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Transnational Political Cosmology: A Central Mediterranean Example

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In 1940, Evans-Pritchard and his colleagues set out to liberate the comparative study of politics from Anglo-European political theories and their assumption that state institutions were required for politics to take place. As social sciences have moved from looking for bounded social wholes to reconstructing the interdependency of social relations at various scales, political anthropology's original challenge has reappeared. In current understandings of transnationalism the focus on cross-border flows, projects, and institutions has left unchallenged the assumption that fraternity is the only kinship idiom applicable to political imagination on a transnational scale. This legacy of nationalist ideology has prevented us from examining how transnational political relations may be expressed in terms of relatedness that are broader and more complex than the homogenizing, equalizing, and exclusive fraternity.

The various ways in which such idioms form transnational imaginaries and political processes the world over awaits examination. As an initial step in that direction, I will show how Sicilians and Tunisians have used idioms of kinship and affinity across difference and multiple scales to form their transnational political relations across the Mediterranean as a European-African (cross-cousin) marriage of sorts.[1] I explain how the modularity, specificity,

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[1] Unless "cousinage" and "cross-cousin marriage" appear inside quotation marks, they are my metaphors for political affinity across difference, similarly to uses of "fraternity" in scholarship to describe the kind of relationship it conceptualizes, even when the actual term is not uttered.

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historical depth, and incorporation of relationship across difference, which such idioms offer, played a role in a segmentary process of region formation in the central Mediterranean.

By applying concepts associated with the study of kinship and marriage to recent Mediterranean history, I demonstrate how segmentation (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 147) can be useful in the study of transnational politics. Segmentation theory once stood at the center of political anthropology, yet it remained peripheral to the anthropology of Europe. This was because anthropologists crossing the sea back to Europe failed to bring the study of segmentation and kinship with them, assuming (wrongly; McKinnon and Cannell 2013) that these categories' erstwhile prevalence had given way to modernity. These concepts' untimely death at sea points to an issue that is central to the political anthropology of transnationalism: our ability to explore how transnational political relations are expressed in kinship idioms and develop in a segmentary way (Dresch 1988: 57) that departs from the modern, state-centered rhetoric of fraternal nationalism and universal citizenship.

Understanding transnationalism through segmentation outlines how transnational spaces like the Mediterranean can be studied as spatio-political constellations, which undergo not only projects of region-making but also processes of region formation and disintegration. The Mediterranean provides an especially fruitful case for such an examination because it has for several centuries served to stage the distinction between the West and "the rest" in the most intimate geopolitical settings. Enriching our understanding of transnationalism to match the complexity and specificity of the ways in which people make and break transnational relations is a necessary step in populating the gap between the national and the global scales of politics. That is what this article sets out to do.

LONG-LOST COUSINS

Mazara del Vallo, a fishing town at the southwestern tip of Sicily, 90 nautical miles northeast of the tip of the Tunisian shore, boasts millennia of connections to and tensions with the other side of the Channel of Sicily. Mazara's city center, which people denote to this day with the Arabic words "*Kasbah*" and "*Medina*," preserves the urban structure and some remnants of an architectural style that date back to the medieval Arab and Arab-Norman periods. The river Mazaro, which gave the city its name and still runs through the old port, was once the trench line between Magna Græcia and pro-Carthaginian settlements. In AD 827, the Arab fleet landed near Mazara and conquered the town as a prelude to two hundred years of Arab rule over Sicily. In AD 1072, the Norman Count Roger I completed his conquest of Sicily in Mazara and celebrated this feat by establishing a cathedral in the town.

Mazara's last sixty years have been tumultuous. It played a minor role in the waves of migration and relations between colonial North Africa and Sicily

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around the turn of the twentieth century (Clancy-Smith 2011). But since the end of World War II, and especially since the 1960s, it has changed from a relatively unimportant viticulture town (Lentini 2004: 199–210) into a central stage for fishing wars with Tunisia and Libya, labor migration from Tunisia, drug and arms trafficking, and transnational infrastructure projects. During those years, the Mazara fishing fleet became the largest in Italy thanks to massive governmental development funds through the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno (Barbagallo 1989: 47), and continuously expanded its fishing zone outward from Sicily across the Mediterranean into the North African fishing banks. In the mid-1960s Tunisian fishers began coming to Mazara to work on the same trawlers that fished off the Tunisian and Libyan shores. Several of the first among them married Italian women (at times as their second or third wives), a practice that stopped once, as some Tunisians say, "for Mazaresi we turned from a curiosity into Arabs." The town's relatively large immigrant community (about a tenth of its population) has led to Mazara being dubbed "the most Arab city in Italy" (Hannachi 1998). In an island whose Christian inhabitants often say (in Sicilian), "We are too Arab," these labor migrants personified how narrow the Channel of Sicily is.

This confluence of connections has made Mazara into one of the Sicilian hubs of Mediterraneanist cultural and economic politics. In the spring of 2008, café dwellers at the town's central Piazza Repubblica watched passing cavalcades of government ministers from Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia who had come for the annual meeting of a Mediterranean-wide fishing consortium (COSVAP). The following autumn, clerics, theologians, and academics from the entire Mediterranean rim followed the same route during the inaugural conference of the Mediterranean Center for Intercultural Studies. During this conference, which was dedicated to the topic of inter-faith peace in the Mediterranean, the participants walked to the town's cathedral for a Mass for Peace. At the cathedral entrance the center's co-founder, the Bishop of Mazara, stopped the group and drew our attention to the relief above the main door, which depicts Count Roger I trampling with his horse over a "Saracen" as an emblem of the end of Muslim rule of Sicily.

During one conference session, Slimane Zeghidour, an Algerian intellectual and journalist living in France, recalled the relief: "The image is violent, violent, but it shows that the Mediterranean's two shores have always lived together and with conflicts. But who doesn't have conflicts? […] There are always conflicts but conflict is intimacy." Zeghidour's observation was meant as more than a platitude: the intimacy he referred to resided in a deeply shared past. This shared past was important not because it was peaceful but because it made Mediterranean Christians and Muslims into "cousins": "As you know, family disputes are the most ferocious and the most violent.… We should not view [the Arab-Islamic world] as a foreign, hostile, mysterious, and enigmatic world. We have to strive to remember we have in front of us *cousins*,

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cousins with whom we have had disputes and with whom we've lost touch; but they are true cousins, persons of the same family."[2]

By applying cousinage to Mediterranean history, Zeghidour created a graded scheme of structural distance, in a way that identified the structural source of the current divisiveness: "A certain discourse, especially that of American evangelists [has made] some Muslim Arabs see their Christian compatriots as strangers [and] consider Christianity as something totally foreign." The shared origin of the three monotheistic religions did not make all their believers brothers, but rather kin. The Mediterraneans among them were closer to each other than to "American evangelists." And those distant relatives—Christian but not Catholic and farther afield—were the source of the present political predicament (as distant cousins often are). The political solution thus lay in "reminding" Mediterranean Christians and Muslims, south Europeans and North Africans, that they were "true cousins." It was exactly this point that the next speaker misunderstood.

Professor Anna Paola Tantucci, the president of the Italian chapter of the World Association for the School as an Instrument of Peace, was discussing the importance of human rights for "sustainable globalization." She referred to what Zeghidour had said, which, in her words, "invoked the fact that we—Christians and the Arab world—should feel ourselves cousins.… I would take it a step further: We should be as brothers.… Of the three ideals of the French revolution—equality, liberty, and fraternity—the first two are more or less accomplished, whereas fraternity is totally disregarded. Instead … the founding of the universality of human rights on fraternity, which excludes races and all that which does not exist in reality—we are brothers on the same land, on the same planet—is what we should inculcate in our youth."

By preferring global fraternity to Mediterranean cousinage, Tantucci's remark points to a wider issue in academic understandings of transnationalism. For it reveals the assumption that the only kinship idiom applicable to transnational situations is fraternity, in one of its two forms: in existing "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991: 6–7), and in the project of creating the global realm of fraternal "human rights" (Dworkin 1986: 206). In both cases, all the group's members are declared "born free and equal" and urged to "act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Fraternity is the only kinship term that has survived the rise of academic interest in transnationalism, making "imagined communities" the imaginary building blocks of a world turned global. As a result, nationalism, that "new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together," is still assumed to have driven a "harsh wedge between cosmology and history" (Anderson 1991: 36). Fraternity's potential as a political kinship metaphor

[2] The following two quotes come from the conference, "Sponde 2008: Incontro Internazionale Di Studi," which I attended from 18–21 September 2008.

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well predates the French Revolution. Among all the popular kinship categories —cousins, in-laws, milk-kin, godparents, et cetera—fraternity postulates the closest, strictest, most equal bond (Mahmud 2014: 84). In European, Middle Eastern, and North African imaginations, brothers are supposed to be similar, close, equal, and the like, and should avoid divisive competition; or so go various ideologies of fraternity (Sahlins 2011). This strictness is the source of its ubiquity as a vehicle of political mobilization: invocations of fraternity entail a binary, situational, and "leveling" view of the social world (Schneider 1990: 37) and produce either reifying exclusions or no divisions at all. Most famously, in tribal feuds, however people may describe their relationship, they call each other "brothers" when the time comes to bear arms. But the call is made, and taken, as a situational, mobilizing gesture, not as a description of political relations (Dresch 1986: 311; Shryock 1997: 77).

Nationalism's fraternal mold for transnational relations turned this mobilizing framing into a prescriptive ideology: in Tantucci's words, "We should be as brothers." But this mold actually resembles kinship in the Middle East: "'Extraverted systems' speak a language of introversion" (Dresch 1998: 125). As nation-states find themselves obliged to forge binding unions across their borders—bridges, pipelines, supra-national institutions, and so forth—they discuss such infrastructural projects of "concrete transnationalism" as "transnational sister- and brotherhood" (Löfgren 2004: 63). These region-making projects thus undermine "nation-state boundaries and policies," which they view as "unnatural," in the name of assumptions about the "underlying natural coherence and commonality" of the wider regions these projects seek to beget (Peebles 2011: 28). This rhetoric of sameness suppresses difference and relegates it from the realm of political action to that of cultural tolerance: we should act as if we were brothers (not siblings or sisters), and tolerate all that which reminds us that we are not.

This is not the case with cousins. Cousinage does not impose identicality or amity on the cousined parties, but rather allows them to be both somewhat different and even in conflict with each other, while still related, in ways that maintain and distinguish overlapping sociopolitical fields. This potential derives from the structural differences between brotherhood and cousinage as idioms for social relations, which play out when both terms are applied as metaphors to transnational politics. Cousinage introduces graded difference as well as varying scales of proximity and the potential segmentation they enable. It permits lateral connections or affinity (cousins can and are sometimes expected to marry). Finally, it introduces crossness, when such connections occur across difference (as when cross-cousins marry). Parallel cousinage—for example, children descended from brothers or from sisters—extends brotherhood (or sisterhood) in scale, because parallel cousins' relation remains, in a way, within the family line. Contrary to that, cross-cousins—respective children of a brother and a sister—relate to each other through a union and exchange

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between two family lines: they are "united by that which divides them, linked by that which separates them" (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 19). Herein resides the power of cousinage over fraternity as a metaphor in the making of transnational constellations.

COUSINAGE INSTEAD OF FRATERNITY

Cousinage makes a wider world. Cousins make that world by exchanging objects and histories. In so doing, they forge relations across what they perceive to be distance and difference between the parties. Cousinage, crossness, and cross-cousin marriage resemble in this sense another "eminently flexible institution"—milk kinship (Clarke 2007: 288). Yet, whereas the "the mediating possibilities" of milk kinship reside in its ritual creation of closeness between those recognized as more distant (and often unequal), for whatever cliental or tactic purpose, cousinage serves as a descriptive metaphor that permits affinity. As an idiom for political relations, cousinage permits varying degrees and kinds of difference, familiarity, misunderstanding, and structural distance. That cousinage parses the world differently across the Mediterranean further complicates the ways in which the politics of relationship across difference unfolds.

Sicilians and Tunisians, for example, use cousinage terms in different ways. When you walk along the quays of the new port in Mazara, you can hear Sicilian fishers call each other "*ciao cugì!*" This truncated form of "cousin" does not distinguish between cross- and parallel cousins. Nor does it in Sicily where, as in other parts of the Northwestern Mediterranean, crossness among one's cousins is unmarked (Davis 1977: 197). In Sicily especially, fraternity is distinguished from the three "dangerous Cs: *cugini, cognati, e cumpari*" (cousins, brothers-in-law, and co-parents). Tunisians, on the other hand, distinguish between a person's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts (*'amm[ah], khāl[ah]*). As metaphors, both terms imply respect, while the latter adds difference and may reduce obligation. This distinction is felt annually by those Tunisian youth who spend their summers with maternal relatives in Tunisia, and consequently must navigate these patrilocal and patrilineal familial contexts against the grain (Ben-Yehoyada 2011: 395). The distinction plays out also in the avuncular term of respect: Tunisians in Mazara used to call the head of the political cell of the pre-2010 Tunisian ruling party, who was known to report on them to the government, "*khāl.*"

In framing transnational political relations, such differences may be defined according to ideologies of identity and sameness: religious, linguistic, ethnic, national, or otherwise. As among kin, both distance (grade) and difference (crossness) shape the contours of potential interaction, be it affinity or conflict (Dresch 1998: 121). Calling someone "cousin" can serve as a distancing gesture, which nevertheless affirms a shared context. Israelis often call Arabs "our cousins," who in turn call Jews "our paternal cousins," and the English in the century following 1776 called their transatlantic ex-compatriots

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"our American cousins." In both cases, "cousins" receives its meaning from its contrast with "brothers," for which the nation is the yardstick. These differences between Sicilians and Tunisians, or more generally between kinship idioms that mark crossness and those that do not, might seem insurmountable. Yet so long as both sides cast each other as eligible candidates for transnational affinity—politically marriageable, as it were—the structural similarities and differences in the parties' alliance and affinity strategies channel the course that events take. One might argue that such pronouncements about kinship and affinity among the nations are nothing but political rhetoric, but the use of these idioms derives its meaning from their relationship to others (especially brotherhood), be it in political speeches, intellectual discourse, or quayside discussions over the morning's coffee.

Most importantly, cousinage offers an alternative to fraternity by incorporating specificity and difference into the metaphor for political relations, rather than extracting them out of the elementary building block of transnational relations. Transnationalism has been broadly treated as the globalizing opposite of the localizing processes of nationalism (Verdery 1998: 292), or as "processes and connections across specific state borders," like religious or national imperialism (Schiller 2005: 440). Either way, what is abandoned is the possibility that transnational processes might be shaped and conditioned by specific segmentary dynamics that derive neither from the local/national nor from the global. Transnational regions like the Mediterranean, with their vague boundaries and long histories that predate nationalism, inform many facets of academic life: faculty positions, publications, and professional associations ("European," "Middle-Eastern," "South Asia"). But as direct objects of analysis, they have recently appeared in anthropological literature more as the usual suspects in deconstructions of "area studies" (Guyer 2004) than as objects of historical-anthropological reconstruction. Meanwhile, other disciplines express fewer qualms in addressing regions (Armitage 2009; Horden and Purcell 2006; Pace 2007). Nevertheless, no matter how transnational our studies and multi-local our sites, after the dethroning of "methodological nationalism" we are left with the choice between methodological globalism (or cosmopolitanism; Beck and Sznaider 2006) or no methodological "–ism" at all. But the transnational needs be neither global nor cosmopolitan, and should not be confused with either.

The recent history of political relations in the central Mediterranean shows how we can study transnational regions, not as timeless essences, but as constellations that undergo processes of formation. It presents a specific case of such a constellation, formed by a shared past, similar kinship and affinity idioms, and the specific Sicilian-Tunisian structural relationships in which transnational segmentation took place. People come to see each other as related, each side alluding to particular past events that cast the present in its own interest. Both sides' allusions (as well as the idioms that inform them)

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transform their political relations with each other and with the wider transnational constellation in a way that neither nationalism nor internationalism exhausts.

The idioms they use for their relations come from kinship and marriage, the working of these relations is segmentary, and the resulting transformation is from internationalism (or supra-nationalism in the case of the European Union) to transnationalism. These three elements are not equally present in the scenes and stories that follow. Specifically, cousinage appears in two of them. Nonetheless, the view of transnational politics that cousinage in general and cross-cousin marriage in particular symbolize—affinity among the kindred across the difference between them—have pervaded this specific constellation. These terms may therefore serve us in examining other cases where allusions to a shared past, specific idioms of relatedness, and segmentary dynamics affect the formation of transnational constellations.

POSTCOLONIAL MATRIMONIAL STRATEGIES

On 29 October 1973, Mazara del Vallo was in a festive mood. The 1973 Israeli-Arab War had ended four days earlier, and the oil embargo that OPEC had declared during the war promised a grim immediate future for European countries. But in the previous weeks the Italian and Algerian national energy companies had signed an agreement for the construction of the *Transmed*, a trans-Mediterranean methane pipeline to run between the two countries. The immediate cause of local excitement was that the pipeline, which the mayor called "the most important gas pipeline in the world," was to pass through Mazara's municipal territory.[3] In the following decade, the pipeline claimed center stage in local, national, and international debates about the future of Sicilian-Tunisian, Italian-North African, and European-African relations. Most specifically, the pipeline accelerated discussions of Italy's Mediterranean regional policy on both sides of the sea.

The pipeline represented much more than the supply of energy from the South to the North. It stood for new possibilities of transnational political relations, and differently so in each of the political scales. On the northern side of the channel, when neo-colonial projects replaced colonial domination, southern European states were literally better positioned than their richer northern neighbors for new kinds of connections with independent African nations, not because of any industrial strength or previous colonial domination, but because they were located *between* former colonizing industrial centers and recently decolonized energy suppliers. The Italian National Oil and Gas Authority (ENI) and its omnipotent postwar leader Enrico Mattei (d. 1962), had since the late 1950s promoted Italian autonomy from major

[3] Filippo Asaro, *Consiglio Comunale Mazara del Vallo* (hereafter *VCCMdV*), 29 Oct. 1973, Act 302.

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Western powers and oil companies in the international oil market, especially in relation to postcolonial Arab countries (Perrone 1995). The *Transmed* project offered to materialize this vision by forging a durable connection between Algeria and Italy.

In Sicily, different interests gave form to a similar quest for autonomy. As Italy's energy policy sought to use its proximity to North Africa for its position within Europe, so did Sicilian energy policy seek to use the island's geographic position to break from the national monopoly of ENI (Polara 1973). In both cases—national autonomy in a supra-national hierarchy or sub-national independence in a national hierarchy—potential cross-channel affinity promised room for geopolitical maneuver. In this context, the pipeline's proposed path, which would physically bind Algeria to Italy as it passed through Tunisia and Sicily, pumped new energy into the old geopolitical imagination of the Mediterranean. Nowhere was this clearer than in Mazara.

By the mid-1970s, the fleet's growth and its continuous interactions with Tunisia (and to a lesser extent with Libya) had turned Mazarese politicians and intellectuals' attentions to the sea. Once Tunisia gained independence from France in 1956, its coastguard began to enforce its maritime sovereignty by chasing, arresting, and occasionally shooting at Mazarese trawlers fishing in Tunisian territorial waters. Although Mazarese fishers themselves called trawling in these waters "stealing fish" (*rubare pesce*), the official Mazarese position was to deny the accusations of territorial infringement and claim that such arrests were "acts of [Tunisian] piracy … in international waters."[4] These clashes at sea have become known as "the Fish War" (la Guerra del Pesce). It continued throughout the 1980s paced by three bilateral agreements (Messina 1994). From the mid-1960s to the late 1990s, 479 Mazarese trawlers were arrested, spending on average fifty-two days in custody. In 1975 the tensions intensified, with twenty-three trawlers being sequestered for an average of twenty-one days. It was in this context that the pipeline project developed. Moreover, Italian-Tunisian negotiations over the pipeline intensified the rate of clashes and arrests at sea, since the trawlers served as the most accessible pawns in inter-government exchange (Cremasco and Luciani 1985: 28).

The *Transmed* project and the Fish War signified the contemporaneous opposite aspects of cross-Mediterranean connections: peaceful and conflictual. In 1972, in the midst of the Fish War, the first news of the pipeline project seemed to promise a new phase in cross-Mediterranean relations. The Fish War marked the conflictual prelude to this transnational bond, not its exclusive opposite. We shall see that each of the main political forces in town framed this promise differently, but these differences were not articulated at the time, before the 1973 oil crisis and the Fish War's intensification.

[4] Leonardo Arena, *VCCMdV*, 6 Oct. 1975, n. 99.

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Together, clashes and potential connections made Mazara a prize in the regional and national political game. The main contenders for local hegemony were the Communist Party and the Christian Democratic Party. Both attempted to co-opt the rising political and economic force of the boat owners, who had initially been aligned with the centrist Republican Party, which both locally and nationally served as the fulcrum of the political balance. The fourth party, the Neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI), lacked national parliamentary significance at the time, but rose in local prominence in tandem with the intensity of events.

Initially, everyone agreed that a pipeline that would stream Algerian gas to Italy through Mazara promised a bright future for the Mediterranean and a central role for Mazara in it: "Historical, natural, and geographical reasons … make Mazara the *connecting link* (*anello di congiungimento*) with the peoples of the third world who possess a great human, economic, and cultural potential, which can be developed to the reciprocal interest of all the peoples of the Mediterranean basin."[5] "*Anello di congiungimento*" has several possible meanings, which combine in this context. In infrastructural terms, the pipeline and Mazara would unite "peoples." In evolutionary/development terms, Mazara as a "missing link" would connect the "developed" and the "developing" worlds. Metaphorically, the term denoted potential revived affinity between Italy and Tunisia, "two Mediterranean sea-dwelling peoples connected by densely glorious historical events." Its basis was not shared descent but rather a shared past moment of connection.[6]

Together, the term's three dimensions—infrastructural, evolutionary, and affinal—clarify how, as a historical event, the *Transmed* project offered Mazaresi the opportunity of Tunisian-Sicilian "kinshipping," of reaching back to the distant past to inform and then change present political relations (Smail and Shryock 2011: 32, 52). The specific form this kinshipping took was affinity among the related across difference: two geographically close but developmentally unequal and culturally distinct "peoples" and their "worlds," Europe and Africa, which were already related through ancient connections.

Across the channel, the gradual turn from anti-colonial struggles to state nationalism in Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya influenced the positions each of these countries took regarding its resources as well as whether and how Europeans should access them (Burke 1998).[7] Since the pipeline was to pass from Algeria through Tunisia and Sicily to northern Italy, its planning wove together these various positions. For Algerians, natural gas became

[5] Rolando Certa, *VCCMdV*, 10 Dec. 1972, n. 371, my emphasis.
[6] Lorenzo Fasulo, *VCCMdV*, 28 Dec. 1972, n. 381.
[7] Italian-Libyan relations were Italy's only Mediterranean neo-colonial relationship, involving energy extraction and various violent episodes. Libya's minor role in Sicilian emigration, in later labor migration to Sicily, and in the Fish War, as well as its relative distance from Sicily, made Libyans less appealing candidates for such transnational cross-cousin betrothal.

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the life liquid of the new nation. Shortly after independence in 1962, natural energy resources were put forward as a key symbol of postcolonial Algerian self-assertion in its relations with France. Throughout the 1960s, politicians called oil and gas Algerian's "heritage," "patrimony," and "source of life." The successful extraction and marketing of gas and oil affirmed, "that the blood of free men, the blood of our martyrs, was not shed in vain."[8] The more aggressive elements of such discourse—the rhetoric of blood and martyrdom—were initially directed against France, which Algerian politicians accused of trying to turn the Mediterranean from "a sea of peace" into a "French Sea,"[9] echoing a century-long French Mediterraneanist discourse (Silverstein 2002). Still, Algerian rhetoric also included the notion of regional bonds and transnational sharing of resources: Algeria, it was declared, would "share its mineral resources with countries that [were] bound to it by destiny."[10] Italy—geographically near and with no colonial taints on its relationship with Algeria—became an eligible candidate for the binding relations of the kind that Algerian politicians had in mind, and which the pipeline represented. Furthermore, according to ENI's independent, international politics of parity with oil-producing countries, the Italian and the Algerian partners (Algeria's national oil and gas company, SONATRACH) would each own a half of the joint company (Hayes 2006).

Tunisian pronouncements about the pipeline spread across the semantic spectrum of Italian and Algerian phrasings. Tunisian officials combined the technical and the organicistic references, calling the pipeline "a Mediterranean artery," "a chain-link between Europe, the Arab World, and Africa," and declaring that the project would "constitute an almost organic link in the great construction of Europe-Arab World and Europe-Africa … underlining the complementarity and solidarity of the Arab community and the European Community."[11] One might doubt such pronouncements as mere political rhetoric, with which most Algerians and Tunisians might have disagreed. The question, however, is not the sincerity or spread of these pronouncements, but the significance they took on in relation to other framings such as declarations of brotherhood, friendship, and mutual interests. In those years, especially around the 1973 war and oil crisis, Tunisian officials and their Arab counterparts frequently referred to each other and to their peoples as brothers (or sisters, depending on the gender of the noun in question). In this reaffirmed fraternal bond, the Tunisian Foreign Minister Masmoudi declared that oil, "which had once been a factor of discord, has become an instrument of rapprochement,

[8] *Al Moudjahid*, 21 June 1971: 25–26.
[9] Ibid.: 20.
[10] *Al Moudjahid*, 30 July 1965.
[11] *La Presse de Tunisie*, 9 Oct. 1973: 6; 6 Dec. 1973: 5; 8 Dec. 1973: 1, 5.

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mutual support, and understanding."[12] As it were, the pipeline was to pump the essence of Algerian nationality, aided by Tunisian-Algerian pan-Arab brotherhood, across both the sea and the difference that sea marked between the two "communities." A bond of affinity would flow across difference.

EUROPEAN BROTHERHOOD OR MEDITERRANEAN CROSS-COUSINAGE

The potential North African-south European affinity emerged against the background of an international Mediterranean schema and gradually transformed it into a transnational web of alternative relations. Mediterranean political relations in the late 1960s initially developed between nation-states, which themselves belonged to larger sets—continental, civilizational, and religious. European countries as a group were structurally opposed to Arab countries, North Africa, or the entire continent, and Europe was opposed to Africa. Any connection between Italy and Tunisia (and more so Sicily-Tunisia) was therefore a connection between two geographically adjacent but, structurally speaking, politically distant political units. According to this view, the political relation that the pipeline proposed would connect the two continents as lineages. This way of thinking has also been used to explain how the European Economic Community (EEC; established in 1957) began a gradual continental "fusion" of the various national "imagined communities" into a new solidarity group: the European Union (Shore 1993).

This schema fits the version of segmentation theory that confounds segments with lineages and identifies the structure of political relations with an alignment of groups in a given time, whether tribal or international. It examines nation-states and wider political elements (like NATO or the European Union) as "solidary groups [that] form, and then combine or conflict, in predictable ways within a system sustained by a balance of power between its elements" (Dresch 1986: 309). Applications of this model of segmentation as lineage to both intertribal and international situations are unsurprising given that the same author promoted them (Gellner 1981; 1983).

In the view of segmentation that I take here, it does not occur between corporate groups but rather the other way around: grouping emerges from the segmentary course of events. The transnational structure is not made up of nation-states. It hinges on political worth, the defining quality of any given position in a segmentary structure (whether persons, groups, cities, or nations). In the channel's transnational constellation, "political relations are relative and dynamic … [they] are best stated as tendencies to conform to certain values in certain situations, and the value is determined by the structural relationships of the persons who compose the situation" (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 137, in Dresch 1986: 317). The Fish War and the proposed pipeline underscored the

[12] *La Presse de Tunisie*, 22 Dec. 1973: 4.

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structural relationship between Mazaresi and Tunisians across the sea that linked and separated them. In these relationships, Mazarese politicians perceived the effects that events both tense and peaceful had on Mazara's political worth through the tension between cross-channel potential affinity and national (and European) fraternity. They strove to engage the Italian government and later the EEC and the Sicilian regional government in this political worth. Their vicissitudes shaped their segmentary *political relations* with Mahdia, Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, and Europe/Africa and remade the relationship between national fraternity and transnational cousinage.

Initially, the transnational constellation's northern pole resided in the only level that had concrete institutional authority at the time: the Italian nation-state. In the late 1960s, Mazarese politicians of all colors accordingly agreed that their shared task was to make their town "perform the desired service of a connection with Africa and become, as in the past … 'the pearl of the Mediterranean.'"[13] Their course of action was to persuade the administration in Rome to carry through national and transnational infrastructural projects. The benefits from such projects, they argued, would "not be limited to Mazara—which, given its natural position, would necessarily have to construct the basis of the aerial, maritime, and submarine bridge that would unite Europe with the African continent—but for the entire province, for the region [Sicily], and for the nation."[14]

In the early 1970s, however, this vision of European-African relations was under stress from a more belligerent version of cross-channel relations, and this pressure began to split the local political scene. The Fish War was gaining momentum and the Italian government had still failed to sign a fishing agreement with Tunisia. Meanwhile, Libya had been expelling Italian colonists, and Algerian-French post-independence tensions cast a belligerent shadow on the sea. The politicians-cum-owners, who through their dominance within the local Republican Party became the town's kingmakers (if not yet its mayors), saw opportunity in the contrast between cross-channel projects and such tensions. In a piece of exemplary segmentary thinking, a Republican trawler-owner declared in 1970 that Italy's inadequate foreign policy offered Mazara a distinct role. "Even if the fault should be attributed mostly to the ineffective Italian foreign policy … regarding the peoples of the Mediterranean," he contended, the Mazara council had a "duty to remedy" this failure.[15]

That duty entailed forging sub-national relations across the channel. Mazaresi and Tunisians framed and justified this as a rekindling of historical connections that were specific to Sicily and Tunisia and distinguished both

[13] Salvatore Giubilato, *VCCMdV*, 12 Sept. 1970, n. 11.
[14] Filippo Asaro, *VCCMdV*, 18 Apr. 1968, n. 36. Similar speeches about Italy's proposed role in European Mediterraneanist agendas abounded in Italy and beyond (Silvestri 1968).
[15] Ignazio Giacalone, *VCCMdV*, 12 Sept. 1970, n. 11.

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places from their respective wider regions. In 1972, Mazara signed an agreement with Mahdia, a Tunisian fishing town that also happened to be the hometown of the Tunisian foreign minister. The agreement, declared Mazara's mayor, represented "an important melding of the socioeconomic contexts of the two coastal peoples."[16] Relations with Tunisia had suffered continuously since 1967 from Tunisia's arrests of the Mazarese trawlers. But the remedy for this predicament was already underway, owing to "the development of diplomatic and then of personal relations" with people from Tunisia. After all, Italy and Tunisia were "two seaside Mediterranean peoples connected by historical events that are dense with glory."[17] For the Tunisian foreign minister, Mohamed Masmoudi, the pact united his hometown with the Sicilian town, "which also received its name from Arabic: 'Mazar El Ouali' [Mazar of the governor] and where the Arabs have left many traces."[18] While both sides referred to past moments of connection, Masmoudi specified the power relations in these moments, citing the "traces" that "Arabs have left" in Mazara, not the other way around.

In those years, the centrist Republican Party was the party of progress and of the fleet. Both the Christian Democrats and the Communists were trying to recruit boat-owners into their ranks, but only the Christian Democrats had any success. With no organic connection to the boat-owning class or substantial link to the ruling parties in Rome, the Communist Party and its affiliated politicians critiqued any shortcoming of the national government in terms of their own Mediterraneanist vision of transnational class-conflict. The arrests at sea and the tensions between Tunisians and Sicilians were the fault of the northern (national and European) paternalist capitalism. To liberate themselves, according to the leftist Mazarese politicians, Sicilians should forge cross-channel unity of the oppressed with Tunisians and other Mediterraneans against their shared (Italian or European) oppressors: "Beyond a southernist [*meridionalistica*] politics, we need to undertake a Mediterranean one, because Sicily could and should progress through international collaboration."[19] For the left, the sea thus offered a center of gravity that seemed to detach Mazaresi's lot from the north-south geographic hierarchy that has dominated Italian politics (Schneider 1998). Theirs was a unity of the oppressed, not an affinity of the related, but the two visions ran parallel in consciously rejecting the received map of Italian politics.

Nevertheless, all of these plans, proposals, and imaginations of the new Mediterranean made assumptions about the role to be played by institutional channels of the Italian state. The state was supposed to fund all the international

[16] Lorenzo Fasulo, *VCCMdV*, 22 Dec. 1971, n. 113.
[17] Lorenzo Fasulo, *VCCMdV*, 28 Dec. 1972, n. 381.
[18] *La Presse de Tunisie*, 18 Dec. 1973: 5. While the reference to the town as "Mazar" matches its name in medieval Arabic, "governor" reflects the prevalent assumption that the origin of "Vallo" is in the Arabic "*wāli*".
[19] Matteo Celere, *VCCMdV*, 10 Dec. 1972, n. 371.

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infrastructural projects, negotiate fishing agreements with Tunisia, and secure Mazarese trawlers' fishing in the channel. But the valence of this Mazara-Sicily-Italy relationship had been reversed, since the state, in implementing all this, would now be serving Mazaresi's Mediterraneanist projects and, ipso facto, facilitating their increasingly transnational (rather than international) worldview. The allusions to the ancient Mediterranean here served two connected goals. First, they molded Sicilian and Italian histories around a Mediterranean kernel of cross-lateral contacts rather than a European kernel of linear descent. Second, in a national history so perceived, these allusions gave Mazara a key role in both Sicily's and Italy's histories. Where affinity across difference (Trautmann 2001) helps set the terms of transnational engagement, those with the richest pedigree of crossness stand out.

WITH MY COUSIN AGAINST MY BROTHER?

We have seen how the *Transmed* project and the Fish War, in generating alternating belligerent and pacific trance-channel connections, drew Mazaresi's attention to the Mediterranean alternative to Eurocentric geopolitics. These events accelerated the segmentary dynamics in the Channel of Sicily and brought the Mediterranean and European alternatives into conflict. The conflict evolved between, not Mazara and Tunisia, but Mazara and Rome. The more that Mazarese interests became attached to the transnational conditions of *their* economic subsistence and political worth, the more detached these interests became from the international purview of Italian action.

The accelerating Fish War brought Mazarese politicians and boat owners ever-more-often to Rome to request their national government's help in ransoming their town's trawlers. When their requests were ignored or rejected, the politicians began accusing the government of various sins, depending on the political position of the Mazarese accuser. After every wave of arrests at sea, the boat owners would declare a strike and try to channel the fishers' "rage" toward their patrons in Palermo and Rome, who were usually the national Republican Party and Christian Democratic politicians who had first helped them build those trawlers (Redazione 1975b). This "rage," as well as the mobilization of the thousands of trawlers' deckhands summoned to express it, soon became a key political possession to be won, harnessed, and deployed in the local, regional, and national political game.

The intensification of belligerent events in 1975 initiated a tripartite struggle over the signification of the fishers' "rage." The Republican Party had initially framed this rage as clients' justified moral demands on their patrons in Rome. Now, though, the struggle over controlling and directing the strikes took place mainly between the Communist Party and the MSI. According to the MSI, the national government was responsible for "the scant value attributed to Italy in the international scene." The only way to save Italy's national honor was to send "two helicopters and a naval ship to

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the Channel of Sicily."[20] In this equation, arrested Mazarese trawlers signified injured Italian honor, which should be defended by the Italian national forces. Leftists, who rejected the use of military means, denounced "the logic of profit established by Italian and European capitalism, which has always considered Sicily as a colony to exploit."[21] At both ends of the local political spectrum, then, the problem was no longer only North African belligerence, but also the failure of national institutions to "execute the necessary actions so that the Italian flag will be respected in the Mediterranean." Where the two sides differed was on the best means to gain that respect: by forging relations or by seeking "direct confrontation."[22]

During the night between 3 and 4 October 1975, a Tunisian coastguard ship killed a Mazarese fisher. The entire fleet reentered port and preparations began for a general strike in town. In a unanimous motion, the Mazara City Council asked the Italian government why "they do not consider acting with extreme resolve toward Tunisia, whose conduct … has reasserted that country's will to control the well-stocked waters of the Mediterranean through the use of intimidation and violence, to which Italy has reacted only with resignation and renunciation."[23] This was the limit of consensus. The MSI presented a pamphlet they "had found on the streets," a screed which linked together the "Tunisians" who had migrated to work in Mazara and the "Tunisian" dignitaries who had come to celebrate the agreement three years earlier with the "Tunisians" who had shot the fisher: "ASSASSINS! … The Libyan and Tunisian governments unilaterally decided to extend the territoriality of their respective waters … and now Tunisian waters include even the very island of Lampedusa; and we stand by and watch!"[24] The following day, MSI members attacked Tunisian labor migrants around the old port (Vasile 1975).

Against the MSI's attempt to turn Mazarese fishers' "rage" into injured Italian "honor" and direct it against all things "Tunisian," the Communist Party tried to make the same "rage" signify a transnational class opposition. The party's national newspaper speculated as to whether the fisher would have survived had it not been for the captain-owner's "refusal to surrender" due to either his greed or sense of honor. Moreover, it said, the opposition was not between Tunisians and Italians, because onboard the Mazarese trawler six Tunisians had been working next to the deceased (Redazione 1975a). More broadly, leftists compared Tunisians' current plight with the lot of Sicilians since Italian independence. Tunisia, "a poor and recently liberated people," asked Italy to mediate in its negotiations with the EEC, but the Italian government "remained

[20] Mario Caruso, *VCCMdV*, 25 Sep. 1975, n. 95.
[21] Rolando Certa, *VCCMdV*, 10 Dec. 1972, n. 371.
[22] Salvatore Giubilato, *VCCMdV*, 12 Sept. 1970, n. 11.
[23] Leonardo Arena, *VCCMdV*, 6 Oct. 1975, n. 99.
[24] Nicolò Cristaldi, *VCCMdV*, 6 Oct. 1975, n. 99.

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deaf." This was blamed on "an old logic, established in 1860, in accordance with which the state government has done nothing but exploit and impoverish the south and Sicily." In the evolving EEC, Mazara needed "to make everyone understand that the south—which has been considered until now as the south of Italy—does not intend to become the south of Europe."[25]

The clashes at sea and the equally serious accusations by Mazaresi that their own national government was betraying them clarified the difference in interests between Mazara and Rome. Into these tensions, news of progress in the *Transmed* project appeared in October 1975, rekindling Mazaresi's hopes that their national government would help them pursue their budding Mediterranean interests. Then, in 1977, ENI and the Italian Ministry of Industry decided to cancel the pipeline project and instead to ship the gas by tanker from Algeria to a terminal in northwestern Italy. The choice between building a pipeline and establishing a gas-shipping infrastructure had far-reaching regional implications (Stevens 2000: 234). Between the initial announcement of the pipeline project and the decision to drop it, Algeria had reinforced its relations with the Soviet bloc by agreeing to host the Soviet Black Sea fleet.[26] As a NATO member, Italy was expected to avoid binding and permanent infrastructural connections with pro-Soviet countries like Algeria, and the proposed pipeline was one such connection. In other words, the pipeline would be an infrastructural Catholic "marriage," whereas the gas-shipping infrastructure involved less permanent or constraining relations (author's June 2012 interview with Marcello Colitti; Hayes 2006: 59). Constructing the pipeline would thus reorient Italian international commitments farther away from the country's already tenuous obligations to the Atlantic NATO and U.S. policy in Europe and the Middle East.

The question of whether Italy was "Mediterranean" or "European"/"Western" suddenly took the form of an exclusive dichotomy. What now stood between Mazara and the success of the pipeline was another, stronger segment in the Italian nation-state: the industrial north, the old patriarch, but now with Europeanist tendencies. To some Mazaresi, this raising of the stakes clarified matters: "There arose a need to modify [Italy's] Mediterranean policy."[27]

The Fish War and the pipeline's construction together intensified the segmentary dynamics and also increased their pace. In July 1977, Algeria, Tunisia, and Italy concluded negotiations regarding the pipeline's construction.[28] But

[25] Rolando Certa, *VCCMdV*, 12 July 1979, n. 74.

[26] In 1974, like after every Israeli-Arab war (1956, 1967, 1973), the Soviet Navy searched for a port that does not freeze over in the winter.

[27] Ignazio Giacalone, *VCCMdV*, 20 Apr. 1977, n. 30.

[28] Whether the cause of this felicitous change was the convincing effects of a wave of arrests at sea, or instead agreement on the compensation for Tunisia that met its demands, depends on the observer's perspective.

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that September the Tunisian coastguard arrested four trawlers and fired on one of them.[29] Then, on 8 December 1978, the Tunisian coastguard killed another Mazarese fisher[30] in an incident that the MSI called "the natural consequence of the apathy and indifference of the Italian government regarding the fleet of Mazara del Vallo."[31] Mazaresi went once more to Palermo and Rome hoping to convince their patrons "to force the EEC to respect the Italian nation's prestige regarding Tunisia."[32] In 1979, another fishing agreement with Tunisia expired and a new wave of arrests ensued. Boat-owners kept protesting that these had taken place outside the zone of Tunisian control, and demanded the Italian navy's protection. But after several arrests were verified to have taken place within zones of Tunisian responsibility, the Italian national opinion blamed Mazarese trawlers' transgressions for the clashes.

In a discussion of the situation in the Senate, the foreign undersecretary condemned the "unhelpful behavior" of some of the trawlers and announced that the navy was operating also to prevent Mazarese transgressions (Zamberletti 1979: 1590). In response, the fleet prepared to go on strike again, and MSI activists went around the old port menacing and beating Tunisian workers (as they had in 1975). MSI politicians explained the violence as "the consequence of the fishers' rage, which has been repressed for long years, during which a lot of blood has been poured in the Channel of Sicily."[33] But this "rage" was now directed as much at the Italian and Sicilian governments as against the Tunisians. Moreover, the segmentary logic of action had entered even the outlook of leftist politicians. Short of citing "rage," they laid "the blame solely on the regional government, which was revealed as the servant of the national government, which in its turn has always followed the interests of the industrialists of the north, leaving the problems of the south to fester."[34]

At the height of the Fish War, with the pipeline's construction well underway and a growing community of Tunisians living in Mazara and working in its fleet, Mazarese accusations no longer directly targeted Rome, the failed defender of Italian national "honor" (or national executive of the northern capitalists). Rather, the transnational dynamics segmented the Rome-Palermo-Mazara line in a way that left Palermo faulted for serving Rome, which by now was frequently accused of subservience to Brussels (and Paris). Mazaresi from the Communist Party to the MSI felt wronged by each and all in the Europe-Italy-Sicily hierarchy. In "a fairly stable segmentary system," sections whose members feel wronged may leave their tribe (Dresch 1986: 318, 320),

[29] Giuseppe Pernice, *VCCMdV*, 16 Sept. 1977.
[30] Rosario Tumbarello, *VCCMdV*, 10 Dec. 1978, n. 169.
[31] Nicolò Cristaldi, *VCCMdV*, 10 Dec. 1978, n. 169.
[32] Rosiario Tumbarello, *VCCMdV*, 22 Dec. 1978, n. 180.
[33] Leonardo Arena, *VCCMdV*, 19 Oct. 1979, n. 99.
[34] Rolando Certa, *VCCMdV*, 12 July 1979, n. 74.

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but switching political sides was not an option that Mazarese politicians considered.

Instead, what developed over the following years was a Mediterraneanist perspective on cross-channel political relations that put more emphasis on cross-lateral connections (with Tunisia) and less on lineage descent (within Italy and the European "family of nations"). Mazarese would remain Sicilian and Italian, but once political relations were charted from the center of the sea and point of connection, other Sicilians and Italians would, in terms of this central idiom of political relations, move in the direction of transnational relations conceived as affinity across difference. This process had national patriarchal repercussions. While the Italian national government conceded the pipeline would be built, it took its construction and operation away from the Sicilian regional company and delegated them to ENI's national subsidiary, SNAM (Polara 1977). The cross-cousins could marry, as it were, but their patriarchs kept the dowry.

FROM RAGE TO COLLABORATION

Over the next two years, visions of Mediterranean glut and renewed bonds seemed to take over Mazara. First, the pipeline, which was planned to arrive in the town in 1981, triggered everyone's imagination, even as the regional government of Sicily was still negotiating with its national counterpart regarding exactly how much benefit the pipeline's passage through the island would bring to its population.[35] Second, in the months that followed the expiration of the Italy-Tunisia fishing treaty, the two governments negotiated the future of fisheries in the channel along new lines of bi-national companies, with the Tunisian partner owning 51 percent and the Italian 49 percent.[36] The Mazara City Council was asked to support the initiative by signing a motion declaring that "after many misunderstandings, difficulties, and at times also clashes of a certain gravity that gave rise to particular tensions," the time had come to "make the Mediterranean a sea of work, of peaceful cohabitation, and of sympathetic cooperation at all possible levels."[37] The creation of bi-national companies expanded the pipeline's logic of binding relations. The mayor therefore asked the council and its constitutive parties to regard previous belligerent events as having been the prelude to a peaceful future.

In this spirit of rapprochement, a Mazarese delegation visited Mahdia to renew the agreement with the Tunisian city. Tunisian reports of the celebration declared that the delegation had come "to give the joining of the two maritime citadels new blood … of brotherhood expressed in deeds." As in segmentation

[35] One article header in the newspaper *L'Unità* read, "And what if for Sicily the methane would turn into a mere tube?" (Stancanelli 1978).
[36] Nicolò Vella, *VCCMdV*, 25 Nov. 1980, n. 156.
[37] Ibid.

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generally, "brotherhood" did not describe the relationship but framed the situational mobilization: "The protocol handshaking ended with brotherly hugs, like a family destined to live through sharing and difference." Although the hugs were "brotherly," the parties were not "brothers," but cross-kin, linked by the "difference" that separated them, and with a long history of animosity and fluctuating power relations: "In the Fatimid capital, Mazzara del Vallo [*sic*], the twin-city, is the opposite maritime gate where the first Maghrebi soldier landed in the conquest of the Gold Island three epochs ago."[38] As Mazara's mayor reported to his council upon his return, the delegation had also visited "the countryman 'Imam al Mazari,' who is much venerated in that nation…."[39] Imam Al-Mazari was "a countryman" of both Mazara and Mahdia, since he had been born in the former (AD 1061) and died in the latter (AD 1141). The Imam was perhaps the perfect "shared relative" for this new bond of affinity because he connected Mahdia and Mazara directly: neither the Imam's life nor the new link in mind had anything to do with Algeria or the rest of Italy. Adding a visit to the Imam's tomb insured that the spirit of the ancient scholar would bless the delegation's mission and the transnational bond it wanted to strengthen.

The ongoing negotiations over the future of fishing off the Tunisian coast and the last stages of the pipeline's activation (a contract for the supply of gas was yet to be signed) intensified the kinshipping's segmentary dynamics, as Tunisian and Sicilian interests were realigned and distinguished from those of Algeria and Italy (and Africa and Europe), the pipeline's two extremities. In September 1982, Algeria and Italy signed the gas delivery agreement, and before the end of the year the seventeen arrested Mazaresi trawlers had been released. In May 1983, the line was inaugurated on the basis of an agreement that the gas would become Italian property immediately upon crossing the Algeria-Tunisia border. If the gas was the "blood" of the Algerian nation, it was thus clarified that Tunisia was as much a "foreign body" as was Italy, since "Algerian" gas could not travel as Algerian through its territory (Stevens 2000: 238). With Tunisia distinguished from Algeria, and Sicily from Italy, the clashes at sea were turned from being an obstacle to cross-channel union into a way to enforce the interests of the closest parties over those of more distant ones.

This new political relation did not terminate the Fish War, but it did align the parties' interests during its last phase. In late 1989, during the negotiations of the bi-national fishing companies, Tunisia arrested ten Mazarese trawlers. The next month five more were arrested, and the council convened for a special session with the Italian foreign minister. This time, however, the

[38] "Mahdia et Mazzara en tête-à-tête," *La Presse de Tunisie*, 24 Feb. 1982: 6.
[39] Nicolò Vella, *VCCMdV*, 22 Mar. 1982, n. 3.

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clashes at sea were discussed in direct connection with "the problems" that "the Tunisian presence in town created." "The Tunisians," the MSI explained,

> wanted to guard their own interests, and if we want to read between the lines of the things said in Palermo by the Tunisian Fisheries Commissary, we can note that, at least in words, they wanted to guarantee our interests as well.… The clandestine Tunisians in Sicily and in this city are numerous, and they are incredibly tolerated by the authorities; the shooting in the Channel of Sicily goes on, and they shoot at head height … the Tunisians shoot because they want to force the Italian authorities to accept the mysterious Tunisian proposals, and they shoot in order to gain involuntary collaborators; the tension in the Channel of Sicily emotionally incites the sailors and their families to accept what the government of that country has asked.[40]

The same MSI politicians who had harnessed the fishers' "rage" during the 1980s now, ten years later, declared that they were "emotionally incited" to support the Tunisian government's requests. Nevertheless, the agreement's language needed tweaking before the entire council would approve it. The final declaration, approved without dissent, included an added statement that while "Tunisian immigrants should not compete disloyally" with the Mazaresi fishers, "neither must they become the object of unscrupulous economic operators' exploitation."[41]

This unanimous declaration signaled the end of the old bifurcated view, in which any interaction was perceived to be taking place between either two distinct and sovereign countries or two opposing transnational classes (of oppressed and oppressors). In the new view, all aspects of Mazarese life, including clashes at sea, were framed as Sicilian-Tunisian transnational relations. These relations were now being charted from the channel outward rather than from the continents towards their point of contact. Mazaresi did not become Tunisians' "brothers" (be it as oppressed southerners, Mediterraneans, or human beings), and differences of identity and interests remained. But the transnational affinity across these differences aligned the linked parties with each other and against their respective "brothers." This was a lineage theory (and nationalist) prohibition if ever there was one, and it is not a rare occurrence, at least not in parts of southern Europe (Campbell 1964: 71).

In her discussion of "the global situation," Anna Tsing suggested that analysts be attentive "to the changing definitions of *interests* and *identity* that both allow and result from" transnational events, by focusing "on the historical specificity of events … and the open-ended indeterminacy of the regional processes" that produce them (2000: 349). The story of the Fish War and the *Transmed* shows how such interests and identities can materialize out of an underlying transnational, kinship-informed, segmentary cosmology. Mazarese

[40] Nicolò Cristaldi, *VCCMdV*, 12 Mar. 1990, n. 45.
[41] Ibid.

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did not discover their Mediterranean horizon somewhere in the 1970s, nor did they cease to see themselves as Italians in the following decades. Both national and transnational categories, not to mention Mazaresi's Italian honor, remained part of the process throughout. That said, the growing tendency toward Mazarese-Tunisian alignment displays how the Mazarese outlook shifted from an international to a transnational one, from brotherhood to cross-cousin marriage. Pitt-Rivers's fundamental observation about kinship and marriage clarifies this transnational political transformation: "One might sum up the Mediterranean as a region in which marriage is not made for the sake of kinship but rather the reverse; kinship, such as it is here, is derived from the links of marriage" (1977: 73).

CAST THY NEIGHBOR AS THY KIN

The segmentary course of events throughout the period of *Transmed*'s construction did not end with the pipeline's inauguration. Indeed, as the two conferences described early in this paper attest, the last two decades have seen Mazara's transnational stakes rise. In the context of the switch from the Cold War to the War on Terror, and increasing Italian attentions, both positive and negative, to its labor migrants, Sicilians and Tunisians in Mazara allude to the ancient Mediterranean past they share, a past that, once made present, informs how they make and break social relations.

During my fieldwork in Mazara, I encountered various permutations of the following conversation. Along the quay of the town's old port, Tunisians and Sicilians talked politics on a daily basis. Whether the topic was news of a local or national instance of anti-immigrant racism, the relationship between the two countries, or their own working conditions, Tunisians often framed their protest not as citizens or denizens, and hardly ever as rights-bearing humans, but rather within a past they conjured up as specific to themselves and Mazaresi. At a certain point during the conversation, the Tunisian would cite "the culture, medicine, chemistry, agriculture, geography, and philosophy that *we* have brought to Sicily." At the end of the list of benefits Arab rule had brought to the island, the Tunisian would say: "So why are you treating us like slaves?" The Sicilian would usually respond: "Yes, it is true, during the days of Roger II [AD 1005–1054], Sicily was the most beautiful place on earth!" At that point, the conversation would usually wander off to other topics, or the band of fishers would disperse to go home with the bread they had bought.

In these short exchanges, fleeting but recurrent, Tunisians and Sicilians cast each other—the "we" and the "you"—as both descendants and representatives of a distant past. Each of the two speakers referred to a period of peace and prosperity (preceded by one side's victory), in which Muslims and Christians had cohabited on the island, in the ninth and the eleventh centuries, respectively. Moreover, each speaker alluded to that common golden age to frame

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social relations between present-day Tunisians and Sicilians. Tunisians and Sicilians did not, however, summon up the same blissful periods. Like other contested narrations of family histories, the sides disputed the exact power relations between them, each referring to that specific moment in which their "we" had the upper hand. These differences would usually become explicit only later, when one side would interpret the interaction to me.

Tunisians cast themselves as the descendants of the Muslim fleet that in AD 827 landed near Mazara on its way to ruling the entire island. This discursive move casts their contemporary migration to Sicily as a reiteration of the medieval one. According to that script, Sicilians today are descendants of "backward, illiterate peasants" who succumbed to Muslim conquest and then enjoyed its blessings for two centuries. The least they should do is accommodate Tunisians' arrival in light of the many blessings they received from their medieval predecessors. For their part, Sicilians cast themselves as the descendants of the Norman Hauteville/Altavilla dynasty, which between AD 1061 and 1091 led the conquest of Sicily. In this script, Tunisians are portrayed as mere courtiers in a kingdom that was "re-conquered" and then "ruled again" by Christians. The difference between Byzantine and Catholic "Arab-Norman" Sicily is ignored. By moving two centuries forward, Sicilians present themselves not as the island's subjugated population but rather as the lords of the land who retain the sovereign prerogative to choose how to treat their Arab subjects. They also associate themselves with Nordic conquerors, whose only qualification for current Sicilians' purposes is that they were European and Christian.

Sicilians and Tunisians in this way cast each other in roles taken from the past, from which both sides see themselves to be descended. Similar segmentary strategies for social boundary making have been analyzed within a given "prevailing ideology" (either national or supranational; Herzfeld 1987: 159). But in Mazara, the object of people's allusions is not common descent but affinity; not a shared ancestor, but a duo of shared historical pairs (from the ninth and eleventh centuries), on which they do not completely agree. To paraphrase Andrew Shryock's analysis of the disputes over genealogy in Jordan (1997: 59), when such contested castings unfold across national ideologies, they form a transnational "community of disagreement." The points of contention in such disputes, like mentions of past wars and periods of political supremacy, are the points at which Mazarese and Tunisian respective identities are most fully elaborated. Except for a list of groups' names from the region's past, there are very few historical representations internal to the channel that Sicilians and Tunisians share. The structure of these discussions enables people to frame their recent shared history of exchanges and animosities without predetermining whether any particular relationship should be belligerent or amicable.

The Mediterranean offers fertile ground for such role-playing because it is one of those regions where the game of geopolitical musical chairs has been

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played by almost all sides for a very long time. When any two people from opposite sides of the channel meet, the one from the southern side can be and often is cast as a descendent from Carthage, Medieval Islam, or Anti-fascist Maghreb, and the person from the northern side is accordingly cast as descended from Romans, Christians, Byzantines or Normans, or Italian Fascists, and so forth. Because each group at one time or another fought or allied with any other given group, people can cast their interlocutors simultaneously as past-friend, past-foe (victorious or defeated), or both. These segmentary strategies thus have a double function: they cast both parties as personifications of a past social configuration ("Me Charlemagne, you Sultan"), but they also imply the power relations from that configuration. And since every person can occupy various positions within these historical pairs, people can articulate connections by choosing between the various historical scripts at hand.

Let me be clear: transnational segmentation does not imply an "anything goes" approach to making and breaking social relations. The specific castings that each side tries are conditioned by the possible connections between present people and past figures and by the political affiliation desired. When Tunisians and Sicilians allude to medieval Sicily, no one declares that what unites them is that they believe in one god, and for a good reason. Anyone who has participated in discussions about monotheism and world politics, either before or during the last decade of inter-religious animosity, has heard the phrase: "We are all sons of Abraham." Some of us have found ourselves using such phrases. But these "cosmopolitan" pronouncements leave a platitudinal aftertaste because they mean nothing concrete. Even when uttered sincerely, they carry no palpable political implication because they reach to a moment too far in the past and postulate a brotherhood too homogenous and inclusive, at least on a Mediterranean scale.

Contrary to these declarations, the relationships that Sicilians and Tunisians construct are rife with difference, which is power-laden, exclusionary, and specific enough to alter their political alignments. Along the same lines, Sicilians often depict themselves as Romans fighting the equally glamorous Carthage, and cast people from Milan or northern Italy in general as "barbarians … who were still eating with their hands when we had poetry!" In this script, Sicilians' socioeconomically superior "national brothers" (e.g., from Milan) become more distant than the Muslim, Arab, North African migrants, who are co-descendants from the ancient Mediterranean union. This localist casting of present collectivities as reincarnations of past ones often derives from folklore, "ever the source of historicist accounts of national identity" (Herzfeld 2003: 307). Nevertheless, when people use them transnationally, they sometimes end up undermining their respective imagined communities.

Nationalism's grip on social scientists' political imaginations is palpable in their tendency to label inner divisions in nations with the holistic term "fragments," not the modular term "segments." By contrast, seafarers and politicians

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around the Mediterranean see no problem in segmenting their political worlds in two fundamental ways: they open national scales both upward (e.g., Europe/Mediterranean) and downward (Sicily, Mazara), and they create lateral and diagonal relations across these hierarchies (Sicilian-Tunisian). This evidence of transnational segmentary politics and the political imagination it articulates should make us question whether the "harsh wedge" that nationalism was supposed to have driven "between cosmology and history" (Anderson 1991: 36) has been permanently or fully inserted (Shryock 1997).

In a political anthropology that takes "imagined communities" as the cosmological building blocks of a world turned global, fraternity will be wrongly assumed to monopolize people's political imagination. Until political anthropologists absorb the insights of crossness—in kinshipping and otherwise—they will confuse segmentation with lineage and lineage with fraternity. The use of segmentation and kinship idioms to understand transnationalism may lead some to argue that my analysis has neglected power relations. For the people this paper has discussed, there is no opposition between kinship terms and power relations. Rather than "diffuse, enduring solidarity" (Schneider 1977), kinship here is the idiom in which power-laden political relations across difference are expressed and through which segmentary political processes occur. If we follow their lead, we may expand our examination of the central Mediterranean to inquire into different ways in which transnational constellations form into regions.

SEGMENTATION AT LARGE

The challenge that the central Mediterranean poses to anthropology is to examine transnational constellations, not against a yardstick of cultural homogeneity or postulated fraternity, but rather on the basis of the modular and flexible political relations that segmentation and varied kinship idioms allow. Anthropologists and historians have agreed that the Mediterranean no longer exists. Historians claim that the Mediterranean they excavate from archives—from the days of sails, corsairs, and the slave trade—"waned" at the latest between the late nineteenth century and the 1920s (Horden and Purcell 2000; Greene 2002; Tabak 2008). Anthropologists had initially sought a comparative analysis of circum-Mediterranean "problems of social organization" (Pitt-Rivers 1963: 10, 25), but social comparison gave way to cultural unity (Silverman 2001: 45–50). The resulting image of the Mediterranean was based on cultural similarities among discrete social units, like *Honour and Shame:* [christened as] *The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Péristiany 1966), for which Mediterraneanist anthropology is remembered to this day (Herzfeld 1987; Bromberger 2006). As a result, the Mediterranean has managed to serve simultaneously as a paradigmatic case in studies of maritime worlds and societies (Wigen 2006) and as a usual suspect in the critique of practical Orientalism (Herzfeld 2005a).

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The transnational challenge that the Mediterranean posits becomes doubly relevant because it was in crossing that sea northward that segmentation theory and kinship studies encountered their main obstacles. Once in Europe, social anthropologists encountered resistance both from their non-Europeanist colleagues, who regarded Europe as a continent unfit for anthropological analysis, and from historians, who rejected the application of concepts deriving from the study of stateless societies in a continent that for them epitomized modernity, real history, and the state (Blok 1981: 435). That same state monopolized both honor as a national motivating value for political actions and the historicist accounts of national identity to justify defending that honor. The few studies that did focus on cross-Mediterranean connections (e.g., Davis 1977), focused on connections between "cultures" rather than the cultural conditions of connection: similarities between discrete entities rather than graded resemblances in practices across time and space. With the exception of Jane Schneider's classic paper, "Of Vigilance and Virgins" (1971), anthropologists circularly concluded that connections and proximity both generated and were based on cultural unity (Galt 1985), or argued that such claims of cultural unity amounted to reiterating stereotypes (Herzfeld 2005b: 131). In this way, Mediterraneanist anthropology has repeated nationalist ideologies of brotherhood and homogeneity, only this time on a transnational rather than national scale.

Furthermore, the abandonment of segmentation and kinship in favor of a search for cultural unities ended up reaffirming notions of inherent difference between the West and the rest, at least from a European point of view. The initial social-comparison thrust in Mediterraneanist anthropology culminated with a culturalist view of the similarities between Southern Europe and North Africa. Europe was thus initially split into zones that evinced cultural similarities to North Africa and the Levant, and therefore legitimized an anthropological beachhead on Europe's southern coasts. When the "cultural unity of the Mediterranean" was debunked, Europe became that continent which was culturally not comparable with its neighbors Africa and Asia. There was never any sense of urgency to finding a similar anthropological unifying ground for European anthropology, since such a ground was, almost self-evidently, the West (Asad et al. 1997). The deconstruction of the Mediterranean, or at least of its existence as an anthropological object of study, was begotten together with the reconstruction and indeed the reaffirmation of Europe.

By preferring Europe as a spatial category to the Mediterranean, anthropologists opted for a political imagination built from a lineage of discrete spatio-political entities and cultural identities, not structural relationships. This is where the segmentary political imagination, which Sicilians and Tunisians partly share, makes the central Mediterranean represent a wider set of transnational constellations; they are neither eternal crystals of cultural identity

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nor mere objects of projects of rule, but rather are changing, albeit recurring products of political process.

Returning to the Mediterranean does not mean reifying regions as areas of cultural unities. It offers new lenses through which to examine transnationalism the world over. Constellations are often "multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional space[s]" (Ballinger 2011: 59); they contain changing boundaries, idiomatic diversity, and the misunderstandings these entail. When constellations undergo region formation, their segmentary dynamics are influenced by the transregional specificity of terms of relatedness, and by intra-regional diversity in the ways they are used to inform political process (e.g., crossness or bilaterality). Between Sicily and Tunisia, the move from internationalism to transnationalism entailed a gradual shift to a preference for affinity across difference rather than descent. Alternatives to descent may also take other forms. Just as Mazaresi turned, as it were, to their cross-cousins when their brothers had disappointed them, in other places and times adoptive kinship (like milk kinship) provided the political alternative to brotherhood and descent (Parkes 2001).

In fact, in premodern Western Europe, and more recently in west-Eurasian segmentary political constellations, politically significant terms of relatedness included not only descent and affinity, but also cliental allegiance. Parkes' comparative view suggests that the opposition between fraternity and cousinage—and therefore the meaning and political potential of fraternity itself, including its idiomatic bequest to nationalism—are regionally and historically specific (2003). European nineteenth-century nationalism emerged against the background of a kinship-politics nexus that no longer included cliental adoptive kinship as a politically significant idiomatic alternative to descent and affinity. If milk kinship and other alternatives to fraternity as idioms for transnational political relations are as meaningful elsewhere as cousinage and marriage are in the central Mediterranean, we should expect that they have affected the meaning of national fraternity, and that they informed both nationalism and transnationalism accordingly.

The modularity of the nation form, in other words, may reside not only in its "intimate links" with "the reworking of global capitalism, and the relational character of intra- and inter-state fields" (Goswami 2002: 795), but also in the different political cosmologies in which it has been operating the world over. In this light, the nationalist ideology of fraternity becomes not the modern negation of kinship's erstwhile hold on politics, but rather the culmination of a "centripetal consolidation" of political structure (Parkes 2003: 765). Consequently, a rise in use of alternative terms of relatedness would accompany transnationalism as the contemporary instance of centrifugal processes (Lieberman 2008: 697). These terms can be both trans-regionally specific and intra-regionally diverse. West African politicians have recently referred to inter-group or transnational "joking relationships" in various ways and for different, sometimes

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cynical political projects (Canut and Smith 2006). Such political expediency actually reflects these idioms' effectiveness. Segmentary processes of transnational region formation may therefore express a renewed political significance of terms of relatedness for transnational relations, which were latent during more nationally centripetal periods (see Parkes 2001, 21).

What I suggest is a far cry from the human rights NGOs' view of transnational political imaginations and relations as "fraternity or nothing," the idea that, absent political organizations based on the ideology of fraternity, chaos reigns in the stateless "state of nature." That view bears little resemblance to the diversified, contested, many-headed political cosmology fostered by stories about Arabs and Sicilians, and Romans and Carthaginians, and the constellations they delineate in the present. My claim is not that we should promote transnational politics on the basis of cousinage, milk kinship, or other such terms of relatedness. People around the world have been doing that for some time now. My claim is that we should articulate our academic understanding of transnationalism to match the complexity of regionally specific, internally diverse ways of making and breaking transnational relations. The alternative is to assume that when people interact transnationally, all they have in mind is fraternity. That will not do, not only because it assumes that on the global scale only the like come together, but also because it obscures what transnationalism is all about: unity by that which divides, linkage by that which separates.

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Abstract: This paper examines the workings of kinship and marriage idioms in transnational political imaginary in the central Mediterranean to challenge current academic reliance on the notion of fraternity as the symbolic building block of both national and global political relations. Since the 1960s, the Sicilian town of Mazara del Vallo and its fishing fleet have become entwined in intensifying interactions with Tunisia and the wider Maghreb. These interactions—specifically the Tunisian-Italian "Fish War" and construction of a trans-Mediterranean natural gas pipeline between North Africa and Europe—rejuvenated the old geopolitical imagination of the Mediterranean and helped produce the central Mediterranean as a spatio-temporal field of political action. Italians and Tunisians perceived each other as related, and staged the trans-Mediterranean infrastructural project as a sort of European-African (cross-cousin) marriage. I begin by examining the tensions between two central kinship idioms—fraternity and cousinage—in current understandings of transnational relations. I then discuss the growing prevalence of a transnational political cosmology of affinity across difference over that of shared descent and sameness that characterize national alignments. I conclude by examining how Tunisians and Sicilians in Mazara today cast each other in roles deriving from segmentary schemes they share, but on the content of which they disagree. By applying concepts associated with kinship and marriage studies to recent Mediterranean history, I show how segmentation, a concept anthropologists abandoned when they crossed the Mediterranean on their way into Europe, can help us understand transnational politics.

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