

14

TRAVEL STORIES AND TRAVELERS

Transdisciplinary approaches and proposals for a history of Europe

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Histories of transcontinental movements in the history of Europe

It was in the second half of the last century that a new historiographical paradigm was inaugurated that radically altered the traditional approach to political, cultural, and social history. Indeed, it was in 1949 when Fernand Braudel published the volume *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. The protagonist of the French historian's investigation is the Mediterranean, the subject and no longer solely the object of analysis, which passes under Braudel's lens over a long period of time, where the marriage of history and geography is fundamental for understanding the same social and cultural dynamics. It is a methodological approach that Lucio Gambi (1972) called "the historical values of environmental frameworks," i.e., the interaction between humans and nature, interpreted and revived by the Anglophone school by focusing on the dimension of individual histories of which David Abulafia (2013), Monique O'Connell and Eric Dursteler (2016) are spokespersons.

Mobility is the key to understanding human history, and many scholars have focused on migration flows in recent years. As mentioned by Ian Coller (2020), the French Revolution produced multiple outcomes in many ways and far beyond the territories occupied by Napoleonic troops; as well as other significant revolutionary frictions. The transnational approach and the use of biographical sources are the methodological choices of 19th-century historians such as Maurizio Isabella (2011), Konstantina Zanou (2018), Julia Clancy Smith (2013), and Michael Broers (2014) and are capable of constructing a "new thalassology" of the Mediterranean, which chronicles the impact of Mediterranean migrations on the construction of European identity (Guarracino, 2007).

It is now well established that voyages, conquests, and economic expansions are not a phenomenon of the Modern Age but have occurred over millennia.

Piracy and related forms of maritime violence, for example, are almost 3,000 years old: from the late Mediterranean Bronze Age to the eve of the 21st century. The phenomenon should therefore be studied from a long-term global and historical perspective, although the importance of specific historical factors should not be overlooked, as M. Bloch (1953) has pointed out. Piracy can also be studied from an economic perspective in the context of which market access is of paramount importance (Leeson, 2009).

Human history is a history of mobility, and the cipher of modernity and actuality is mobility itself (Clancy-Smith): studying it allows us to continue the reflections of one of the promoters of world history. Christopher Bayly (2019) recalls “the idea that there is some contradiction between the study of the social fragment or the powerless and the study of the great processes that have constructed modernity.” In this sense, the teaching and learning of history today can only start from the recovery of the value of contamination between cultures, which means first and foremost rediscovering the roots of European identity for an education for peace and for active and democratic citizenship that is able to stimulate the younger generations to investigate and reflect on the present and guide them on how to work together as citizens for effective integration policies.

The routes of history: itineraries, routes, and cultures

From the very origin of travel in human history, roads – at first roadways – and routes represented, as they do today, the expression of man’s great mobility and were the means that made possible the encounter of different cultures. Explorers, conquerors, merchants, refugees, bandits, corsairs, wayfarers, pilgrims, students, and the curious, with their movements and exchanges over millennia, have composed the varied and rich cultural mosaic of our continents; from that distant journey of humans from Africa, we will take a great journey through time in the footsteps of men and women who were able, with their testimonies, to forge the European identity, starting from the relationship between nomads and the sedentary and between the moment of invention and the moment of construction and preservation.

Among the routes of history, the focus is on the routes of faith, which were constituted on the ancient Roman roads and represented an articulated system that contemplated multiple possibilities of connection between the different routes, allowing the ideal link that enabled the “holy places” to be united to each other also on a more concretely itinerary level.

As is well known, the agricultural revolution coincided with the first and greatest global demographic transformation that established a close and indissoluble link between the increase of foodstuffs and population growth that implied new agricultural frontiers, new territories, and thus considerable transformations of the environment. Relations among humans fostered, mainly through trade, the spread of ideas, techniques, and goods. Indeed, thanks to trade, groups of humans colonized territories permanently and transmitted their knowledge to other human groups (e.g., the effects of trade in the Danube valley). The theme therefore would extend to the

sea and trade routes, which in the second half of the 15th century expanded considerably. The most intense and important traffic of wide-ranging trade involved and connected the ports of Flanders and England to those of the Near East in a network involving major ports with ample receptive capacity and a considerable number of smaller ports of call, where, unlike the major ports of call, reception facilities were limited and services were mainly oriented to inland and local transport.

For many centuries it was the sea routes that conveyed the long-distance links, and there was no long-distance link that was not made through a sea route; and only exceptionally did the land ones have a dimension that holds up to comparison. It was on the trade routes, often coinciding with devotional routes and thus the ancient Roman road axes, that the encounter of humanity on the move began. These included the amber, silk, gold, and salt routes.

Sea travel and trade: production, transportation, markets, and stakeholders

The earth's surface is composed of about 30 percent land and 70 percent water, of which about 97 percent is ocean. The connection with this element of nature has been – and continues to be – fundamental to the survival of the human species. The sea has also been the main carrier of commerce for centuries: propelling a boat over water requires infinitely less energy than land transport. There is a wide assortment of vessels, and numerous trade routes have begun to emerge since prehistoric times. It is believed that the Egyptians were among the first Mediterranean civilizations to engage in river and sea transportation. The earliest boats were probably rafts made from papyrus reeds, while wooden boats are speculated to have been adopted during the Neolithic period (6,000 BCE), around the same time as the introduction of agriculture and animal husbandry.

The gradual development of increasingly large port infrastructures in various parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia meant that as early as the Hellenistic period (323–31 BCE), there was an entire network consisting of main ports (Ancient Coastal Settlements) intended for international trade (emporiums) and “secondary” facilities. Huge transformations in the scale and complexity of Roman maritime trade, and the associated infrastructure, occurred between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE. The economic, social, and cultural pattern that then developed in the Roman world created an unprecedented demand for consumption (Young Gary, 2001). The new needs triggered the development of new infrastructure and profound innovations in construction techniques, making it possible to create artificial harbors. Indeed, in the 2nd century BCE a major technological revolution took place: the introduction of hydraulic concrete enabled the construction of completely artificial harbors with imposing concrete piers; they could be located on open coasts that were not naturally protected.

Archaeological research on the coasts of northern Germany and southern Scandinavia has uncovered several dozen sites from the Viking Age (750–1050 CE) embedded in a supra-regional network of trade and communication in the North

Sea and Baltic Sea area. Numerous boat landing places have been identified. In written sources they are usually described as trading posts or market places. Significant finds of Arab silver coins, dated from the late 8th century onward, reflect the gradual growth of trade with the Arab world.

Beginning in the 11th century CE, strong urban growth and significant trade development is attested in Europe where Mediterranean ports become crucial to the economy. There is a major restructuring of equipped landings and ports of call that gradually enter a complex system linking production and market areas, providing a strong stimulus to the economy and investment. In this scenario an important role is played by the already mentioned Vikings, whom we can point to as the first European merchants and navigators who connected seas and oceans around the year 1000. However, it should be remembered that before that period, sources record Viking attacks (793) on monasteries such as Lindisfarne, on the coast of Northumberland in the British Isles, and St. Philibert, at the mouth of the Loire (799). History is also inextricably linked to maritime violence (Williams, 2000).

As already mentioned, from the 11th century there was a considerable growth in productive activity that was evident in the expansion of maritime trade (Simbula, 2009). The commercial success of Italian port cities, which were among the major beneficiaries of this expansion, produced not only prosperity but also more aggressive maritime strategies.

Improvements in technology in the 12th century enabled ships to make longer and more frequent voyages with longer sailing seasons, relying on the compass, nautical instruction books, and maps. In ancient times sailors used the position of the stars to know the location of places; instruments such as periples are also known, such as that of the Red Sea (1st century CE) describing navigation routes across that sea and, to some extent, across the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. In the Middle Ages pilot books and nautical charts became more widespread.

This combination of factors and technological advances made both warships and cargo ships more effective. Competition for trade guided the naval policy of the so-called maritime republics and other geopolitical entities as well. The maritime economy and naval strength allowed Venice a thalassocracy that lasted several centuries during which the city was able to rely on a widespread distribution of trading bases and colonies; in addition, the Venetians knew how to adapt ships to specific missions.

The port system and trade network showed full structuring in the 14th century when the Mediterranean became a set of interconnected sea and land routes and, at the same time, was the shared setting of three distinct economic and cultural areas (West, East, Islam). The trading companies of the maritime republics of Genoa and Venice not only integrated the various networks of the Mediterranean but expanded them to the Atlantic and the North Sea.

The business records produced over a 50-year period (1380–1410) of activity by the companies of Prato merchant Francesco di Marco Datini highlight how Western and Southern Europe and the Near East were at that time already connected by established networks.

Fernand Braudel (1949) speaks of a “northern invasion” in the Mediterranean in referring to the Dutch and English who, beginning in the late 16th century, maintained control of the Mediterranean throughout the seventeenth century.

Although a base of livelihood and source of wealth, the sea is also perceived as a threat, so much so that numerous myths of sea monsters and sea gods have arisen. Every culture that has had contact with the sea has at least one sea monster in its mythological history. Shipwrecks testify to how real these fears were, and, on the other hand, underwater archaeology, crucial to the study of seafaring, shows how wrecked ships can enrich our knowledge of international contacts and networks developed among the various players in maritime trade in centuries past (Jowitt et al., 2020).

Among the threats, besides shipwrecks, piracy has never been absent. The presence in all the world’s languages of the word ‘pirate,’ which derives from the Greek verb *peiràn* and means ‘to assault,’ testifies that piracy is a phenomenon as old as shipping itself and is recurrent in universal history (Braccesi, 2004). There are different types of piratical activities: an initial, though rather fluid, distinction can be made between privateers and pirates. A privateer can be defined as one who, provided with authorization from an official government, acts against enemy ships of the state he serves; a pirate, on the other hand, is one who assaults ships solely for his own interest and without legitimacy from monarchs, local governors, or other minor officials. But the blurry line between pirates and privateers could easily be crossed, and many acts of piracy were committed under false pretenses against non-enemies and in peacetime.

Maritime predation became very intense between 1620 and 1720, a period known as the Golden Age of Piracy. It took place mainly in the Caribbean and in the waters off the American colonies. The exploits of pirates inspired creation of many legendary figures and a genre of literature, including Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) or Emilio Salgàri’s *Pirates of Malaya* (1896).

Other terms have been used to refer to types of marauders of the sea: buccaneers and filibusters. In the Caribbean islands, buccaneers got this name from the boucan, a tool used to smoke meat. Although piracy declined dramatically in the 19th century, serious incidents occurred off the coast of Africa, particularly in Somalia, where in 2008 acts of piracy included the hijacking of ships belonging to different countries, which caused warships from different navies to intervene. In late 2008, the European Union organized Operation Atalanta for the freedom of navigation of merchant traffic and in particular for the transport of World Food Program humanitarian aid in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. The naval military operation, which has included among its objectives the fight against arms and drug trafficking, will end on December 31, 2022.

Travel and mirages: slavery of yesterday and today

Human history has long been, and unfortunately still is, a history of various forms of slavery. Although condemned by the Geneva Convention of 1926, it continues to exist in some countries. In particular, Article 1 (FedLex – Confederazione

Svizzera: https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/46/696_714_724/it) of the aforementioned Convention defines slavery as “the state or condition of an individual over whom the prerogatives of the right of ownership are exercised,” while the slave trade includes:

Any act of capturing, purchasing an individual for the purpose of reducing him or her to slavery; any act of purchasing a slave for the purpose of exchanging or selling him or her; any act of transferring for sale or by exchange a slave purchased for the purpose of being sold or exchanged, as well as, in general, any act of trading in or transporting slaves.

Wars, invasions, and colonization were among the main causes that fueled, in every different time and place on the planet, a profitable trade with slaves being the cheapest labor force. A journey that differs greatly from those analyzed so far in that it actually concerns a forced migration, that is, when people are compelled by force to leave their land of origin (Ceccatelli & Tirini, 2020).

Probably initiated with the sedentarization of man, and thus with the emergence of agriculture, slavery was present in the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations of the Assyrians, Sumerians, and Babylonians; in the Near Eastern civilizations of the Hittites and Hebrews; and in Egypt, India, and China. Indeed, slavery requires large lands to be exploited, economic surpluses, and high population density. It is because of these factors that it started from the Neolithic period and specifically about 11,000 years ago.

Slavery was not identical in every civilization; in some cases the slave had no rights and in others he or she was partially protected by law.

The phenomenon of slavery from the agricultural revolution to the present day is a practiced and accepted reality. Between the 16th and 20th centuries 12 million Africans, herded onto slave ships, many of whom died during the crossing, were deported to America as forced labor. In the 16th century, for the first time, Western civilization surpassed the Arab slave trade in export volume through the Atlantic slave trade of African slaves.

The spread of capitalism also moved through slave ships, which, with its many uses, played the role of transporting goods, men, and weapons; the vessels were, as they were called in the Igbo language, true “owba cococoo” (monstrous ships): places, therefore, of labor, confinement, trade, and plunder, of men who changed from slaves to submissive laborers and, through violence, forced subjects. Numerous were the revolts and mutinies.

As noted, slavery has existed as long as human history has existed. However, various forms of abolitionism were adopted over the centuries, i.e., movements aimed at abolishing slavery. In 1863, A. Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves held in the Confederate States.

Human history is a history of movement, and climate has been responsible for many of the profound transformations of the planet and human movements. During planetary migration, humans have extended and expanded natural frontiers;

they have, thanks to technological advances, explored the planet by plying seas and tracing pathways.

The peopling of the earth has involved continuous migrations. From the need for food, control of territory and conquest of other spaces, the desire to explore and the natural desire for adventure, and climate change humanity's journey began as early as 70,000 years ago when *Homo sapiens* successfully carried out a great planetary migration that reached and populated Eurasia from East Africa in a short time. All humans share a very high percentage of DNA that attests to the fact that we are all descendants of this group of African humans.

While humans traveled long distances, accomplishing the global migration that populated planet Earth, others continued to move daily within relatively small areas; many of these movements were linked to the changing seasons, the life cycle of plants, and to the very migrations of the animals on which humans fed.

Globalization is a very long process that has taken place over the last tens of thousands of years, from the earliest movements of the earliest human communities, constantly searching for resources to sustain themselves (Ambrosini, 2005). Although far less numerous and dense than today, they had to move to ever new areas in which to gather, hunt, and fish since they were still unable to produce their own food. Thus it was that from their areas of origin in East Africa they reached by groups the various continents, distributing themselves and placing themselves in all the habitable areas of the planet. They assumed from the climatic and environmental contexts those somatic differences that characterize the races, but which in reality have not changed the almost absolute identity of the human species, today confirmed by genetic investigations. It was in the horizons circumscribed by their rays of displacement the different linguistic strains arose and radiated.

Those millennia could be considered the times of separation since almost all the peoples who inhabited the different parts of the Earth were ignorant of the existence of the distant ones or at most had some legendary notion of it through those who initiated long-distance exchanges, assuming the function of mediators. One can thus designate those peoples who inhabited the hinge areas between continental contexts and who derived their livelihood precisely from the transportation and trade of products and raw materials of remote origin. Examples among the most recent include those peoples who between Asia and Europe activated the mythical routes of silk, spices, incense, and amber, which by overland tracks, river routes, and sea routes brought goods of distant origin to the extreme ends of Eurasia.

The climatic changes of the first centuries of the Vulgar Era, particularly the lowering of temperatures between the 5th and 6th centuries CE, certainly influenced the movements of peoples in northern and eastern Europe who precisely then broke through the Rhine/Danube front that bounded the Roman Empire to the northeast. In the five centuries between 800 and 1300 global temperatures averaged at least one degree higher than today. Just within this period – and especially from the 11th century onward – Europe's population increased to levels later reached only with the Industrial Revolution. The “warm Middle Ages” ended in

the early 14th century with a sharp drop in temperatures (mini-glaciation) that was accompanied by famines and followed by extensive plague epidemics and consequent sharp population decline. The mini-glaciation had its coldest period in the 1600s and continued until 1850 with average temperatures of 2.5 to 3 degrees lower than today (Ashtor, 1982).

The sea is also the scene of several illicit trades. Since ancient times among the “merchandise” transported have appeared slaves. Homer refers to Phoenicians moving through Greek waters, between Libya, Ithaca, and Lemno, landing at ports to sell slaves and products of their metallurgy. For the Middle Ages we can mention, to limit ourselves to a very few examples, the flourishing slave market operated by Vikings, or that of 12th and 13th-century Spain, which traded Muslim slaves.

Of gigantic magnitude was the transatlantic slave trade that ran for more than 400 years (16th–19th centuries), involving millions of people mostly originating from the African coast, enslaved and deported to the Americas and the Caribbean islands (Curtin, 1969).

Speaking of the present-day Mediterranean, it must be remembered that it is a crossroads of the illicit drug trade. There are multiple trafficking streams: the two-way use of the Balkan route has recently been noted, which has seen an increased flow of drugs from Western Europe to Central and Southern Europe and Turkey.

Another truly global concern is migrant smuggling in which profit-seeking criminals take advantage of migrants willing to take risks in search of a better life when they cannot access legal channels of migration. It has been estimated that in 2020 alone, nearly 3,200 people lost their lives along global migration routes despite movement restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, this is not an accurate figure since it is not possible to count the victims of the ghost shipwrecks, barges that sank of which it is not possible to document the number of victims.

A history of Europe: teaching objectives and skills for participatory citizenship education

In the field of historiography, in order to make full use of the acquisitions of analytical research and local insights, it is necessary to broaden the horizons and reflection to the main outcomes of human history by seeking to detect and compare the climatic and environmental characters that have influenced the population and migratory movements, the economic and social dynamics that have resulted, and the political relations that have developed from them, observing in different contexts the influences of natural disasters, health events, and technological evolutions as well, of course, as the manifestation of cultural aspects and artistic expressions. These are key themes of World History, a discipline recognized as such in the 1980s and geared toward learning about historical unfolding and the connections underlying the constitution of the international order and the interdependencies between economic, political, social, and diplomatic factors in different areas of the world.

An attitude that fully emphasizes the study of world history, based on two main approaches, is considered fundamental: on the one hand, integration (syncretism) through which historical processes are emphasized that enable the comparison and identification of relationships between different cultures, between communities around the world that reveal similarities and kinship; and on the other hand, difference (discrepancy), by which the variety and thus the peculiarities of different human experiences and social patterns are emphasized. In short, it involves recognizing, distinguishing, and comparing the constants and variants, the general and the particular aspects that connote the evolutions of human affairs in all areas of the world.

History is understood as a continuous succession of changes over time, proceeded by evolutionary or transformational processes through incessant transitions in which developments, phenomena, events, motivations and accidentalities, environmental and human factors, and contrasts and coincidences intertwine, collide, rebound, deform, disappear, and reappear. It is influenced by causal relations but also by randomness. They are enacted according to an unfolding that is sometimes foreseen and sometimes unpredictable. All this converges to form “conjunctures,” in other words, those heterogeneous combinations of situations and facts which, precisely because of their internal complexity, are unrepeatable. Each period of history can be seen as the combination of a wide range of concomitant conditions, circumstances, factors, trends, and variations of remote, recent, or contemporary origin.

Recognizing that the reality in which we live is only one of a number of possible worlds, both with respect to the past and with respect to other contemporary and future societies, implies an awareness of the relative and provisional nature of civilizations. Social systems are complex and in motion; it is up to us to identify the conditions that favor or limit change or permanence (Borghi, 2016).

History becomes primarily the discovery of a pure otherness: at a given time, in a certain place, there were men and women who spoke a particular language, ate certain foods, inhabited and lived in certain dwellings, and were organized in given social forms, professing specific cults and religions; people and groups who have left us a heterogeneous heritage of experience and knowledge, as they contributed, as our ancestors, to shaping what we are today, influencing all aspects that affect us on a daily basis, from the tools and services we have to the communications and connections we use, from the words we use to the foods we eat.

Some transdisciplinary content: travel between devotion, curiosity, and necessity

In proposing the theme of “travel and travelers” over time and in order to better master the infinite variety of facts that concurred to such outcomes, we have identified some general aspects that in different historical periods have undergone remarkable transformations, such as the arrangements of peoples, their relationships with resources, and their cultural and religious references. These are useful

overviews to introduce and then follow in continuity their more minute transformations through the chronological succession of the essential events that affected them. An initial summary review of such strands can indeed usefully outline the frames of subsequent diachronic profiles to be conducted at different scales of magnitude: planetary, continental, national, and territorial.

The main objectives of the approach by outcomes of history are to offer a critical approach to the phenomenon of travel considered decisive for the elaboration of European societies and to gain insight into the complex relationships existing between different cultures through an approach by outcomes of history.

Identifying the fundamental phenomena of travel in the history of humankind and its intertwining of economic, social, and cultural aspects thus defines the indicators that make it possible to define the characteristics of societies and compare them with others. Knowing the fundamental moments and processes of the European history of travel with glimpses into world history, also starting from personal and local history, offers the opportunity to expound historical knowledge by making connections and arguing one's own reflections and to develop education for democratic citizenship through critical and responsible behavior inspired by the values of freedom and solidarity at all levels of organized life (local, national, European, and world).

Among the skills we can mention those of attributing meaning to the main forms of the journey through history and comparing them with current aspects as the result of an ultra-millennial process; of understanding the relationships between historical events and processes by distinguishing between historical unfolding, micro-histories and sectorial or thematic histories, to grasp the relationships between local history and national, European, or world history; of using in a relevant way and essential key steps in periodization and temporal organizers.

Also of particular relevance is the understanding and use of the methodology of historical research and to know how to use historical sources of different types (e.g., visual, multimedia, and dedicated websites) to construct historical knowledge, making use of disciplinary sectoral vocabulary. Experiential activities that enable students to recognize the historical component in current migrations and other forms of travel by implementing comparisons, comparisons and grasping persistence, continuity and discontinuity, and the variety and historical development of the phenomenon of travel and travelers to identify relationships with European and world contexts and intertwining with environmental, demographic, and social variables.

Skills and competencies should be aimed, therefore, at recognizing the contexts that induced humanity to move by identifying the evolutions of travel and in the traces of the present (material and immaterial heritage), the phenomena, and evolutions of the hybridization of past histories and cultures (Baumann, 2003).

Among the themes that can be proposed in a secondary school context, that of pilgrimage is of great and significant relevance (Cardini, 1996); representation of a typical religious, cultural, social, and economic expression that did not concern only the Middle Ages nor only Christians, but that in that era and among those

faithful involved women and men of all ages and social conditions on their way to the kingdom of heaven (Richard, 2002). The motives that drove them to face the countless hardships of pilgrimage can be summed up in that commitment of faith, that voluntary act toward a shrine, which is a deepening of one's existence; the religious dimension of a path of prayer and meditation; the personal desire to be *advevae et peregrini* in "adventure" toward God, toward that otherworldly goal that is the true homeland.

The earliest pilgrims are men who fade into myths and legends from the Bible to the *Odyssey* to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, from the Dolmen to Stonehenge. These are journeys linked to places that are objects of devotion in order to make contact with natural centers and with illustrious personages; to celebrate precise events; to draw from them information about destiny; to hope for a recovery from an illness; to venerate sacred images, objects, parts of a body, or relics. The exodus from Egypt is the model for excellence of pilgrimage in both Jewish and Christian traditions in which Egypt was a symbol of sin and of slavery from which the pilgrim frees himself by turning toward the authentic homeland: the Promised Land that becomes a great occasion for equality and brotherhood among all the children of Israel and a recognition of Jewish identity.

Traveling in today's times with male and female students is not unlike what wayfarers once did along ancient roads or plying the seas. Reflecting on the reasons why one chooses to embark on a journey, reach a place, be received in a facility, what to bring on a journey, and what one actually needs means constantly recalling the similarities and differences between the past and the present. It means, first and foremost, having a cultural experience and, as recalled by UNESCO (Unesco – World Heritage Convention: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention-text>), understanding the nature of tangible and intangible heritage by assuming the responsibility of caring for it, protecting it, and enhancing it; that is, sharing the knowledge of our common history in order to build mutual respect and common dialogue among communities.

Another topical issue that brings us back to sea travel again is maritime violence that has been accepted and/or tolerated for much of history. The raiding mentality, present in many societies around the world, even served to justify maritime violence, for example by conferring religious sanction on it and elevating the social status of the perpetrators, at least when the victims of such violence were foreigners or outsiders. Only with the formation and development of states in classical antiquity did piracy become more clearly defined and fully condemned. During the late Roman Republic, particularly beginning with the Greek historian Polybius (c. 200–118 BCE), piracy came to be defined as a particularly despicable activity, distinct from both other forms of violent crime and acts of war. According to Cicero (106–43 BCE), who is associated with the expression "pirates are common enemies of mankind," they were a threat to the social and political order of civilization, and consequently did not deserve to be treated with respect or decency but to be exterminated. Piracy was defined as a crime against the laws of all men (natural law) and their suppression was, according to Cicero, an obligation for all states.

The idea of pirates as enemies of mankind weakened with the fall of the Roman Empire, and it had to wait until the 15th century with the rediscovery of Cicero's writings. During this period, which coincided with the beginning of European expansion, the condemnation of piracy as contrary to natural law re-emerged; this condemnation also served to justify imperial expansion. It was not until the mid-19th century, however, that the major European powers renounced piracy as a means of exercising power over the sea.

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Digital resources

- Ancient Coastal Settlements, Ports and Harbours: A catalogue of Ancient Ports. Link: www.ancientportsantiques.com/
- Operation ATALANTA: Contributes significantly to the suppression of piracy, as well as the protection of the vessels of the World Food Programme (WFP), African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other vulnerable shipping. Link: <https://eunavfor.eu/>