

THOUGHTS AND DEBATES ON THE MEDITERRANEAN VIEWED FROM THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND ANDALUSIA

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I. FOREWARD

The Mediterranean sea is a very precise marine area, so much so, that it can almost be considered as a closed sea. “Mediterranean” or “Mediterraneaness”, are, on the contrary, somewhat complex and multifaceted terms, ungoverned by specific limits, and the objective of research and reflection by all disciplines and sciences on earth: social, historical, cultural, artistic. etc. Vastness indeed.

That said, the intention of this paper is not at all systematic, nor does it wish to create precise self-contained profiles, but simply to put forward and comment upon some of the essentially geographic thoughts and debates which have been made on the Mediterranean or “being Mediterranean” from or on behalf of the Iberian Peninsula (hereinafter I.P), Spain and Andalusia.

This last detail, introducing Andalusia into the story, is justified because it is, without a shadow of doubt, the Autonomous Community which controls the entry and exit gates to the Mediterranean and due to this it is historically and geographically Mediterranean par excellence. All the more so, since Andalusia is quintessentially both Spanish and Mediterranean Spanish, when contemplating what the Mediterranean is from Iberia and Spain, as we shall subsequently see.

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON WHAT THE MEDITERRANEAN LIMITS CONSIST OF

Geographically, Birot (1964) studied the Mediterranean world in depth as a whole – with regards to relief, climate, biogeography, agrarian landscapes and other aspects – but what is surprising is that when he attempts to delimit the said space he resorts to just this one skeleton idea: “the most accurate definition – he says – is a bio-geographical one. The Mediterranean world is the climatic area where it is possible to grow olive trees and also dry cereal crops” (p. V).

For his part, Lacoste (2001, 3), when defining the Mediterranean as a “geostrategic area”, states that it “is not limited to coastal regions in the strictest sense. For both cultural and climatic reasons, Morocco is classically included into the Mediterranean area, although it borders to a large extent with the Atlantic, and Portugal too, which has its back to the Mediterranean”. Moreover, the strictly Mediterranean area (4,000 km. from east to west) goes even further for over 1,000 from the coasts of Palestine to the Persian Gulf countries and even the Black Sea and the Caucasus. The whole of this is to be called the “geopolitical Mediterranean area”. In Lacoste’s distinction between mediterranean regions strictly speaking and broad extensions of them, we already find the classical and beautiful distinction that F. Braudel (1976, 133 y ss.) makes between “the Heart of the Mediterranean”, constituted by its seas and coasts, and the “Major Mediterranean”, which goes deep into Africa, continental Europe and the Atlantic.

As regards the I.P., in Lautensach’s maps (1967, 34), we may observe how the polar limit of the olive tree and another series of mostly Mediterranean plants like the rosebay, the date-palm, gall-oak, palm heart, holm oak and cork oak, extend throughout Andalusia but also throughout the Spanish Levant, the Ebro depression and the Southern Submeseta. This is exactly the same as that shown on the maps of Mediterranean Spain according to Thornhwaite’s climatic classification, Papadakis’ agroclimatic regime and the old E.E.C. crops and exploitation (Sumpsi, 1977, 93, 94 and 97).

Cabo (1990, 143) also refers, in greater detail, to the difficult depiction of Mediterranean Spain, to which he attributes at least the following characteristics: general absence of frosts or scarcity of them and gentle winters; severe aridness and long seasonal drought; specific fruit crops, including citrus fruits, palm hearts, palm tress and other tropical plants; and the

need for irrigation. On applying these criteria, it was estimated that Mediterranean Spain includes Catalonia, the Balearic islands, the Community of Valencia, the kingdom of Murcia and Andalusia, that is to say, 159,000 km², 31.6 % of Spanish territory.

To conclude, it is absolutely clear that Andalusia is the most Mediterranean of Spanish regions, but that Mediterraneanness also spreads further to the North and reaches even Catalonia along the coastline and the Ebro depression towards the interior.

The basis of Andalusia's extreme Mediterranean character comes from just fourteen kilometers which separate Europe and Africa, this Community being the closest European territory to the African continent. The physical foundation for this closeness rests in the continuity of our Andalusian mountain range along North Africa which very recently – during the Quaternary – put the Mediterranean and the Atlantic into contact, when a chunk sank, through the Strait of Gibraltar.

From the biogeographical viewpoint, the fourteen kilometres which currently divide Africa and Andalusia –even less in the glacioeustatically lowest sequences of the Quaternary – have led to all types of exchanges of flora and fauna with North Africa and to the impact of tropical type elements. This is thus one of the causes, among many others, why Andalusia is a bio-geographical sample of such great wealth.

Furthermore, such proximity explains the historical shifting, be it pacific or warlike, which has existed between Western North Africa and Andalusia, with so many political, financial, social and cultural repercussions in its wake. The Africanness attributed to Andalusia is unquestionably geographic in nature.

However, although the Strait of Gibraltar is obviously a gateway, it is also an “important maritime port” between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, as it is eloquently stipulated by Cabo (1990, 11):

“Whilst the inhabited world restricted itself to the Mediterranean area, the Strait of Gibraltar to the South of the Peninsula, linking up the Latin sea with the Atlantic, was of no great strategic value... but human contacts between Europe and North Africa increased the strategic value of the Strait when the World expanded with the discovery of West Africa and the American continent and when one or the other provided contact with the Far East... the importance of this marine nexus between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic is such that at present and without taking into account

the passing of submarines, which are difficult to count, it has been calculated that not less than 70,000 passenger, cargo, war or fishing vessels exist. This represents traffic of one vessel every seven and a half minutes and, in total, 35 per cent of the worldwide maritime movement with a transport estimated to be between one thousand million tons of freight”.

The calculations made by Cabo must have later in time increased and yet another series of specifications must be added to emphasize the significance of the key “port” of the Strait of Gibraltar: the importance of petroleum which is transported from the Middle East; the rising controversy of the said region or North West Africa which convert it into a geostrategic key; the single exit from the Black Sea of the Russian fleet in winter when all their Northern seas are frozen; as a navigable channel for both the maritime traffic of E.U. countries like the whole of Greece and Italy and partially France and Spain.

To conclude, no clear limits can be set on what Mediterranean means, although some valid approximations of them have been put forward, but what is clear is that a good part of the I.P. is Mediterranean and that this character par excellence belongs to its most Southern Autonomous Community, Andalusia.

III. WHAT IS MEDITERRANEAN? DOES A MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE EXIST?

A double reflection may help to define what the Mediterranean is: from a historical-cultural viewpoint or from a geographical viewpoint. From a historical perspective, until the time of Philip II, we do not find any study surpassing the thoroughness and broad perspective of Braudel’s classical work (1976), already quoted, to which we keep coming back. Obviously, we are going to focus on the second option, but both are so inextricably linked that neither can be ignored. We therefore regard the Mediterranean as something like a “cultural meeting point” (which is the subtitle of the book by García Gómez-Heras and Febles Yanes, 2006). Here, the key questions to ask are these:

Does the Mediterranean, geographically speaking, have a singular socio-cultural identity which makes it unique in itself and differentiates it from other geographic areas? Do its coastal peoples conceal a history of their own, do they harbour a unique way of life, and do they contain a specific source of cultural values?”

[...]

“(it is a question of reflecting) on the Mediterranean as a cultural phenomenon, as an historic geographic ideal, as a utopia of the social model, as a supranational financial structure,

as a space of intensive migration, as an episode of religious contrasts, as a Project of public construction, as an area of warlike conflicts, as a model for literary-linguistic creation....”

(García Gómez- Heras, 2006, 14-15).

The answer to these questions would be a resounding “no” from some who define culture as a common “worldview, religious principles and forms of life which have traversed the tests of time”, considering that this viewpoint would not be shared today between a Frenchman, an Italian or a Greek on the one hand and a Tunisian or a Syrian on the other. Indeed

“It is true that from a historical point of view, the Mediterranean has been the cradle of European civilisation which has in some cases imposed common or very similar moulds. ...but when this level of cultural unity has prevailed in the Mediterranean area this has been due to its being dictated by “human agents”, which essentially coincided with the Roman Empire in ancient times”.

[...]

“The Arab invasions from the 7th century onwards and the Ottoman power from the 15th century onwards contributed to the rupture of general patterns, giving rise to several diverse Mediterranean cultures, despite the unity which many scholars have wished to attribute to this area since the 18th century and since Romanticism” (Salvador Miguel, 2006, 112-113).

As opposed to this position, we find other more ambiguous and imprecise viewpoints, according to which “the Mediterranean is a border culture”, a “space of multiple intersections”, a “*unitas multiplex*”, etc. (Ruíz Doménec, 2006, 16 and Lorite Mena, 2006, 17).

However, thoughts of this kind are much more clearly explained and better expressed by Sierra González (2006, 102 and foll.), with these three basic ideas: the Mediterranean as a sea which unites and separates and therefore creates conflict, the Mediterranean as a border, and the Mediterranean as a confrontation between East and West. This author states the following with regard to the first issue:

“Thus the image construed about the Mediterranean in cultural imagery is the image of a sea which unites and separates and on whose shores interminable conflicts have been released between geographically close cultures, but distant in values and in lifestyles. In this imaginary territory of the sea which unites and separates something has emerged which Edward W. Said defined as the figure of the «*cultural rival*». The other, like the opponent, who through the journals of history has given rise to the appearance of historical subjects on the north and south shores that have defined themselves as *we* only when they have been able to construct the

antagonistic image of an *other* as negation.... thus we successively find the Greek and the Barbarian, the Roman and the Carthaginian, the Christian and the Moslem”.

I believe that these conflictive antinomies are clearly visible within the panorama of religions in the Mediterranean, to the extent that “this united world around the *Mare Nostrum* was precisely characterised by its lack of religious unity”, as has been studied by Díez de Velasco (2006, 76 and foll.), although the Mediterranean conflicts are obviously of a very diverse nature as is demonstrated by Abad Ripoll (2006, 125 and foll.), who classified them, according to Paul Balta.

But secondly, “the Mediterranean is a borderland which has given rise to border cultures and mixed identities”, also being, as has been said, the paradigm of confrontation between East and West:

“In fact -states Sierra González- the idea of the East, as a paradigm of opposite, of negativity came about on the western shores of the Mediterranean. The division between the eastern shores of the Mediterranean and the western shores, in the north and south, has for some time marked the frontier between civilisation and its denial. The adventurous traveller’s memory, although in, the distant, eastern side was a *fabulous place* and the western side was the *real place*, it could be said that until relatively recently the eastern shore of the Mediterranean was the place of the exotic beings, of unforgettable memories and landscapes, of fabulous travel and fantasies. That is to say, everything which stands out as extraordinary and which can only possibly exist as a distant land. But nowadays the Other, being different, no longer shines out as a paradise and has become reduced to the night darkness of race”.

As a summary of all that has been said, the following text by E. Morin in his prologue of the recent book by B. Porcel (2007,14) may serve, where he states the essential unity of the Mediterranean within its variety and confrontation:

“There remains not just a Mediterranean climate, Mediterranean landscapes, Mediterranean traditions, but also a Mediterranean life, a Mediterranean culture inside the very diverse Mediterranean cultures, a Mediterranean gastrosofy, Mediterranean temperaments”.

[...]

“To perceive of the Mediterranean, one also needs to perceive of its unity, diversity and types of conflicts all at the same time... Yes, the Mediterranean is the sea of communication and of conflict, the sea of polytheisms and monotheisms, the sea of fanaticism and tolerance, and how wonderful! the sea in which the conflict, when finally resolved in the small Athens of the fifth century, becomes a democratic and philosophical debate”.

IV. DOES A MEDITERRANEAN GEOGRAPHY EXIST? THE MEDITERRANEAN LANDSCAPE

Despite the complicated assignation of any limits to the Mediterranean and despite the indecision and ambiguity surrounding the existence of a Mediterranean culture, as we have seen, it appears to be clear, on the contrary, that there is recognition of a geographic Mediterranean entity, the visual and perceptual expression and image of which is expressed in an equally existing Mediterranean landscape. The “Letter of the Mediterranean Landscape” (“Carta del Paisaje Mediterraneo” C.M.P.) of 1993, establishes this existence and was written to delineate, define, evaluate and protect it. Moreover, there are two books which have been very influential in Spain, entitled “(El) Paisaje Mediterraneo” (1992) (“(The) Mediterranean Landscape”) and Arias Abellán-Fourneau, Eds. (1998). To begin with, we can say that, as Luginbühl (1998, 199) puts it

“The Mediterranean landscapes display specificities which are mostly based on the nature of the geomorphological and biological foundation of the Mediterranean area and in particular on a certain climatic violence and tectonic movements, as well as some particularities of the crops: the importance of forestry or of the “cultivated” tree in the landscape, the extensive nature of grazing lands and the importance of the city”.

But, in spite of these common grounds, the essence of the Mediterranean landscapes is that they respond to a dialectic of unity and variety, as it has been well expressed by Drain (1998, 21):

“The Mediterranean landscape may be defined by a paradoxical singularity which possesses both outstanding unity and extraordinary diversity... For F. Braudel, the Mediterranean was of course «one thousand things at once. Not just one landscape but innumerable ones», but also «a coherent image, like a system where everything gets mixed up and recomposed into an original unit »”.

We will now enter into more detail about the two major common traits of our landscape, namely: *fragility of the ecological balance* and the peculiarity of the agrarian landscapes. With regard to the first, it may be stated that the said fragility is derived from at least three causes: a complicated movable relief which is not at all uniform for tectonic and geomorphologic reasons; several climatic constrictions presided over by scarcity, in general, of water and by the severe inter-annual and inter- seasonal irregularities which are so in keeping with the Mediterranean climate; and as a consequence of the previous point, a notable lack of surface run-off, which at certain

times may be extremely devastating. In general, this fragility of ecological balance contradicts that romantic image of the sweet, peaceful and serene Mediterranean. The latter has, on the other hand, been dealt with in many of the studies written on the Mediterranean, and its presence in the Andalusian coast was expertly studied by Carandell in an article in 1935; it is always pointed out that the fragility gives rise to many risks in the agriculture of the area. (vide. Schlizzi y Rivière Honegger, 1998).

Another major trait of the Mediterranean is that it possesses very old and very long-standing *singular and specific rural landscapes*, as shown by Mazurek and Blanchemanche (1992, 142). As it has already been suggested, these landscapes also respond to a heavy dialectic of unity within variety, so obvious that, as Meynier (1970, 34) states, “it gets more complicated, varies, declines into infinite nuances «seemingly challenging all efforts at synthesis» (Desplanques)”. Notwithstanding, we may say, at first sight, that this agrarian landscape is as follows: firstly it is an “ager” landscape, with its own crops from a sedentary activity; a “saltus” which requires pastoral or even itinerant activity (for example transhumance); and a “mansus”, made up of market gardens which are an essential complement of the previous land uses and link with the city habitat, so important in this landscape. Traditionally, the basic Mediterranean crops fit in with the so-called “Mediterranean trilogy” (wheat, vines and olives), but there are so many ways in which this can be displayed spatially, and also so many implications with other crops and land uses, that analysis unveils the extremely varied Mediterranean forestry (the “fruitalisation” as it has been called), the Iberian “pastureland”, the Italian “coltura promiscua”, monocrops vs. policrops, etc.

What has been said until now is just a tiny part of the multitudinous issues to be studied within Mediterranean agrarian landscapes, among which we would underline the following: the organisation of holdings, boundaries and enclosures; the importance and profusion of stone in this agrarian morphology; equally for water and the difficulties involved in finding it, driving it and using it; the topographical conditions; the aesthetics of these landscapes and their relationship with its physical and human treatments and the influence of different civilisations throughout history, etc. The characters of the said Mediterranean agrarian landscapes, which have been well summarised by the quoted authors, are also dealt with by Meynier (1970, 34-35), who speaks of how the southern regions of Europe clash with the Northern ones, especially due to the

“*discontinuity* of agrarian planning where each township tends to be divided up into one part cultivated, the *ager* of Latin agronomists, one part uncultivated, the *saltus*, forest, shrub, lands, wastelands, stony patches, for pasture or which even remain totally unoccupied.”

And this subject also led the great French agrarian writer to link up with another characteristic of our agrarian landscapes which is their adaptation to difficult natural conditions. He speaks of “the presence of a tyrannical relief”. Although “possibly more frequently the mountain, instead of playing an off-putting role, appears to attract or retain the settlers”. Thus in this Mediterranean world, the combination of complex physical and human motives initially facilitated occupation and even cantonment of rural life in the mountainous areas, subsequently proceeding to the colonisation of the plains from the 19th century onwards and the first half of the 20th century. Today, however, due to the agrarian crisis, the Mediterranean mountain has become completely depopulated in many areas, the reason why Drain (1998, 24) talks about the agrarian landscapes as “unfrequented” or “inanimate lands”.

With regard to the Mediterranean climate, which is so constricting for the agrarian sector, its most serious threats require “adaptation or combat”. The briefness of the spring rains and the earliness of the summer drought very frequently demanded irrigation, as essential in these landscapes today with modern infrastructures as in the past. The importance of the tree in general and the fruit tree in particular is also of note, taking advantage of auspicious ecological conditions of all types, which has been searchingly studied by González Bernáldez (1992), introducing the before-mentioned concept of “the fruitalisation of the Mediterranean landscape”.

There is one fact which we, however, need to emphasize among the appealing and complex polymorphism of the rural Mediterranean landscapes: the great importance of the city, within them. It was always the source of investments for the country, and the latter the provider of all urban food; the cities structure the land and, depending on their power, grant it its respective townships. These, depending on their needs, are divided into concentric rings with different uses and developments, and the road system is also adapted to their service, helping everything to flow into the centre of the town. Water, and the vegetable patches, windmills, etc, were not just farming matters but participated with the town for its development and supply. In the end the Mediterranean created that

genuine urban-rural hybrid within the settlement which is the “agrocitv”, the absolute expression of the symbiosis existing between city and country in the Mediterranean world (López Ontiveros, 1994).

The balance of the different elements making up the Mediterranean landscapes at certain times in history went through phases of blockage or stability, segregating its own support determinism (according to Bertrand, 1975), although there were other moments of rupture and change. One of them, perhaps the most serious of all, is the current one in virtue of a series of processes of all types which the C.P.M. (1993) puts across well. But actually, the key lies in the so-called “agrarian crisis” brought on by massive emigration, which threatens to destroy the complex of the Mediterranean landscapes, both by the intensification of agriculture and the neglect of it, particularly in mountainous areas. A need thus arises for protection of both the eminent and agrarian heritage, and the aesthetic and cultural settlements (López Ontiveros, 1999).

V. THE MEDITERRANEANESS OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

Now that the Mediterranean has been depicted, we may reflect upon how the I.P. sees itself as concerned by its Mediterraneanness and how this must be particularly emphasized for Andalusia.

The resounding proof of Iberian Mediterraneanness, according to Terán (1952), seems to us not only conclusive but also definitive in the Spanish geographical context, with this author inserting it into what is called “the geographic geniality of the Iberian Peninsula”. In the quoted texts, this idea is developed as follows:

“A peninsula in the extreme southeast of Europe – says Terán – between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, European lands’ end, and extended bridge towards the African continent in which only the voussoir of an arch is missing”.

Terán continues to say that in the peninsula, as we have previously ventured for the whole Mediterranean, “diversity and contrast” predominate, even mentioning a “miniature continent” and “crossroads of sea and land routes”. He continues along these lines:

“Approximately half of the peninsular perimeter is Mediterranean coast. Since the journeys and colonisation of the Phoenicians and Greeks, the Peninsula became integrated into the Mediterranean

World and throughout history has participated in the experiences, adventures and culture of this homeland of life and civilisation which she embraces from the West”

[...]

“Mediterranean and Atlantic; the I.P. is more Mediterranean than Atlantic, due to its position between the two seas. However, this does not lead to the deduction that it is European and African due to its location between two continents. When one speaks of the affinities between Spain and Africa, one is really speaking of those which exist between two members of the Mediterranean family. The I.P. and Africa are Mediterranean and as such are similar to one another and relate to one another but neither Iberia nor the Maghrib are actually African. The true Africa is that which begins to the south of North West Africa in the Saharan desert”.

And everything that has been previously stated is explained and endorsed by Terán, forcing us to see that the Iberian Mediterraneanness depends upon the climate, vegetation, agrarian landscapes and the diversity in life and working forms of its inhabitants. The classification made by Mata Olmo (1997) is symptomatic, reinforcing that of Terán with regards to the agrarian landscapes, of the “Spanish agrarian landscapes and systems”, where those connoted with the qualifier of “Mediterranean” (labour intensive dry lands”, “wooded dry lands”, “pastured landscapes” and “circummediterranean irrigated lands”) are the overwhelming majority.

Geographically, then, in all objectivity, we think Terán has established and moulded the indubitable mediterraneaness of the I.P. into our geographical thought.

VI. THE IMMENSE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANDALUSIA WITHIN THE MEDITERRANEAN ENSEMBLE

VI.1. The origin and structure of the Romantic image of Andalusia

Within the context of the obvious geographical mediterraneaness of the I.P. it is easy to prove that Andalusia is particularly Mediterranean because a large part of its coastline is washed by the Mediterranean; because it is the closest to Africa; because it is the southernmost part of the peninsula; because thanks to everything aforesaid, it is the part most physically and humanly influenced by everything African; because in the end, its co-existence and confrontation with what is Islamic- Mediterranean lasted the longest in Hispania, eight centuries in fact.

But in contemporary times, the mark of Andalusia's mediterraneanness has not been imposed geographically but literally and artistically through Romanticism and its survival has been so persistent that it has lasted through to our present times (López Ontiveros, 1988). In this romantic image Andalusia is the standard-bearer, the epitome of Spain in its entirety and, even more in its "literary material" to a worldwide level, setting in motion an "Andalusia cycle in the nineteenth and twentieth century arts", as proven and developed by Baltanás (2003), who states:

"So when we speak of an *Andalusian theme* or an *Andalusian cycle* we are referring to a wealth of interlinking subjects, arguments and motives which appear to focus on a landscape, but actually form a clearly prosopographic profile: this is the personification of Andalusia ."

This phenomenon is so extensive and complex, in any case, that we cannot develop it entirely, and will have to confine ourselves to those more valid geographic aspects which prove Spain's Mediterraneanness and the leading role played by Andalusia.

Despite the large cycle of travellers concerned with Spain in the 18th century, the truth is that before the nineteenth century, our country, and hence Andalusia, was an unknown territory for the European. An anonymous French traveller in 1805 was therefore able to state: "I have noticed that when talking about Spain to a Frenchman it is like talking about China, about the Patagonians, we are completely ignorant of this ancient country!" (quoted by Hérán, 1979, 21). However, in the nineteenth century there was a colossal, unprecedented avalanche of travellers to this *España ignota* which then became *fashionable Spain*, which has been explained in terms of war, politics, art, economic, tourism, etc, although we believe the principles are literary, and we shall get to the bottom of this to some extent.

All authors unanimously relate these reason to a single event: Romanticism. The latter was searching for what Spain and Andalusia could offer to perfection. I believe Calvo Serraller (1991, 22) skilfully focuses on this issue:

"Declared incompatible with the spirit or European Enlightenment (recall the question of the abbé Masson de Movilliers in 1782 for the *Encyclopaedia*: What is owed to Spain? In two, four, ten centuries, what has it done for Europe?), what has happened for Spain to quite unwittingly become fashionable precisely at the historic moment of its greatest prostration..? Well..., in actual fact., just that: this historic collapse and weakening confirmed an already consolidated image of being different, hated before and enchanting now, from the moment when the

Bourgeoisie revolution triumphed in Europe in all of its connotations. Romanticism was, naturally, what revolutionised the traditional criteria of cultural homologation which served to guarantee Spain's difference as its asset".

In the end, this is also the subject of "unpredictable Spain" – different in sum -, "the land of the unexpected, *le pays de l'imprévu*, where "the exception is the rule", which for R. Ford (1974) is the final conclusion of its comprehension and the reason for its appeal. Following on from the discovery of Spanish singularity, the stimulus of its appeal, several important deductions have to be highlighted here. The first is the tourist cliché slogan "Spain is different", which doubtless has its base in the aesthetic comprehension applied by the Romantics to Spain and Andalusia. One step beyond this is the assertion made by A.Dumas – another major cliché – that "Africa begins in the Pyrenees", the corner stone of the geography conveyed by the romantics.

From everything said above, one can deduce the absolute and logical preference for Andalusia by the romantics, because it is the most different from Europe, the most African – in terms of landscape and culturally speaking - in Spain due to distance and Arab persistence. It is the most exceptional, the most unpredictable, the most colourful. Furthermore, protagonism of Andalusia is indeed very palpable in nineteenth century travel documents. When analysing the symbolic significance conferred on the Sierra Morena and specifically entry into it through the Despeñaperros passway, which became the "European gateway" and "entrance into paradise", the former was so great that Dumas' apothegm of "Africa begins in the Pyrenees" could be replaced by this one: "Africa begins in Despeñaperros" (vid. López Ontiveros, 1991 and 2002).

But this attraction for Spain and Andalusia is, in turn, fruit of the romantic preference for the East – within the previously alluded to dichotomy of East vs. West – and for the South – victim of another antinomy - opposed to the North. Baltanás (2003, 57-59) writes that:

" *The East*, for the writers of the (Andalusian) cycle, was not a geographical place, but a utopia, a symbol, a yearning. Saying *east* is like saying *the other, something different, mysterious*. Everything the West is not.

But one must not forget that "Andalusia is the East really close by, the closest, the East enfolded into Europe's own heart". However, observe how the same Baltanás (2003,

191) links the eastern condition of our region with the fact that it is quintessentially the South:

“The romantic orientalization of Andalusia was advantaged by its southern geographical location. The East does not mean the east coast, or the East, but the South...

Andalusia is the South by antonomasia. South of the Iberian peninsula and south of Europe. Sunny, burning lands compared with the cold, misty ones.... it is usually accepted as an incomplete truth that the romantics discovered the south and the east; men from the Northern lands, the first romantics considered the South as paradise lost”:

VI.2. A romantic liking for moors and historicism.

The question remains to be asked that, if for the Romantic Andalusia was Africa, paradise, the south, the east, what exactly were the contents of this clichéd image of the region, which is also paradigmatic of Spain, and which elements moulded it. We cannot hope to offer a detailed response to this question and shall therefore merely allude to three components of this image, all totally geographical, and which equally impregnate the Mediterranean: one is of a general nature, another refers to physical geography and a third to human geography.

We could call the first one *romantic maurophilia and historicism*, whereby the romantic conception of the travelogue always contains an obsessive recourse to history, exalting former glories, which in Andalusia invariably entail the Moslem age, and which contrast with contemporary decadence. The Moors and people from the east therefore appear to be the almost absolute creators of their physical, human and artistic landscape, any other ingredient being frequently underestimated.

Texts from western travellers proving this generously abound and coincide with those of Arab travellers to Spain, partly influenced by those men of letters - Irving, Chateaubriand- but with the major contribution of “the sensitive or sensual idea of what is Spanish, almost always what is Andalusia, genuinely Arabic, so they therefore have no need of foreign theories to support them” (Paradela Alonso, 1993).

Lastly, we should point out that the clichéd platitudes of this maurophilic historicism are not always useful for geography, but when moderately applied, they have done much towards an understanding and explanation of our villages and towns, which nearly all contained urban planning and architecture of Moslem imprint in the nineteenth century.

Our agrarian landscapes, particularly the market gardens and those in the mountains were also of Moorish extraction, not to mention a multitude of ethnological, social etc. traits which have been influenced by this historical trace. It is quite another thing for this component to be made exclusive and ignore any other influences.

On the other hand, it is common knowledge that this maurophilia may be at the heart of a historicist vision regarding Andalusia's origins, which they exclusively attribute to the Arab influence and which contrasts and clashes with another, swaying the balance in favour of a Castilian origin (López Ontiveros, 2003, 38 and foll.). From a geographical viewpoint, we may possibly be more interested in the specific view of Lautensach (1967, 187 and foll.), who highlights several significant spatial aspects where the Moslem component is very important for "the development of the Spanish cultural landscape", and particularly for the Andalusia cultural landscape. The following are data provided by this author, and several other from our own observations:

1st) A large number of Arabic words passed into the romance languages of the peninsula, and continue to be spoken today, and what is more important for us: the reverberations of the Arabic language and to a lesser extent the Berber language in the toponymy of the peninsula. There are no less than 2,911 place names, for settlements, mountains and regions, in the peninsular and the Balearic islands which are of Arabic or Berber origin. The density increases the further south one goes and is at its height in the Alpujarras: 75/1000 km².

2nd) The names of 302 rivers, appearing on Lautensach's map, have Arabic or arabised origins. The map shows five areas with arabised toponymia rising from north to south: I, the Cantabrian coast, without toponymns of this origin; II, the Duero and Ebro river basis with very few; III, the Tagus, Guadiana and Valencian river basis now with high density particularly down the Mediterranean side; IV, the Guadalquivir river basis similar in numbers; V, maximum density in what is today the southern Mediterranean rivers and the ancient Kingdom of Granada.

3rd) Of resounding interest is the map which Lautensach entitles "Architectonic geographical remains (mosques, minarets, bridges and hot springs) and of settlements

(towns with Moorish quarters or Moorish city walls and fortifications) and later repercussions (Mozarabic churches and in particular Mudejar buildings and houses with horizontal roofs) from Arabic times”, when four areas of great Arabic influence appeared in the Spanish geography: south of Aragon and in contact with Castile; the area around Valencia; Toledo and Northern Extremadura; and without any possible comparison, the whole of Andalusia and its continuation into Murcia. Proportionately to the duration of Moslem domination, the frequency of Arabic characters falls from south to north and from east to west.

4th) With regard to agrarian geography the legacies are even more relevant, if at all possible:

- Arable plants introduced or reintroduced: date palms, bitter orange, lemon trees, pomegranate, carob beans, mulberry, apricot, banana, sugar cane, rice, cotton, saffron, aubergine, water melon and tiger nut. The same goes for the production of “Malaga raisins”.

- Creation, development and expansion of a good part of the existing irrigated lands up to contemporary times, either in the shape of large market gardens like the Vega de Granada, or in the proliferation of hundreds of small plots which have had such a great significance in the diversification of the diet and in the provision of vitamins until the disappearance of local self-government. The Moslems also contributed their hydraulic infrastructures and water distribution to these irrigated crops, as well as many of their technical talents.

- They were also responsible both in irrigated crops and equally in many dry crops, for the construction of lands which were at times unimaginable due to the profusion and difficulty of terraces, patches, hedges, clearing and defence of slopes or coastal areas, etc

- In livestock we must not ignore the introduction of the Merino sheep, with such a brilliant future for our migrating livestock organisation (“Mesta”).

- And lastly, important but disputed, is the Moorish contribution to the measurements of land in Andalusia, the thesis defended by Ferrer and González (1996) and commented upon by López Ontiveros (1999), which shows “that it is from the Roman-Moslem-castillian mixture where the Andalusian surveying system originates”.

To conclude, the Moslem influence cannot be omitted from the geographic structure of Andalusia, although neither can, by any means, the Castilian. For example, in each and every one of the aspects where we have emphasized the former, the latter is crushingly proven by data and arguments, although they are, however, essentially based on expelling the population en masse, and repopulating it with Castilian Spaniards instead.

Of all that has been mentioned, one thing is clear geographically: that the romantic image of Spain and Andalusia, coming from maurophilia, which is based on more or less exaggerated facts, presents us with these territories among all the circumeditarranean lands, as those which share and integrate elements from the Mediterranean, western and Christian North, as well as the oriental, African and Islamic South.

VI.3. The climate, vegetation and crops in the Romantic image of Andalusia

Another element of physical geography characterising the Andalusian romantic image is the *climate*. This maybe forms one of the main ingredients of the “Andalusian paradise” but there are very few explicit references to it and even far fewer fine-tuned distinctions of it, the majority of authors confining themselves to a single praise regarding this aspect. However, we may reach several conclusions to sum up the perception of the climate which the Romantic travellers held, which are:

- They are obviously surprised by and emphasize the absolute summer drought (Gautier states in his notebook; “we saw a cloud as something extraordinary”) and in general the purity of the air. This, for the aesthetes they were, mainly implied an effusion of light and colour which is why their scenic descriptions are frequently based on tint and hue, assisted by the absence of vegetation and the tortuous Andalusian mountain geology.

- Obviously they could not help but experience and report on the tyranny of this climate, alluding to the heat, sirocco, calina and in virtue of a clumsy determinism, attribute its cause to a beneficial environment – the singular fertility of the Baetica – in turn the basis of the Andalusian sloth and joyful poverty of its inhabitants, a crucial issue within the travel ideas of the time.

I believe Quiot (1998, 303 y 307) succinctly develops what is called the third cliché of current Mediterraneanness, created by tourism, and which, coinciding with that stated previously, is “the Mediterranean, associated with an unmitigating sun”, ensuring beach tanning, but clashing with the architectonic and landscape practices of the area where they

are always searching for freshness and shade. And, according to this author, Mediterranean is also associated with “winter sweetness because the tropics are there”. There is no doubt that this idea of what is Mediterranean is the same as that attributed to Spain and especially Andalusia in the Romantic geographic image.

With regard to *natural vegetation and crops* –which for many is the same – they are exceedingly interested in the exotic and colourful African species: prickly pear, agaves, rosebay, figs, cotton, sugar cane, custard apples, sweet potato, orange trees, lemon trees, palm trees... From this phytogeography someone unfamiliar with Andalusia reaches the conclusion that our region is completely covered in agaves, prickly pears, palm trees and orange groves, with a few olive trees and naturally no cereals, since these are very rarely mentioned because the travellers were familiar with them from their own countries. An elegant text by Willkomm (1997, 257-258) about Motril and its fertile plain is, in my opinion, a very good example of the geobotanic preferences mentioned:

“In the abundant gardens and vegetable patches, not only found outside the town but also between the houses, you can find palm trees, bananas, custard apples, avocados, erythras, cassias and other exotic trees and shrubs originating from tropical America. The giant cactus, the largest I have ever seen; sugar cane plantations with their soft green colour; the cotton plantations covered with yellow flowers; the prickly pineapple; the humidity and heat from this fertile plain are elements which confer Motril with an appearance more akin to the Antilles than to Europe or the East. The plain is tremendously fertile and a good sample of this is the enormous quantity of melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, water melons, pineapples, tomatoes, peppers, vegetables and roots of all types which are taken to the city market every morning where they are put into towering piles”.

Also, the treatment of the olive tree is a very good example of the Romantic traveller’s point of view on vegetation and crops. This tree takes special precedence from an aesthetic point of view and they feel a fascination for it, based on the exotic feeling it has for not existing in central and northern Europe where a good many of the travellers come from. However, this appeal contrasts with the psychological revulsion it almost unanimously aroused in all of them; I am unaware of the possible basis for this reaction –maybe due to the pale, dull colour of the leaves but it is well documented in many texts, similar to this one of Doré and Daviller: “from the scenic point of view the olive tree is a sad, grey unpleasant tree on the landscape”.

Our conclusions also fully coincide here with those of Quiot (1998, 310 and foll.), who in his refined and precise analysis of the Mediterranean vegetation imposed and desired by tourism, bases the latter on the pseudo-tropical climatic characters attributed to the region in the simplification of a “Mediterranean associated with a single entity”, when in reality it is a profuse mosaic of vegetable and plant formations. Of them all, states this author, the most praised is “the mythical palm tree” (which among the travellers to Andalusia is also the most admired plant) but also several others which the northern Europeans considered exotic (bamboo, coconut palms, citrus fruits, bay, thuja, agaves, yuccas, etc.), sometimes paying very little attention to the many and very interesting autochthonous species.

What is obvious is that the romantic phytogeography of Spain and Andalusia totally coincides with that conferred by recent tourism to the Mediterranean; both are presided over by the exaltation of the exotic which the people from the north encourage, and an imprecise geographical mix-up of the Mediterranean, the tropical, the African and even the “American”.

VI.4. Observations on the Romanic Andalusian city

Lastly, in our portrayal of the Romantic image of Andalusia, we will refer to that conveyed to us about the *Andalusian city*. In the previous century, that is to say, in the 18th century, there was a profound debate in travel literature, and throughout the whole artistic philosophical world, on urban actually meant, which resisted the idea of Moslem, maze-like and chaotic urban planning, in favour of the seventeenth century urban planning, geometrically and hypodamically stamped. Let us see what the main characteristics of this urban planning was, favoured by the said travellers, in this eloquent text by Ponz:

“Several things have to be combined for the beauty and magnificence of a city: unencumbered entrances; the number of doors corresponding to its grandeur; that there are many interconnecting streets; that the main ones are straight and wide... but they should not all be the same in width and straightness, because ridiculous and total uniformity would be vexatious; (...) the squares should be multiple to let the neighbourhoods breathe (and have to be) rectangular, circular and elliptical”:

And on the contrary, we see how the same author judges the urban planning of Seville – just as he does that of Toledo -, which is of Islamic origin and conception. Ponz says:

“Its streets are very badly paved, (which) were left so by superstition or Moorish rusticity as disorderly and narrow and (which) many more have remained so up until now in Spain, as I said to V. talking about Toledo. There was no thought for improving them, our kings continued with the

same ideas and upheld the architects of that nation (...). The bad shape and deformity of the cities will never be put right unless they are remade (...) (At the same time) the squares in Seville lack proportion and regularity or lack the accompaniment of buildings with some uniformity which could then allow them to be called more spacious places”.

In keeping with this thought on what urban means, the Enlightenment travellers also had a very critical appreciation of monuments in the so-called “Churrigueresque baroque”, a style which is generally found, it is said, in our churches and convents, a certain respect, but not enthusiasm, for gothic art, and an attitude ranging between indifference and mere curiosity regarding our Arabic monuments (see especially López Ontiveros, 2001, 21-22 and Puente, 1968, 209 and foll.). What concerns us now is to state how the Romantic travellers totally inverted this perceptive paradigm, as may be seen in the brief appreciations made hereinafter.

1st) *The Andalusian cities are generally conceived of as having a Moslem origin and mould*, which was truly paradigmatic for some of our then most emblematic old quarters, for example Cordoba, Granada, Seville, Ronda, etc. but this statement should not be exaggerated, since Terán (2004, 45), when commenting upon a work by Niemeyer in 1936, said that the latter “felt himself obliged to state that in Andalusian towns and villages the genuinely Moorish imprint is the least frequent”. Consider, however, that this observation cannot lead to underestimate the Arabic or Moorish element in the towns perceived and described by the Romantics because the time of both statements is different, because in the large provincial towns and main villages, particularly the most inner parts of them, which are those preferred by the Romantics, the Moslem influence is unquestionable.

2nd) With regard to *Arabic monumentalism*, which is the one preferred by the Romantic traveller and significantly present in the three Andalusian cities – Granada, Seville and Cordoba- it is the root cause of them supremely becoming “the promised lands of the Romantic travellers”. Three monuments in particular – Granada’s Alhambra and Generalife, Cordoba’s mosque and Seville’s citadel - may alone have caused a good part of the travel avalanche of the nineteenth century. Let us ponder upon some of the eulogies made by travellers about the Mosque in Cordoba as living proof of how important the Arabic monumentalism was: “enormous and unique Mosque” according to Andersen;

“even today, by universal opinion”, says Amicis, “it is the most beautiful Moslem temple in existence, and one of the most admirable monuments on earth”; “singular building worldwide” for the Baron Davillier; “Unique monument in the world and completely new, even for those who have had the occasion to admire the marvels of Arabic architecture in Granada and Seville”, according to Gautier.

3rd) *The Oriental and African features of the Andalusian town* form the key to the Romantic image of our cities and I think are represented in Cordoba in a paradigmatic way. My observations in this regard are the following ones (López Ontiveros, 1991):

The fact, that Cordoba has experienced a profound decadence since the Arab era is not a hindrance for its nineteenth century visitors to continue regarding it as a “genuinely Moorish”, “completely Oriental” city “whose uses and customs bear no similarity at all to that of Europe”, which “looks like the Moors left yesterday” and if they could return “would not have to do much to established themselves in it again”. Finally, as Poitou says, “Cordoba has partly preserved the appearance and deep-set engraving of a civilisation which once flourished within it”.

But, what are the elements of its urban planning which define this African, Moorish and Oriental Cordoba? Its rambling, narrow streets, its white houses and its barred windows and patios with galleries, all in perfect harmony and inextricably combined in the visitor’s image.

With regard to the *street network*, the travellers agree that these are short, narrow, windy, and rambling “alleys” rather than streets. Quinet’s brief observation is illustrative on the rambling streets: “The streets of this town of houris instead of going from one place to another, double back, they fold in on themselves in inextricable labyrinths.” And when traversing this labyrinth, as Wylie elegantly writes, “it’s as if you were crossing a sea with no course, or a desert without directions, you have to be guided by the sun by day and the stars at night”.

The *houses* themselves are neither spacious nor high, with flat roofs and roof terraces, a few latticed windows on the outside. However, some authors later refer to house with balconies. And all the travellers equally emphasize the pure white of the whitewashed

walls helping to give them an appearance of cleanliness and newness which, as Gautier says, “thanks to the lime, the wall constructed one hundred years ago cannot be distinguished from that completed yesterday”.

Notwithstanding, the element from the house which most attracts the traveller’s attention are the *patios*. Outside door, vestibule, central patio, adjacent galleries, etc. are its basic elements and its originality springs from the fact that, as commented upon by Amicis, “it is not exactly a patio as such, nor a garden, nor a room, but all three in one.”

Surprisingly -since this is running forward more than a century to the current trend which attaches so much value to urban vegetation – the travellers emphasize the city’s *tropical or African fruits and flowers* which, in keeping with what has already been said about them in general, are mainly to be found in patios, vegetable patches and private gardens.

But of course, whatever has been said about the Moorish and Oriental character of Cordoba can also be said of many other Andalusian cities such as Granada, Seville, Malaga, Almeria... and so many others.

Now that we have a rough idea of the Romantic image of the Andalusian city, we need to ask what assessment is conveyed to us by the nineteenth century travellers about Andalusian town planning as a whole. It may clearly be observed that, as the century progresses, Cordobese urban planning as a whole, as well as the previously mentioned elements, are highly rated, at times even to the extreme, by a good number of travellers. Latour, in a tale of great Romanic purity discovers a “melancholic charm” to the city; Amicis, exaggerating, breathes “the air of another world” here because “it is in the East”; Godard, when surveying the patios of Cordoba uses the expressions “earthly paradise” and “garden of Eden”. In their lingering and charmed descriptions they all denote an empathy and high assessment of the object described: Cordoba.

In my opinion, there are three main reasons for the authors’ favourable opinion of Cordobese urban planning: the exotic and eastern nature of the city, something completely novel to them; its decadence itself which, as Godard says, promotes silence and meditation, rare in the European cities transformed by the industrial revolution; and the climate, the sun and light, so highly valued by those who in general come from the

northern mists. However, these three reasons are not just confined to Cordoba, they are the common ingredients of the “Andalusian paradise” which, continues to be sold today as tourism merchandise. None the less, in the nineteenth century, many travellers believed they had found this paradise practically in its purest state in Cordoba, many others also in Granada and other cities.

Finally, from a geographical viewpoint I relieve the major contribution of these writings stems from the fact that the authors were skilled at elegantly and succinctly characterising and describing the Islamic-based urban planning of the Andalusian city, which had hardly altered at all. To conclude, this drew Andalusia once more to the Islamic and African part of the Mediterranean, converting Spain and this region into the paradigm and link to Mediterraneanness.

VII. THE EXPANSION OF ROMANTIC PLATITUDES IN SPANISH AND ANDALUSIAN GEOGRAPHY

The Romantic image of Andalusia, which has already been analysed, had an intense effect on the geographers, and thus M. Sorre (1934, 13) in the renowned “Universal Geography”, guided by Vidal de la Blache y Gallois, on the subject, speaks of “African affinities” and “reflections of the East” which are found in Andalusia and are present throughout history; of the “strong seduction” and “nostalgic recall of beauty” which its vision leaves; of its early and ancient civilisation; of its light, its voluptuousness, etc. No doubt all these expressions are resonances of the Romantic idea and are also rooted in Andalusia. However, it is Sermet who is the supreme continuer and spreader of this Romantic ideology in Andalusian geography and the key geographer in this respect.

In fact, this author, in his works dated 1956, 1958 and 1975, creates an unusual geographic translation of the Romantic idea, underlining the African and Oriental nature of Andalusia, based on foreigners’ perception of how exotic it is. According to him, this bestows on it a personality and originality which is also derived from being a truly natural combination, as well as not to mention having the same human types and presenting a similar historical development in which naturally the Moorish influence is of overwhelming influence. The wealth attributed to Andalusia, in line with the vision of paradise the Romanic travellers had, is totally disproportionate and, faced with such obvious misery, there was no choice but to attribute it to that also overused Romantic recourse of “joyful poverty”.

Finally, it is paradigmatic in Sermet to affirm that Andalusia is the amalgamation of Spain, precisely because it is its core, the most singular region. Of course, all these affirmations are disputable and many of them inadmissible due to the justification of totally unacceptable situations, but neither can it be denied that Sermet had foresight in his intuitions and his definition of many geographical characters of Andalusia doubtless arising from the Moslem influence of its history. However, no current day geographer accepts his conclusive affirmation about the natural unity of Andalusia.

To a greater or lesser extent, Sermet's beliefs influenced the geographers who recently tackled Andalusia, particularly with regard to its personality and originality. Themes of this kind many be found from Otero Pedrayo (1956, 98 y 102) to García Manrique (1980, 17), as well as the French geographers Drain (1979, 15), Huetz de Lempdes (1976, 133-134) and Humbert (1992, 85-86). But there are others who make more of the subject. This is the case of Cano (1987, 15 and foll.), for whom Andalusia is a "distinguished space", but with a weak "natural identity". Recently, this same author (2001, 25 and foll.) has, nevertheless, underlined "the difference of Andalusia compared with the rest of the peninsula, owing to a series of factors which are natural in origin, but which affect other elements". And lastly, it is also Bosque who has an influence on the subject. Let us glance at the following text by this author and verify the sharp echoes of Sermet's ideas:

"No other Spanish region has so much international prestige. This prestige is, without a doubt, the consequence of its geographic personality. It is explained thus, as Sorre says, more than any other part of the Peninsula, «Andalusia strongly seduces the imagination». The first reason for an attraction of this kind resides in its millennium culture, converting Andalusia into the most venerable cultural focus of Western Europe. Moreover, however, its nature promotes its seduction: a gentle and sweet climate, its river rich landscapes, its pure blue and transparent sky, its abundant natural riches have always been an attraction for the inhabitants of the dry Castilian Plain, of the wild Atlas or the desolate Sahara. And lastly, its location at one of the crossroads of the ancient and modern world, dominating the Atlantic-Mediterranean interflow and putting Europe and Africa into contact".

However further on in the same book, in a more specific manner, he affirms that Andalusia "is not a natural region, in neither relief, nor climate nor vegetation" and that "the unity of Andalusia springs more from its past history, its people, than its physical framework Andalusia rooted in Tartessos and Rome, transformed by Islam, is like an Eastern progress

rooted in Western Europe” (Bosque, 1987, 423-4). Once cleared of all ambiguous nuances, almost all the rest of what this author says summarises what the geographers have recently expressed about the personality and originality of Andalusia, which reiterates the ideas of Sermet and which is rooted in the Romantic concept of Andalusia.

Sermet also had some influence on non geographer authors, on political experts and “Andalusia enthusiasts”. In one case, that of Clavero Arévalo, 1984, not only are his theories used, but they become the basis for *Being Andalusian*, which develops some of this author’s themes, or even exaggerate them, such as the following: climatic determinism in the physical, psychological and cultural characteristics of the Andalusian; permanence in the same territory from Tartessos to the current day; panandalucism which Morocco also forms part of, etc. In sum, this is a syncretic thought with an explicit and exaggerated influence of Sermet, though no geographer of the present day could accept that closed and absolute unit of the physical Andalusian frame nor that sometimes even physical determinism without distinctions.

To conclude, the following reflections could be pertinent. Despite the discrepancies, all authors, without any significant exception, attribute Andalusia with an undeniable existence, a lively geographic personality and a clear-cut originality, whilst at the same time being the genuine paradigm of Spain. These fundamental but extremely important characters were not discovered by the Romantic travellers but the latter fixed them into the basis of understanding for Andalusia and Spain. Sermet adapted the Romantic platitudes to Andalusian Geography and bestowed them with certain spatial groundings, conveying them to the geographers who were concerned with the region and to some Andalusia enthusiasts. The geographers, however, mostly renounced an unacceptable natural unity of Andalusia, as the basis of regional unity and personality.

We must be cautious about discerning the laudable virtues and rejectable aspects of this Romantic idea of Andalusia, but some opinions may be put forward. The greatest benefit of the Romantic idea, and that of its geographical follower that Sermet is, is that they created an appealing image of the region and made this known in Spain and abroad, following centuries of omission.

Moreover, together with this, an exaggerated optimism, an image of the world view of Andalusia, led them to believe in an undying regional wealth, when historically Andalusia was drowning in deepest underdevelopment. Within this context, any attempted justification of the social and financial backwardness of the region is unacceptable.

VIII. FINAL THOUGHTS

- The definition and limits of the Mediterranean are difficult issues, and cannot be meticulously formed in any type of bibliography but from the Romantic period up until present day, they are unavoidable not only for geography and other earth disciplines or sciences, but also for history and social sciences.

- The cultural unity of the Mediterranean is a particularly complex issue, since two irreconcilable concepts clash: one denies it and the other affirms it, albeit under the acknowledgement that serious conflicts exist in the region, accepting many nuances on the subject, giving rise to doubts, creating contradictions.

- On the contrary, everyone accepts the precise existence of a Mediterranean geography, basically identifiable, above all, as a climate and landscape of a certain nature. Once the content and main elements of this have been defined, the Mediterranean agrarian landscapes, which are so complex and plethoric in significance, gain major ground. .

- Terán convincingly defined the I.P. as the combiner of Atlantic and Mediterranean elements with a clear predominance of the latter. Moreover, Andalusia is especially evolved in this Mediterraneanness due to its proximity to Africa, its extensive coastline in the *Mare Nostrum*, for its persistent of Moslem occupation etc.

- But the genuine nature of this Andalusian Mediterraneanness is particularly the fruit of the Romantic image of the region, the geographical traits and components of which we have tried to define. This understanding, which in itself is mainly aesthetic (literature, arts etc.) has also impregnated Spanish geography, thanks to Sermet's writings and gracefulness, promoting and adapting the Romantic clichés to our discipline and dispersing them among geographers and other scientists. In any case, Sermet's work is a passionate cry to the South, to the Mediterranean, to Andalusia which in Spain is quintessential

Mediterraneaness and to which, according to him, befits all the clichés the Romantics attributed to this appealing multicontinental and multicultural space.

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