

## *The Mediterranean World and 'Mediterraneanism': The Origins, Meaning, and Application of a Geo-Cultural Notion in Israel*

YAACOV SHAVIT

'The sea, after all, can act in different and indeed almost opposite ways.'

Ernest Barker, *National Character*,  
p.57 (London, 1939, 2nd edn.)

'The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean.'

Samuel Johnson, 11 April 1777, in  
Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, p.36.

### THE UNITY AND UNIFORMITY OF THE 'MEDITERRANEAN WORLD'

The notion 'Mediterraneanism', or the attribution of 'Mediterranean characteristics' to different features of the natural and human environment, has in recent years surfaced quite frequently in Israeli cultural polemic and in literature. It may be found in *belles lettres*, in cinematic and theatrical reviews, in descriptions of landscapes and character or human behaviour, or even in reference to culinary menus. It has become a literary convention and a practical criterion for profiling or evaluating – negatively or positively – aesthetics and social behavioural values. Time and again it is argued that Israel, both as a society and as a culture, belongs to the 'Mediterranean world', and that it forms, and always has formed, an integral part of its civilization. Therefore, it is argued, a wrong sense of regional belonging is responsible for the existence of a profound lack of geo-cultural awareness of the Mediterranean environment, and even an attitude of indifference to and alienation from it. Israel, according to this view, was created not facing the sea, but with its back to it.

The notions 'Mediterranean world' and 'Mediterraneanism' often appear as an *a priori* generalization, intended to define a specific type of

human region and culture. They also feature in everyday language in a repertoire of different and contradictory characterizations, such as 'Mediterranean charm', 'Mediterranean violence', 'Mediterranean primitivism', 'Mediterranean temperament', 'Mediterranean rationalism', 'Mediterranean brightness and joy of life', to mention just a few.<sup>1</sup>

Recently it has been suggested that there is also a special literary genre, 'Mediterranean literature', which includes a Jewish branch.<sup>2</sup> According to this view, the Mediterranean Jewish genre excels in literary clarity, a 'family-oriented' conception of society, a preference for reality rather than a philosophical approach to life, a non-tragic attitude to the world, and so on. There is no historical basis for this characterization, and it brings together writers of widely differing hues, and creates an artificial distinction between works of literature, based, as it were, on socio-geographic factors. In any case, here we should mention that this assumption goes further, and affirms that the Sephardic Mediterranean writings occupy a marginal position in Hebrew literature, while most of the Israeli population has a 'Mediterranean mentality'; in other words, there is a claim that a Mediterranean mentality exists, and differs from the mentality of those originating from another geo-cultural milieu.

Behind all this lies the assumption that a delineated Mediterranean basin actually exists as a defined geographical region, and that this region has both a distinct and united history of its own, and an individual geo-historical and cultural personality. This assumption is rooted in a certain corpus of modern European literature, and has been disseminated by travelogues and tourist guides that spoke in terms of, to mention only one phrase, the charm of the Mediterranean ('*der Zauber des Mittelmeers*').<sup>3</sup> For this reason Fernand Braudel's great study, while not discovering, or even rediscovering, the Mediterranean world, no doubt added new dimensions to its image, while greatly influencing the contemporary geo-historical perception. It is hard to know what influence this erudite and extensive historical work of Braudel had on the popularity of the definitions, or what influence was exerted by the literature which described the Mediterranean experience: one example can be found in the books by Lawrence Durrell which, it is usually said, represent 'the spirit of the Mediterranean from Avignon to Alexandria'.

In any case, it is clear that in the Israeli case the definitions became both useful and fashionable in different circles: they fell on socio-cultural ground which was ready to exploit them.

Nevertheless, expressions such as 'Mediterranean world' and 'Mediterranean culture' remain, to my mind, extremely vague and obscure concepts. It is, therefore, worthwhile to re-examine their

meaning and content. In this world-view, the Mediterranean basin, apart from possessing unique features and having formed a historical framework, is considered a *united* as well as *uniform* entity. I am of the opinion that this presumed *unity* and *uniformity* have been created mainly at the historian's and geographer's desks and in the imagination of artists and men of letters, who created a geo-cultural image and metaphor rather than a 'real' geo-cultural profile.

It is a well-established fact that after the collapse of the Roman empire the Mediterranean basin never regained its political unity. It was divided between different nations and hostile civilizations. The notions of unity and uniformity refer, therefore, to the basic human conditions and patterns of living and human culture. Braudel defines a 'cultural area' as a space or as a *locus*, which is composed of many and varied components defined as a 'regular grouping'; civilization or culture, in his view, is the 'totality' of the range of attributes. It is this 'totality' which is the 'form' of the civilization thus recognized.<sup>4</sup> From this point of view it is clear that, for Braudel, the Mediterranean basin is a cultural area which is united as well as uniform. He describes the Mediterranean region as a 'human entity', a 'source of physical unity, a climate which imposed its uniformity on landscape and ways of life'. The result of this physical unity and uniformity, according to Braudel, is that people of the Mediterranean region always felt at home in any part of it...; 'Wherever he might come from [he] would never feel out of place in any part of the sea'.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore clear that the Mediterranean is a cultural unit, in Braudel's mind, not only because it is the 'oldest stretch of sea ever dominated by Man, with a whole past behind it',<sup>6</sup> but also and mainly because its environment enabled or even enforced unity and uniformity on its population. Braudel refers of course to a cultural – not to a political – unity and uniformity – and it is important at this point to try to define the meaning of these two different terms.

A region can be described and defined as a cultural unit when it has clear and defined boundaries, and when it is organized and acts as a 'system' (I prefer to use the term 'system' over the customary organic analogies in the anthropo-geography of the nineteenth century). A cultural system presumes a certain degree of interdependence of its constituent parts, which do indeed also show a strong and recognizable relationship. Unity in our case exists, or is achieved, when and where continuous and stable patterns of interdependence exist, and this interdependence extends to a range of components. It must be more intensive, stronger and more effective than the mutual dependence existing between the component parts of the particular system and other cultural systems (or cultural regions). Braudel writes that

cultural goods, the micro-elements of civilization, are constantly on the move.<sup>7</sup> From this point of view he must prove that the 'move' of cultural goods within the Mediterranean basin or region was more intensive and more interdependent than between different parts of this region and other parts of the world.

However, unity as understood from a functionalist point of view, may consist of different and even contradictory elements, deriving from different kinds of cultural goods. The cultural unity of a region need not be created, or be imposed by its uniformity (or the uniform nature of the cultural goods), nor does uniformity within it necessarily create unity in any one region.<sup>8</sup>

Uniformity conveys an idea of homogeneity and the identical character of both the 'whole' and its constituent parts. It is claimed that this uniformity is not imposed by human cultural 'agents', but is a result of a common physical environment, and that it is this environment which imposes a similarity of patterns of human organization and response, while at the same time providing a congenial basis for the activity of many cultural 'agents'.

The organic analogy describes the Mediterranean region as a *Naturtypus* (natural type) with a unique *Weltstellung* or *Lage* (position in the world), which as a result is characterized by a deep unique relationship between nature and history, and nature and mankind. This relationship creates uniformity. From a positivist point of view, the similarity that exists between the different kinds of cultural goods is the origin and basis for its uniformity.

These are modern notions and part of a modern *imago mundi*. Ancient historians and geographers never attached to the Mediterranean basin a character of cultural unity or uniformity. Within the divisions and classifications of the globe into zones, the Mediterranean area was not considered a region in its own right. Its various parts were included in different zones, and no claim was asserted that it possessed the same *clima* and *terra* which resulted in the creation of like-minded societies and cultures. The same holds true for Muslim and Christian historians and geographers of the Middle Ages.<sup>9</sup> In Ibn Khaldūn's famous division of the universe into zones, the Mediterranean is not identified with the 'Middle Zone'. It is the inhabitants of the middle zones who have so-called Mediterranean characteristics ('They have all the natural conditions necessary for a civilized life, such as ways of making a living, dwelling, crafts, sciences, political leadership, and royal authority'.) However, the middle zones include the coastal regions. There the air is very much hotter because of the reflection of the light and rays of the sun from the surface of the sea and, therefore, the people's share in qualities resulting from heat, namely joy and

levity, is larger than that of the inhabitants of the cold and hilly or mountainous countries.<sup>10</sup>

In most of the great geo-cultural and morphological divisions of the nineteenth century, the Mediterranean region does not represent a unique framework of a historical civilization. In T.H. Buckle's *Introduction to the History of Civilization*, to mention only one example, Spain and Greece are presented as two contradictory types of environment and, hence, of human culture. Spain resembles tropical lands such as India, and its climatic conditions (heat and dryness) are considered a fertile breeding ground for superstition and ignorance. Greece, on the other hand, is considered by him the 'natural soil' for the propagation of arts, sciences and liberalism.<sup>11</sup>

The variety and diversity of Mediterranean cultures in ancient times is a historical fact. It is also a fact that in certain areas around the Mediterranean sea strong localism developed and continued to exist over a long period. The common assumption in most of the writings on the history of ancient Israel is that the Mediterranean sea, which formed its western border, failed to have any impact on the development of Israelite society and culture. It is frequently argued that the Bible regards the sea as an eternal threat to the land and its inhabitants.<sup>12</sup> Neither did the sea nor rainfall play a role in ancient Egyptian religion and culture; instead, it was the river Nile which occupied the centre of the life and world-view of the Egyptians.<sup>13</sup> We could mention more examples to establish the argument that the Mediterranean region was the cradle of and starting-point for the dissemination of many different and even contradictory social orders and world-views. Wherever unity or uniformity of some kind existed, it was caused mainly by the dissemination of a dominant culture throughout the region by 'human cultural agents'.

In the case of the 'Mediterranean unit' there are two arguments involved in the establishment of its unified cultural image from the late eighteenth century onwards. The first is the perception of the Mediterranean (and its inner seas) as the core and source of its unity and uniformity. The second is the perception of the nature of the Mediterranean basin as a geographical unit.

The emergence of the image of a united and uniform 'Mediterranean world' and culture was a result of the revival of the concept of climatic causation in the German *Aufklärung* (mainly under the influence of Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*),<sup>14</sup> the appearance of anthropogeography and comparative geography in the late eighteenth century, and of Romanticism. Here I will describe only a small part of this vast corpus of literature. The Mediterranean sea acquired the image of a *mare clausum* – the inner focus of the surrounding world. In Henri

Pirenne's famous description, the Mediterranean during the Roman era was an 'inland sea ... the vehicle of ideas, religions and merchandise.'<sup>15</sup> It created and enabled the interdependence of its various parts and afforded quick and safe sea-routes and safe shelters. Jacob Burckardt even claimed that these natural features of the sea accounted for the Italian seamen's timidity and lack of a spirit of adventure, when compared with the courage and boldness of North Sea mariners.<sup>16</sup> According to this view the sea is the factor which both unifies and unites the various adjacent parts along its seaboard, creating a physical bridge as well as a uniform environment.

The same characteristics were attached to the Mediterranean sea in European Romantic poetry. It is always a bright and glistening sea:

Along Morea's hills the setting sun;  
Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,  
but one unclouded blaze of living light.

(Lord Byron, *Curse of Minerva*)<sup>17</sup>

This kind of portrayal of a uniform sea, which creates a unified environment and imposes its nature on human society, became an *a priori* or automatic literary convention. Descriptions of this kind ignore the fact that ancient mythologies personified the Mediterranean sea as a fearful monster; apart from this, weather conditions made it impossible to navigate safely during certain times of the year. In any case, even if the common assumption that the sea was a vital factor in creating the physical unity of the Mediterranean region is considered as only too self-evident,<sup>18</sup> the fact that this region formed a political and cultural unity (but not uniformity) during the long period of the *pax romana* remains accurate and true. From our point of view, however, it is not important whether this unity was achieved by control of the sea, or whether that sea became a 'closed sea' because a single great power controlled the surrounding shores. For these reasons, regardless of the many attacks on Pirenne's great thesis,<sup>19</sup> its principal assumption still holds true. Only during the Roman era did all the elements of Mediterranean unity exist and act in concert, whereas during the subsequent periods the Mediterranean region was divided, its different parts becoming 'elements' of other cultural systems, while only some of the components of the former interdependence continue to exist. The sea alone was not enough to create unity.

The second perception of the unity and uniformity of the Mediterranean region referred mainly to the nature of the environment as a *Lebenswelt*. Typologically, the Mediterranean climate is determined by its bi-seasonal system, with dry, hot summers and warm, wet winters, and by its dependence on rainfall. Its nature is, in Goethe's

words, a harmony of heaven, sea, and earth ('Ein Harmonie von Himmel, Meer und Erde').<sup>20</sup> It was mainly the geographic and climatic conditions which created the classic Greek culture.

The popularity of these views, which in German literature were first expressed by Johann Joachim Winkelmann (in two famous books, one published in 1755 and the second, *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, in 1764) can be demonstrated by the following quotation from the book by Carl Philipp Funke (1752–1807), *Mythologie für Schulen und zum Selbstunterricht* (Hanover, 1824; first edition 1808). This portrayal is clearly informed by the assumption that mythology is the primal expression of Man's reaction to nature and the world:

Jedes Volk, wenn es seine allmähliche Bildung nicht durch ein anderes empfängt, hat seine eigene Mythologie. Indess stimmen die meisten in gewissen Vorstellungen mit einander überein. Bei keinem einzigen von den alten Völkern finden wir sie jedoch so verfeinert und ausgebildet, als bei den Griechen. Der Grund hiervon liegt vorzüglich in dem glücklichen Himmelsstrich, unter welchem diese Nation wohnte; in der Beschaffenheit des Landes und anderen zufälligen Umständen.

(Every people, in so far as its gradual cultural development is not the product of another culture, has its own mythology. Even so most of them share certain images and ideas. However, in not a single one of the classical peoples will we find them in so refined and well-defined a form as among the Greeks. This is primarily a result of the felicitous geographic and climatic conditions under which they lived, the natural landscape and other accidental circumstances.)

This school of thought needed to compromise between the Aryan model, which holds that the Greek characteristics originate from their Hindo-European *Urzeit* and are formed by the influence of mid-Asian natural phenomena, and between the native model which claims that the natural characteristics of Greece and the Mediterranean are so different from those of Asia. Therefore they produced the theory that indeed the Greeks absorbed certain Hindu-European elements and introduced them to Greece. However, along the calm, indented coastline of the Aegean, they created a different culture, due to the influence of different natural conditions. In Greece nature does not experience the strong contrasts which mark nature in Asia – and therefore Greek religion does not express the same destructive contrast between 'good' and 'evil', et cetera.

It was the prominent German geographer Carl Ritter who, in the African volume of his universal *Erdkunde* (Berlin, 1822), claimed that

the North African countries, as a *Naturtypus*, do not belong to the African continent, but rather form an integral part of the coastlands of the Mediterranean region, and thus possess a uniform basic character ('einem eigentümlichen Grundcharakter'). One of Ritter's prominent interpreters recognized for the first time that the *Mittelmeergebiet* is a unity (*Einheit*) which creates both unity (*Einigkeit*) and uniformity (*Einlichkeit*).<sup>21</sup>

It was, indeed, the transition of anthropo-geography to the regional level at the end of the nineteenth century that advanced the study of the Mediterranean world on a regional basis. Two of the foremost books on this subject were the German geographer Alfred Philippson's *Das Mittelmeergebiet*, and a work by Friedrich Ratzel's disciple Allen Churchill Semple, *The Geography of the Mediterranean Region*.<sup>22</sup>

The first, Philippson, preceded by approximately half a century Braudel's assumption that the Mediterranean as a region (*Gebiet*) represents a separate part of the world (*Erdräum*), with uniform natural characteristics and with a uniform history, all of which had created a similarity in relationships and ways of life among its adjoining populations.

A book by an Israeli historian, Shlomo Na'aman,<sup>23</sup> follows this view, giving a brilliant characterization of Mediterranean civilization and Mediterranean *homo sapiens*, neither of them merely the result of an integration aided by the close, even intensive contacts that the sea itself and its shores make possible between the different areas. The Mediterranean world is characterized by the similarity between its forms of life, this resulting from 'a climate with a unique cycle'. This decides which materials will be used for building, and even the planning of villages and towns, the kinds of agriculture, et cetera, and it also led to the special terminology on the organization of society in *poleis* or the cosmos. Indeed, there is no doubt that the close-by is more familiar, but one must ask, in that case, how it was that within the framework of this united world, and even within specific parts, totally different forms of government and ways of life developed, and how it is that under the same sky and in the same climate, different philosophies evolved. Palestine, small and situated on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, is a clear example of the multiplicity of cultures within a single, if diverse, territorial framework. In any case, there is a great difference between the claim that the Mediterranean world created similar lifestyles and the view that it shaped and imposed a special 'Mediterranean character'.

However, it was not the science of geography, but the vital presence of the classic ideas in the European mind of the nineteenth century that created the image of the Mediterranean.



During the nineteenth century, Italy and Greece were the two countries and the two cultures which determined the image of the Mediterranean world and civilization. A concept of harmony was created between the image of Greece and that of the Hellenistic civilization whose roots lay in the Mediterranean region, without taking into account other Mediterranean lands and cultures. Italy was regarded as the land of *alma Venus*, characterized by spontaneous consciousness and a genuine joy of life, as opposed to the severity and dourness of 'the North'. In Italy, according to the popular romantic metaphor, one could find the antithesis to Protestantism and Puritanism. The people of Italy, wrote Goethe in his *Italienische Reise*, are always out of doors, and having no cares, they do not brood ('... sind immer draussen und in ihrer Sorglosigkeit denken sie nicht'). The conventional description of the sky was always as blue or bright blue. By extension, Italy and Greece were regarded as representative of the characterization of the entire Mediterranean region as a world of spiritual and sensual *joie de vivre*. In Friedrich Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*, para. 255), Mediterranean nature is harmonious, full of awareness, transparent, and so forth. Under these blue and open skies lie the roots of the eternal soul of the Mediterranean, namely the south of Europe.

There were, of course, other images and conventions. The Mediterranean region was often portrayed as sentimental, lacking in depth, crowded and vulgar: an integral part of the Levant. In a large corpus of European literature it became the embodiment, not of the classical harmony of Greece, but of the 'Levant': southern Europe and the Muslim countries thus became an entity associated with *vera miseria*, a backwater of cultural decadence and degradation. In certain other examples the Mediterranean acquires a Dionysian countenance; fierce, hard, and cruel. In D.H. Lawrence's novel, *Sun*, for example, the Mediterranean sun is a procreative, phallic symbol, forming a stark contrast to the bleak and impotent 'West'.

Turning again to Braudel's thesis and his historical-cultural picture, it would seem to me that he fails to prove his case, confusing unity with uniformity on the one hand, and similarity with familiarity on the other. There may exist intensive interconnections, similar patterns of living, a familiarity between certain features of landscapes and cultures, although they are different in nature; even pronounced similarities do not create uniformity. A citizen of Venice, for example, would feel more at home, in Amsterdam than in Alexandria or Istanbul, whereas a traveller from Alexandria would feel more at home in Baghdad than in Marseilles.

A similar comment could be made with regard to Braudel's emphasis

on the concentric structure of the Mediterranean region, and its division into human units on the basis of their different geographical structures. For instance, the societies occupying the mountainous regions which Braudel identifies around the Mediterranean sea (the Atlas mountains, Aragon, the Appenines, the Balkans and the Lebanon mountains) are very different in character and culture. Their common 'Mediterranean quality' is not the result of their being situated in proximity to the Mediterranean sea, but of their residing in mountainous regions, with similar characteristics producing life-styles which can be recognized among mountain dwellers in areas beyond, and even far removed from, the Mediterranean world.

In my opinion, the unity and uniformity of the Mediterranean region have always been the creation, and thus the result, of human agents and activity, and where their power to impose unity or uniformity failed, natural conditions proved insufficient to this end. Braudel had to stress the consolidating power of the 'environment' because within the time span of his study, the second half of the sixteenth century, the Mediterranean region was divided between two rival forces and mutually hostile civilizations: the perspective of the *longue durée* drove him to ignore the many decisive elements of diversity which were not elements of a unit.

It seems, therefore, that these common images of a united and uniform Mediterranean world, both in the positive and the negative sense, were created and adapted as an oppositional model to or metaphor for the accepted image of Europe. As seen from the north, the countries 'south of the Alps' represented the 'other side of Europe': a different aspect of European history, and a primary source of its *Urgeist* or a dimension of it. Within the struggle for the 'real' image of 'Europe' the 'South' became a metaphor for certain characteristics which were felt to be missing in the 'North', as well as a metaphor for the negative qualities that were absent in the 'North' and explained its inferiority. It became an alternative for both the 'West' and the 'East' because the Mediterranean was neither 'West' nor 'East' and was able to function as a fictitious model for positive ideas.

In reality, however, the Mediterranean world is not a unified region, nor a *Kulturtypus*. It is an image and a metaphor; as such it became part of a certain *imago mundi*, and therefore a useful element in cultural polemics concerning both national identity and belonging, and cultural identity and its origins and authentic sources.

## IN QUEST OF AN ALTERNATIVE REGIONAL-CULTURAL BELONGING

The concept of a united Mediterranean region was not easily accepted by Jewish writers. The Hellenic and Roman worlds of the past had been the great enemies of the people of Israel, and their pagan civilizations were no 'alternative' to that of Christian Europe. On the contrary, many Jewish authors since the late nineteenth century had come to regard ancient Hellenism as a symbol for modern secular Europe.<sup>24</sup> It was quite obvious, therefore, that it was hard to think of Israelites or Jews in terms of the heathen Mediterranean and its pagan nations. Palestine was generally regarded as a unique and separate territory, or as a part of the Fertile Crescent. Only during the late 1920s and 1930s did the 'Mediterranean option' become available and useful to a small circle of public figures and men of letters. The growing knowledge about the history of the Phoenician civilization created an opportunity for the re-evaluation of the historical roles of the Phoenicians and Punics of Carthage and, thus, a re-examination of the part played by the Israelites, mainly during the Kingdom of David and Solomon, in the creation of a 'Phoenician-Hebrew' Mediterranean civilization. According to this new historical view the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, which was ruled by north-western Semitic people, and the Aegean Sea, which was ruled by the Greeks, not only maintained close relations with each other, but were considered to have been founded on a parallel structural basis, due to a common environment. Eventually these two parallel civilizations spread through colonization to the western part of the Mediterranean basin, engaging in a contest for hegemony over the area. The Israelites, in this representation of the past, were neither indifferent to the sea, nor turned their backs on its dramatic history. On the contrary, they were profoundly involved in the great deeds that turned the Mediterranean into an internal sea and the focus of the world. At that time the sea was considered a bridge, or a 'pathway' (a Biblical image from Psalms 8.8: '... all that swim the paths of the sea'). In other words, the Hebrews were responsible for creating the unity of the Mediterranean region. The modern Jewish nation should therefore 'return' to the Mediterranean, the stage of its great deeds in a distant past.

Aaron Aaronsohn (1876–1919), the pioneer of modern agricultural science in Palestine, directed his harshly critical view of German science against Alfred Philippson and his book, *Das Mittelmeergebiet*. He claimed that for Philippson, a German-Jewish scholar, the Mediterranean had become a 'purely German sea' (namely Hellenic-Aryan sea) – one that was *Judenfrei*, without a trace of Jewish footprints in its history.<sup>25</sup>

As I have already described elsewhere,<sup>26</sup> the new Phoenician-Hebrew Mediterranean image enabled Jewish writers to view the Mediterranean rather than the Fertile Crescent as the 'real home' of the Jew, or at least to regard Palestine as a historical bridge and a link between 'East' and 'West', benefiting from both these worlds and, conversely, making a vital contribution to their progress. A wide new horizon thus opened, and Jewish history gained a fresh romantic dimension, and an opportunity to break through the wall that encircled it into unexplored spaces. Itamar Ben-Avi (1885–1943), journalist and amateur historian, and one of the foremost personalities in the gallery of those promoting the modern Jewish orientation towards the sea, expounded his Hebrew version of the *Drang nach die See* in the following words:

... no more will the nation remain confined only within the narrow and constricting borders of Palestine. Hurray for the open expanse of the sea. [The new Hebrew man] will yearn for the infinite space, the magic of the horizons and the days of King David and King Solomon. Ezion Geber and Eilat, Tarshish, and Ophir will be recalled in our renewed lives.<sup>27</sup>

This new historical image served primarily as a background against which to encourage maritime activities and initiatives on the part of the Zionist movement and Jewish society in Palestine. Its influence did indeed make itself felt, as proven by the gradual development of a Jewish maritime and naval presence, whose history lies beyond the scope of this article.

This picture of an – at least partial – unity of the Mediterranean, and the Jewish role in it, was mainly used for practical political purposes, in order to encourage young Jews to follow their seafaring forefathers in the reconquest of the sea. However, for some scholars these steps did not go far enough.

Braudel published his book in 1949. A year earlier, a Jewish scholar who, in the course of studies in France, made a number of memorable contributions to our knowledge of the Mediterranean region (mainly North Africa) published *The Book of the Seas: An Aspect of the History of Civilization* (in Hebrew). Naḥum Slouschz (1872–1966) was a prominent scholar, writer, and traveller, whose specializations were history and archaeology. Following studies in Geneva and Paris, he was appointed in 1904 to the new chair of Hebrew language and literature (established by Ernest Rénan) at the Sorbonne. During the years prior to the First World War he undertook a series of exploratory journeys to North Africa on behalf of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles

Lettres. There he studied Phoenician and Greek inscriptions and wrote several books about the history of the Maghrib. He was deeply influenced by the 'Phoeniciophile' French school and Victor Bérard, its leading figure, as well as by certain Italian writers who attempted to harness history to Benito Mussolini's new imperialistic aspirations in the *mare nostrum*.<sup>28</sup>

Slouschz, however, advanced the idea that the unity of the Mediterranean basin was first achieved by the Phoenician-Hebrew civilization, rather than by its major rival, the Graeco-Hellenistic civilization or its Latin heir. Slouschz's description of the nature of the Mediterranean and the *homo mediterranicus* is one of the most impressive and fascinating portrayals I have come across in any literary work. Since his book is known to a limited public only, I feel justified in quoting from it extensively.<sup>29</sup>

Like nature, so is the man who lives in it. It is the sea that has throughout the generations imprinted its temperate stamp upon the mood of the people residing along its coasts: this Mediterranean man is first and foremost a social type, a link in a vast chain of people like himself ... Each and everyone of them is first and foremost a son of his town, his environment, tied with countless delicate strands to the society into which he was born; he is one of the people, who have raised him and from whom he will never detach himself. At the centre of his world lies nature, which is good and bountiful to all, and which sheds its light upon all its creatures. He loves the street; he enjoys the wide open spaces. The town, fences, and walled-in spaces are merely there to serve as a refuge against wind and rain, or to protect him against enemies from afar. The home is not the main dwelling place, but a place where the family congregates; a place for storing food, a shelter for the night, and an escape in time of trouble ... His private affairs, his joys and his sorrows, in which all members participate, belong to the society – and they are openly discussed under the blue sky and in the light of the sun ...

The bright light in the heavens and down below, his secure belief in creation, his faith in the nature of the world, his happiness with life overcome all hurts and drive away the unpleasant moments and difficulties which beset all human creatures. The rural idylls portrayed in ancient poems such as the Song of Songs or the lyrics of Anacreon, Virgil, and Catullus have not yet lost their effect, nor have they disappeared from the shores of the azure sea. Even the Christian faith – the product of a mistaken disappointment with our physical existence – interwoven with

many visions of believers hailing from countries bathed in the hot rays of the sun ... this did not prove strong enough to divert the minds of the natives of the sea from the beauties of nature and the rain to which they were attached, in our days as well as during the pagan days. Even religion, which emerged out of the cruel Arabian desert – the creation of a haunted landscape and an iron-cast sky – was unable to evade the nature of the angry and all-consuming equator, clung to the old preordained laws or to fatalism, and, as it approached the shores of the bright azure sea, unable to maintain its harshness, and mellowed and faded away.

The craving for life in the land of the living overcomes everything: the poor farmer in southern Italy, the fisherman of the Greek isles who barely provides for his daily necessities, the winegrower in the Provence, and the smallholder in the Balearics subsisting on home-grown vegetables, throughout the centuries never changed their way of life. They remained suffused with brightness, filled with charm and dedicated as ever to the ancient fondness of life. Their souls have remained 'pagan', meaning that under the cloak of Christian reticence and modesty shrouding the faces of these open-faced children of nature they even today worship the powers of nature. He who reads the Provencal poetry of Frédéric Mistral discovers that the main difference between his conception of nature and love of life and the majority of the Homeric idylls written three thousand years earlier is only one of time. The sounds, the perceptions, the sentiments are the same.

And who is greater, and mirrors our own sins more than our own Heinrich Heine? Born on the green banks of the Rhine, he stands revealed to us in all his brilliant colours, like the sun over the Negev: the son of a restless generation, who rebelled against his inheritance of suffering, and therefore threw off the bonds of his patrimony for the sake of individual human freedom, a wilful person, an individualist who placed himself apart from his society.

This sensitive poet, born along the banks of the northern rivers, under bleak skies, a refugee of the ghettos, whose warped education alienated him from the enlightenment of the Hebrew tradition, was all his life embittered by the sorrow of this separation. This poet, disappointed in his loves, who failed to see his aspirations fulfilled, hurt, beaten and deadly ill, deep in his torn soul still felt the warm stirrings of a belief in light and life. His desperate need for the untrammelled love of the Mediterranean vision, his feelings of security and optimism reveal to the critical eye his southern origins: fifty generations of storms and fog in a northern

climate did not tarnish the radiance of his southern soul. It is no coincidence that Heine's songs portraying the sea in all its power and majesty, like his descriptions of the shores of Italy – the only shores of all the countries around the primeval sea which the poet ever saw for himself – are full of emotion and bewilderment.

Like his coreligionist Yehuda Halevi, to whom Heine felt a close physical as well as mental affinity, he was a descendant of the ancient Hebrews. His natural place is in the pantheon of the eternal Mediterranean Hebrews. Above all he visualized nature with all its wonders. Having been uprooted from the sources of his natural and racial origins, and despairing of all the prevailing beliefs and of opinions in his time, he tried to find refuge for his tortured soul in affected permissiveness and forced frivolity; yet, despite all this, in the recesses of his torn and tortured soul were kept alive the chords of his faith in light and life, in unrestrained love for the beauties of nature, and a feeling of security and optimism which to the discerning eye reveals his Hebrew extraction, his Mediterranean origin.

This quality of brightness and clear and easy simplicity stems from the ancient southern past which remained ingrained in enlightened Jews long after their dispersion among the Gentiles. Its distinguishing characteristics are: a fertile imagination which, although at times blinded by the too bright light from the heavens, on the whole blends harmoniously with a clear and practical sense of realism; sensitivity or even hyperactivity, which resists a too prolonged or concentrated effort, counterbalanced by hardness and a stubborn and optimistic clinging to the will to live; an aversion to loneliness and separation from human company, which – however – does not negate an inclination towards introspection and communion with nature; a (at times overdone) desire for social activity and involvement in public affairs, and an inner need to take positions and stand in the forefront of every kind of spiritual and social movement that sweeps the contemporary human mind, coupled with a less praiseworthy tendency to imitate others and to show unreasoned admiration for everything new or unknown. Another ingrained habit is the tendency to be loquacious to the point of garrulousness, which willy-nilly turns every southerner into an accomplished speaker on any subject virtually from birth. The southerner also has a clear and self-assured outlook on life and a deep faith in the future.

Indeed, there no doubt exists a distinct human outlook among the people living across the Alps to the north, in much the same way as there exists a distinctive all-embracing human perception

among those who are born in the south, and every traveller who crosses the mountains will be able to see for himself that nature is the greater artist and educator.

Slouschz's broad impressionistic canvas is representative of the feelings and impressions of others. Already in March 1926 Chaim Arlosoroff (1899–1933), a prominent Zionist Labour leader and brilliant scholar, who had obtained his formal education at the University of Berlin, had written along the same lines in a letter from Syracuse, Sicily, addressed to his wife:

By the way, when I look at the Italians, for the sake of comparison, the cultural uniformity of the Mediterranean basin stands out very strongly, indicated by minor signals. In contrast to central, northern and western Europe: (a) People here like to gesticulate clearly and energetically while talking, with an inclination for pathos and wide open gestures. (b) People carry loads on their heads, without manual support, while the body (unlike in Chinese or Indian pictures I have seen) is held upright, erect, in an almost festive manner. (c) Everyone sings while they work – from all sides. The songs are the same throughout the Mediterranean, with the same melody and harmony, sung by Arabs, Jews, Italians ... and the great popularity of Italian opera – Verdi, for instance – among the Jews, and the enthusiasm it arouses, is, in my opinion, by no means accidental. If we remain on the Mediterranean shore, we will set up a monument to honour Verdi rather than Bach, in Tel Aviv and in the Valley of Jezreel.<sup>30</sup>

In this instance the Mediterranean mainly supplied a certain model of aesthetic values which was 'European' in character, yet not 'western' in nature. Indeed, in order to overcome the common and influential identification of the Mediterranean world with the decadent Levant a division was created between the 'Levantine' seaboard and its harbours (Istanbul, Beirut, Alexandria), and the 'European' seaboard and its port cities (Marseilles, Naples, Athens). The first were described as being wild and undisciplined in nature, the latter as noble and lively, imbued with a truly bright and colourful life-style and a natural sense of restraint. A distinction was applied between a positive and a negative kind of Levantinism and cosmopolitanism, based on a different use of the same repertoire.<sup>31</sup> The same characteristics that were regarded as negative in the first kind, merited a positive interpretation in the second. The Mediterranean culture, as a 'southern European' culture, was believed to be able to supply models for a 'Mediterranean language', with its own Mediterranean rhythm, Mediterranean archi-



ture, Mediterranean music, and so forth.<sup>32</sup> The Mediterranean person as a uniform cultural type thus became a 'third option', a new model in addition to the existing alternatives of 'European' or 'Asian', 'western' or 'oriental', 'Aryan' or 'Semitic'. The Mediterranean image belonged neither to the 'West' nor the 'East'; it was neither 'purely Semitic' nor 'purely Aryan', but belonged to a unique type of culture.<sup>33</sup> As such it had the makings of a culture and civilization that could create a model culture to which it was proper to belong.

In certain segments of the modern Hebrew-Palestinian literature the Mediterranean sea has taken on a kind of mythological function. Young writers identified their own common youth with the *Jugendzeit* of the new Jewish society in *Eretz Israel*, thus creating a cultural myth by portraying their new environment and cultural identity as arising from the sea – from the 'depths of the crystal-pure, virgin waters of the Mediterranean', divorced from any links or connections with the Jewish past. The sea and its shoreline became major components of a romantic and primitivist portrayal of reality. A completely contrasting ideological and poetic protest against this naive, primitivist romanticism can, however, be found in the 1920s in the expressionist poetry of the great modernist-nationalist poet Uri Zvi Greenberg. Greenberg saw the Mediterranean as a powerful and fierce sea, part of the national world-view associated with the Jewish *Sturm und Drang*. The blue of the Mediterranean created a rather misleading image:

... and masses of blue, and sunshine galore and exotic / colours, a happy hunting ground for painters who dream / of cashing in at western exhibitions / and a diversion for tourists and stimulant for pilgrims' / sensibilities.

However, as mentioned earlier, the most common argument was that Tel Aviv and other Jewish cities had been built with their backs to the sea, in an effort to impose an alien, European style upon the 'natural' Mediterranean environment. This alienation from the sea was viewed as only one of the symptoms of the total alienation of Israeli culture from its natural *Raum*. 'Levantinism' as a cultural and societal content remained a negative criterion and category, and Mediterranean cities a negative model, although some of its features and many aspects of the Mediterranean urban life-style became positive examples.

Aspects which were marginal within the cultural polemics during the 1930s and even afterwards disappeared, became from the 1960s onwards the basis for a renewed evaluation of the place of Israeli culture within the overall framework of Mediterranean civilization.

The essayist Jacqueline Kahanoff, a native of Alexandria and herself steeped in French culture, proposed a change in the image of Mediterranean culture.<sup>34</sup> She posited the view that it was of a 'Hellenistic' type: the Levant had traditionally been a bridge between different cultures; it was a geographical stage on which they met and intermingled, or could live side by side in an ethnic cultural mosaic. Unlike the Christian nationally divided West, the Mediterranean region had never intended to impose any integrated culture on its inhabitants. The 'Mediterranean Levant' was therefore pluralistic and tolerant in nature. Its basic social values were a family atmosphere, moderation, et cetera.

This positive interpretation and image of Mediterranean Levantinism was advanced as a reaction to the Hebrew-Israeli idea of a 'unified Hebrew culture': the view of Israeli society as a 'melting pot', which would create a single nation with a unified and integrated national culture. This concept of homogeneity was regarded by her as 'cultural dictatorship', which through various means tried to destroy the cultural diversity of the newly-born Israeli society. Paradoxically, from this point of view, the Mediterranean culture became a positive model by the change of the content and meaning of its presumed unity and uniformity: this time it was not a *homogeneous uniformity*, but a unity and uniformity composed of *variety* and *diversity*. The unique character of the Mediterranean region lay in its being the 'natural framework' for extensive human diversity within one defined region. Here lies, according to this view, the main and basic difference between Mediterranean and European culture. This new image became useful at two levels: one as a conventional, common description of different cultural and social phenomena in Israel; the second as an ideal model for Israeli culture and society. It was distorted by certain organized groups as part of their political, cultural, and even ethnic struggle within Israeli society.

It is too early to evaluate the influence of the revival of the notions of 'Mediterranean world' and 'Mediterraneanism' (as a definition of culture and human values) in the Israeli cultural polemic of today. This brief examination aims to serve as an introduction to the uses of the concepts and images in different Mediterranean societies and cultures. The purpose of such an ambitious study should, in my view, be to prove the existence, or non-existence, of similar geo-cultural images in various Mediterranean societies as evidence for the existence or non-existence of common world-views and common patterns of response to the Mediterranean environment.<sup>35</sup> One of the interesting outcomes of such a comparative study should be a comparison between the image of the sea and the region held by its inhabitants and natives, and their desire to belong, and the image evolved by those who made their

*peregrinatio ad Mediterraneum* in order to find either a different soul from that of 'Europe', or to revive the Mediterranean 'lost cultures' and its 'Golden Age'.

## NOTES

This article was submitted in the summer of 1986. I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Theodor Bruggeman of the University of Cologne for referring me to the book by Funke. Thanks are due to L. Middleton-Weaver for his kind assistance.

1. This is a small selection from various Israeli newspapers of recent years.
2. D. Miron, 'The Jewish Mediterranean Genre in Israeli Literature', *Ha-Olam ha-Zeh*, 8 April 1987. This description follows the characterization of the southern as opposed to the northern soul, for example in Thomas Mann, *Mario und der Zauberer*. There Thomas Mann sees a parallel between the Mediterranean climate – the 'sun of Homer' ('die Sonne Homers') – and the climate beyond the Alps; the colourful Mediterranean climate, exuding confidence and complacency, is nevertheless devoid of content and unable to supply the deep and complex needs of the northern soul. Typical of a new tendency is the initiative to publish an international Mediterranean literary journal, whose editorial board is in Tel Aviv, but which is published in Montpellier (l'Éditions de l'Éclat). The journal, *Le Vent*, is rooted in the concept of Mediterranean poetics with a special quality of its own, exemplified by a softness, minimalism of language, blurred distinctions between the different genres – characteristics which here are naturally seen in a totally positive light.
3. See, for example, K. Edschmid, *Zauber und Grösse des Mittelmeers* (Frankfurt, 1932).
4. F. Braudel, 'The History of Civilization: The Past Explains the Present' in id., *On History*, trans. S. Matthews (Chicago, 1980), pp.202–3.
5. F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. II, trans. S. Reynolds (New York, 1972), pp.231, 237. For a comparable approach to Jewish history in the Mediterranean region, see Z. Ankori, *Jews and Christian Greeks and their Reactions through the Ages* (Tel Aviv, 1984) (Hebrew), in which he states that the Jews felt at home in every part of the Mediterranean, and viewed the Mediterranean area as their natural home. The Jewish diaspora around the Mediterranean is compared to the Greek migration to and colonization of the Mediterranean countries. It is important to note that for Braudel the Mediterranean formed only the kernel of the Greater Mediterranean, and the spread of the Mediterranean beyond its 'natural boundaries' is depicted as the work of Man, and not as a result of similarity of climatic conditions (ibid., p.170). At the same time Braudel is convinced that although Mediterranean Man is obliged to struggle with the tough Mediterranean forces of nature, he would find it hard to adjust culturally to other continents.
6. Braudel, 'Towards a Serial History: Seville and the Atlantic, 1504–1650' in id., *On History*, p.93.
7. Braudel, 'The History of Civilization', p.205.
8. For the meaning of 'region', see D. Whittiesey, 'The Regional Concept and the Regional Method' in F.F. Dohrs and L.M. Sommers (eds.), *Introduction to Geography* (New York, 1969); A.J. Herbertson, 'Geographical Regions' in *Geographical Teacher*, Vol. 2 (1913–14), pp.158–63; J.F. Unsted, 'Geographical Regions Illustrated by Reference to the Iberian Peninsula', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 42 (1926), 159–70. For two different points of view of the nature of Mediterranean unity, see the two articles by N. Keliot and A. Shmueli: 'The Unity of the Mediterranean Sea as a Geographic Region', and 'The Geographic Unity of the Mediterranean Sea' in Y. Karmon and G. Horowitz (eds.), *The Geography of*

- the *Mediterranean Basin* (Tel Aviv, 1983), pp.17–33, 33–49 (Hebrew).
9. See J.K. Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusaders: A Study in the History of Medieval Science and Tradition in Western Europe* (New York, 1965).
10. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqadimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. F. Rosenthal (Princeton, 1969), pp.61–3. Ibn Khaldūn distinguishes clearly between the inhabitants of the coastal regions and the inhabitants of the 'Middle Zones': the first, he writes, are similar in character to the inhabitants of the South.
11. H.T. Buckle, *Introduction to the History of Civilization* (London, 1857–1861), pp.75–84, 528–33. Philippson, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the many earthquakes in Greece created a feeling of insecurity and giddiness among the Greeks, which contrasted with the seriousness of the Germans, due to the far more stable natural conditions in their country (ibid., p.38).
12. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1946), pp.4–96; also M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, 2nd Eng. edn. (London, 1960), p.13.
13. E.C. Semple, *The Geography of the Mediterranean Region: Its Relation to Ancient History* (London, 1932), p.511. As against this, in the entire Aegean world primitive religion was associated with the need to pray to a supreme deity to bring down bountiful rains. Rain also plays a major role in the Jewish religion. On the role of the sea in Egyptian cosmology (in comparison with the Ugaritic and Biblical stand), see the work of O. Kaiser, *Die Mytische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (Berlin, 1959). It seems relevant to distinguish between the role of the sea in myths of the Creation, and its role in the basic experience of culture and society and their expression in literature, and especially in the writings of travellers.
14. See P.H. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (California, 1975), pp.133–6.
15. H. Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Brussels, 1937), trans. B. Miall (London, 1939; repr. 1968), p.11.
16. J. Burckhardt, *Die Kultur Renaissance in Italien (1860)* (Berlin, 1928); with respect to the Italian sailors, he wrote that for them a large part of the earth had already been discovered ('Eine ganze grosse Seite der Erde lag dann gleichsam schon entdeckt vor ihnen', p.280).
17. In P.B. Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind', the Mediterranean sea is portrayed as 'lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams'.
18. As claimed by Z. Rubin in his article 'The Mediterranean and the Dilemma of the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 1 (1986), 13–62.
19. This book was published in the year 1937, but its ideas had been presented by the great Belgian historian already some ten years earlier. For a summary review of the argumentation with Pirenne, see Alfred F. Havinghurst (ed.), *The Pirenne Thesis, Analysis, Criticism, and Revision* (Boston, 1958; repr. 1976). On the Mediterranean as a centre of Muslim civilization, see S.D. Goitein, 'The Unity of the Mediterranean World in the Middle Ages', *Studia Islamica*, 12 (1960), 29–42.
20. J.W. Goethe, *Italianischen Reise* (1976 edn.), p.238, and the well-known lines from the poem 'Mignon': 'Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht'. Most interesting is Bakhtin's analysis of Goethe's perception of time and space, clearly expressed in his impressions of a journey from Italy. According to Bakhtin, Goethe's realism attempts to locate the historical past within defined limitations of time and place, and according to its manifestations in everyday life. See M.M. Bakhtin, 'The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism' in *Speech Genres and Other Essays*, trans. V.W. McGee (Austin, TA, 1986), pp.31–2. On Heine's travels in Italy, see H. Heine, *Reisebilder* (Frankfurt, 1982) in *Italien* (1828), pp.229–497. Lately an anthology of German poetry on the subject of Italy was published. See P. Hamm, *Kennst du das Land wo die Zwei Zitronen blühen: Italien im deutschen Gedicht* (Frankfurt, 1987). Philippson (see nn. 22, 25 below) writes that this longing for the Mediterranean sea coast is inborn in German writers and poets, even though the German landscape is even more impressive!

21. H. Beck, *Carl Ritter: Genius der Geographie* (Berlin, 1979), p.83.
22. A. Philippson, *Das Mittelmeergebiet, Seine Geographische und Kulturelle Eigenart* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1904); A.C. Semple, *The Geography of the Mediterranean Region: Its Relation to Ancient History* (London, 1932). See A. Aaronsohn's criticism of Philippson (n. 25 below). Alfred Philippson (1864–1953) was born to a German-Russian family, and fled from Germany following Hitler's rise to power, returning only after the end of the Second World War. On Ratzel see H. Beck, *Grosse Geographien: Pioniere Aussenseiter-Gelehrte* (Berlin, 1982), pp.164–79.
23. S. Na'aman, *The Birth of a Civilisation: The First Millennium of Latin Europe* (Tel Aviv, 1975), especially pp.14–18.
24. I intend to enlarge on this subject in a separate article on the contents and use of the contradiction between Judaism and Hellenism in modern Jewish thought. On Hellenism as an expression of spontaneity, see the famous definitions of Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in M. Arnold, *Selected Prose* (London, repr. 1982), pp.202, 273–86.
25. This was printed in a brief monograph on Acre, *Acco* (Tel Aviv, 1925), published posthumously. Aaronsohn, ironically, regards Philippson as a typical representative of the pseudo 'pan-German' school of science.
26. Y. Shavit, 'Hebrews and Phoenicians: An Ancient Historical Image and its Usage', *Studies in Zionism*, 5, 2 (1984), 157–80. The attitude of European historiography to the Phoenicians and their role in Mediterranean history is extensively discussed in the recent work of M. Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, Vol. I (London, 1987), pp.337–99.
27. From Ch. II, 'On the Sea' of his book, *Juddh Immediately* (Tel Aviv, 1930), p.60 (Hebrew); see also Shavit, 'Hebrews and Phoenicians', n. 20.
28. For a detailed bibliography of his writings see my book, *The New Hebrew Nation: A Study in Israeli Heresy and Fantasy* (London, 1987), pp.167–8.
29. For a comparison, see Na'aman, *The Birth of a Civilisation*, pp.14–18.
30. Ch. Arlosoroff, *Writings*, Vol. 6 (Tel Aviv, 1934), pp.177–8 (Hebrew).
31. See, for instance, the description of the southern Mediterranean ports in Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad or The New Pilgrim's Progress*, 1867.
32. For such a division of the Mediterranean, in order to sever the Jews from the Semitic East and Islam, see the work of Abba Achimeir (1899–1962), who studied in Vienna and received his doctorate for a dissertation on Spengler. Following his return to Palestine, he became the intellectual leader of the radical Right at the end of the 1920s. In his view, Odessa was closer to Athens and Naples than to Istanbul and Alexandria. See also 'Hod we-Hadar', *Ha-Mashkif*, special supplement, 10 July 1945; see also Achimeir's article, 'The Race', in his book *Judaica* (Tel Aviv, 1960), pp.23–4. About the Mediterranean accent, see Z. Jabotinsky, *The Hebrew Accent* (Tel Aviv, 1930) (Hebrew). Jabotinsky (1880–1940) was born in Odessa and at the end of the century studied at the University of Rome.
33. The subject of Mediterranean music in Israeli-Jewish musical composition is discussed in Liora Bresler's M.A. thesis, 'The Mediterranean Style in Israeli Music' (Tel Aviv University, September 1982); see also 'The Mediterranean Style in Israeli Music', *Cathedra*, 38 (1985), 136–61. In his book *Israeli Music* (1951), Max Brod suggests that Mediterranean music must reflect the 'brilliant light of the Mediterranean area' – in other words, be bright and 'translucent' music. Against this, others of the 'Mediterranean school' described the Mediterranean expanse as characterized by bare hills, sand, a cruel sun, thirst and poverty, which led to music which reflect these characteristics.
34. See Jacqueline Kahanoff's essay, 'Black on White' in *Essays* (Tel Aviv, 1978), pp.47–67 (Hebrew).
35. For a short example of Egyptian Mediterraneanism, see I. Gershoni and J.P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and the Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900–1930* (Oxford, 1986), pp.115–16. A geo-cultural image or *topos* is a pattern of organizing reality in a world-view; elements of such an organization could be prejudice, mistaken ideas, literary conventions, fictional or legendary geographi-

cal descriptions, and so forth. See C. Erikson, *The Medieval Vision* (Oxford and New York, 1976), pp.3–28.

For a critical approach to the anthropological concept of Mediterraneanism, see M. Herzfeld, *Anthropology Through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), pp.64–76. My attention was drawn to the book after this article had gone to press.