Geopolitics and the geographical imagination in Fascist Italy

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Abstract

Geopolitics and the geographical imagination in Fascist Italy

The thesis provides a critical history of the Italian geopolitical movement of the inter-war period and especially its journal Geopolitica (1939-1942). The discourse is situated amidst the wider contexts of the inter-war debates surrounding geopolitics and our anglophone histories of this episode. Similarly, the movement is positioned within the political, academic and cultural contexts of Fascist Italy and the cultures of Italian geography in this era.

Substantial chapters consider the origins and development of geopolitical ideas as they were re-negotiated in Fascist Italy; the regime's promotion of an Italian geographical imagination and its consequent support for Geopolitica; and the programme of Geopolitica itself. The cartography of the journal, its representations of colonial space in Africa and its analysis of the Mediterranean and Balkan regions are also addressed at length. Finally, the various contestations of geopolitics and its key terms are rehearsed, as is the journal's probable impact and its eventual closure. The legacies and histories of this episode are briefly considered.
Geopolitics and the geographical imagination in Fascist Italy

BY

DAVID A. ATKINSON

A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of the Loughborough University of Technology

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Geopolitics and the geographical imagination in Fascist Italy

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This thesis is all my own work unless otherwise indicated in the text or footnotes.
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Introduction

Fascist Italy witnessed the development, growth, success and decline of a particular and distinct version of academic geopolitics. This movement produced Geopolitica, an Italian geopolitical journal which was published between January 1939 and December 1942. It received influential support from Fascist Italy's Ministry of Education and was edited by two professional geographers - Giorgio Roletto and Ernesto Massi. Both men were committed to the discipline of geography and to Italian imperialism and expansionism. Both were also firm supporters of the Fascist regime. From the start of the 1930s, when the two editors were based in the contested frontier city of Trieste, each had sought to contribute their geographical expertise and professional services to the state and to the Italian colonial cause. When they discovered German Geopolitik, they reconciled its ideas and approaches with their own notion of a 'dynamic political geography'. These ideas were modified throughout the 1930s amidst an ongoing discourse of ideas, initiatives and critiques through which individuals and organisations in several different European countries debated and considered the nature, prospects and potentialities of geopolitics. The Triestene geographers were acutely aware of this discourse and it was in the light of this wider geopolitical conversation that they developed their own self-consciously Italian geopolitics as a way of visualising and understanding the contemporary political world.

Their geopolitics, expressed primarily through Geopolitica, were a strongly pro-Fascist discourse which virulently supported Italian expansionism and the Italian colonial empire, particularly in Africa. Broadly stated, their ambition was to apply a geopolitical perspective, with its assumed insight, synthesising vision and explanatory power, to the problems of international politics which affected Fascist Italy. They used all the tools of geography including survey, regional inventory and cartography to make their points. Geopolitica was a notable element of the regime's attempt to expand the geographical imagination of its imperial population. Although the subject of a good deal of speculation and debate in Fascist Italy, Geopolitica was nevertheless also marginalised by the geographical establishment. It closed down in the chaos of the Italian war effort at the close of 1942.

This thesis is an account of Geopolitica, Italian inter-war geopolitics, and -by extension- of the Italian geographical imagination in the Fascist period. It cannot hope to be a comprehensive history nor to understand the Italian situation as well as might an Italian geographer steeped in their own disciplinary traditions, communities,
and their own 'invisible college'. However, this thesis represents my particular and situated perspective as a British geographer, considering the ephemeral and ambiguous movement that was Italian Geopolitics. I have tried to reconstruct something of the intellectual, institutional, academic, political, social, cultural and historical contexts within which Italian geopolitics emerged, developed, prospered and then faded. I have also tried to sketch some of this movement's primary concerns and interests and the ways in which it attempted to bring a geopolitical perspective to bear upon these interests. This thesis is a first step in the telling of this story.

I am also concerned to pose questions for Anglophone geographers with this thesis. I hope to expose the ways in which our received history of geopolitics is in important respects a partial and limited account of inter-war geopolitics in continental Europe. I believe that we need to continue writing and re-writing the revisionist accounts of geopolitics which have been completed by other scholars. This thesis is my first contribution to that project. Secondly, I would argue that geographers have a responsibility to deal with geopolitical ideas properly. The neglect of these ideas in the Cold war period in the geographical academy only handed the discourse to Cold war warriors. I believe that geographers must continue to keep an eye upon the uses and abuses of geopolitical ideas. This project should, I believe, be a part of the welcome development in recent years of a critical geopolitics and also of a critical historiography of geography.
Chapter 1.

Histories of geopolitics

The beginning

My first task as a post-graduate student was to write a paper on the geopolitical movement of Fascist Italy. It was an impossible task. There was, for instance no secondary literature to which I could turn, and five years later there is still only one paper in the English language (apart from my own) which discusses Italian geopolitics at any length - and that paper was only published in September 1994, some fifty-two years after the Italian geopolitical journal *Geopolitica* ceased publication. Whilst the silence surrounding Italian geopolitics was one immediate problem, it soon became apparent that there was not even any substantial literature with which I could contextualise the place of geography and geographers in Mussolini's Fascist state. If it was a difficult task, to construct a thesis with no established secondary literature, and to work in a different language and culture, then this was brought home forcefully in my first few weeks of research. Yet it is precisely because no one has studied Italian inter-war geopolitics that this research is relevant.

The first half of my final year undergraduate Political Geography and Geographical Policy Analysis course dealt almost exclusively with what I will here call 'The Geopolitical Tradition'. Although admirable in its scope, this course was constrained by the literature available to an Anglophone readership. And whilst reading about Karl Haushofer and German *Geopolitik*, the nature of some of the material struck me forcefully. For the lack of anything else, we were reading the writings of Hans Weigert, Andreas Dorpalen, and, most vividly of all, Robert Strausz-Hupé. To anyone who has taught the history of political geography and geopolitics, these names will be familiar as those of some of the American authors and agitants who constructed a sizeable, complicated and at times sensationalist response to the perceived threat and intellectual assault on America and American minds of German *Geopolitik*. For in early 1940s America, German *Geopolitik* was a significant and

frightening threat in the minds of American journalists, commentators as well as geographers.

It was in response to this threat that American writers and emigrés from Eastern Europe created a whole literature about *Geopolitik*, and about how America and her allies might counter and crush this movement. As our received histories told the tale, German *Geopolitik* was morally corrupt, a perversion of science and of political geography and one laid at the service of the Nazi state by Haushofer through his personal links to Hess and Hitler. According to some, Haushofer's *Geopolitik* was even the mastermind behind Nazi expansionism. Reading these accounts half a century later, I realised that there was a whole moral-economy involved in the writing of analyses of geopolitics, but that the histories that we were reading were primarily from only one perspective - that of belligerent America. Apart from the group based around Gerhard Sandner in Hamburg who were re-assessing the roles of *Geopolitik*, no English-language scholarship had dealt with the legacies or histories of geopolitics in a serious, sustained and rigorous manner throughout virtually all of the Cold war era. To do so was to tamper with non-scientific 'propaganda' and, *in extremis*, to invite allegations of neo-Fascist sympathies. As far as the established histories of geography were concerned, the history of geopolitics was a closed-book. Little more remained to be said about this shameful episode in geography's history. This silence in turn meant that undergraduates at the turn of the 1990s were reading American texts on geopolitics from the 1940s - texts which were written to defile and oppose German *Geopolitik* under the particular strains of global warfare. Partial histories were therefore perpetuated.

This thesis is an account of the state of my investigation some four years later. Yet in that time my basic rationale for this study has changed remarkably little, and indeed, has been reinforced by events within and without the academy. My basic premise is that our anglophone histories of geopolitics are only partially-written and that our received wisdom neglects a number of geopolitical movements, with the Italian example being only one of the most significant. Another rationale is that the histories of geopolitics are far too important to remain half-written and half-understood in this manner. Rather than neglecting this embarrassing aspect of our disciplinary history, we have a duty to acknowledge it and to deal with it. Given that our received history of geopolitics shaped my initial assumptions and those of the discipline within which I work, it is with these histories that I begin.
Part I. Writing histories of geopolitics: German Geopolitik and American Analysis during World War II

In the anglophone world, our historical appreciation of Geopolitik is chiefly informed by the reaction to this discourse which arose in the United States from the late-1930s until the mid-1940s. It was this debate which gave rise to the various misconceptions which had to be corrected in the 1980s. Others have catalogued this story before me. Yet there is no harm in telling it again for several reasons. Firstly because of the all-pervasive way in which this particular version of history influenced the English-language histories of German Geopolitik, and by inference, the history of most inter-war European geopolitical discourses. Secondly because I believe there is a distinctively geographical interpretation of the history of Geopolitik which draws as much upon geography’s disciplinary anxieties as it does upon the narrative largely accepted by historians. Finally, the revisionist history we tell, of populist scaremongering is not quite the whole story either. I will begin with the popular hysteria which surrounded Geopolitik.

A thousand scientists and mass-hysteria: making myths

The article which did most to establish the infamy of Haushofer and Geopolitik was published in The Reader’s Digest in 1941. Frederick Sondern Jr. had published 'Hitler’s Scientists' in Current History in June 1941. But it was when The Digest chose to reprint and precis the piece that Sondern would tap into the magazine’s large readership and its reputation for a common-sense approach and for telling the truth. In 'The Thousand Scientists behind Hitler' Sondern told a sensationalist tale of:

...the work of Major General Professor Dr. Karl Haushofer and his Geopolitical Institute in Munich, with its 1000 scientists, technicians and spies. These men are almost unknown to the public, even in the Reich. But their ideas, their charts, maps, statistics, information and plans have dictated Hitler's moves from the very beginning.

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2 A relatively common feature of recent work on critical geopolitics and the new historiography of geopolitics has been a brief acknowledgement of this American hysteria about Geopolitik. See, for example, S. Dalby, Creating the Second Cold war, London, 1990, p. 36.
3 This point has been alluded to in N. Smith, 'History and philosophy of geography: real wars, theory wars', Progress in Human Geography, 16, 2 (1992), pp. 257-271, esp. pp. 259-262.
7 Sondern, 'The Thousand Scientists', p. 45.
Allegedly based on the personal knowledge of the author and a number of corroborative sources, Sondern proceeded to outline the secretive *Institut für Geopolitik*, this 'superbrain' of Nazism. He told how "Dr. Haushofer's domination of Hitler's program is sufficient guarantee that the Nazi machine will not stop short of reaching for world control."\(^8\) For Haushofer's influence over the younger Hitler later won from the Führer the resources to collate an encyclopaedic array of facts and figures about each and every nation on Earth. It was with this information that Haushofer issued his orders which, given the benefits of pacts with Japan and Russia, would soon include an attack on the United States. Sensationalist stuff indeed, and as far as Sondern was concerned, the lessons were clear. Americans had the facilities, brains and money to take measures 'as thorough and systematic' as Haushofer's.\(^9\) It was imperative that they did so.

It was such breathless and melodramatic accounts, repeated and syndicated across many of the most influential newspapers, popular journals and magazines of early 1940s America, that prompted the popular debate labelled 'Barbershop geopolitics'.\(^10\) Thanks to coverage in *Life, Time, Colliers, Harpers, Fortune* and comment from Dorothy Parker, Walter Lippman and other influential columnists, *Geopolitik* lived a vicarious existence in the American popular imagination.\(^11\) And in the shadow of the spectacular success with which the *Blitzkrieg* had subdued mainland Europe in 1939-1940, commentators began to propose that this *Geopolitik*, this necessary 'superbrain', with which to comprehend the power-politics of the contemporary world, be domesticated, understood, adapted and used by Americans. In the early 1940s when Strausz-Hupé was writing, it seemed 'Smart to be geopolitical', whilst others intoned 'Let us learn our geopolitics'.\(^12\) Many American professional geographers appeared happy to assist in this way, as another wartime sage put it: "...on campuses all over the country, musty old geographers are blossoming out as shiny new geo-politicians."\(^13\)

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8Sondern, 'The Thousand Scientists', p. 46.
9Sondern, 'The Thousand Scientists', p. 48. Interestingly, and by contrast, the following article in that issue of *The Reader's Digest* made a case for the essential nobility and heroism of the Italian people. Aimed squarely at the Italo-American community, it attributed the ongoing defeats of the Italian army to their realisation of their ignoble cause. The blaming of Fascism rather than of *Italie per se* was a strategy adopted widely in 1941-1943 America as a palliative to its large and influential Italian population. L. Adamic, 'And Proud of it!', *The Reader's Digest*, 38, 7 (1941), pp. 49-53.
10The term is borrowed from G. Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1985, p. 102.
13J. Thomdike, 'Geopolitics: the lurid career of a scientific system which a Briton invented, the Germans used and the American's need to study', *Life*, 23 December (1942), p. 13.
Geographers joined the many other commentators who rushed into print with analyses and interpretations of geopolitics. However, learning one's geopolitics was not an uncontroversial affair.

Even before America declared war on Germany, many US commentators were opposed to Nazi expansionism and warning of its ambitions. Subsequently, interpretations of Geopolitik were usually hostile, albeit occasionally mixed with some awe and apprehension at the flawless manner in which Haushofer appeared to be directing the apparently invincible march of the Wehrmacht. There was therefore a price to be paid by those who failed to be suitably condemnatory of Haushofer. George Renner, for example, was widely-castigated for what were seen as his pro-Axis proposals for the redistribution of global space. Likewise, the respected political scientist Nicolas Spykman was critiqued for his adherence to a 'realist' position which urged the appreciation of geographical factors underpinning, at times, shaping international politics: in 1938 claiming that, "Geography doesn't argue, it simply is". His re-negotiation of Mackinder's Heartland thesis into an emphasis upon the 'Rimland' regions between Heartland and maritime powers, and his plea that America should ditch isolationism and engage with global politics drew some flak from commentators for whom such realpolitik seemed uncomfortably close to German Geopolitik.

Some of this criticism originated from the professional geographical community. Yet however ready they were to reject the applied geography of Geopolitik, American geographers then struggled at length over the correct response to the challenge of Haushofer. Renner and Spykman were seen as foolish or corrupt in their adoption of German-style realpolitik. But American geographers created little more than an ambiguous, confused and, at times, exceptionalist response. The most obvious and frequent critique, given this assumed connection between Geopolitik and German grand strategy, was that Geopolitik was not a proper and legitimate prosecution of 'science' and the 'scientific method' - it was a 'pseudo-science'. However, a further

position emerged whereby an American use of geopolitical techniques, for self-evidently 'democratic' and 'peaceful' means, could produce a legitimate geopolitics - a 'Democratic' geopolitics. Attempts to differentiate 'bad' Geopolitik from legitimate 'Democratic' geopolitics were frequently confused affairs, descending in some instances to plain national exceptionalism. Moreover, American political geographers were highly conscious of the public debates surrounding Geopolitik and the assumed association between themselves and Haushoferian practice. Anxious to defend the scientific credentials of their foundling discipline and, no doubt, of their own careers, they further attempted to distinguish a 'scientific' political geography -they kind they imagined themselves to practice- apart from the pseudo-scientific ideology of German geopolitics. As the leading American geographer of his day Isaiah Bowman was prominent in this debate. And although keen to provide an American response to his German contemporaries and to contribute to the national wartime effort, he struggled to separate his practices, and those of the discipline he lead, from the notoriety fast accruing around Geopolitik.

The war years, and the furore over Geopolitik, provided a series of opportunities for American geographers. They enjoyed openings to advance the discipline's status within the academic division of labour and its standing within society at large - powerful imperatives at the time. Likewise, they also saw their chance to increase the geographical imagination of the American public. After a spell of international isolationism under Roosevelt, and in response to Geopolitik's attempt to increase the 'space-consciousness' of the German people, many writers promoted the expansion of the American geographical imagination to the global scale. Hand in hand with the

18O'Loughlin, Dictionary of Geopolitics, pp. 8-10.
21The role of geographers can be seen in A. Kirby, 'What did you do in the war, Daddy?', In Godlewska and Smith, Geography and Empire, pp. 300-315; and a 1940s 'relevancy' debate in: E. Ackerman, 'Geographic training, wartime research and immediate professional objectives', Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 35, 4 (1945), pp. 121-143. See too the continuation of these sentiments after the wartime and the problems the discipline encountered: N. Smith, "Academic war over the field of geography": the elimination of geography at Harvard', Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 77 (1987), pp. 155-172, and see that debate which followed in Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 78 (1988), pp. 144-163. I will deal with this debate a little later.
22Strausz-Hupé, Geopolitics, p. 3.
requirement to critique *Geopolitik* and to refute this 'ideology' with the 'democratic' and 'scientific' political geography of America went the need to increase American space consciousness. Geographical texts became a heady mixture of sentiments: indignant at German geography whilst exceptionalist about their own. And this moral agenda was underpinned by a wartime urgency to inculcate in Americans an appropriate geographical awareness.

**Moral exceptionalism and a 'Democratic Geopolitics'**

The moral exceptionalism of the American position could be seen across a whole range of American publications of the period and such was the clamour surrounding geopolitics, and such the volume of calls for an American, 'Democratic' geopolitics to quash Germany, that eventually they prompted the publication of yet another text - a symposium on political geography which went through editions in 1944 and 1949. *Compass of the World* was edited by Hans Weigert and Vilhjalmur Stefansson and with the assistance of Richard Harrison.²³ It was a reader of almost thirty articles and contributions from the 'Democratic' geopoliticians and political geographers of the English-speaking world. It included works by Bowman, Weigert, Mackinder, Ellsworth Huntington, James Fairgrieve, Hartshorne and Lattimore amongst others.²⁴ It was inspired by the American debate around *Geopolitik* and a conviction that "...the acceptance of the creed and ideology of geopolitics would be a dangerous step towards international fascism."²⁵ Instead the editors sought to outline the new roles of geography in the interpretation and comprehension of a changing, contemporary world. They wanted to inform the popular American geographical imagination and contribute to the winning of the war and to a lasting peace.²⁶ So although provoked by, and reacting against the 'poison' of 'materialistic power politics', the editors were


nevertheless falling into the trap of proposing an American geopolitical perspective with which to organise an appropriate (American) world order.

One contributor who exemplified these tensions was Edmund Walsh, an American Jesuit and scholar of international relations. Walsh had previous contact with Haushofer before the war and, with the benefits of his experience, composed upon the themes of Geopolitik and the 'international morals' of geopolitics. Writing especially for the book in 1944, Walsh did acknowledge that there were some commentators who doubted the extent of Haushofer's control over Hitler. However, for Walsh, these critics were misguided and such speculation over the degree of actual contact between the two was unimportant. Rather, in his somewhat hyperbolic style, he described how the 'Herr Doktor' had 'indoctrinated' both Hess and Hitler in prison to an extent that, in later years:

[Haushofer's] subsidised institute, as a fact of record, created a definite geopolitical atmosphere in modern Germany which enveloped both the makers of policy and the masses of the people to an extent which is undeniable.

And apparently aware of the American debate over Geopolitik which he was thus entering, Walsh again invoked 'facts':

The basic, incontestable truth is that Haushofer, directly in some instances indirectly in others, co-ordinated, integrated, and rationalised the whole field of comparative geography for the uses of the Führer... ...[geopolitics] became a dynamic driving rod in the mechanics of states craft. A huge personnel was mobilised by Haushofer to comb the earth for significant facts and geographic information.

Walsh's chapter is in part a implicit riposte to the increased scepticism of some American commentators which he, at least, identified in the later years of the war. And it is perhaps in response to these more moderate voices that he constructed a vision of Geopolitik which emphasised the indirect and facilitating ways in which Haushofer served the regime with intellectual legitimisation through pseudo-scientific works and by disseminating geopolitical themes into popular culture, rather than by

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27E. A. Walsh, 'Geopolitics and International Morals', in Weigert, Stefansson and Harrison, Compass of the World, 1944, pp. 12-39. Walsh was an interesting character and far from being an 'objective' scientist himself, having founded the Georgetown University's School for Foreign service. He was fiercely anti-communist, having served the Vatican in Russia on famine relief in 1920, and then as Papal representative to the Kremlin. See: R. E. Conot, Justice at Nuremburg, London, 1983, pp. 90.
28Walsh, 'Geopolitics and International Morals', pp. 20 and 32-33.
29Walsh, 'Geopolitics and International Morals', p. 21.
30Walsh, 'Geopolitics and International Morals', p. 22.
31I have found little if any evidence of such a moderation of the Geopolitik myth in my readings of works from the era.
direct policy-prescription. In Walsh's terms, Haushofer made sure that "Geography, particularly war geography, became a national preoccupation which influenced and moulded public opinion...", albeit with the personal price that "He committed intellectual suicide on the altar of a vulgar and unscientific superstition."32

This recognition that Geopolitik was not necessarily involved in a causal relationship with German Foreign Policy was a welcome qualification of earlier accounts, although Walsh continued to talk of the supposed facilitating machinery of an 'Institut' and the 'Thousand Scientists' and, from his Jesuit's perspective, managed to attribute the rise of geopolitics and materialism in part to modernity's neglect of Christianity.33 His proposed antidote to Haushofer was, again, an American Geopolitics, based on "...international justice, international honour, the sanctity of the given word and mutuality of international respect."34 For Americans had the moral duty and integrity to redevelop geopolitics in the 'right' manner.

My project in this chapter is to suggest that the myths which were established around German Geopolitik were more influential than mere Barbershop chatter. Rather they had a great deal of currency throughout American wartime society and on into the peace. The writers I have commandeered to argue my case took geopolitics seriously and are suggestive of the impact this 'science' enjoyed. Certainly, the German Nazi machine appeared to appreciate the consternation that Geopolitik had caused in the United States. An infamous publication by the New York 'German Office of Information' entitled The War in Maps was released to the American public in 1941. Consisting of a seventy-page long series of maps, the volume purported to demonstrate the legitimacy of the German cause and the insidious nature of the British Empire which was once more attempting to maintain global hegemony at Germany's, and eventually at America's, expense. Various attempts were made to render the book credible and to convey its message. The maps themselves were coloured in a collection of sickly yellows (for Britain), pinks (for Germany and its allies), and green (for the United States). The idea presumably being that these hues provoked a subconscious reaction in the reader.35 Of more relevance to my argument is that the cover of this text boasted that it had been compiled 'with the help of leading geopoliticians'. But as Guntram Herb points out, no geopoliticians were

32The quotations can be found in: Walsh, 'Geopolitik and International Morals', pp. 24 and 26.
33Walsh, 'Geopolitik and International Morals', pp. 26-35.
34Walsh, 'Geopolitik and International Morals', p. 35.
35Perhaps an unintended side-effect was the manner in which the maps thus appeared in a whole range of bizarre colours which clashed with one-another. Any credibility the map-makers may have sought by couching their arguments within the 'scientific' language of cartography was thus lost due to the very 'un-maplike' graphics which eventually appeared.
involved in this work. That German propagandists felt able to use the geopoliticians' reputation to add authority to their own work suggests that even they recognised Geopolitik's impact in America.

**Taking geopolitics seriously**

Given our current picture of the one-sided relationship between the geopoliticians and the regime, it comes as no surprise that the Nazi state would exploit Haushofer's 'science' and its American infamy as and when it suited them. Haushofer too was well aware of the attention his work received in the United States and was concerned about being misrepresented. Yet he was in no position to do anything about this. The discourse had escaped his control and was exciting interest in all kinds of places. Its notoriety in America appears to have extended higher than the domain of popular publishing and propaganda. It seems that Geopolitik was of sufficient concern to worry politicians who would not normally worry about 'barbershop' debates.

One of the most famous geographical accounts of Geopolitik and one which I consulted as an undergraduate was written in 1942 by Derwent Whittlesey with the help of Charles Colby and Richard Hartshorne. The German Strategy of World Conquest was undertaken at the request of the state department who wanted "an exact definition of this new German Science". Whittlesey, Colby and Hartshorne were well aware of their loyalties in wartime. Whittlesey -as editor of the Annals of the Association of American Geographers- had addressed this very theme whilst Hartshorne was a key member of the Office of Strategic Services. When it came to providing an academic critique of Geopolitik for the state they were happy to oblige. And whilst German geographers were condemned for placing their geography at the service of the state, a startling lack of reflexivity (or perhaps an overload of

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40 D. Whittlesey, 'War, peace and geography - an editorial foreword', Annals of the Association of American Geographers 31, 2 (1941), pp. 77-82; on Hartshorne and the Office of Strategic Services, see Kirby: 'What did you do in the war, Daddy?' Hartshorne, we learn, was obsessed with providing 'accurate' and 'objective' social-science in an institution where geographers were undertaking perhaps the least 'objective' and most applied studies in the history of American geography.
exceptionalism) on the part of these American geographers allowed them to contribute to a book with an inside-front plate reading "Words are weapons in the war of ideas" over an image of an American eagle perched upon a stack of books. There was a moral economy in state-sponsored 'academic' analyses of *Geopolitik* as well.

A further mark of the gravitas attached to the threat of *Geopolitik* was the way in which the phenomenon translated from the 'barbershop' debates and popular magazines to more 'serious' and 'high-minded' publications, educational materials and academic journals. The Haushofer phenomenon earned frequent attention in *Foreign Affairs*, the organ of the Council on Foreign Relations. Founded by Isaiah Bowman on his return from Versailles to consider and articulate American perspectives on World affairs, the influential and highly respected journal carried critiques and commentaries upon geopolitics from, amongst others, Hans Weigert, Nicolai Bukharin and even the aged Halford Mackinder.42

Weigert, as ever, argued against the realists "...who [would] try to adopt the sinuous ways of Haushofer's Geopolitics to American use" whilst he recommended that America learn from *Geopolitik*’s ways "...of thinking and 'seeing' on a global scale".43 In passing, he mentioned Mackinder's Heartland thesis and its status as a fundamental tenet of Haushofer's Geopolitics. Twelve months later, amidst the geopolitical interest of the moment, Mackinder responded to *Foreign Affairs*’ invitation to expound what would prove his final version of this thesis.44 Whilst re-asserting his ideas, he carefully omitted any mention of *Geopolitik* and his most famous German disciple. Elsewhere he was extremely eager to disassociate himself from Haushofer, labouring the point as the American Geographical Society awarded him its Charles P. Daly medal in 1944.45 Bukharin had proved a more perspicacious critic, complaining about the geopolitical 'prose' of fascist Germany only a year before he was 'purged' by Stalin. But for an American audience in 1936, it was the mobilisation of geopolitical notions in favour of imperialism and fascist expansionism which bothered him most.46 By 1943 Sigmund Neumann could synthesise the problems and dangers of

42On *Foreign Affairs* and the Council on Foreign Relations, see: Smith, *Bowman's New World*, pp. 438-460. Within the journal, besides Weigert, Bukharin and Mackinder, many other articles mentioned German Geopolitik and assumed a basic knowledge of its aims, objectives and successes as given.
Geopolitik with great elegance and measure. Yet for all this considered criticism, Foreign Affairs was also eminently capable of re-iterating the myths that surrounded the popular responses to Geopolitik. The 'Thousand Scientists', the secret 'Institiit' and the direct link between Haushofer and Hitler were commonplace truths which needed no supporting evidence to vouchsafe them. A stream of articles in the 1941-1942 volume 20 attests to this. They included one entitled 'Hitler's better half' which baldly asserted that: "Hitler... became by way of the instrument Hess, the mouthpiece of the world-political dreams of a Munich Professor...Karl Haushofer." Whatever the motives behind these articles, it is clear that geopolitics were taken seriously in the period.

In educational journals too, Geopolitik provided good copy. Here could be found reasoned and nuanced analyses from some commentators. Within geography Sidman Poole addressed the issues sagely in 1944, arguing eventually for a 'Democratic' geopolitics. Yet in the same Journal of Geography only two years previously, Alden Cutshall told geography teachers that they lagged far behind their Axis counterparts. Their wartime duty was to replicate the national service Haushofer provided Germany with his 'superbrain' Geo-politik institute, in reality -he wrote- a special university located in Berlin. It seems that Americans might encounter geopolitics at school as well as in their magazines. They would even eventually even find a version of them in the best-seller lists and at their cinemas. Alexander P. de Seversky's 1942 book Victory through Airpower enjoyed a good deal of overlap with several of the ideas and concerns of geopolitics. Consequently, when over five million Americans read it during the war years, and up to twenty million received de Seversky's message through radio addresses and other publications, the profile of geopolitics can only have benefited. In addition, when Walt Disney filmed a version of de Seversky's book replete with the symbolism of geopolitical cartography

49K. Heiden, 'Hitler's better half', Foreign Affairs, 20, 1 (1941), pp. 73-86, quotation on p. 78.
50See, for example, J. S. Roucek, 'German Geopolitics', Journal of Central European Affairs, 2 (1942), pp. 180-189.
51S. Poole, 'Geopolitik - Science or Magic', The Journal of Geography, 43, 1 (1944), pp. 1-12.
53A. P. de Seversky, Victory through Airpower, New York, 1942.
which I will discuss in a later chapter, it was evidence that geopolitical concerns sat firmly on the national agenda.\textsuperscript{55} In wartime America, geopolitics mattered.

It seems that accounts of \textit{Geopolitik}, and very frequently the myths which attended such reports, pervaded political circles just as easily as they settled in the popular consciousness and embedded themselves in the discourses of academic geography. My point is that these stories extended well beyond the popular but ephemeral press into the more permanent realms of academic journals and pedagogic journals. That is, these accounts were constituted in some ways as genuine academic knowledge with all of the implications of authority and veracity which follow from this. One last example will suffice to demonstrate that in 1940s America, the \textit{Geopolitik} myth did have a significant impact which in turn, impacted upon the post-war taboo whereby geographers failed to address the issues of geopolitics for forty years.

It is, of course, impossible to quantify the impact of these books and journal articles about geopolitics and the hysteria which accompanied some of them. This is a recurrent problem in the study of fragmentary textual sources. We can only try to reconstruct or imagine an audience and to search for the ripples of these ideas and opinions extending outwards into adjacent discourses and other realms. One consequence of the popular association of Haushofer with Hitler was the enduring taboo which surrounded geopolitics and tainted political geography throughout the Cold War epoch. I will consider this period very briefly in the final chapter, because the studied and careful manner in which geographers avoided geopolitics and fell silent when it was mentioned throughout the 1950s and 1960s allowed the pursuit of geopolitics to continue outside the discipline. Surrendering the discourse of geopolitics from geography handed it over to other, less scrupulous academics and statesmen who mobilised geopolitics to serve their Cold war strategies. This aftermath of the 'Nazi taboo', will be dealt with later. For now there remains one significant marker of the impact of the American myth-making about \textit{Geopolitik} which does speak of the potency of this process. I have outlined this below.

\textit{The official view: the mastermind behind Hitler?}

During the early-1946 preliminary preparations for the Nuremberg war trials where the allied governments would try the surviving leaders of Nazi Germany, a document

\textsuperscript{55}Meilinger, \textit{Proselytiser and Prophet}, pp. 20-22. Meilinger even claims that the film had a significant impact upon Japanese Emperor Hirohito as well as Winston Churchill who forced Roosevelt to view it with him in mid 1943.
was compiled by Professor Rafael Lemkin about Professor General Karl Haushofer. Lemkin was an academic and international legal authority who had fled to America after the 1939 German attack on Poland. He was back in Europe as an advisor to the Washington War Department and a member of the American prosecuting team preparing the cases for Nuremberg, a role in which he allegedly first coined the term Genocide. In 1946 though, Lemkin was requested to compile a report about Karl Haushofer and to determine whether he deserved to stand trial. His conclusions, summarised in a confidential army circular written by one Sydney S. Alderman, contradict everything we now think we know about Haushofer and Geopolitik.

As far as Lemkin was concerned, Haushofer was not merely a guilty man, but the prime culprit of Nazi expansionism. Alderman was extremely impressed by Lemkin’s findings as he reported them to his seniors:

In many ways it seems to me that Haushofer...fills in the void created by the death or absence of Hitler as the main moving spirit in the common plan. Haushofer was Hitler’s intellectual godfather. It was Haushofer, rather than Hess, who wrote Mein Kampf and who furnished the backbone for the Nazi bible and for what we call the common criminal plan. Geo-politics was not merely academic theory. It was a driving, dynamic plan for the conquest of the heartland of Eurasia and for domination of the world by the conquest of that heartland.

The whole scheme for domination of Europe and Eurasia and, hence, of the world, and for the linking up of the power of the expanded Pan-Germans with the power of the expanded Japanese empire was contained in Haushofer’s teachings.

And as Alderman continued, he made it clear that the U. S. mission had been searching for a ‘principal author’ of what they called the ‘conspiracy’. Lemkin would seem to have identified one for them:

The Russians always speak of ‘Hitlerite criminals’. We all instinctively think of Hitler as the arch criminal. Really, Hitler was largely only a symbol and rabble-rousing mouthpiece. The intellectual content of which he was the symbol was the doctrine of Haushofer. And, fortunately, while we do not have Hitler, the symbol, we do have Haushofer, the actual author of the criminal plan.

57 Conot, Justice at Nuremberg, p. 11.
The assumption that the myths about Haushofer and Geopolitik were mainly manifest in popular culture and had no real purchase in the more rarefied realms of states craft and serious political debate would seem to be questioned by Lemkin's findings and their serious treatment by Alderman. And although, as an émigré from Eastern Europe, Lemkin might very reasonably bear a grudge against Nazism, why should he direct it towards Haushofer more than towards other Nazis who were certainly of more power and influence? Given what we now take to be historical orthodoxy about Haushofer's role in the Nazi state, it seems that for his final few years the Professor was isolated even from any contact with the kernel of Nazism, never mind central to its operations. If our current histories are correct, Lemkin must have based his analysis of Haushofer as the central figure of Nazism not upon German sources but upon contemporary American critiques. I have tried to suggest that these were in part sensationalist and were all shot through by moral assumptions. They were certainly no basis on which to put the aged Professor on trial for his life as the mastermind behind Nazism. Nevertheless, this was precisely the course of action recommended by Lemkin's report to the official American prosecuting team.

Despite the tenor of Lemkin's report, Haushofer was not tried as a war criminal at Nuremberg. Perhaps suspicious of Lemkin's hyperbolic report, Justice Jackson, chief of council for the American prosecution team, had eventually brought in Edmund Walsh as a special consultant to interrogate the geopoltician and to examine the case against him. And despite his published words of 1944 as to Haushofer's guilt, direct or indirect, Walsh found Haushofer to be innocent of the charges alleged by Lemkin and recommended that the aged Professor be released, in the short term at least. Despite this low-key assessment for the American mission in Nuremberg, the story of Geopolitik was still current enough in America for Walsh to wring a Life magazine article out of his duties as Justice Jackson's official interrogator. By this time however, Haushofer was uninterested in foreign press, his reputation or in geopolitics. After his son Albrecht's involvement in the 20 September plot against Hitler, Haushofer had been imprisoned for a time in Dachau concentration camp. In 1945 Albrecht had been shot by the Nazis. In atonement for his involvement with the Nazi regime, Karl Haushofer had penned an 'Apology for Geopolitik', but given the fate of his sons (his younger son was also imprisoned at this time) and the prospect of testifying at Nuremberg, he and his wife took their own lives in their Bavarian garden.

60Walsh's specific responsibilities in Nuremberg were to deal with Geopolitics and the Nazi persecution of churches: Canot, Justice at Nuremburg, pp. 90, 240, and 420. Part of Haushofer's significance at the Nuremberg trials would have been as a chief witness for Rudolf Hess's defence.
in September 1946. A former colleague at Munich, Carl Troll, quickly wrote an apologia in which the mistakes of Geopolitik were addressed and laid bare. Published in an abridged form a year later in the Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Troll’s article concluded with a section entitled 'A family tragedy' which catalogued the misfortunes of the Haushofers. Thus a neat and poignant conclusion to the whole Geopolitik affair was made public: The hope must have been that a discrete veil might be drawn over the entire issue and that geographers might concentrate upon repairing their damaged reputations and settling down to a spell of apolitical activity.

Part II. Critical histories of Geography and a curious dichotomy

Established histories and textbook chronicles

In 1987 Neil Smith caused a fuss by publishing his account of the late-1940s closure of the Department of Geography at Harvard University in the Annals of the Association of American Geographers. Smith’s account told a tale of underhand political dealings, disciplinary ambition, personal prejudice, various levels of incompetence and a lack of integrity on the part of some of America’s leading geographers of the day such as Isaiah Bowman and Derwent Whittlesey. It was decidedly not a hagiographic account of great men undertaking great deeds to the glory and advancement of American geography. Of additional interest to this fine piece of work was the reception it found in the corridors and offices of American Geographers. If those who were moved to respond to Smith’s article in print were anything like a representative sample, then the urgency of Smith’s original intention -to contribute towards a new history of geography- was emphasised by their comments. One of Smith’s respondents chided him for his critique of Bowman, and represented him instead as an arch typical ‘Great man’ of geography, heralded as "...one of the most significant friends American geography has encountered this century". Another commentary urged Smith to be a ‘good Republican’ and "...not [to] speak evil of geography and geographers..." in a manner which might harm the...

63Smith, ‘Academic war over the field of geography’
discipline’s standing beyond geography departments.66 Such attitudes were, Smith believed, particularly unhelpful and his reply was appropriately rumbustuous.

He began by lambasting traditional histories of geographical thought. They were, he wrote, the descriptive, dull and defensive product of a retarded and boring sub-discipline which had yet to engage a competent and comprehensive perspective upon the history of geography.67 Rather, Smith’s research had been compelled by his conviction that the history of geography was important and that it had to be taken seriously. The histories which had previously been written, were on the whole tired and staid affairs, characterised elsewhere by Henry Aay as ‘Textbook chronicles’.68 They were dominated by lists of:

...great people, great insights and great dates; an inclination towards a stocktaking of accomplishments; a reliance on secondary sources; an emphasis on biography and bibliography; an approach that is descriptive and expository rather than analytical; and a progressive, incremental view of scientific change.69

Such texts were not only turgid and tiresome for all except the initiated, but they also failed in the responsibility of geography to deal with its own history properly. Idealistic catalogues of great geographers, which chart their progress from one advance to the next discovery fail to tell us about anything except the internal development of the discipline. This incremental view of history, a 'Whiggish' or 'presentist' position, refers to the practice of writing and organising history from the perspective of the present. Moreover, this internal development only stresses the successful episodes of the discipline’s history. The missed opportunities, problems, digressions and embarrassments of our history are occluded in favour of a litany of triumphs and advances which pushed the subject towards today’s notion of what geography should entail. Needless to say, such an internalised, hermetic accounts of the discipline also frequently failed to connect this 'science' to the outside world. The notion of a neutral scientific enterprise and of scientists working diligently and objectively was recorded uncritically in these texts. Indeed, the status and authority often accorded to 'science' meant that these books would often stress the scientific credentials of geography. ‘Textbook chronicles’ portrayed a serene progression of

67Smith, ‘For a history of Geography’, p. 159.
individuals and ideas, all contributing to the greater glory of geography and seemingly untroubled by the 'real' world which they described in their work.

If this model of 'textbook chronicles' holds true, then there should be two consequences for the history of geopolitics. We might firstly expect the textbooks of the post-war years to avoid mention of geopolitics as an embarrassing and shameful element of our history. Secondly, if mentioned, we would expect to find Geopolitik presented as an aberration during which the normally scientifically rigorous and objective work of geographers was led astray by German Nazism. Both of these strategies were employed. In his popular Background to Political Geography of 1967, G. R. Crone mentioned German geopolitics in only one paragraph out of 239 pages. And even although 'required' to make brief mention of geopoliticians, he completely failed to address Geopolitik, nor even mention the journal's existence, much less Haushofer and the alleged infamous links to Hitler and Hess. So much for history's most infamous political geographers. And where more substantial mentions of Geopolitik were made, it was often in a negative sense in comparison to the neutral and scientific work supposedly undertaken by other political geographers. Witness the immediate criticism of Ladis Kristoff when he tried to re-habilitate the term at the height of the Cold war. Or, in 1948, under the sub-heading of 'Perversion', the torturous attempts of G. Etzel Pearcy, James Fifield and Associates to distinguish "Political geography [which] is a sane, cautious and -above all else- honest science" from the geopoliticians, "...in no normal state of mind..." who:

...had fallen victim to the psychosis of 'all or nothing'. To achieve their ends they were willing to convert political geography into total geographical nonsense if need be... ...it enabled the German geographers themselves to escape the moral censorship of their science and to side-step their own scientific consciences.

Until recently then, our histories of geography sustained this artificial duality between two distinct, and perhaps it was hoped, discrete aspects of geographical history. On

70G. R. Crone, Background to Political Geography, London, 1967. The mention of German political geography is on p. 106.
Geographers in Latin America had no qualms about using the term, and non-geographers sometimes found it hard to understand why geographers were so perturbed about this, their own slice of notoriety, compare: B. Chubb, 'Geopolitics', Irish Geography, 3, 1 (1954), pp. 15-25.
the one hand was an unproblematic and a-political geography, the geography portrayed in the 'textbook chronicles' progressing onwards and upwards towards its valued position amongst the sciences. One the other hand were stories, when told, of an abhorrent, aberrant geopolitics, infected by political contingency and used as a tool for state-expansionism and empire. Whether written to provide an easily-accessible narrative for geography under-graduates being inducted into the subject or compiled from historical 'precedents' and 'precursors' to derive a normative account of the subject and what it should be focusing upon contemporarily, such essentialist representations of geography, distilled from convenient episodes of geographical history, are an abrogation of geographer's responsibilities to consider the wider ramifications of geographical knowledge. It is quite simply not enough to sustain such a myopic and immature approach to the discipline's history, particularly at a time when other disciplines are looking again at the connections between geography and their concerns and interests. More recent developments in the history of geography, prompted in part by the work of Smith and others, has forced us to reconsider the histories of geographical knowledges, imaginations and practices.

Critical historiography

In his key 1992 text The Geographical Tradition, the first significant monograph on the history of geography to move beyond hagiography and presentism, David Livingstone concluded his opening chapter with three main points which explicated his notion of geography as a contested discourse. The first and second points called for a re-conceptualisation of the practices, discourses and theories of geography as complex, contested and situated. As Livingstone told it, geography has "...connoted rather different things to different people at different times and in different places...", it is, therefore, ineluctably a situated knowledge. Moreover, there is no singular, 'core' of geography, but merely different versions at various times and in numerous places. Geography is a contested discourse and a situated one. That is, the contexts in which geographical knowledge was produced influence how and what was thought, when it was thought, by whom and why. Equally, the social, political, economic and cultural contexts whence geographical knowledge or ideas originated impact upon how these ideas were

disseminated and whether they were accepted, rejected, changed or challenged, and finally, whether they were applied in practice. Livingstone called for a recognition of geography's 'situated messiness'.

In his third point Livingstone argued that there can be no neat and discrete division between these contexts within which geography is produced and the geographical theories, ideas and practices which develop there. Bringing in the context doesn't necessarily mean privileging it exclusively in our histories of geographical traditions. Rather, although the geographical knowledges of a period are influenced significantly by the spatial and temporal contexts in which they are made, equally, it is these same geographical knowledges, understandings, ideas and imaginations which help to constitute local, regional, national and global contexts in the minds of contemporary society. Both text and context are mutually-constitutive and geographical knowledges should be reconstructed with this in mind.

Finally, with geography a situated knowledge capable of partially-constituting the world, we have to recognise the discipline not only as a socio-cultural construct, but also as a political resource. The academic or scientific status of geography, and the roles it plays in the academic division of labour lend 'geographical-science' a measure of authority in most societies, certainly the ones I will be examining. The credibility of this science and the faith popularly-attached to geography's primary practical techniques of cartography and survey means that geographical knowledge can be mobilised profitably for political purposes by states and pressure-groups, or by individuals - including geographers themselves. It is the recognition of this, of the politics of geography, and of the 'politicalness' of geographical knowledge which has been one of the most welcome aspects of the developing critical historiography of geography.


79Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition, p. 3.

80Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition, p. 29.

Rethinking the histories of Geopolitics

Alongside this re-conceptualisation of the history of geography, recent years have also witnessed a renewed interest in writing the histories of geopolitics - up to this point regarded and demonised as the only politicised element of geography's history. Geography's disengagement from the 'perversion' of geopolitics, which had lasted throughout much of the Cold war era was increasingly untenable and the partial histories we possessed, replete with myths and sensationalism, were clearly unsatisfactory. In the mid 1980s a new interest in geopolitics emerged. One element of this took the form of new work upon international political geography, its practices, theories and assumptions. Another, and the one of relevance to my argument here, occurred when geographers began to reconsider the history of geopolitics and started to write new accounts of this most notorious episode in our past.

German Geopolitik - as might be expected - received a good deal of the attention. In Germany a revisionist group of scholars under Gerhard Sandner at Hamburg produced a number of articles which demonstrated the deep roots of German radical-conservatism and the notions of German expansionism and lebensraum which this constituency often expressed. It was upon such roots which Geopolitik later drew, espoused and reinforced. They revealed a history of geography being instrumentalised by the state and for expansionary ends. Their concern was to fill in

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84 The first attempt to write a more comprehensive history of what he called the 'Western Geopolitical Tradition' was published in 1985 by Geoffrey Parker: G. Parker, Western geopolitical thought in the twentieth century, London, 1985.
the intellectual, social and cultural background which allowed Geopolitik to develop and flourish. Reassessments of the actual role of Haushofer and Geopolitik in Nazi society were also undertaken, as were more sober analyses of the movement's aims and impact.

In the late 1980s, while some authors were still reproducing the myths surrounding Geopolitik, a series of articles appeared in English which represent the current state of our knowledge. Along with Professors Otto Maull, Herman Lautensach and Eric Obst, Haushofer, a retired Army General and part-time lecturer at the University of Munich, founded the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik in 1924.\(^\text{87}\) All of the quartet were stung by the humiliating terms which Germany had been forced to accept at Versailles and the journal's historians are generally agreed that at its origins, a revision of the 1919 Peace treaty towards a more sympathetic provision for Germany was a primary aim of the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik. This agenda struck a popular chord in the troubled Weimar Republic where, despite the economic hardships of the late 1920s, the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik was initially successful - selling 3000-4000 copies each monthly issue between 1927 and 1930.\(^\text{88}\) The other two major ambitions of the journal in the pre-Nazi era were presumably also directed towards the sympathies of this healthy readership. These were to provide an expert opinion upon the spatial re-organisation of Germany and to inculcate a wider spatial consciousness, that is, a wider geographical imagination in the German people.\(^\text{89}\) It was to these ends that this particular strain of political geography was directed.

Given these ambitions, to regain lost territory, to organise existing territory better and to teach Germans to imagine a still greater national-space, it is clear that Geopolitik was intended as a 'science' of international politics which also aimed to promote and inform German expansionism. The editors sought to place their geographical expertise and insight at the service of German imperialism. The geography which underpinned global politics would be analysed and prescriptions for geopolitically-sound expansionism would be offered to the national policy makers. The Lebensraum theory, derived from Ratzel and modified by Rudolf Kjellén, argued for German imperialism in Europe. As a vigorous and growing nation, the Germans were

\(^\text{87}\) Although Maull was omitted from the editor's names on the masthead of the second edition of the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik and the names of F. Termer and F. Hesse were located there instead. Maull became more formally involved with the journal in 1926, he would become very influential in its agenda until he left in 1931: Zeitschrift für Geopolitik 1, 2 (1924), p. 1. On Haushofer, see: K-A. Jacobsen, Karl Haushofer: Leben und werk, volumes I and II, Bophard am Rhein, 1979; H. Heske and R. Wesche, 'Karl Haushofer, 1869-1946', Geographers Biobibliographical Studies, 12 (1988), pp. 95-108.


\(^\text{89}\) Paterson, 'German Geopolitics Reassessed', p. 108.
hemmed in by the pernicious territorial-strictures of Versailles. The 'natural' law of
the organic-state provided pseudo-scientific justification for an expansion of the
German frontiers to encompass the 'living-space' which was urgently required by the
population. At the global scale this division of space would eventually settle into
three or four huge Pan-regions, with a German-led *Eurafrica* controlling both the
European and-African continents.90

We also know that Haushofer's group were far from being ethereal academics
proposing abstracted theories. They developed a *Wehregeopolitik* (war-geopolitics or
defence-geopolitics) whose purpose was to inform the state's preparation for, and
prosecution of, warfare.91 Moreover, Haushofer maintained a prolific publishing rate
through which he evangelised for his new geopolitical perspective. He was also
involved in radio-broadcasts, made frequent overseas journeys and seemed to nurture
his high-profile role as a supposed geographical advisor to the state. It is perhaps due
in part to such activities that Haushofer won his wartime notoriety in the United
States. However, despite Haushofer's apparent ubiquity, by the time news of
*Geopolitik* reached the United States, German *Geopolitik* was far from being a
monolithic entity. Indeed, it had already fractured into several different and
contradictory movements.

Maull, Obst and Lautensach quit as co-editors in 1932 due to Haushofer's increasingly
pro-Nazi sentiments. Furthermore, as early as February 1932, eleven months before
they seized power, the infant Nazi party had recognised the potential political utility
of geopolitics and had founded the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Geopolitik* with 500
members. Although Haushofer was honoured by the group occasionally, its primary
aim was to exploit geopolitical ideas to the maximum benefit of Nazism. It planned
to do this through education, research and propaganda. This organisation quickly won
more influence in Germany than Haushofer himself enjoyed. Especially as the
*Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Geopolitik* adopted the mystical-racism of Nazism whilst
Haushofer remained associated with environmental determinism - an ideology at odds
with Hitler's 'hierarchy of the races' and therefore increasingly frowned-upon as Nazi
totalitarianism took hold. As Mark Bassin has shown, these fundamentally different
ideologies (of environmental or racial determinism) prove that Haushoferian
geopolitics cannot have been the ideological support for Nazi imperialism.

Nevertheless, the combination of Haushofer's willingness to serve the Nazi cause and
the pressure exerted on his movement by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Geopolitik*

90J. O'Loughlin and H. van der Wusten, 'Political Geography of Panregions', *The Geographical
Review*, 80, 1 (1990), pp. 1-20, esp. 2-10.
91Haushofer himself was closely involved in this: Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*, p. 248.
meant that, with time, Haushofer toned-down his emphasis on environment and landscape and attempted instead to develop and incorporate a 'race-theory' into his geopolitics.\footnote{Livingstone, \textit{The Geographical Tradition}, pp. 249.}

Haushofer lost all influence when his friend and protector, Rudolf Hess, flew to Scotland in 1941 and when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in spite of all Haushofer's written warnings against this course. Ironically, by this time he was world famous for his supposed influence over German foreign policy. The reality, as we currently understand it, is that his influence over German policy had been tiny and by the late 1930s he had also lost control of the German geopolitical discourse - having to accommodate himself to the official party line.

What we now possess is a more accurate picture of German geopolitics - with an understanding that Haushofer's fabled \textit{Institut für Geopolitik} never existed, and an appreciation of the tense and suspicious relationship between his interpretation of geopolitics and the state's preferred version. And rather than a simplistic model of a causal relationship between \textit{Geopolitik} and Nazi foreign policy, we can move towards a more nuanced account of the ways in which geopolitics facilitated expansionism with its veneer of scientific rationale and by its reduction of complex international affairs to over-simplified, monocausal narratives.\footnote{J. O'Loughlin and H. Heske, 'From 'Geopolitik to 'Geopolitique': convening a discipline for war to a discipline for peace', in N. Kliot and S. Waterman (eds.) \textit{The Political Geography of Conflict and Peace}, London, 1991, pp. 37-59, esp. p. 43.} The critical histories of geopolitics have done us a great service in dissolving the myths surrounding German geopolitics.

\textit{The importance of continuing this project}

One ramification has been a slight tendency to forget about the significant impact German geopolitics enjoyed in their time and, as Livingstone writes, "...to diminish their significance [whilst revealing] just how pervasive the politicisation of German geography actually was."\footnote{Livingstone, \textit{The Geographical Tradition}, pp. 246; also, G. Sandner, 'Recent advances in the History of German geography, 1918-1945. A progress report for the Federal Republic of Germany', \textit{Geografische Zeitschrift}, 76 (1988), pp. 120-133.} My own impression is that this is indeed the case. We have shifted from a position where most geography was thought to be inherently apolitical and needed to be 'applied' to engage with the 'real world', to an acceptance that all geographical practice and discourse is political. This mirrors asymmetrically the prevalent perspective upon geopolitics. In our received wisdom, geopolitics has
shifted from a highly-politicised position of shame and disgrace and won a less
demonised reputation thanks to its newly-revealed tenuous links with Nazism. These
days, geopolitics are no longer beyond the pale for their political links, but merely
towards one extreme of the wider politicisation of geography.95 The curious duality I
spoke of is reversed. However, whilst the experience of geopolitics remains to be told
fully, I do think that it is incumbent upon us, as geographers, not to leave the role of
interwar geopolitics unquestioned.

My argument here is that an understanding of Italian geopolitics, situated amidst a
wider interwar European geopolitical discourse, should provide us with a more
rounded and comprehensive picture of geopolitics between the wars. Whilst the
memory of the fascist regimes of the 1930s remains contested -and the arguments
surrounding Japanese war-guilt, Holocaust-denial, the re-appearance of Fascists in
parliament in Italy and the commemoration of wartime anniversaries provides ample
testimony to the ongoing disputation of such memories- it is important that we do not
neglect the role of geography in these regimes. Consequently, I want to extend these
critical histories of geographical knowledges and of geopolitics to encompass the
Italian experience.

To do this I will adopt a position in which the term geopolitics is contingent upon
time and place, meaning different things to different people at different times and in
different places. Just as with the wider discourse of geography, geopolitics was a
situated form of knowledge and understanding. Many commentators, from the 1940s
through to the present day have noted the relativism and the plurality of geopolitics.96
In 1942, Hans Weigert commented that:

There is no such thing as a general science of geopolitics which can be
subscribed to by all state organisations. There are as many geopolitics
as there are conflicting state systems struggling under geographic
conditions... There is a Geopolitik, a Geopolitique, there are different
geopolitics for the United States and England. Each nation has the
geopolitics it deserves.97

95Historians of the Third Reich nevertheless still label Haushofer as an influence on Hitlers thinking
through the conduit provided by Hess. They also see the Lebensraum concept as perhaps the
significant element in German expansionism. J. Steinberg, 'The Third Reich reflected: German Civil
Administration in the occupied Soviet Union, 1941-4', English Historical Review, 110, (1995), pp. 620-
529.
96See, for example: E. Thermaenius, 'Geopolitics and political geography', Baltic and Scandanavian
Countries, 4 (1938), pp. 165-177; also Hepple, The revival of geopolitics, p. s22, in which he admits
that most geopolitical writers make the term mean exactly what they want it to mean.
My intention is to introduce Italian Geopolitica - which was very probably the geopolitics which Fascist Italy deserved. It was certainly a self-consciously Italian version of geopolitics which negotiated its own theoretical-stance from amidst the wider European geopolitical conversation of the period. My next section will deal with this European geopolitical discourse which was recognised by most of the geopoliticians of the period. And whilst each group or school of geographers defined their own version of geopolitics, there was nevertheless an awareness of this wider debate from which geopolitics originated. Thus, each version of geopolitics also defined itself to some extent in relation to this ongoing geopolitical tradition.98

Part III. A European conversation - rethinking inter-war Geopolitics

Until the mid 1990s the most extensive reports about Italian inter-war geopolitics amounted to a couple of brief paragraphs in the literature which emerged in the United States in reaction to Geopolitik.99 The most vivid account was penned by Robert Strausz-Hupé in 1942.100 In the three paragraphs with which he covered Italian geopolitics, he wrote of its origins thus:

Not the least remarkable success of German propaganda is that it has made Geopolitik palatable for Italian consumption. In Italy the teachings of Geopolitik have received a respectful hearing. An Italian monthly, Geopolitica, founded in 1939, imitates the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik. Geopolitica is published by a German-controlled firm in Milan.101

He went on to mention a few other brief impressions, perhaps snatches of hearsay, about the journal. What interests me here is his belief that Geopolitica was not so much a home-grown product but Geopolitik exported, planted in Italian soil and diluted to Italian tastes by a German-controlled firm. I will demonstrate later that this is a huge simplification. For a start, the Milanese publishing firm, Sperling and Kupfer, was not controlled by Germany but merely bore a German-sounding name.102 Their publication of Geopolitica was allegedly the price they paid, their bribe, to secure a larger contract from the education ministry. Moreover, far from being a tool

98Livingstone also tries to argue that there is an ongoing tradition, in his case a geographical tradition, which links all of his case-studies. Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition, pp. 30-31.
99Indeed, some accounts at this time discounted any notion of an Italian geopolitics. It seems that, in sharp contrast to the German experience, Geopolitica received very little attention from American commentators.
100Strausz-Hupé, Geopolitics, pp. 126-127.
101Strausz-Hupé, Geopolitics, p. 126.
102Sperling and Kupfer still exist and, during my time in Italy, were enjoying significant sales of low-price pulp fiction. Their biggest sellers in 1993 were the serialised narratives of the American television show aimed at teenagers - Beverley Hills 90210.
of the Nazi propaganda regime, throughout the 1930s Sperling and Kupfer had consistently supplied books and journals to the most significant Marxist thinker of the period, Antonio Gramsci. In turn, Gramsci used this flow of books for the classes in history and geography which he gave to his fellow political-prisoners in the prison at Turi. It was presumably from these books; whilst preparing his geography lectures, that Gramsci, like Strausz-Hupé, learnt of the worrying phenomena of German Geopolitik.

The story of Italian geopolitics occupies the next seven chapters of this thesis. Before then, I want to outline the way in which Italian geopolitics were tied into what I will call the 'geopolitical conversation' which comprised the commentaries, reports, critiques and contributions which characterised the development of geopolitics as the phenomena was bounced and buffeted around the interwar world.

**A history of a European conversation**

In his groundbreaking 1983 volume *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, Stephen Kern paints a vivid picture of political geography in *Fin-de-siècle* Europe and through into the early years of the twentieth century:

All over Europe rivers of geopolitics coursed all over the European cultural terrain. They started in the high reaches of theoretical tomes such as Ratzel's two major works and cascaded through volumes of the new periodicals that were founded - *National Geographic Magazine* (1889), *Annals de Géographie* (1891), *The Geographical Journal* (1893), *Geographische Zeitschrift* (1895). They ran down through the flatlands of popular consciousness in countless magazines and newspaper articles and welled up everywhere, from formal diplomatic pronouncements to barroom banter.

For my purposes, Kern uses the term geopolitics in a rather lax manner. My concern is to highlight the emergence, circulation and debating of a particular set of ideas which self-consciously fashioned and considered themselves as being 'geopolitical',

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and therefore as somehow distinct from other ideas and approaches within geography and without. I will concentrate upon these self-styled geopolitical discourses as one important element of the intellectual context within which the geopoliticians of Fascist Italy situated themselves. I can't tell the wider story of political geography, or of politicised geographies. This would be too great a task for this thesis. Neither will I concern myself with introducing the geopolitical discourses of Japan, of South America, or of other parts of the world. My position is Eurocentric because the Italian discourse I am looking at was itself Eurocentric. Moreover, aside from the unavoidable histories and assumptions fed to me by the American critiques of Geopolitik, and which constituted the intellectual furniture with which I began my research, my research has been focused upon Europe and I think that I have found traces of what can be labelled an European conversation, or a tradition (in its loosest terms) of geopolitics.

Geopolitics was clearly not just a German 'science', even if that which went under this broad and amorphous banner was often inspired by the large, infamous and productive German precedent. Rather, in the inter-war world, a broad notion of 'geopolitics' enjoyed an expanding currency across a number of international boundaries, and within geography as well as without. It is this which I will examine here.

However, I do have to position the emergence of geopolitics, a self-conscious derivation of political geography within the wider context of political geography in Europe. For Kern is unquestionably right to highlight the growth of political geography which accompanied the late nineteenth-century speculation about the politics of space and territory. In 1873 Jules Verne could write about circumnavigating the globe in just eighty days, and only twenty years later Frederick Jackson Turner pronounced the American Frontier closed. During the 1884-1891 'Scramble for Africa' the European colonial powers shared-out the remainder of the continent's territory which wasn't already under their control. As the Italian Kingdom was establishing itself in the late nineteenth century, other nations became ever more concerned about the finitude of global space and at the spectre of a closing world.


As what Mackinder labelled the post-Columbian epoch (the age of European exploration and expansion) drew to a close, so political geographies coursed through public discourses as individuals and institutions attempted to make sense of this closing space. Europe was at the epicentre of this interest and it is here, and in the debates over political geographies which developed from this period, that the intellectual context of Geopolitica originates.

One of the first geographers to attempt a contextualisation of the history of geography dated the wide scale late nineteenth-century politicisation of the discipline to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871. In the famous phrase of the American Geography Society's President Daly, this was a war fought as much by maps as by weapons. A realisation which prompted both belligerent nations to re-assess and prioritise the discipline of geography. Geographical societies had been established in Paris and Berlin from the 1830s, but in the aftermath of 1871 Geography became a central element of military academies in both France and Germany and the discipline was also encouraged in the universities in both countries. Increasing numbers of University chairs were resourced by central government whilst the private geographical societies and institutions multiplied in this favourable environment.

The politicisation of the discipline in France and Germany and the manner in which geography was being re-oriented to the national-state requirements eventually catalysed the development of geography in Britain in the late 1880s. By this time two distinct 'schools' of geographical thought, or better, two national geographical discourses, were becoming well established on the continent.

It is with these two national discourse, the French and the German 'traditions', that I want to begin my brief history of the discipline in Europe. For the geographical discourses of other European nations which emerged after these two earlier and powerful examples developed in their shadow. Certainly, Italian geographers negotiated the nature of their own discourse with a pronounced awareness of French and German geography. The choice they faced was often whether to adopt elements through the highpoint of European modernity, see: D. Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity, Oxford, 1989, pp. 201-289.


of the French, German or both traditions, or how far to consciously deny these other traditions in an attempt to establish an indigenous, Italian tradition. Whilst I believe that this broad model holds true for several European academic geographical traditions in general, I am more sure that it is applicable in the growth and spread of political geography throughout Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. And this was especially the case as the debate surrounding geopolitics gathered momentum in the 1930s. As a consequence, it is with the two pillars of French and German geography that I will begin.

Given that they were both catalysed by the Franco-Prussian war and by subsequent attempts to define national space and to conquer and control colonial spaces, it is not surprising that both French and German geographical discourses displayed nationalistic traits and betrayed an antagonism towards one-another during stages of their development. As I have suggested, this was never more so than in the embryonic field of political geography where politics and the 'academic' analysis and explanation of political phenomena were openly mixed. This was also the arena in which the French and German 'schools' of geography began contesting one another and defining themselves in part through this oppositional process.

The 'new historiography of geography' counsels against the myopic writing of histories through the medium of 'national schools' of thought. Quite correctly it recognises that this form of analysis has been over-privileged with explanatory power and has foreclosed on many other elements such as local and national politics, economics, culture and sexuality which have often played far more important roles in the making and remaking of geography over the last two centuries. However, I do not think that the notion of a 'national school' of geographical thought should be abandoned completely. The Italian evidence suggests that 'national schools' were important in shaping geographical histories precisely because of the ways in which past geographers perceived themselves and others as positioned within, without, between, or perhaps unaffected by 'national schools'. And it was a conscious membership of these 'schools', a self-positioning in a particular tradition in a period when the discipline was establishing itself, which contributed to the identities of these geographers. Thus, a model of competing and contested, but consciously acknowledged, geographical 'schools' holds some relevance, and certainly helps me to develop my story.

In the French geographical tradition for example, after 1871 a distinctive set of priorities emerged and, encouraged by the Third Republic and its emphasis upon national regeneration and growth, geography became important in efforts to define the
limits and nature of France and the distinctive and unique French landscape. Elsewhere, geography was mobilised to define, map and control French possessions overseas. It should not surprise us that the geographers who occupied the university chairs founded by the state to undertake such work saw themselves as creating a 'French School' of Geography. Likewise, given the disciplinary ambitions of Geography to forge for itself a new and central role in national life, it was in the interests of these early French professional geographers to create, define and reinforce a distinctive 'French School'. The acknowledged leader of this 'school' was Paul Vidal de la Blache, the towering figure of French geography, and it is with him that we can identify the origins of a tradition of mistrust and opposition between French and German Political Geographies.

A year after the 1897 publication of Friedrich Ratzel's *Politische Geographie*, now acknowledged as the first statement of modern Political Geography, Vidal de la Blache reviewed the book in the *Annales de Géographie*. In so doing he introduced this text to a French audience and influenced the development of political geography there. He also found fault with the book's emphasis upon geographical determinism, the notion of the organic state and Ratzel's attempts to tease universal laws from his observations. Vidal's critique was an early statement in the process which established a semblance of rivalry and mistrust between French Geography and German-Ratzelian geography which was to continue through to the Second World War. As Lucien Febvre would later write, Vidal de la Blache had "...ripened his ideas on human geography [and] tested them by comparison with the books of Ratzel, whose weaknesses his critical sense soon detected." Febvre continued, [de la Blache] "...became the undisputed master of a group of disciples who throng the French Universities and Lycées." It was these disciples who nurtured and developed French geography further. Consequently, an element of scepticism towards German geographers becoming enshrined within their traditions as French-Vidalien geography, with its emphasis upon human agency (possibilism) and the resultant distinctive *genres-de-vie* which constituted the *pays de la France*, found itself opposed to the determinism of German Geography led by a Ratzelian creed.

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114Brian Hudson, charts the origins of this divide in the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian war: 'The New Geography and the New Imperialism'.

115P. Vidal de la Blache, 'La Géographie politique, à propos des écrits de M. Frédéric Ratzel', *Annales de Géographie*, 7 (1898), 97-111.


Camille Vallaux, for example, paid homage to Ratzel's original innovative work but also mistrusted his determinism and vigorously rejected his nationalism. He alleged that Ratzelian determinism was little more than an academic justification for German expansionism and was right to identify Ratzel's nationalism and his willingness to supplicate his science to the German state. We know that Ratzel's interests extended far beyond the academy into the German Colonial league and other nationalist associations. Nor was his academic writing immune, his 1900 book *The Sea as a source of the greatness of a people* argued explicitly in favour of Germany's growing world-role.

Political bias was not, of course, the sole prerogative of Ratzel and his followers. Vidal himself was greatly influenced by and involved with national politics. His shift from the Classics to geography was enabled by France's post-1871 promotion of the discipline's national benefit and his *Tableaux de la France* sought to define the new, revived France of the Third Republic before France was once more to be engulfed by war with Germany. Once at war, Vidal placed his expertise at the service of the state - sitting on various committees and, like much of the remainder of French geography, working for national victory against Germany. Vidal's final work, an analysis of Alsace-Lorraine was irreducibly political in its evidence that this contested region, the site of contemporary terrible bloodshed, was geographically, and therefore scientifically proven to be, French by Vidal's evidence. So this opposition, played out at the academic level in the determinism-possibilism debate, at international level with two national geographies supporting their respective states against the other, shaped continental European geographical debate and discourse for the inter-war period. Between 1870 and 1919 the geographers of Europe abandoned most pretences to scientific objectivity and embraced their applicability to the state and to states craft. Fuelled by a heady mixture of personal and disciplinary ambitions at home and a nationalistic support for their state, well-meant or otherwise, geographers, and geographical institutions across Europe placed their services within the political realm.

After the slaughter of World War One, and the eager, if sometimes ineffectual, efforts of geographers to be involved, the victorious powers assembled at Versailles to divide the war's spoils and to build a new peaceful order of the world. The role of geography

at the conference has been well documented. Geographical evidence played a significant role in negotiations and geographical expertise was marshalled by most nations as the territorial settlements were hammered out. For most of those who would become significant players in the inter-war geopolitical theatre, Versailles has a special significance. For some, notably America's Isaiah Bowman, it was a great opportunity to help build an American-inspired world order and to advance himself and geography in America. For a ten-year-old Ernesto Massi, Versailles changed his citizenship, transferring his home-city, Trieste, from the Austrian Empire to Italy. For others the conference brought disappointment. In Britain, Halford Mackinder was not elected an advisor to Lloyd George and the conference failed to take due notice of his recommendations within Democratic Ideals and Reality. And for Karl Haushofer, leading his troops back from the front line through a defeated and shattered Germany, the Versailles settlement marked a final and unwarranted humiliation for Germany. The resentment was fuelled by the belief that geographical evidence had been used unfairly by the Allied powers at Versailles; and when Bowman published the first edition of The New World in 1920, this best-selling text was read, in Germany at least, as a manifesto of the victorious powers. One which spelt out their vision of the post-war world-order with the aid of a strain of geography bent to the America's ends.

As I have mentioned already, the reaction against the treaty of Versailles was of great significance in catalysing German geopolitics. In my opinion, It was with the advent of Zeitschrift für Geopolitik that continental European geography (broadly polarised between German determinism and French possibilism) began to fracture still more due to the debates and conversations which surrounded this new, belligerent and highly politicised version of political geography.

Criticising Geopolitik

Geopolitik had its critics at home; most famously the Marxist Karl Wittfogel. In 1929, in a lengthy critique which problematised Geopolitik's environmental-determinism, Wittfogel developed an alternative vision of geography which, in sympathy with Possibilism but couched in the analytical categories of Marxism, stressed the mediating impact of human-kind upon the environment. Although

120 For Isaiah Bowman, leader of the American delegation in particular, the conference afforded him the opportunity to influence the world-order and to make the contacts which would perhaps make him the most influential geographer of the twentieth century. See: Smith 'Isaiah Bowman'.

Wittfogel was eventually forced to flee Germany with the ascendancy of the Nazis, Haushofer had proved keen to listen to Wittfogel and, despite his own right-wing conservatism and distaste for communism, had given his critic space in Zeitschrift für Geopolitik. The defection of Maull, Lautensach and Obst in the early 1930s due to their increased discomfort with the overtly political stance of the journal signalled more dissent within Germany. Yet opposition and debate in Germany were stifled, especially after 1933. This was decidedly not the case in the rest of Europe as I will demonstrate below.

French criticisms and La Geopolitique

If my contention of a long-standing wariness of French geographers towards the neighbouring German discourse has any truth to it, then we should expect to find concerns about, and critiques of, Geopolitik to the West of the Rhine.122 This was indeed the case both within geography and without. In the late 1920s Geopolitik was of sufficient stature to rouse the concerns of Annalistes Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre.123 Concerned by what they labelled the 'geopolitical cartography' of Geopolitik, they used the pages of the Annals d'Histoire économique et sociale to criticise the 'ideology of Geopolitik' and to propose a French cartographical response which would argue against these German geopolitical maps.124 As I have already hinted, such national exceptionalism was an endlessly recurrent theme of the inter-war years. And as many nations developed their own geopolitical traditions, there was significant potential for conflict between these competing discourses. Bloch and Febvre provide only one example of this - but a useful one in that they demonstrate how a wider community was aware of Geopolitik, and moreover that busy, influential, and widely-informed intellectuals like Bloch and Febvre were sufficiently concerned and motivated by what they knew of Geopolitik to draw attention to the journal and to contest its contents. They were also nationalistic enough to seize upon what they considered sinister developments across the Rhine. It was such instances, repeated across the inter-war world which I claim constitute the beginnings of a geopolitical conversation of this period.

Febvre's concerns with political geography pre-dated his criticisms of Geopolitik. In 1922 he had argued vigorously against Ratzelian geography and what he considered

122 This same argument is offered in Parker, Western Geopolitical Thought, pp. 87-101.
its mechanistic determinism. However, with the advent of Geopolitik, his criticisms developed from his confidence in French Vidalien possibilism as far superior to the reductionist environmentalism of German geography and its new geopolitical offspring. He labelled German geopolitics as 'worthless glitter' based upon 'old Ratzelian litanies'. His friends and colleagues were in accord. Albert Demangeon was an associate of Vidal, Bloch and Febvre and editor of the Annales de Géographie throughout the 1930s to his death in 1940, reportedly with grief at the sight of German troops occupying Paris. He was worried by Geopolitik and published an ongoing series of reviews of the journal and its key concepts such as Lebensraum. He also sponsored French efforts to negotiate their own Geopolitique and the connected debate as to whether this was an appropriate field for geographical science. Part of his opposition to Geopolitik, expressed famously in a 1932 article in the Annales de Géographie, was based upon the determinism which he thought had been adapted too crudely from Ratzel. His vision of political geography rejected determinism in favour of the French Vidalien tradition he championed whereas Geopolitik, which "...deliberately renounces all scientific spirit..." seemed to him to be little more than part of the German expansionist lobby. Demangeon's intervention was aimed directly at Geopolitik and was later seen as an important development by the geopoliticians of Italy.

Other French geographers had learnt of Geopolitik and were unhappy about what they found. And whilst most would acknowledge their debts to Ratzel's late nineteenth-century work, as we have seen, the roots of a conflict between possibilism and determinism were already in place before the Great war. After 1918 there was growing dissent at the nature of German political geography, its perceived caricature of Ratzelian ideas, and its nationalism and support for expansionism. Geopolitik was a natural focus for this criticism and individuals schooled in the French Vidalien tradition such as Jean Brunhes, André Siegfried, and Y-M Goblet would all argue...

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129A. Demangeon, 'Géographie politique', Annales de Géographie, 61 (1932), pp. 22-31. Demangeon was not entirely innocent of meetings with Germans and Geopolitikers, (past and present) having attended the 1937 Allesandro Volta conference in Rome (with an appended and optional fieldtrip to Italian Libya) alongside Karl Haushofer, Otto Maul as well as Georges Hardy.
131O'Loughlin, Dictionary of Geopolitics, p. 88.
vehemently against German determinism and Haushofer's journal. Their loyalty to Vidal de la Blache, or to *La Geographie humaine* cannot totally explain their uncompromising opposition to *Geopolitik*. Their disquiet must have also grown steadily with the rise of Hitler, German re-armament and the re-militarisation of the Rhineland. Particularly as all would recall the Great War; and their parents would have told them of the disaster of 1871. If German geography appeared to have mobilised itself yet again, we could only expect the French to react - on intellectual and nationalistic grounds. A 'debate' which was frequently heated had clearly developed over political geography and geopolitics. And whilst the Germans were not to my knowledge as ready to engage in argument as the French, the way in which other geographers from other nations became involved augments my point.

Perhaps the most outspoken French critic of *Geopolitik* was another Vidalien disciple, Jacques Ancel. From 1936 until 1939 his career appears to have revolved around an ongoing debate with Haushofer in which he doggedly criticised the latter's geographical determinism and pseudo-scientific justifications for German expansionism; and this at a time when Hitler's imperialism was becoming increasingly evident. His background as a decorated-veteran of the First World War who, after studying under Vidal de la Blache at the Sorbonne, went on to develop an academic interest in central and Eastern Europe, meant that Ancel was especially likely to identify and then object to Haushofer's work and the German expansionism to which -in French minds- *Geopolitik* was so closely linked. His opening salvo appeared in 1936, and in the first lines of *Géopolitique* Ancel situated his book as a trenchant critique of German geopolitics:

> At the present time the pangermanism of Hitler has borrowed its rationale and its vocabulary from the *Geopolitik* of German professors. My intention is to recapture this applied-term [geopolitics] as an externalised, dynamic political geography.

The importance Ancel attached to *Geopolitik* was not solely rhetorical, but based upon a conviction that it was a genuine menace to France. Ancel confronted this *pseudo-géographie* upon its claims to understand the externalities of the state. The internal political geography of the state was amply covered by the work of Siegfried, Vidal, Demangeon and Febvre. Therefore, "...as Franco-German relations are the

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order of the day, it is in this other domain that my efforts are focused.” Ancel went on to mention his own provenance within the Vidalien *Géographie humaine* and proceeded to argue the wider credentials of this French approach to geopolitics - based upon historicism and rigorous analysis.

*Géopolitique* then, emphasised this dichotomy between the French and German 'schools' with an opening chapter whose title demanded: "Les Méthodes - Géographie allemande ou Géographie française?" Here Ancel traced the development of German political geography from Ratzel to *Geopolitik* and then, by way of contrast, the approach of Vidal de la Blache and *Le géographie humaine*. As I am suggesting, the European debate about geopolitics was frequently premised upon this opposition. Furthermore, Ancel then demonstrates another of my propositions: that the debate surrounding geopolitics was a self-conscious conversation between several 'geopoliticians' in different European countries. I have avoided long lists of writers referenced and books read in this chapter so far lest I stray too close to 'textbook-chronicle' territory. However, Ancel proves my point by discussing, debating and citing not only numerous examples of French and German geographies, but also the work of Yugoslav Johan Cvijic, Rudolf Kjellén, Isaiah Bowman, Russian expert Yuri Semjonov and even the Italians Roletto and Massi. In developing a version of geopolitics rooted in rigorous French Vidalien traditions and in opposition to the determinism of *Geopolitik*, Ancel discussed and invoked a wide cross-section of European political geographies. It is precisely such instances, appearing increasingly in the late 1930s, which constitute the 'geopolitical conversation' I am talking about.

In 1938 Ancel again took issue with Haushofer and his 1927 work, *Grenzen*, with a second monograph entitled: *Géographie des frontières*. In his preface, André Siegfried was scathing of *Geopolitik* - no doubt in mind of Hitler's obvious intentions towards Czechoslovakia. Ancel's preface was signed and dated 'Tatranská Lomnica (Slovaquie), août 1938', only two months before the Wehrmacht marched into the Sudetenland. He too was bitter, railing against the imminent fracture of the European order established at Versailles and denouncing "...the geographers, enlisted by Hitlerism...clothing their excessive pretentions in a pseudo-géographie." He

137 Ancel, *Géopolitique*, p. 5.
140 Some details of arguments -and, indeed, similarities- between the *Geopolitiker* and Ancel, Goblet *et al.* are to be found within: Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought*, pp. 87-101.
continued, somewhat disingenuously: "My design is not to argue with the scholars over the Rhine. I solely want to demonstrate the inanity of their purely-speculative logic." In the text he again criticised determinism and re-asserted the Vidalien faith in human agency - the frontiers Haushofer wrote of were neither fixed nor immutable. And again, Ancel enlisted and discussed a whole litany of European political geographers in his riposte to Haushofer.

Jacques Ancel clearly considered himself to be engaged in a significant debate, and one which was informed by the contributions of other geographers throughout Europe. He had a particular and clear conception of what geopolitics should be. From the Vidalien traditions of human geography he sought to develop a French Geopolitique in contrast and opposition to German Geopolitik. In this role he was merely one of the most productive of many French geographers engaged on the same task and building a French interwar geopolitical discourse. Robert Specklin wrote that the Ancel-Haushofer debate was always undertaken in the best possible academic spirit. The Nazi authorities in occupied France failed to equal these standards. They sent Ancel to a concentration camp which killed him. It was perhaps because of this bloody history between the French and German nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that geopolitics were taken seriously and so vigorously contested.

Haushofer's birthday

In 1939 Zeitschrift für Geopolitik published a Festschrift edition to celebrate their editor's seventieth birthday. Tributes to Haushofer took the form of articles which demonstrated how his thinking, how geopolitics, had spread throughout the world and had been adopted by different nations. Benoy Kumar Sarkar wrote from India; Jon Şan-Giorgiu from Bucharest. Several German émigrés contributed from their posts abroad, whilst a Dutch writer -soon to experience German expansionism at first hand- was meanwhile concerned with Holland's Pacific geopolitics. Haushofer

144 Ancel, Géographie des frontières, p. 1.
145 Benoy Kumar Sarkar, 'Grund fragen der Geopolitik - angewandt auf das indische volk', Zeitschrift für Geopolitik, 16, 8-9 (1939), pp. 631-637. Sarkar seems to have been involved in the anti-British nationalist movement. See also his review of Haushofer's Grenzen in the Calcutta Review of 1939 when, clearly taken by the ideas of Geopolitik, he calls for a geopolitics of the Bengali people which would reflect the glorious history of this 'noble race'. He concluded that Indians have much to learn from Haushofer and Geopolitik: Benoy Kumar Sarkar, 'Geopolitik as a social science', The Calcutta Review, 31 (1938), pp. 105-107.
even published a contribution from Jacques Ancel which characteristically posited a French geopolitique against its German contemporary.148 Like Ancel, all of these other international contributors noted the development of geopolitics in their own nation and each seemed aware of the negotiation of their own national 'school' or version of geopolitics from the initial impetus provided by Geopolitik. As I hope to demonstrate in the rest of this thesis, this was certainly the case with the remaining contributor to the Festschrift. Ernesto Massi represented Italian geopolitics and contributed an article titled: 'Roman and Italian Mediterranean Geopolitics'.149

Elsewhere in the 1939 volume of the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik could be found contributions from Poland, Italy, The United States, Bulgaria and from another author in India.150 It seems that the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik was quite an international publication on the eve of war; and this quite apart from the sensationalist impact it enjoyed in the United States. Moreover, the genre of geopolitics could also boast adherents throughout other nations in the period. And these 'geopoliticians' were well aware that they were part of a developing branch of knowledge, and that these ideas were being debated in other nations contemporaneously.

One sign that geopolitics mattered in inter-war Europe were the translations of significant works which began to appear in the 1930s. Haushofer had James Fairgrieve's work translated into German whilst his own contributions were translated into French and Russian.151 Even an anonymous British text of the period, Ernest Short's Sketch of geopolitics, found its way into print in France as part of Payot's 'library' on geopolitics.152 Elsewhere, the notion of geopolitics had arisen in Hungary

148 J. Ancel, 'Die französische geografische schule und die Geopolitik', Zeitschrift für Geopolitik, 16, 8-9 (1939), pp. 640-656. The 1939 volume of Geopolitik also carried contributions from Poland, Italy, The United States, Bulgaria and from another author in India.

149 E. Massi, 'Römische und italienische Mittelmeer-Geopolitik', Zeitschrift für Geopolitik, 16, 8-9 (1939), pp. 551-566. Massi also introduced himself as the primary representative of Italian geopolitics and provided a lengthy footnote which traced a thumbnail sketch of the discipline's development South of the Alps (p. 551).


151 Martha Haushofer translated J. Fairgrieve, Geographie und Weltmacht, Berlin, 1925. This was one of the few times when British political geographers had much impact in this 'European conversation', even Mackinder received little attention from the Southern European discourses; Bowman's New World was the most well-known Anglo-Saxon text. See M. Hauner, What is Asia's Heartland to us?, London, 1990, pp. 169-171 on the Russian translation of Haushofer's Geopolitik des pazifischen ozeans (1934). In French: K. Haushofer, Le Japon et les Japonais (Geopolitique du Japan), Paris, 1937.

in 1930 when Paul Teleki, professor of Geography at Budapest University and a former prime-minister, penned a significant paper in this ongoing conversation. Teleki recognised that the differences between political geography and geopolitics amounted to more than a mere change of name, but an evolution of an old discipline (political geography) to cope with the new flux and demands of the interwar world. Teleki’s insight was cited frequently by the Italian geopoliticians and, even as Hungarian Prime minister once more he found time to receive Haushofer for an official visit in 1939. Elsewhere, as we have seen, geopolitics enjoyed a profile significant enough to rouse Nicolai Bukharin to debate. Other critics also commented from the Soviet Union. And Milan Hauner claims that the Soviet leadership showed a good deal of interest in Haushofer’s prescriptions up until 1941, even producing an unauthorised translation of one of his books for use in colleges. In Finland geopolitics won increasing attention in the late 1930s. And although its practitioners were sceptical about Geopolitik’s claims to scientific exactitude, they nevertheless produced writings on Finnish versions of Lebensraum for German consumption in 1941-1942 and fostered international links with the Geopolitiker.

It was with an eye to this same international audience that Edvard Thermaenius published, in English, a self-consciously positioned Swedish contribution to the debate. In Geopolitics and political geography (1938) he tried to reclaim Rudolf Kjellén’s reputation and work from their association with Geopolitik. He argued that geopolitics should be used ‘realistically and critically’ to prepare for the imminent changes in the world system. Implicitly he was calling for a Swedish geopolitics to surface from amidst the European circulation of geopolitical ideas. Kjellén’s ideas were also adapted in Japan where several strains of geopolitics emerged over the first half of the century.


155Hauner, What is Asia’s Heartland to us?, pp. 170 and 198.


157Thermaenius, ‘Geopolitics and Political Geography’.

158Thermaenius, ‘Geopolitics and Political Geography’, p. 12; Thermaenius, as with other ‘geopoliticians’ of the period, was widely-read on the European tradition. His bibliography shows him to be familiar with the German, English and Swedish literatures on the subject.

I cannot deal with all of these different discourses here, but there is one final movement which did play a significant role in the circulation of geopolitical ideas around Europe in the interwar years: the geopolitics of Franco's Spain. A recent article in English concluded that the geopolitical debates which circulated through Fascist Spain, and through the journal *Estudios Geograficos* in particular, were quite limited. However, the Spanish discourse does demonstrate two of my points. Firstly, it partook in the circulation of geopolitical ideas throughout Europe. For example the 'official definition' of geopolitics which was decided in Italy in 1941 (which I will discuss later) was a matter of some excitement for the Spanish geopolitical 'experts'. They joined in the international discussion of this new 'definition' just as they had followed and reported the development of geopolitics in other countries. The second point is that Spanish geographers, like their Italian colleagues, found themselves choosing between the two dominant European 'schools' of geography - the Possibilist and the Deterministic approach. And because the contest between French and German geopoliticians had crystallized around their different approaches to the discipline, for the geographers of smaller national discourses (such as Spain), the choice between French Vidalienism and German determinism often became caught up in the debate surrounding geopolitics.

One figure who encapsulates this position superbly is Jaime Vicens Vives. Vives is remembered as Spain's greatest historian of the century, the man who dragged Catalan historiography away from nationalist interpretation towards the more...

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163 This debate continued beyond the war years: J-M. Martinez Val, 'Panorama de la geografía humana actual', *Estudios Geográficos*, 7 (1946), pp. 73-96, esp. pp. 94-96; J. Gavira, 'La ciencia geografía en Europa y América al finalizar la guerra', *Estudios Geográficos*, 7 (1946), pp. 525-545.

holistic and rigorous analysis of the French *Annales* school. Yet in addition to introducing *Annalists* thought into Spain, Vicens Vives also promoted geopolitics. He taught in the joint department of Geography and History at Barcelona University and it was from here that he published *España, geopolítica del estado y del imperio*, a 215-page monograph which used geopolitical analysis and geopolitical cartography to analyse and explain the history of Iberia from classical times to the twentieth century.

He began his text with a lengthy and informed 'introduction to geopolitics' which rehearsed the determinism-possibilism debate, the various critiques of geopolitics and the field's development within these parameters. He proposed instead the synthesising vision of geopolitics, in his words: "...the excellent and original possibilities [created by] the coincidence of geographical and historical factors in the domain of geopolitics." Geopolitics could be considered "...a science of the relations between the geographical environment and the historical in the formation of states." And as he concluded: "It is in this direction that Italian university geographers and the more selective of German geopoliticians are presently developing." Vicens Vives continued with discussions of *espacio-vital*, the state as a 'geopolitical synthesis' and with a long dilation upon the methods of geopolitical cartography. The main body of the text contained 84 geopolitical maps with adjacent essays which explained this synthesis of history and geography. I don't really have the space here to discuss the book. My point is that the author clearly rated geopolitics very highly as an explanatory technique. Equally, he had developed his approach very consciously from within the wider European geopolitical conversation to which he was in turn contributing.

**Conclusion**

It is this ongoing debate, this 'geopolitical conversation' which formed the intellectual milieu in which *Geopolítica* developed. Unlike the American accounts we inherited from the 1940s, there was not simply one overarching German discourse. Rather, there were individual and different geopolitics in different countries - a characteristic appreciated by the geopoliticians of the era. Thus, the Italian geopolitical movement I

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166 Vicens Vives, *España, geopolítica del estado y del imperio*, Barcelona, 1940.
168 Vicens Vives, *España, geopolítica del estado y del imperio*, p. 11.
will outline below could never be described as a unique phenomenon nor an isolated discourse. And whilst the geopolitical protagonists of interwar Europe were admittedly relatively few in number, their influence was disproportionately large. One trait which characterised European geopolitics in this period was a belief that this new 'science' might provide its practitioners with a special and privileged perspective - a geopolitical vision. And this vision was often articulated with the aid of a stylised form of geopolitical-cartography which itself was diffused throughout those involved in the European geopolitical conversation.

Thus, Italian geopolitics emerged in a Europe where geopolitics were gathering pace as an esoteric, vague, possibly dangerous, but always persistent discourse. Quite apart from the historical interest of reconstructing something of Fascist Italy's geopolitical movement, an understanding of this discourse, its linkages, aims, ambitions and failings, can only aid our comprehension of the messy and scrambled set of ideas that geopolitics has been.
Chapter 2.
Geographers, geographies and an Italian context

Introduction

Having established the particular histories of geopolitics which geographers worked with for much of the post-1945 era, the recent revisionism of these histories, and what I believe to be the wider and interconnected histories of European geopolitics in the interwar period, this second chapter will set *Geopolitica* in its national context. It traces the development of Italian geography from 1870 until the apogee of Fascism. I take this relatively broad approach for two reasons. Firstly because again, little had been written in English of the histories of geographical knowledges until very recently.\(^1\) Secondly, I want to suggest that Italian geography, in all its plurality, was immutably a political resource: it inevitably served political interests and did so more or less continuously from its modern origins through until the high-tide of Fascism.\(^2\)

In turn, geography and geographers, of whatever kind, appeared quite happy to serve national interests, or the interests of influential patrons within society. And as it undertook such work the discipline also attempted to establish itself in society and in the Italian academic division of labour. My aim is to provide some context and background against which I can trace the development of Italy’s geopolitical movement.

There is a complex history to be written about the various inter-woven discourses, movements and individuals of modern Italy which all, at one time or another, used the title of ‘geography’ or were labelled as ‘geographical’, or by means of their practices and ideas to all intents and purposes became ‘geographical’. ‘Heroic’ explorers, map-makers, surveyors, academics, colonial-agitators, colonial-administrators, missionaries, merchants and financiers, politicians, the military and the aristocracy all played roles of varying importance in the lengthy and complex history of modern Italian geography. It is inevitable then, that in writing the immediate contexts of

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\(^1\) Although see Gambi, ‘Geography and imperialism’; B. Cori, *Italy*, in R. J. Johnston and P. Claval (eds.) *Geography since the second world war, an international survey*, London, 1984, pp. 42-63; and finally, the one geographical article I have located on geography under Fascism was a poor effort claiming that Italy’s use of natural resources and development of its agricultural regions marked Mussolini out as a ‘natural’ geographer. It was published in 1940 by Harold Kemp, the geographer who was the alleged lover of Whittlesey and thus incurred the disgust of Bowman who then refused to support the Harvard geography department whole-heartedly in its fight against closure. See H. Kemp, ‘Mussolini: Italy’s geographer in chief’, *Journal of Geography*, 39, 4 (1940), pp. 133-141.

\(^2\) This, again, refers to Livingstone’s phrase: Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*, p. 3.
Italian geopolitics, I risk broad generalisations and caricaturing various elements of this collective 'geography’ in order to encompass something of its scope. This is not to say that I am unaware of the heterogeneity of Italian geography and the many differences and contestations it contained. I will talk about apparently arbitrary categories such as 'academic geography', 'institutional geography', 'popular geographies' and 'practical geographies' not as hard and fast divisions within the geographical movement, but as important and overlapping strands of thought, interest and practice within that broad church. Neither do I want to suggest that the various strains of Italian political power and authority which influenced geography can be represented as a singular entity. Political contingencies too encompassed a multiplicity of interests and positions, often overlapping, contradictory and confused. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, there was not necessarily any discrete division to be drawn between political practice and geographical theory given that both the production of geographical knowledge and the pursuit of political practice were constituted and re-constituted reciprocally.

Yet nevertheless, my broad point is that geography, in all of these plural forms, was often intrinsically-connected to political contingency. Geography frequently responded to the patronage of the powerful. In this fashion, geography was indeed 'a political resource', and as Ó Tuathail argues, can be seen in some of its incarnations as an instrumentalised part of government - a set of practices for the ordering, administration and control of peoples, territories and resources. This governmentality of geography is most obvious in the practical applications of cartography, regional-survey and state-education; technologies by which the state increased its control over that which it presumed as its domain.

However, albeit in a less overt manner, geography was also of utility to the state as a practice by which national government might influence the geographical imagination of individuals, communities or perhaps even society as a whole. I take the term 'geographical imagination' to refer to the ways in which people understand the

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3Livingstone reviewers frequently made the point that although Livingstone is aware of the heterogeneity of geography, he nevertheless tells only some of these varied traditions.


5A cry for a more 'messy' understanding of Italy in the Fascist era for example, was expressed in E. Gentile, Il culto del Littorio, Bari, 1993, pp. 5-38. See also, E. Gentile, 'Fascism as a political religion', Journal of contemporary history, 25 (1990), pp. 239-251; S. Corrado-Azzi, The historiography of Fascist foreign policy, The Historical Journal, 36, 1 (1993), pp. 187-203.

6Heffernan, The science of empire', pp. 92-95.

geography of the world and their location in it relative to other localities, regions, countries and continents. The Fascist state used geography to influence how Italians made sense of their world, and this adds another element to the governmentality of geography. I do not want to adopt Ó Tuathail's position whereby all geographical knowledge becomes a part of governmentality, or of geo-power as he puts it. But neither do I want to dilute the message that, on the whole, Geography served the interests of the social and political elite, and of state and empire in modern Italy. I do not want to lose sight of this overwhelming trend.

Part I. Geographies and the state: Liberal Italy

When the Bersaglieri of the Italian army breached the Aurelian walls of Rome and stormed Michaelangelo's sixteenth-century Porta Pia on 20 September, 1870, the Risorgimento was complete and a united Italy celebrated Rome as its new capital. Within ten days a commission had been established to replan, rebuild and embellish the former Papal city - to render it a fit capital for the young nation, but as the Risorgimento hero Massimo D’Azeglio noted famously and wryly, now that Italy was made, the challenge was to make Italians. Thus began the troubled history of 'Liberal' Italy, ruled nominally by the Savoyard crown and in practice by a succession of ministers voted into office by a tiny proportion of the population. These politicians set themselves an unenviable task in 'making' Italy. Faced by a country of vast regional disparities and little in the way of natural resources, Liberal governments presided over economic cycles of boom and bust, conflict with the papacy over the capture of Rome, largely futile efforts to reform the South and its' peasants wretched lives, mass emigration, and four military campaigns of varying success. Industry developed in the North and the bureaucratic-machinery of Government began to change Rome, but influence and power remained the preserve of the aristocracy, the wealthy, and the church. The process of transformismo meant that the political elite ruled with an eye to short term expediency and to their continued conservative influence. It also meant that few might join these influential ranks without adopting their values. In addition to those forced to emigrate and those tied to subsistence

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10 The state of Italy was first proclaimed in 1861 with Florence as its Capital. However, until the capture of Rome in 1870, the papal territories bisected the country and for most Italians, the Risorgimento was considered incomplete.
agriculture in the South, the lot of women failed to improve substantially and the franchise wasn't extended to literate men over thirty and ex-soldiers over twenty-one until 1912. Liberal Italy would finally fall in the aftermath of the First World War, condemned for the perceived injustices of the Treaty of Versailles, the resultant chaos, and the Government's weak response to the disorder and discontent.

Making the nation - Practical geographies

In the late 1920s, the Enciclopedia Italiana's entry upon 'Italy' pronounced: "After the political unification of Italy, the geographical knowledge of the country benefited above all from the work of public offices and governmental organisations." The collection of geographical knowledge had played a significant role in nineteenth-century attempts to define, classify, map, measure and render legible and knowable the new entity which was Italy. This section traces the interconnected histories of Italian attempts to 'make' their country. I situate the gradual and stuttering growth of Italian geography within the context of efforts to engender patriotism and a modicum of a national-consciousness, and ambitions to build an Italian colonial empire. I hope to demonstrate the interconnected ways in which geographical knowledge was intrinsically-tied to the politics of the national-interests, commercial pressures and political lobbies of Liberal Italy.

Liberal Italy inherited a population whose first loyalties were local and regional and whose modern political history was one of foreign domination. These local affiliations -the sense of campanilismo- hindered efforts to foster national unity and a national identity. As a consequence, a geographical understanding of the new country's physical extent and the nature and character of its territory seemed an urgent necessity in the nation-building project and in attempts to build popular affection for Italy. Hence the importance attached to geographical survey and the collection of geographical information.

Shortly after the proclamation of the Italian Kingdom in 1861, the infant state established the Ufficio Tecnico dello Stato Maggiore Italiano, to be re-titled the

11 V. De Grazia, How Fascism ruled Women - Italy, 1922-1945, Berkeley, 1992, esp. pp. 18-40; on the Franchise, see D. Mack Smith, Italy, Ann Arbor, 1959, pp. 257-260. Giolitti thus raised the franchise from three million to eight million, out of a population of over forty million.
13 For an evocative literary account of resentment and indifference to the Piedmontese creation of Italy, see G. T. di Lampedusa, The leopard, London, 1960. Unlike R. Hyam, Empire and Sexuality, Manchester, 1990, esp. pp. 16-19, I do believe that literary sources can be of use to the reconstruction of such historical projects.
Istituto Topografico Militare in 1872. By the time the eventually title of Istituto Geografico Militare (IGM) was conferred in 1882, the organisation had established itself as Italy's official cartographical agency with a leading role in the collection and collation of geographical information about the new Kingdom. From 1879 the IGM began to publish its Carta topografica del Regno d'Italia at the scale of 1:100 000. As the first systematic attempt to map the entire peninsula and the first detailed topographic portrait of the new state, this series had both a practical and a symbolic importance. The maps provided a scientific definition of the extent and character of Italy but also provided Italians in their provinces with a much needed impression of their new country.

In this same period other aspects of Italy's physical and human geography were collected by state-sponsored organisations. A nation-wide cadastral survey was carried out while the Istituto Idrografico della Reale Marina surveyed Italy's coasts and marine basins. From 1884 the country's geology was also mapped at 1:100 000 by the Reale Ufficio Geologico. The Reale Ufficio Centrale di Meteorologia e Geofisica collated national climatological data and the Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici examined all of Italy's inland lakes and rivers. The Reale Istituto Centrale di Statistica took the first national population census in 1861 and at subsequent ten-yearly intervals (with the exception of 1891). It also gathered and published information on other aspects of the fledgling state, including Italy's economic activity. In the same way that other modern European states prioritised the collection, categorisation, classification and archiving of statistics and information about new territory (albeit usually colonial territory overseas), the Piedmontese bureaucracy, when faced with the incorporation of the Italian peninsular and peoples in the late nineteenth century, similarly employed such practices. Much effort was invested to

14 On the IGM see: Istituto Geografico Militare, Il primo centenario dell'Istituto Geografico Militare, Florence, 1973;
17 The Piedmontese state was considered by contemporary European commentators to be one of the most sophisticated, progressive and advanced in Europe. It was this bureaucracy and state-structure which was forced to incorporate some of the most under-developed and poor regions of Europe: J. Gooch, Army, state and society in Italy, 1870-1915, Basingstoke, 1989. For a compelling portrait of enduring poverty and under-development in Southern Italy through into the 1930s, see C. Levi, Christ stopped at Eboli, London, 1947. Other European states busied themselves collating information and knowledge about subject-territories in this period. The British Empire appreciated the need to accumulate and archive facts and figures about their imperial holdings: T. Richards, The Imperial Archive, London, 1994, and T. Richards, 'Archive and Utopia', Representations, 37 (1992), pp. 104-135. Edward Said, of course, has documented the way in which a monumental mobilisation of knowledge, in the form of Orientalism, was used to take possession of the colonial world, primarily by the British and French Empires. See E. Said, Orientalism, London, 1978; and a later development of these ideas in E. Said, Culture and imperialism, London, 1993. On the Napoleonic survey of Egypt in which a similar collation of knowledge and information was used to symbolically-conquer the colony,
produce an accurate and comprehensive picture of the state's territory and to acquire the range of information that constituted what the Italian Encyclopaedia labelled 'geographical knowledge.' In turn, this geographical knowledge helped to constitute the infant state both in practical terms and in the imaginations of its new citizens.

Of course, Italy's 'geography' encompassed more than just the state-organisations which were producing most of the 'practical' geographical knowledge that the country required. Two other forms of this 'protean science' can be immediately identified, and both have a good deal of relevance for this particular narrative. The first is 'institutional geography' and the second is 'academic geography'. Of course, all three of these constituencies overlapped one-another I would not want to claim otherwise. However, for the sake of clarity I will sketch out something of the histories of each of these latter two 'sectors' before I blur and scramble these distinctions in the remainder of the thesis.

**Academic geographies**

In schools and universities, 'Academic geography' struggled to acquire a semblance of the impact the discipline was having elsewhere in Europe. Italian 'Academic geography' emerged after the 1859 Piedmontese educational laws of Count Gabrio Casati were extended to the rest of Italy. These Legge Casati established geography as a university discipline but failed to supply the chairs thus created with sufficient institutional support by which their occupants might develop their discipline. It was see: A. Godlewska, 'Napoleon's Geographers (1797-1815): Imperialists and Soldiers of Modernity', in A. Godlewska and N. Smith (eds.) Geography and Empire. Oxford, pp. 31-53; A. Godlewska, 'Map, text and image. The mentality of enlightened conquerors: a new look at the Description de l'Egypt', in Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 20, 1 (1995), pp. 5-28; and on the French Algerian surveys of the 1830s and early 1840s see: M. J. Heffernan, 'An Imperial Utopia: French Surveys of North Africa in the Early Colonial Period', in J. C. Stone (ed.) Maps and Africa, Aberdeen, 1994, pp. 81-107.

Elsewhere 'Geography' gained acceptance as a serious, important and relevant discipline far more quickly than in Italy - where Geographers occupy a minority status to this day. If Bologna University has by now upgraded its Istituto di Geografia to a Dipartimento (requiring over twenty staff members, negotiations were underway in 1994), this will be only the third in Italy (after Padua and Milan). By contrast, in the late nineteenth century the geographical 'schools' of Germany and France and other European nations were enjoying comparative success, compare: M. J. Heffernan, 'The science of empire', pp. 92-114; G. Sandner and M. Rössler, 'Geography and Empire in Germany, 1871-1945', in A. Godlewska and N. Smith (eds.) Geography and Empire, Oxford, 1994, pp. 115-127.

only with the arrival of Giuseppe Dalla Vedova, a Padovano trained in the German geographical tradition in Vienna, that Italian geography attained a higher academic status. From 1875 onwards in Rome, he propagated German positivism in his efforts to establish the scientific credentials of geography. Together with other German-speaking Italian geographers, father and son Giovanni and Olinto Marinelli who occupied the chair at Florence consecutively from 1893 to 1926, Dalla Vedova promoted the distinctive role of geography as the unitary science of the earth's surface and its associated human activities. As a consequence, the German geographical tradition became influential in the ongoing efforts to elevate geography to a higher status within the Italian education system and in Italian attempts to construct their own distinctive national geography. In line with the model I suggested in the last chapter, French Vidalien possibilism modified this German influence whilst other geographers, in Cori's words, "...continued in a national historico-erudite tradition...".

Even given the gradual acceptance of geography in the Italian academy, the discipline was by no means secure. Giuliano Beloch's Rome chair in Geografia antica (Ancient geography) created by ministerial decree in 1901, was only sustained until 1910 even though merely one year later a cult of antiquity and Romanità would play central role in Italy's fiftieth anniversary celebrations. By the time Fascism attained power 'academic geography' had endured a continuing peripherality in the Italian academy and something akin to a disciplinary sense of inferiority would agitate and concern all Italian geographers throughout the inter-war period. Consequently, the discipline was

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23 Ferro and Caraci, Ai confini dell'orizzonte, pp.187-193; Gambi, Una geografia per la storia, esp. pp.11-14. The Marinellis originated from Udine in Friuli, the same contested province as Trieste. For both of them, issues of geography, nationalism and identity would have literally come with the territory as the Austro-Hungarian empire and Italy disputed their region for almost sixty years. Olinio Marinelli would also serve in the Italian armed services and become the favourite lecturer of Italo Balbo, one of the leaders of the 'March on Rome', Air Ace and founder of the Aeronautica, councillor of the SGI and Governor General of Libya until his mysterious death in a desert air crash in 1940, see C. G. Segrè, Italo Balbo: A Fascist life, Berkeley, esp. p. 29.
24 Cori, 'Italy', p. 45.
25 On Beloch's chair and his curricula see: L. Polverini, 'Il primo insegnamento di 'Geografia antica' in Italia', Geografia Antica, 1 (1992), pp. 5-14; Beloch's job-description, proposed by Dalla Vedova, consisted mainly of teaching the topography of ancient Italy and Rome (a course Roberto Almagià would take, (Polverini, Il primo insegnamento, p. 8)). Yet the chair was discontinued despite Italy's attempts in 1911 to associate itself with ancient Rome through the construction of the 'Vittorio-Emmanuele II' monument against the Capitol hill (J. Dickie, 'La Macchina da scrivere: The Victor Emmanuel Monument in Rome and Italian nationalism', The Italianian, 14 (1994)(forthcoming), and an exhibition of the provinces of the Roman Empire being the primary exhibition of Liberal Italy's half-century celebrations (on this see: S. A. Strong, 'An exhibition illustrative of the provinces of the Roman empire at the baths of Diocletian, Rome', Journal of Roman Studies, 1 (1911), pp. 1-49. The cult of the Romanità, so significant in Fascist culture, received a great public airing here; but nevertheless, the professional geographer charged with the teaching of Ancient Roman Geography at the University of Rome found his dedicated chair discontinued.
often ready to express and demonstrate its utility and the benefits it could bestow. This is a very significant point for the tale I have to tell.

**Institutional geographies**

In Italy, as in many other European countries, 'Institutional geography' provides a far more spectacular and dramatic version of 'geography' in this period. The dominant Italian society was the Rome-based *Società Geografica Italiana* (SGI) which was established in the then capital of Florence by 1,254 founder-members on 12 May, 1867. Like the *Royal Geographical Society* of London or the *Société de Géographie de Paris*, the SGI soon became the dominant geographical institution in Italy. In line with the work being undertaken by the mapping and surveying organisations of the same period, the society's stated remit was to increase the geographical understanding of Italy, its resources and peoples. In practice however, the SGI was often less concerned with Italy itself than with putative Italian colonies overseas.

For as with the London RGS and the Parisian *Société*, the SGI enjoyed as its main constituency the diplomats, military men, politicians, and aristocrats who gravitated towards the seat of government and who constituted the Italian establishment. The SGI came to be closely associated with government circles: connections to political influence which tightened when the SGI despatched its first expedition in 1870 to the Sciotel valley of Eritrea. The project was ostensibly intended to monitor Italian settlers in the area, but with the Suez canal newly completed in 1869, and with France and Britain vying for influence in the Sudan and East Africa, the expedition marked Italian interests and ambitions in the region. It also signified the beginning of the

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26To the publics of most European nations in this period 'Geography' primarily consisted of the 'Heroic' exploration of 'dark and unknown' lands and the re-telling of these 'adventures' once the 'geographer' had returned home to Europe. Geographers who have reconstructed the geographies of this period, talk of a sensational and spectacular geography holding the public in thrall, see: Driver, *Geography's Empire*, and F. Driver, 'Henry Morton Stanley and his critics: geography, exploration and empire', Past and Present, 133 (1992), pp. 134-166; see too: B. Riffenberg, *The myth of the explorer*, Oxford, 1995, esp. pp. 49-68.

27The Society's learned journal, the *Bolletino del/a Reale Società Geografica Italiana* was founded in 1868 and the society's Royal Charter was conferred by Royal Decree on 21st March 1869.


SGI's long-standing and close involvement with Italy's colonial cause. Over the next sixty years numerous expeditions left Italy with the patronage of the SGI and under the banner of 'scientific' exploration and research. Most of these journey's could (and did) claim some legitimacy in that they were 'uncovering' regions of the 'Dark continent' unknown to (western) society. Yet equally, most of the projects also had a commercial, colonial or military rationale. There were undoubted connections between the SGI and Italian imperialism; the SGI became Italy's primary apologist for empire. Moreover, these imperial interests were sustained by the society's Rome constituency - the Italian political elite. A point relevant to my argument here is that the SGI was from the start, and unquestionably, an establishment organisation, voicing establishment interests and concerns and articulating its conservative imperialism which sought a high-profile colonial role for Italy amongst other 'Great Powers' on the international stage.

Not all Italian geographical institutions were as keyed into the Roman establishment as the SGI. In Naples the Società Africana d'Italia had promoted the calls of the local élite for Italian expansionism over the Mediterranean into Africa since 1882. Southerners were always well represented in the colonial movement and the Bollettino della Società Africana d'Italia voiced recurrent concerns that the vast emigration which afflicted their provinces might be re-directed towards Italian settler colonies in North or East Africa.

Meanwhile, in the rapidly-expanding northern cities, organisations of another stripe appeared. In 1877 Captain Manfredo Campiero, an Italian parliamentarian who moved amongst the new class of industrialists, financiers and merchants who emerged in Italy's northern cities in the second half of the nineteenth century, founded a Milanese journal entitled L'Esploratore aimed at this same readership. Concentrating upon travel and overseas commercial and economic matters, L'Esploratore provided a forum for the expansionist sentiments of its constituency and also initiated the 1879 foundation of the Società d'esplorazione commerciale in Africa; an organisation which promptly established its credentials as a pro-expansionist movement by founding a trading post at Benghazi in 1880 and by promoting two expeditions to

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32 Segre, Fourth Shore, pp. 3-19; on the general international context for these ambitions, see R. Bosworth, Italy, the least of the Great Powers: Italian Foreign Policy before the First World War, Cambridge, 1979; on the growth of such belligerant nationalism, see also: A. J. De Grand, The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism in Italy, London, 1978.
Cyrenaica in 1881. Campiero led one of these and was explicitly concerned to develop trading and commercial links. The other was led by Giuseppe and Angela Haimann. Although travelling beneath the banner of exploration with the expressed aims of collecting scientific and artistic data, the Haimann’s also devoted themselves to assessing the resource, agricultural and trading potential of the Cyrenaican plateau. And in reporting a land of erstwhile fertility which might be brought to fruitful production once more, they used their geographical survey and representations of Cyrenaica to create an impression which would convince several others to prescribe Italian expansion across the Mediterranean.35

So although the Società d'esplorazione commerciale in Africa was populated mainly by the emergent middle-classes of merchants, traders, financiers and bankers whose ambitions were primarily aimed at increased markets for their products and services, their memberships would often also subscribe to the nationalism which characterised the SGI and were just as aggressive as the Roman society if not more so in their promotion of Italian expansionism and empire.36 There were, then, differing strains of expansionism and imperialism in Italy sustained by differing geographical constituencies. Nevertheless, despite these differences, they all supported Italian imperialism enthusiastically. Equally, although there was no singular Italian version of 'geography', but rather a host of different organisations, movements and practices, my argument here is that, insofar as I can draw broad conclusions, each type of 'geography' was unavoidably involved in the politics of the new Kingdom, consciously and willingly or otherwise. Each 'geography' also forms something of the context I am keen to outline here. Further examples follow.

One further strain of geography emerged in the Northern cities. In addition to the commercially-oriented geographical societies outlined above, the industrialising North also witnessed the growth of popular institutions like the Touring Club Italiano (TCI) of Milan and the Club Alpino Italiano. These bodies, composed of patriotic individuals who valorised the natural landscapes and wilderness regions of Northern Italy, were essentially geographical in all but name. The TCI in particular would eventually oversee the production of various map series at a number of scales as well as a whole range of popular publications which aimed to present Italians with

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34The Società d'esplorazione commerciale in Africa was later re-named the Società d'esplorazione geografica e commerciale in Africa. On this see: A. Milanini Kemény, La Società d'esplorazione Commerciale in Africa e la politica coloniale, (1879-1914), Florence, 1973; and also, Segrè, Fourth Shore, pp. 9-32.
36Consider the overlap between these societies and the emergent Nationalist movement in the North (De Grand, The Italian Nationalist Association); consult also, R. A. Webster, Industrial Imperialism in Italy, 1908-1915, London, 1975.
practical information for touring their nation. One prominent ramification of introducing Italians to the countryside and regions of their nation was the increased patriotism this engendered. Besides touring maps, the TCI served its membership with regional guidebooks and a popular geographical magazine, the Vie d'Italia (The Byways of Italy), which concentrated upon representing the cities, peoples and landscapes of the peninsular. During the Great war the TCI had re-oriented its efforts to the national cause more explicitly, celebrating a sense of Italia. The Club later grew in influence under the Fascists who recognised and realised the political potential of these arbiters of the national geographical imagination. 37 An already patriotic and politicised organisation was thus rendered even more so.38 The SGI and the Northern geographical societies were therefore not the only organisations to extol nationalism, expansionism and an international role for Italy. Such sentiments similarly informed other organisations which, while not geographical in name, nevertheless stood alongside the geographical societies and shared their interests and their members from the conservative and nationalist lobby - the cultura della destra.39

One such group was the colonial lobby, a constituency adjacent to and overlapping with that amorphous thing which was Italian 'geography'. The conceits of this lobby had suffered a jarring set-back in 1896 when an Italian expeditionary army seeking to occupy Abyssinia was routed terribly at Adowa. The public backlash against colonialism ensured that Italy withdrew from all overseas expansionism for fifteen years. Public opprobrium also engulfed associated organisations such as the SGI. For a short while academic geographers were able to impact upon the society whilst the military men and politicians laid low.40 Equally, the anti-colonial sentiments which had surfaced when the Societii di studi geografici was established in Florence in 1895, was reinforced by Cesare Battisti and Renato Biasutti, the professional geographers who founded the Genoa-based journal La cultura Geografica in 1899.41 In the spirit

39 Literally 'The culture of the right'. It was this constituency which the Fascist regime won the consent of throughout the years of consensus, see: R. Visser, 'Fascist doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita', Journal of contemporary history. 27 (1992) pp. 5-22.
40 Giuseppe Dalla Vedova became the first professional geographer to be President of the SGI in 1900.
41 Gambi, Una Storia; Gambi, 'Geography and imperialism', esp. pp. 80-81. For Battisti and Biasutti’s initial statement in La Cultura Geografica, see: La redazione, 'Ai lettori', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 1,
of the times, they argued that Italy should solve its own chronic problems of underdevelopment and poverty before it embarked upon colonial adventurism. This short-lived journal is important in that it provides evidence that geography was not a univocal entity in this period, and was not totally committed to expansionism. However, those academic geographers opposed to the empire were few. Many others were not as guarded with their nationalism and eminent figures such as Olinto Marinelli were among the founder-members of the Italian Colonial Institute in 1906.

Initiated by the re-grouped expansionary lobby, the Colonial Institute argued for an internationally-oriented, nationalist Italy enjoying Great Power status and a colonial empire. In its later Fascist incarnation the Colonial Institute would prove a power-base for Ernesto Massi and Giorgio Roletto, but in 1906 it forged links with other Rome-based like-minded institutions such as the Italian Naval League, the Dante Alighieri Society, and the SGI whose President in 1906, Antonio Di San Giuliano, was simultaneously president of the new organisation and Italian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. It was doubtless with this cumulative authority that he addressed the SGI and argued that their nation: "must not be the last in the grandiose contest of the nations for prosperity and power".

The sentiments of this lobby are quite clear and although relatively limited in numbers, the Colonial Institute included some of the most influential individuals in the Kingdom. Moreover, there was a marked degree of commonality between the memberships of these societies as the ruling classes of the capital, in line with the conservative nationalists of Northern cities, agitated for empire and increasingly abandoned the liberalism of the period's dominant political figure, Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti. According to many commentators, Giolitti's decision to invade

15 Gennaio (1899), pp. 1-2. Biasutti, as I note later, was more ready to praise the relationship between the state and geography in the 1940s.
42 For an exhaustive summary of the foundation of the colonial institute and its place amidst the foreign affairs of the day, see: A. Aquarone, 'Politica estera e organizzazione del consenso nell'età giolittiana: il Congresso dell'Asmara e la fondazione dell'Istituto Coloniale Italiano', Storia Contemporanea, (1977), pp. 57-119, 291-333, and 549-570.
44 Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana, Serie IV, Vol. VII, no. 6. San Giuliano made this claim to the SGI in the President's address, 1st May, 1906. cited in R. J. B. Bosworth, 'The Albanian Forests of Signor Giacomo Vismara: A case study of Italian economic imperialism during the foreign ministry of Antonio di San Giuliano', The Historical Journal, 18, 3 (1975), pp. 571-586. Bosworth's article provides a useful contribution: he situates San Giuliano within this small but influential nationalist-conservative group who were militating against the liberalism of Giolitti and provides the reader with a flavour of the nascent expansionism these individuals professed.
the Ottoman colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in September 1911 was a gamble to appease the Nationalists who had recently gained political-organisation in the shape of the Italian Nationalist Association. Whatever the reason for the invasion of Libya, the geographical societies (who shared a substantial membership with the Nationalists), openly backed Italian expansionism for the first time, abandoning any pretence towards scientific disinterest and organising lectures and meetings to explain and justify the invasion to the public. Likewise, the SGI again contributed overseas expeditions to this imperialism. In 1913, along with the colonial administration of Italian Somaliland, the society funded Giuseppe Stefanini and Guido Paoli to conduct geographical and resource surveys, to construct a geological map, and to investigate the possibilities for agricultural development in this existing Italian colony.

The efforts of the SGI were not immediately rewarded. Libya would not to be successfully pacified until 1932 and Italy's entire colonial projects was stymied in 1915 when Italy was drawn into the Great war. In the same way as the social, political and economic structures of French, German and British society were permanently fractured by the slaughter and futility of the struggle, the end of the war brought only chaos and discontent to an Italy which was nominally victorious. It was in the chaos and discontent of the post-war years that Fascism originated. My concern in this last section has been to demonstrate the number of different roles which Geography played in Liberal Italy. For the colonial and expansionary lobbies, organisations such as the SGI and The Italian Colonial Institute provided suitable and respectable vehicles for their views. Consequently, in Italy as elsewhere in Europe, a broadly-tenable generalisation could claim that geography was used by the ruling élites to further their own nationalist concerns. A more nuanced account might qualify this; Italian geography was itself, in one of its most significant incarnations, a colonial lobby and a vehicle of imperial apologia. Institutional geography formed a central element of the colonial lobby as much as it was hi-jacked by it. Whatever the situation, geography was prominent in the Italian imperial effort.

Yet as I have already suggested, geography in Liberal Italy was a broad church. Not only an imperial science, or a colonial lobby - it was also a popular discourse, encompassing the TCI’s guidebooks and popular magazines and simultaneously a practical realm of knowledge whereby the geographical ‘facts’ of the country were

The role of the *Touring Club Italiano* in widening the geographical imagination of Italians in the period, both at home and abroad, is a topic which deserves much more attention. Although see: Di Mauro, *L’Italia e le guide turistiche*.

47 Gambi, *Geography and imperialism*, p. 82.
gathered and classified by the IGM and other organisations. Last, and arguably of least influence in Liberal Italy, geography existed as an academic discipline, seeking acceptance within the academy and country. It is this final version of geography, the Italian academic discourse of geography, which I will be dealing with primarily in this thesis. However, just as the term ‘geography’ cannot be disentangled from the varying forms and meanings that ‘geography’ contained in Liberal Italy, so too it is impossible to tease out any history of academic geopolitics in Italy without reference to these other forms of geography and their impact upon various Italian geographical imaginations. The SGI, the IGM, the TCI, and the Italian Colonial Institute all constituted Italian geography in its plurality. However contradictory or entwined these groups were, they all nevertheless made some claim to the label of ‘geography’ and were all tied into the practicalities and contingencies of their social, economic, cultural and political context in Italy. This was the context within which Geopolitica developed and within which it tried to get its own, unique and radical version of the discipline accepted. I will outline briefly some of the changes that affected Italian geography—in all of its forms—under Fascism.

Part II. Geography and the state: Fascist Italy

When the Fascist Blackshirts of Benito Mussolini fought, scuffled and paraded their ways through the various gateways of Rome on 28 October, 1922, the Fascist conquest of Italy was concluded and the world’s first Fascist state was inaugurated.49 The crisis of legitimacy which faced Mussolini and his ‘legions’ was not one of establishing a new nation, but of establishing their right to rule and justifying their seizure of power. In the longer term, for a movement which saw itself as revolutionary, the problem was how might the nation be rebuilt and re-educated along suitably Fascist lines.50 For some twenty years Italy was subject to the Fascist experiment., and although the historical arguments persist as to whether Italy was a truly totalitarian state or not, it seems pretty clear that Fascism sought to intervene in most aspects of Italian society and to reconstruct them to its own ends.51 As I will suggest, that heterogeneous thing labelled ‘geography’ played a significant role in the

49 On the early years of Fascism, an excellent account is contained within: A. Lyttelton, The Seizure of Power, Fascism in Italy, 1919-1929, London, 1973. Although the ‘March on Rome’ is often remembered as a bloodless capture of the state, we should not forget that several people died during the day as the Fascist Squadristi converged on the city centre - a continuation of the violence which had accompanied Fascism’s rise to prominence in the North and centre of Italy, and an ominous foretaste of the regime’s later use of force whilst it quelled and subdued its domestic opposition.

50 Lyttelton, The seizure of power, pp. 94-149.

51 On this generally, see: Thompson, State control in Fascist Italy, Manchester, 1991; De Grazia, The Culture of consent.
re-making of Italy along Fascist lines. More significantly for my purposes is the continuing role of geography in Italian expansionism and in inculcating a wider, international geographical imagination in the Italian people. This context will be fleshed-out as I continue my narrative. Here I will sketch a preliminary picture of the heightened, and often unapologetic, roles of geography under Fascism.

An imperial society? The SGI under Fascism

Commentators are increasingly recognising the favour which geography, in all of its plurality, won from the Fascist regime. In May 1924, when although victorious in April elections, Fascism's control over the country was far from secure, Mussolini made time to visit Villa Celimontana in Rome (the home of the SGI), to address the assembled 'geographers' and to grant the organisation an increased government subsidy. The SGI, as their report made clear, and perhaps as their guest intended, was delighted by this attention from a regime already looking -at least rhetorically- to the possibility of overseas adventure. The largely nationalist and expansionary sentiments of the SGI and the colonial lobby happily accommodated such a demonstration of the premier's support. From January 1925, Mussolini began creating an attempted totalitarian state by normalising his 'Fascist revolution' and subsuming the power of individual Fascist Ras (regional leaders) to that of the centralised Fascist state. Mussolini may have been to the SGI to reassure this influential audience of the expansionary intent of his regime before this process commenced.

Whatever the motives, the common ground between the two groups was cemented by the leading roles of eminent Fascists in the SGI's hierarchy. Luigi Federzoni was the
leader of the Nationalist Association who allied the influential movement to the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) in the 1920s before its official merger in 1923. The price for his support was the colonial ministry, from where he was obviously a contender for the premiership should Mussolini fall. At the same time this powerful and influential figure was president of the SGI. His successor at the Colonial ministry was Pietro Lanza di Scalea who likewise inherited the presidency of the SGI from Federzoni in 1926.56 It was under Lanza di Scalea's jurisdiction that:

...to give greater impulse to the study of geography and to co-ordinate the related initiatives of the National Committee for Geography, the Minister of Public Instruction believed it necessary to reorientate the Geographical Society towards a new basis.57

General Nicola Vachelli, president of the IGM and an ardent Fascist, was set the task of rewriting the society's constitution to render it more relevant to national requirements, that is, to the Fascist agenda. The most fundamental change was the society's loss of autonomy: from 1932 its president and council would be nominated by the education minister - a mark of the ever-closer connections between regime and the society.58

Given these connections, it is unsurprising that the SGI's expeditions remained tied to Italy's imperial agenda. In 1924, for example, Stefano Pucini visited Somaliland on behalf of the SGI and reported upon the agricultural and economic potential of the colony. Work at home continued with the public-relations role which the SGI had established during the Libyan wars. The urgent requirement for Italian colonial expansionism was articulated by geographers along with explanations for past colonial aggrandisement. These messages were conveyed with the authority of geographical insight in journals, books, lectures and meetings. The state proved highly appreciative of these services; one notable reward being the 1926 occasion when Victor Emmanuele III gifted the society its palatial and handsome headquarters in the Villa Celimontana.

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56Lanza di Scalea was colonial minister from July 1924 to November 1926. He became president of the SGI in February 1926.
Other of the many forms of geography also enjoyed these hitherto unparalleled levels of support and the wider attention which attended it in Fascist Italy. Perhaps most interestingly, geographical knowledge gained a wider acceptance in itself as an *a priori* division of academic labour and as an important and valuable realm of understanding and cognition. And although I was at pains in the previous section to dissect some of the various geographical discourses which comprised 'geography' in Liberal Italy, with the greater acceptance which geography won from many new quarters in Fascist Italy, some of the overlaps between these component discourses were muddied still further. For in Fascist Italy, although Geography remained a constellation of different discourses, such fine distinctions would not deter the state once it had decided that the entirety of 'geography' was worthy of support. Consequently, although there remained differences within Italian geography, as a generalisation, geography moved centre stage. No longer was it supported by the small albeit influential colonial lobby, by organised interest groups or as a statistical arm of government bureaucracy. Increasingly under Fascism, many types of 'geography' were funded directly from the state purse.

The first degree courses in geography were introduced in 1924 and soon afterwards the National Research Council (CNR) was established with a 'Committee for Geography' as one of its fourteen divisions. The CNR was designed ostensibly to co-ordinate national research activity. Predictably, it soon fell under the influence of the regime and by 1937 was on the statute books as the scientific and technical organ of the state. The Geography committee consisted of professional geographers and disciplinary leaders with Fascist sympathies such as Almagià and Dainelli. They were joined by ardent Fascists such as Nicola Vachelli (of the Istituto Geografico Militare) and career-colonialists such as Amadeo Giannini and Corrado Zoli, both of whom would later enjoy honorific positions as patrons of *Geopolitica*. Such political credentials qualified these men to distribute state-funding for geographical research and to formulate the future direction of the discipline. Within human geography for example, initiatives were directed towards the study of rural dwellings, mountain

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60 Geography in Italy since 1939*, *The Geographical Journal*, 115, 1 (1950), pp. 79-83. Although note that the information on which this note was based was provided by Almagià.
61 Annual reports were carried in the geographical journals, see: A. R. Toniolo, 'Il comitato Nazionale per la Geografia del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche', *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana*, serie 6, vol. 6, no. 11 (1929), pp. 784-798.
depopulation, and on Italian urban areas and ports: important issues of Italian national development funded and co-ordinated by the state's quango.62

Geography's increased favour was reflected in the Enciclopedia Italiana, a huge cultural project which the regime trumpeted as one of it's greatest achievements.63 The editors of the geographical entries were Almagià and Biasutti and the space they were accorded in this monumental, multi-volume work is testimony to the discipline's new standing in the country.64 In addition, the wider appreciation of geography's growing role in the country is obvious from the mid 1920s onwards. In 1928, reporting the tenth Italian Geographical Congress of the previous year, Luigi Rusca praised the essential work geographers were undertaking towards the creation of a 'coscienza coloniale' (colonial consciousness or colonial awareness). It was geography and geographers, he continued, with their representations of overseas territories, that helped to constitute an idea and an appreciation of the Italian empire in the Italian popular imagination.65 That same year Nicola Vachelli would write in the IGM's popular journal L'Oltremare, that:

The formation of a colonial science...requires, beyond scientific analysis, the accurate and profound knowledge of the geographical environments and of the societies inhabiting them...geographical science...[when] understood in its true sense, is physical, political, and economic all at once.66

It was this sense of geographical knowledge as wide-ranging, encompassing economic, political and physical elements simultaneously, which persuaded some in Fascist Italy to consider geographical survey -with its catholic reach, self-proclaimed comprehensiveness and scientific status- as the essential foundation of a colonial domain.67 Vachelli echoed Amilcare Fantoli, an Italian 'colonial expert' and chief

62 Cori, 'Italy', p. 46. Giorgio Roletto, for example, contributed a title to the CNR's series on Italian ports: G. Roletto, Trieste, Padua, 1941.

63 Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Storia di un'idea, L'enciclopedia Italiana tra memoria e progetto, Rome, 1992, esp. pp. 3-26, (Almagià is pictured on p. 10. and the cartography of Achille Dardano, one of Italy's leading cartographers of the time and a man greatly involved in the colonial cartography of Fascism, on p. 46). Giovanni Gentile was appointed director of the Encyclopaedia which secured the contributions of over 2500 domestic and overseas experts, amongst them Roletto, Demangeon and H. J. Fleure. Also: Vinci, 'Geopolitica e balcani', p. 97.


65 L. Rusca, Problemi Coloniali al X Congresso Geografico Italiano, Rivista delle Colonie Italiana, 1 (1928), pp. 177-184. On the Rivista delle Colonie Italiana, one of the most important of the plethora of colonial reviews and journals which were established under Fascism, see: D. Furfaro and G. Bianco, L'ideologia dell'Imperialismo Fascista nella "Rivista delle Colonie Italiane", Miscellanea di Storia delle Esplorazioni, 4 (1979), pp. 221-254.


Government-climatologist of Libya who, in the *Introduzione* to his 1925 *Piccola Guida della Tripolitania* (Brief guide to Libya), stated that:

*Here united [together] are the most important and most necessary notes upon the largest Italian colony... published quickly and for the first time, so that they can [help one] formulate a sufficiently clear concept of the region.... it is hoped that this information, combined with a profound sense of colonial culture... ...might contribute to... [and help] constitute the construction of this colonial edifice that Italy has needed for so long.*

Earlier geographers had claimed a role in the colonies for geography as an all-encompassing subject, but it was under Fascism that geography's comprehensive vision came to be highly valorised. As Fabio Lando notes, the geographers and colonial authorities worked together to such an extent that the Libya became "an authentic laboratory" of geographical science. Geographical knowledge was seen as being able to constitute and 'make' colonial space both practically and imaginatively. In practical terms, technologies such as cartography, survey resource analysis and regional inventory produced a portrait of colonial space which was legible to the European mind. As a consequence, in Fascist Italy, geography came to be regarded as a 'colonial science' and its most spectacular expression occurred in Libya in the mid-1930s when, under the direction of the SGI, a series of high profile expeditions were despatched to the Saharan interior. Investigating everything from botany, zoology, and parasitology through to ancient history, archaeology, and anthropology in addition to human and physical geography. The aim of these expeditions, wrote Corrado Zoli, President of the SGI from 1933-1944, ex-colonial governor and future patron of *Geopolitica*, was to lay "...the indispensable foundation of the civilising mission..." which Italy had taken upon itself in Africa.


69Professore Giuseppe Ricchieri for example, published a booklet in 1913 designed for a popular audience and which encompassed a comprehensive survey of Libya. In 140-pages he ranged from Libya's geology to its climate, flora and fauna; from ancient to current history; and from regional surveys of Libya's component areas to the economic and political prospects of the colony. This self-consciously synoptic account was prefaced by a chapter entitled "How much we know and how much we still don't know of the region," which included a history of the exploration of Libya and a claim that the maximum profit might only be culled from the colony if the importance of an "effective scientific understanding of the country" was acknowledged. "Every civilised government", he claimed, realised that the accumulation of geographical knowledge was to the advantage not only of science, but also to its own national-political interests: G. Ricchieri, *La Libia*. Milan, 1913. For Ricchieri's context, see: Atkinson, *The politics of geography*.

70F. Lando, 'Geografie di casa altrui: l'Africa negli studi geografici italiani durante il ventennio fascista', *Terra d'Africa*, 1993, pp. 73-124, the quotation is from p. 84.

The exercise in establishing an exact 'scientific' portrait of the Saharan territory 'captured' in Libya is indicative of both the SGI's commitment to the state's imperial agenda and, conversely, of the regime's favour towards geography. The politics of this 'colonial science' were clear. Just as Liberal Italy had mapped and surveyed itself upon unification, so too did its Fascist successor apply this same practical and symbolic process to its overseas territories. And although many other academic disciplines were involved in this appropriation of colonial space, it was geography, geographers, and geographical institutions which provided the organisation, the public-relations, and the ecumenical reach which could accommodate all aspects of this 'colonial science'. Geography, and the SGI in particular, remained umbilically-connected to the imperial process.72

Nor were such connections between geography and the state ever denied, despite the claims to scientific-status which accompanied many geographically-produced statements in the period. In contrast, Italian geography appeared to revel almost indecently in its new found utility to colonial-governance. One particularly celebratory example was produced by the IGM in 1939. It was an explicit account of its own role in the preparatory work for the invasion of Abyssinia, in the military exercise itself, and in the subsequent imposition of Italian authority.73 Aside from its contribution to the Abyssinian campaign, the IGM had also applied its skills in Libya, Eritrea and Somaliland. Like other colonial powers, Italy needed maps for immediate practical and military purposes and for the longer-term organisation of conquered regions and for the imposition of Italian authority. Contemporary accounts relate how Italy was known for the systematic manner in which its colonial-territories were swiftly mapped, with work beginning as soon as military authority was established.74 By the early 1940s almost all of the vast territory of Libya had been mapped by the IGM at 1:400 000 and such was the requirement for colonial-surveyors and cartographers that extensive courses in 'Colonial surveying' had been established by

72 Atkinson, 'The politics of Geography'.
74 R. Bagnold, *Libyan Sands*, London, 1926. Whilst planning an expedition at the London RGS in the 1920s, Bagnold recalls how 'There were three areas of seducing blankness, omitting Italian Libya (which it would now be only a matter of time until it was explored and mapped)." pp. 208-209. Bagnold himself, it should be remembered, was a leading member of the British Army's Long range desert attack group, a section of the SAS dedicated to sabotage in the North African campaign. See: W. G. V. Balchin, 'United Kingdom Geographers in the Second World War', *The Geographical Journal*, 153, 2 (1987), pp. 159-180. For an example of the swift mapping of new Italian territories see A. Dardano, 'Areometria dell'Oltre Giuba (Giubaland Italiano)', *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana*, Serie VI, vol. 1, 5-6 (1924), pp. 268-270.
These various branches of geography were, it seems, only too eager to become involved in the state's business of governance, to submit their science to this project and to become a significant part of the functioning of government. On its part as we have seen, the regime pursued this practical aspect of geographical knowledge with vigour. The politics surrounding the production of geographical knowledge in Fascist Italy are unavoidable.

The geographical imagination and empire

From the balcony of Palazzo Venezia above the crowds in central Rome, Mussolini proclaimed the foundation of empire on May 9th 1936. With the conquest of Abyssinia, an 'Italian East Africa' of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Italian Somaliland was established. To the north, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were integrated with the Fezzan to form Italian 'Libia' in 1938 and the coastal territories were then included as part of Metropolitan Italy proper.

With the onset of Fascism's 'Imperial phase', the practical capacities of geographical knowledge, its usefulness to governance was less required than it had been. Italy's empire was complete and although ardent Fascists then turned their ambitions towards Albania, the Levant, Dalmatia, Corsica and Nice, the priority was to establish the nature and extent of Italy's new territories in the Italian popular consciousness. As De Grazia points out, until this date: 'By breaking down a specifically provincial identity, thus familiarising a parochial public with the geography of a 'greater Italy', [the regime] sought to politicise at the most primitive level.' In the late 1930s the pressing task, more than ever, was to expand Italy's geographical imagination to the level of empire and to make of Italians imperial citizens. For despite the efforts of the regime to promote tourism in Libya and Italian East Africa, few Italians would ever visit these extensions to the Italian peninsular. Therefore, to most citizens of newly-imperial Italy, Italian Africa was known and understood primarily through the ways in which these territories were presented to them in popular culture; in exhibitions, comics, lectures, books, magazines, journals, education, films and so on. In other

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75On the history of Italian cartography in Libya, see E. Casti Moreschi, 'Nomi e segni per l'Africa italiana'; C. Taversi, L'Italia in Africa, Storia della Cartografia coloniale Italiana, Rome, 1964; and, from the period, E. De Agostini, 'La cartografia', in Reale Societa Geografica Italiana, Il Sahara Italiano, pp. 643-658; on the range of maps available, even during the reconquista, see, 'Ufficio Studie propaganda della Cirenaica', in Rivista delle Colonie Italiane, I, 3 (1928), pp. 367-368; also see Sindicato Nazionale Fascista dei Geometri, Corso per Geometri Coloniali, Roma, vol I., 1937, on the institutionalization of 'colonial-surveying' in this period.


77De Grazia, The culture of consent, p. 183.
words, the geographical technologies and techniques which had fixed and categorised African territory in European terms for the practical business of governance was now to be superseded by the ability of geography to produce colonial space imaginatively. In the race to instil in the populace a coscienza-imperiale, Italian geography, as ever, was closely involved.

Maps

Cartography had long been implicated with Italian political interests and empire, from the mercantile imperialism of Venice and Genoa through to the efforts of the Liberal state to map its new Italian territory as a first stage of appropriation. In this same fashion, the mapping of Libya, Eritrea, Italian Somaliland and eventually Abyssinia was undertaken apace so as to quicken the practical appropriation of these territories. Cartography, though, was also useful for the symbolic capture of territory.

Maps have long been recognised as authoritative documents; enjoying enormous popular faith as arbiters of geographical veracity and as mimetic representations of geographical 'reality'. The role of cartography in Fascist Italy will be considered at greater length in chapter five. It is sufficient to mention here that it was because of cartography's aura of truthfulness that the mapping of Italian colonies was symbolically significant. For once they were encoded within the language and scientific-methods of supposedly 'objective' cartography, these lands were named, demarcated and represented as Italian in an uncontested and authoritative medium.

To Italian imaginations, these maps could obviously be trusted and were the best and most accurate representations of Libya, Eritrea, Somaliland or Abyssinia available to them. Consequently, maps assisted in the symbolic capture and representation of colonial-space as well as for practical considerations. In addition to other products such as books, pamphlets, articles, speeches, presentations, slide-shows and exhibitions, cartography was able to help the regime to mould and disseminate an imaginative vision of the Italian colonies. The fact that Geography could represent itself as a science as it portrayed these other regions, lent its representations a sheen of credibility and reliability. Geography then, could not only help Italian imperialism

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79 A corollary was the way in which the geography of the indigenous populations was largely obliterated on these maps and replaced by the geography of the conquering power. The silences and blank spaces of information missing from, or excluded from maps are as political as the symbols which are included: J. B. Harley, 'Silences and secrecy: the hidden agenda of cartography in early modern Europe', Imago Mundi, 40 (1988), pp. 57-76.
80 Casti Moreschi, 'Nomi e segni per l'Africa italiana'.

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with its practical requirements, but it could also assist Fascism to represent the empire to the imperial citizens of Fascist Italy.

**Education**

Education was an obvious arena in which Fascism sought to influence the Italian population. Indeed, one contemporary commentator reported that the Fascists considered their work in the nation’s schools to be perhaps the most 'Fascist' of all their achievements. As a consequence, the Fascist project to wider Italian geographical horizons was also mediated through the classroom. Geography was promoted in Italian schools - albeit slowly. The Balbino Giuliano laws of 1929 made one hour of geography mandatory in every Italian schoolchild's week. That some professional geographers interpreted this as a huge step forward is indicative of the low priority accorded to the discipline previously. However, in concert with other initiatives of the period, it does seem as if the regime was keen to develop the geographical imagination of its populace. Although accounts of Fascist education policies always list geography along with the other favoured disciplines which were prioritised by the regime, there remains much work to be done upon the role of geography in Fascist school curricula. However, surviving geographical textbooks of the period do provide rich sources which testify to the ways in which geography was taught in Fascist schoolrooms and the wider contexts and histories within which the discipline was positioned.

Giuseppe Teti's *Geografia Complementare* was published in 1931 by the Dante Alighieri Society's press, and before Italy had its empire. Nevertheless, Teti's preface invoked the glories of the Italian people shamelessly, veering at times towards

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82 On Giuliano, see: Cannistraro, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 249.


85 Brief mention of the role of geography as one of the disciplines granted significant attention by the regime can be found in: L. Mineo-Pauella, *Education in Fascist Italy*, Oxford, 1946, p. 169 and p. 174.

86 The book was aimed at higher-middle-school students: G. Teti, *Geografia complementare per le scuole medie superiori*, Milan-Genoa-Rome Naples, 1931.
a racial essentialism. He outlined his mode of geography in the preface - a geography which was largely deterministic, but qualified appreciably by human agency, a common position in inter-war Italy. His claim that an understanding of geography was a necessity for the future well-being of the nation betrayed both his nationalism and his advocacy of geographical understanding. Informed by these two benchmarks, his text was basically a political and economic geography of Italy under Fascism. It concluded with an account of the nation's position vis-a-vis other European powers. The author's hostility to the Versailles settlement and his distrust of other European powers, both emblematic of Italian nationalists around the turn of the 1930s, led him to conclude by advocating a state of 'glorious isolation' for an Italy organised along Fascist lines. Yet Teti's text is mild compared to others which appeared after the proclamation of empire.

In the early 1930s, during Giuliano's term at the education department, the government began producing its own elementary school textbooks and censoring textbooks for middle and other schools. Further interventions from the ministry in May 1936, on the eve of the fall of Addis Ababa and as part of Cesare Maria de Vecchi's assault on Italian cultural life, meant that as the numbers in education expanded rapidly, state control over the educational system became tighter still. One commentator reported that:

The basis of Fascist educational reform... [intends] ...the inculcation in every student of national consciousness or patriotism, and consequently, 'textbooks in history, geography, economics and law and elementary school readers must be in accordance with the historical, political, juridical and economic requirements established since Oct, 28, 1922.

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87Teti, Geografia complementare, pp. v-vii.
88Teti, Geografia complementare, esp. pp. 190-204.
90Cesare Maria de Vecchi, one of the earliest Fascist leaders and, given his vanity and extreme monarcho-clericalism, perhaps one of the most distasteful, was minister of education from January 1934 to November 1936. This appointment was designed as an assault on Italian culture indolaf as it should be replaced, through the education system, by Fascist culture. de Vecchi, though, was not up to this task and was replaced in 1936 by the far more able Bottai. Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, 'Cesare Maria de Vecchi' pp. 167-168. Enrollment of middle-schools students increased very significantly in this period, as did university admissions and entrants to teacher-training colleges. The Fascist state thus found itself replicating the problems of the Liberal system whereby too many overqualified middle-class graduates were hunting too few jobs. To solve the anxieties of its middle-class support, the regime expanded the state bureaucracy to accommodate the numbers, eventually creating a bloated, costly and unwieldy sector. On these problems, see: Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, pp. 180-182, figures on p. 181; M. Barbagli, Educating for Unemployment: Politics, Labor and the School System, Italy 1859-1973, (Trans. R. Ross), New York, 1982.
91Abad, 'Fascist Education', p. 433.
And another wrote:

All the books for the five forms of elementary school were written in the [Fascist] spirit. And no school, public or private, was allowed to use any book other than those issued by the state. ...no exception was allowed...

It was amidst this drive towards uniformity and control that Giovanni Colasanti wrote *L'orbe e L'uomo*. Subtitled: 'A geography text for use in middle schools (following the ministerial programme of 7 May, 1936) Volume II - Italy', it had presumably satisfied the censor and was released in 1937. Colasanti's book outlined a geography of Italy based on broad topographical categories (coasts, mountains, plains, rivers) and thematic sections (climate, population, produce). All entries were illustrated with stark and simple diagrams or pictures; the text was straightforward and unequivocal. The nature of Italy, its landscapes and features was an important business and was to be taken seriously. And just as Teti had completed his monograph with an account of Italy's contemporary political position in regional and global affairs, so too did Colasanti conclude his work. A triumphalist chapter on 'The Italian State' discussed the benefits of the 'Corporate State' (a Fascist model of national social and economic organisation) and of an 'Authoritarian Government'. The last chapter dealt with the 'Italian Colonial Empire', notable, Colasanti began, for its resources and its strategic value. The map reproduced in Figure 2.1 was positioned on the facing page.

As promised, the resources and strategic value of Italy's empire was revealed to the reader. Pupils learnt that Rhodes and the Dodecanese islands, Italian since 1912, enjoyed great commercial and strategic value, dominating the Eastern Mediterranean. Likewise, besides accommodating the flourishing olives and date-palms of Libya's sands, the Fourth Shore was presented as being of enormous commercial and strategic value. A natural extension of the *Mezzogiorno*, and a central trading node, it controlled flows across North Africa and functioned as a

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92Mineo-Pauella, *Education in Fascist Italy*, p. 173.
94G. Colasanti, *L'Orbo e l'uomo*, pp. 243-252. The 'Corporate state' will be outlined in chapter four.
95The search for, and possession and control of, resources, as we will see later, was a constant theme of the geopoliticians of Fascist Italy. Here, such concerns are evidenced amongst other geographers and, importantly, the Italian empire is represented to school children as having solved Italy's paucity of raw materials. The interest in Strategic value is also introduced here to schoolchildren and italicised in the original: Colasanti, *L'Orbo e l'uomo*, p. 252.
97Giolitti's negotiator in the talks with Ottoman Turkey whereby Rhodes and the Dodecanese were surrendered to Italy, was Giuseppe Volpi, later a patron of *Geopolitica*.(Mack Smith, *Italy*, pp. 278-279.); Colasanti, *L'Orbo e l'uomo*, p. 254.
gateway to central Africa.\textsuperscript{98} The map reproduced below was clearly constructed to suggest this.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{\textit{Carta sintetica della Libia} (Concise map of Libya)}
\end{figure}

Finally, Colasanti listed the remainder of the Italian empire in similar fashion and other 'Italian lands' which were not included in the Kingdom such as Malta, Corsica and the Swiss Cantons of Ticino and Grigioni. He finished with an account of the

\textsuperscript{98}Colasanti, \textit{L'Orbo e l'uomo}, pp. 254-255.
Italian Diaspora: he concluded that everywhere around the world one could speak Italian to successful Italian emigrants.\textsuperscript{99} Geography lessons were indeed preparing the imperialists of tomorrow.

The total control which the regime exercised over the text books for elementary schools meant that in 1938, authors such as Luigi Filippo de Magistris and Cesare Pico, respectively Professor of Economic Geography in Genoa and Royal Italian Schools Directorate, could be sure that their text \textit{L'impero d'Italia} was read by every Italian child in the fifth year of elementary school who could read.\textsuperscript{100} Shortly after the fall of Fascism, Mineo-Pauella commented that:

\begin{quote}
In the study of geography the factors which were alleged to have brought Italy to 'need' Fascism and an empire were required to be emphasised, not only when dealing with Italy itself, but also when considering the resources of other countries.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

\textit{L'impero d'Italia} was just such a case. An apologia for empire, an historical and heroic account of Italy's colonial expansion, and a geography of each component territory. Replete with pictures, maps, and diagrams, it was a triumphal tour around the empire; listing the moral and intellectual advantages wrought by Italian civilisation, and parading the material projects which were modernising these supposedly-fortunate nations. In their formative years Italians were introduced to themes which would later be addressed by Italy's geopoliticians. Geographical education, at whatever level, seemed to be embracing Fascism and in turn, enjoying increased government attention. I will next outline the attempts of the regime's final education minister, and the one with the longest tenure, as he pushed geography still further within the Italian educational system.

\textit{Bottai, the geographers' minister?}

Giuseppe Bottai plays a major role in the story I am telling here. Therefore, I will save a longer profile of him for chapter four. However, it is his promotion of geography whilst education minister which I will focus on here briefly. Bottai was

\textsuperscript{99}Colasanti, \textit{L'Orbo e l'uomo}, p. 256-259.

\textsuperscript{100}L. F. De Magistris and G. C. Pico, \textit{L'impero d'Italia}, Verona, 1938. Pico may have been national director of education, but his title (from the book) probably refers to a position within the national directorate. He had written on geographical and colonial issues elsewhere, for example: G. C. Pico, \textit{La geografia moderna per le scuole elementari e popolari}, Rome, 1923. De Magistris was involved with some of the more Fascistized institutions of the period, including the ICF and the \textit{Scuola Mistica Fascista}. One point worth making is that one of the undoubted benefits which Fascism brought to Italy was the decrease in illiteracy over the \textit{Ventennio}.

\textsuperscript{101}Mineo-Pauella, \textit{Education in Fascist Italy}, p. 170.
featured in *L'impero d'Italia* as one of the Fascist hierarchy who had returned from the Abyssinian campaign carrying medals for valour and the kudos of war heroes.\(^{102}\) Before his dash to East Africa, Bottai had been Governor of Rome. Perhaps as a result of this, upon his arrival in Addis Ababa he was appointed to the nominal role of Civilian Governor. He returned to Rome only weeks later, but not before he had tried to engage Le Corbusier to re-design Addis Ababa as a new Italian imperial capital.\(^{103}\) This audacious attempt to marry European rationalist architecture to Italian colonialism was typical of Bottai, the self-styled intellectual of Fascism. And although Mussolini allegedly couldn’t stand the sight of him, it was Bottai’s intellectual distinction which propelled him to the Ministry of Education on Viale Trastevere when *Il Duce* was forced to appoint a credible minister after de Vecchie’s tenure.

Bottai was a thoughtful Fascist with a coherent vision of a future Fascist society. He was a technocrat and an elitist who nevertheless appreciated the value that culture, both elite and popular, might lend the Fascist cause. His wide-ranging cultural project aimed to create a self-critical, re-generating Fascist elite who might push Italy towards a future Fascist utopia. An appointment to the education ministry might appear to be a chance to further just these ambitions and indeed, his 1940 *Carta della Scuola* was an attempt to wrestle with the endemic problems of the Italian education system.\(^{104}\) However, his time at education is remembered by many for his imposition of the 1938 racial laws which denied schooling to Jewish children and ousted Jewish academics from their position, among them Roberto Almagià.

Yet there is another, admittedly minor aspect to his ministry which has not been discussed by any of his biographers or by historians of the period. This was his support for geography, and for academic ‘university’ geography above all. As I have hinted, Bottai appears to have been a polymath, accumulating his numerous interests and cultural-interventions in an eclectic fashion throughout his years in public office. We could never claim that Bottai was interested exclusively or primarily in Italian geography, this would be far from the truth. However, he did demonstrate a considerable degree of encouragement to the discipline and, it seems, envisioned a role for geographers in expanding and widening the Italian geographical imagination. In his words, he wanted to see the *coscienza geografica* of the Italian people

\(^{102}\) Although it is thought that the nearest to the front which most of the hierarchs who attended the fall of Addis Abeba ever got was flying over the fringes of a battle at high altitude.


expanded "...ad un livello imperiale" (to an 'imperial level'). One admiring geographer, clearly flattered by the attention, wrote glowingly of 'our minister'.

With the expansion of the Italian coscienza-geografica in mind, it appears that Bottai pushed yet more state funds towards the discipline. The SGI, the by now traditional first call of a Rome government seeking geographical services, became involved with the project. In 1939 the society's flagship academic journal the Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana was simultaneously published under a new cover and put on general sale as I paesi del mondo (countries of the world). The intention was to give the publication a wider appeal and to sell it to ordinary Italians. Bottai's support was very much in evidence: the first article in the Bollettino and I paesi del mondo was authored by the minister and comprised a programmatic article entitled 'Mete ai Geografi' (Aims for Geographers) which spelt out his vision for the discipline. I will deal with this text at greater length in chapter four. Here I shall quickly note that he emphasised the importance of geography in the modern era lay with its capacity to observe, to understand, and to acquire a scientifically-thorough knowledge of the contemporary world. This importance was heightened, he continued, now that Italy had attained its 'livello imperiale' and needed to disseminate a coscienza geografica amongst her populace. The minister went on to confirm the future of academic geography in the Fascist state, arguing that the value of a unified and holistic geography, restored to its place at the centre of the modern nation, lay in its ability to unify human understanding of the world.

The SGI remained implicit to the Italian imperial effort in other ways as well. In the early 1940s it produced a series of booklets which focused upon the regions of Africa, the Balkans, and the Mediterranean that were either coveted by Italy, occupied by Axis forces or had been recently incorporated into the Italian empire. Edited by Elio Migliorini, also editor of the Bollettino and President of the SGI, this Paesi d'Attualità series included, La Siria and La Tunisia (both penned by Migliorini) as well as other contributions upon Egypt, Savoy, Ljubljana, Dalmatia,

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105 Coscienza geografica translates as 'geographical consciousness', a phrase that enjoyed an increasing currency during the 'imperial phase' of Fascist Italy. On Bottai see S. Cassese, 'Giuseppe Bottai', in Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, Rome, 1971, pp. 389-404; and on his cultural project see, A. J. De Grand, Bottai e la cultura Fascista, Bari, 1978.

106 Italian geographers were pleased by the attention of this influential figure, see R. Biasutti, 'Della nuova Geopolitica', del rinnovate Bollettino della R. Società Geografica Italiana, e di altre cose', Rivista Geografica Italiana, 46, 1-3 (1939), pp. 64-69, in which he makes mention of Geographers referring to Bottai as 'their' minister.


Montenegro and Corsica. All began with a regional geography of the area in question, then outlined its contemporary relevance to international affairs and ended with an account of Italian interests in the region. This was geography selling its expertise on behalf of the state; with the state clearly pleased with the service provided. In 1942 the Bollettino announced that Bottai had further increased the SGI's government subsidy so that the series might be continued for the next three years. In an ominous move, the series would be re-titled Paesi dell'ordine nuovo, (countries of the new order).109

The favour that Bottai extended to geography was based on its capacity to comprehensively describe the world and then to introduce this world to Italians. The minister was persistent in his support. He called Italian professional geographers to a conference in January 1941 at which he again confirmed his support for university-level geography. He also indicated his support for a national geographical academy: a proposed graduate-school for the imperial discipline.110 One geographer reported approvingly upon "...his courageous programme for the renewal of geographical studies and of the national geographical conscience, that he began with the foundation of Geopolitica....".111 Bottai's role in Geopolitica is dealt with later. However, I hope that I have demonstrated that this important 'hierarch' of the regime was prepared to support the discipline rhetorically and in material terms too. Along with the final pieces of the contextual-jigsaw which I will outline below, we will have some sense of the environment in which Italian geopolitics developed.

Popular geographies

Thanks to Fascism's promotion of the popular geographical imagination the Touring Club Italiano thrived. Its traditional function, introducing and guiding its members to other regions of their country and other aspects of their heritage, had already made it influential in the widening of the geographical imagination of Italians.112 With some

112 Treves, 'Anni di guerra, anni di svolta'.

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400,000 members in 1928, 480,000 in 1938 and almost 490,000 by 1940,\textsuperscript{113} the movement's impact was sufficient to ensure that it was placed under the regime's effective control from 1935 with its name italicised to the \textit{Consociazione Touristica Italiana}, reputedly on the direct orders of Mussolini himself.\textsuperscript{114} The prolific production of the CTI continued unabated under government influence. In addition to the \textit{Vie d'Italia}, a parallel journal was launched in 1932 called the \textit{Vie del Mondo} (the ways of the world) which functioned much as \textit{The National Geographic Magazine} or \textit{The Geographical Magazine} did in The United States and Britain - its features on Italy and the world were presented in an accessible and straightforward style. The \textit{Attraverso l'Italia} (travels through Italy) series continued to publish its big format, picture-laden issues, the \textit{Guida delle Strade di Grande Communicazione} series catalogued Italy's highways in the colonies and at home whilst from the early 1930s a new series entitled \textit{Guida practica ai Luoghi di Soggiorno e di cura d'Italia} (practical guide to places of relaxation and recuperation) listed and described the various types of leisure-resorts to be found in Italy and its colonies.

The CTI's \textit{Guida d'Italia} (the Red guides) also continued to be regularly updated and expanded. As Roland Barthes suggested in his essay \textit{Les Guides Blu}, travel guides too are ideologically-loaded texts, shot through with the values and sentiments of those who created them.\textsuperscript{115} In Fascist Italy there appears to have been a cogent appreciation of this fact. The CTI guides were unashamedly commandeered for national service - most famously in the case of the \textit{Guida dell'Africa Orientale Italiana}. Almost half a million copies of this 1938 publication were distributed to Italian households free of charge. Its six-hundred and forty pages encompassed descriptions of all parts of Italy's East African possessions and sought, in the words of the preface, to contribute to the understanding and development of the empire. Moreover work on the guide had begun, the introduction boasted, the day after the military operation was complete. The idea, quite clearly, was to introduce Italians to

\textsuperscript{113}These figures are taken from the inside-covers of the TCI's various guide-books which always quantified the print-run of which that book was a part. And as all members of the TCI received its publications for free, this provides us with a crude measure of the scale of the organisation at various points in its history. These figures are drawn from: Touring Club Italiano, \textit{Possedimenti e Colonie}, Milan, 1929; Consociazione Turistica Italiana, \textit{Guida dell'Africa Orientale Italiana}, Milan, 1938; Consociazione Turistica Italiana, \textit{Italia Settentriionale Guida Breve}, Milan, 1940.

\textsuperscript{114}On the regime's use of the TCI and the 1937 occasion when Mussolini personally ordered that the TCI's name be italicised into the 'Consociazione Touristica Italiana', see Di Mauro, 'L'Italia e le guide turistiche'.

their empire and to raise their imperial-geographical imaginations as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{116}

Two years later, when an abridged version of the \textit{Guida d'Italia} was produced in three volumes for easier digestion, its preface concluded with the justification that: "...the understanding of the country on the part of all Italians is a necessary foundation in the civil and economic ascent of the nation."\textsuperscript{117} Eventually, as Italy careered towards war and defeat in World war two, regions which technically were not even Italian were granted their own \textit{guido rosso}. Dalmatia, nominally controlled by Italy during the Axis occupation of Yugoslavia, and Corsica, merely the object of Italian ambitions, both received their own guide in a series of the regions of Italy - implying that each region was naturally part of Italy. Of relevance to my inquiry is that by this stage the CTI was thoroughly-embedded in the regime's expansionist project.

Perhaps the CTI's greatest contribution of the period materialised under the direction of Giotto Dainelli, a leading geographer and geologist of the day and another future patron of \textit{Geopolitica}, when the organisation prepared Italy's first National Atlas in 1940.\textsuperscript{118} The summation of his life's dreams, as Dainelli's rather flowery preface proclaimed, the Atlas was an impressive collection of maps and statistics, defining the geographical extent and character of the nation as surely as the \textit{Enciclopedia Italiana} determined the Italian perspective upon a universal range of topics or the PNF's Dictionary of Politics laid down political orthodoxy in Mussolini's Italy. In yet another of it many forms, geography was moulding the Italian geographical imagination.

The last of the geographical organisations I will deal with here, the \textit{Istituto Colonial Italiano} also fared well throughout Mussolini's reign. Re-named the Istituto Coloniale Fascista in the 1920s and eventually, the \textit{Istituto Fascista Africana Italiana} upon the proclamation of empire, the organisation was granted use of the stately Palazzo Brancai before, in the twilight of the regime, a sprawling, new modernist complex, intended to be library, archive, study-centre and exhibition hall, was constructed for it in the grounds of the Villa Borghese in Rome. The organisation also supported numerous branches throughout the peninsular, but especially in the northern cities.

\textsuperscript{116}Consoziazione Touristica Italiana, \textit{Guida dell'Africa Orientale Italiana}, Milan, 1938, (Guide to Italian East Africa); which received a positive review from London's \textit{Geographical Journal}, 93, 5 (1939), pp. 448-449.
\textsuperscript{117}Consoziazione Touristica Italiana, \textit{Italia Settentrionale Guida Breve}, Milan, 1940, p. 5.
where Fascism remained more than an inconvenience forced upon the local elite and more of a political faith with a flock of believers.\textsuperscript{119}

By the 1930s the ICF’s interests revolved around the optimal development of Italian colonies, the pursuit of an unrelenting colonial policy, and the dissemination of knowledge and information about the empire to the Italian people. Whether through lectures, slide-shows, night-school classes, newspapers, monographs or public exhibitions, the ICF was an ardent promoter of the empire. By the 1930s the ICF had also become an integral element of the regime’s \textit{dopolavoro} (afterwork) activities, the attempt to control the leisure time of the Italian people.\textsuperscript{120} An important plank in the regime’s attempted totalitarianism, the \textit{Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro} (OND) provided leisure facilities and premises for whole communities; showing films, organising sporting events and other activities. At the cost of some conflict with the Catholic church, the regime had also instigated a series of youth groups which enjoyed a monopoly over children’s leisure time and provided a smooth progression from the ‘infants’ organisation, the ‘Sons of the Wolf’, through the ‘Balilla’ and other stages, to full membership of the PNF at twenty-one. These organisations were designed for social engineering.\textsuperscript{121}

The imperative to expand the Italian geographical imagination was naturally encompassed by this huge sector too. In ongoing attempts to dissolve provincialism, the Dopolavoro organised outings for whole communities to other parts of the nation or, at times, tourism in the colonies.\textsuperscript{122} The ICF was fully-integrated into this process. It promoted colonial-tourism and for those without adequate funds, brought the empire to their local Dopolavoro headquarters through films, lectures, slide-shows and exhibitions. Whether through intellectual argument or through to the organisation’s increased use of the totalitarian machinery established in the 1930s, the ICF remained committed to inculcating an imperial consciousness into Italy. In following the lead of geographers who had co-founded the organisation in 1906, several geographers of the 1930s figured in the ICF’s hierarchies at various local and

\textsuperscript{119}J. Steinberg, ‘Fascism in the Italian South: the case of Calabria’, in D. Forgacs (ed) \textit{Rethinking Italian Fascism}, London, 1986, pp. 83-109. Steinberg’s work, as readable and compelling as ever, reminds us that for many in the South, Fascism was a distant concern. Little changed on the ground in relation to economic and social structures and those who did choose to wear a Blackshirt were usually the local elite who merely appropriated local Fascist organisation as a means of maintaining their local influence.

\textsuperscript{120}Thompson, \textit{State control}, pp. 82-87.

\textsuperscript{121}This being a topic which has received growing attention in the last fifteen years or so, compare: De Grazia, \textit{The culture of consent}; T. Koon, \textit{Believe, Obey, Fight. Political Socialisation of youth in Fascist Italy, 1922-1943}, London, 1985; on the contest between regime and church for young minds, see: R. Wolff, \textit{Between Pope and Duce. Catholic Students in Fascist Italy}, New York, 1990.

\textsuperscript{122}De Grazia, \textit{The culture of consent}, pp. 180-184.
national levels. These individuals include Giorgio Roletto and Ernesto Massi, the two founders of *Geopolitica*.

I have represented the academic, political, social and cultural contexts of Roletto and Massi at length. In the next few chapters I will discuss the ways they intervened in these contexts and the roles which they sought for their journal *Geopolitica*. I hope that it is increasingly clear that their journal was not a unique expression, but rather an extension of the links that had been steadily increasing between the regime and geography from the early 1920s. Equally, in their development of geopolitical ideas, the two geographers were informed by the wider discourse of geopolitics which were circulating around Europe in the interwar years. Before I introduce their thought and its specific context of Trieste, I will quickly sketch something of the state of political geography, as a recognised sub-field of academic geography in Fascist Italy.

*Political geography under Fascism*

The origins of a self-conscious Italian 'Political geography' lie with a review of Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* by Olinto Marinelli in 1905. And just as the French had set about proposing a different, national French version of political geography once Vidal de la Blache had introduced Ratzelian thought to France, so too did the Italians begin to develop an Italian political geography. The onset of war in 1915 brought an urgency to this debate. Despite much domestic disquiet at intervention in the war, Rome had mobilised upon the promise of territorial gain in the Trentino and Trieste. This emphasis the chance to 'redeem' these lands to the nation and the promised compensation of electoral and land reform for the sacrifices of the trenches, meant that a great deal of emphasis was placed upon the territorial rewards of the war effort.

As a result, for some Italian geographers, the immediate task seemed to be to analyse the war and Italian irredentist claims from this new perspective of political geography. For others it seemed necessary to engage in the debate over the Peace

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treaty and territorial spoils which followed hostilities. Giuseppe Ricchieri was amongst still others who lamented that unlike other participant-nations, geography had not been mobilised at the Versailles conference by Italy. Although some attempt was made when Commander Roncagli of the Royal Italian Navy travelled to the RGS in London to contest Jovan Cvijic's maps of Serbian ethnic distribution in the Julian Alps on the Italian border. The re-alignment of frontiers, irredentism and the extension of the state were of major political importance to Italians in wartime and afterwards. This was especially the case with Italy's disputed eastern frontier with Yugoslavia. Amidst the politicised geography of the post-war years, political geography -interpreted as a study of the state, its people and territory- was gaining currency amongst a small group of scholars. Indeed, in 1921 Ricchieri was moved to pronounce to his audience of academics and students that:

Of the notable impulses given to political geography by the war, those which we especially mustn't neglect stand testimony to some recent and important works published in various languages on the subject which draw fundamental conclusions, although not all in agreement, about the new concept of the state, of the factors of their power, and of their relations with one another in the present world order.

This history cannot be explained just by geographical determinism, nor by historical-economic materialism, for in the life of states and peoples there is the great and ever-increasing importance of the moral element. Men, as individuals and in the masses, are not slaves to the brute forces of nature. But neither, for that matter, are they any less tied to their own country, to their own national sentiments.

Before the war Ricchieri had busied himself providing geographical legitimation for the occupation of Libya. It is not surprising that, given the pressing questions of frontiers and territory, Ricchieri was one of several Italian geographers to take notice of the growth of European political geography, to read its major texts, and then to propose a distinctly Italian version of the phenomenon which blended both French and German developments to address Italian issues. To support his arguments above, Ricchieri quoted Kjellén and Alexander Supan and then Jean Brunhes and Camille

126 M. Baratta, Confine orientale d'Italia, Novara, 1918; M. Baratta, 'Giuseppe Mazzini e il confine orientale d'Italia', Istituto Geografico de Agostini Quaderni Geografici, 7 (1919), pp. 1-30.
129 R. Ricchieri, 'L'elemento geografico nella grandezza delle Nazioni secondo il Prof. Giuseppe Ricchieri', Rivista Geografica Italiana, 28 (1921), pp. 125-126, quotation from p. 125. This was the text of his inaugural address for the academic year 1921-1922 at the Milanese Academia Scientifica-Letteraria.
130 Atkinson, 'The politics of geography'.
Vallaux. He was already perpetuating the European geopolitical conversation, and the Italian perspective he contributed modified the determinism of German writing with an element of human agency and the idea of a national identity forged through a common history and culture rather than a common soil.

In a modern Europe comprised of new states, enlarged states, dismembered states and controlling a re-aligned colonial world, other commentators also soon recognised the relevance of political geography in teaching and research. One of the first major Italian statements of this nascent sub-discipline was provided by Roberto Almagià in 1923. He rehearsed the position of Ratzel and its mediations through Kjellén and other German commentators such as Supan and Dix. He then assessed the French contributions of Brunhes, Vallaux, and Febvre. Like Ricchieri, he corrected the "...exaggerated preponderance which Ratzel... ...attributed to the earth (territory)", seeking instead a greater concentration upon the 'human element'. Moreover, he identified the importance of the political-economy of the state and, finally, called for an appreciation of the new international dynamism of the world system - of colonial trade, international sea-lanes, factors which would shape the new discipline of political geography. In his opinion, political geography could consider the state as a geographical object, studying its 'static' size, location and shape. But more importantly, he also identified the dynamic aspects of the state and recognised "...that the state isn't fixed or immutable, but it is an individual which is born, develops, decays and dies following influences which, to a notable degree, are tied to geographical conditions." So although he shunned absolute determinism, the model of the organic state was translated into Italy and was seen as able to explain the dynamic role of the state contemporary world. Almagià concluded with a new definition of political geography:

131 Ricchieri cited: R. Kjellén, De staat als Lebensform, Leipzig, 1917, and A. Supan, Leitlinien der allgemeinen politische geographie, Lipsia, 1918. Also J. Brunhes and C. Vallaux, La géographie de l'histoire. Géographie de le paix et de la guerre sur terre e sur mer, Paris, 1921. He also provided other references for Kjellén and brief biographical notes for all of the individuals he mentioned. He was clearly very abreast of the debate.

132 On an analysis of the French material which was emerging at this time, see: A. R. Toniolo, 'I moderni concetti di geografia sociale e politica, secondo J. Brunhes e C. Vallaux', L'Universo, 4 (1923), pp. 203-212. Toniolo fully recognised that the French work was in part a reaction against German ideas of political geography (pp. 205-207). Political geography also surfaced in Mussolini's own journal: L. Filippo de Magistris, 'Geografia e politica', Gerarchia, 2, 6 (1923), pp. 1033-1039.


The study of the state in its physiognomy and geographical structure and in its conditions of existence, and of [the state's] development and distribution on the earth as determined by geographical factors.\textsuperscript{139}

The next significant statement of political geography in Italy appeared in 1929 when Luigi de Marchi wrote 'The foundations of political geography'.\textsuperscript{140} De Marchi was a keen supporter of Fascism and as early as 1924 had called for the "...need to create in the country a geographical imagination."\textsuperscript{141} In his preface he complained that German, French, British and American authors had all interpreted political geography from their own national perspectives, especially at times of international tension.\textsuperscript{142} He aimed to provide the first Italian voice in this debate and, given his training as a natural scientist, he gravitated towards Ratzel's work and replicated its determinism.\textsuperscript{143} As far as he was concerned, political geography was "the science which studies the influence of natural factors, and of their distribution on the earth's surface, in the formation, development and decline of states".\textsuperscript{144} And the way in which geography had shaped the development of territory and population was pursued for the next sixty pages.\textsuperscript{145} Next, the geographical value of state and empire, and, in passing, the necessity of an Italian empire, were all argued at length.\textsuperscript{146}

In differing from Almagia's version of political geography, De Marchi demonstrates that the subject was already contested ground in Italy as throughout Europe.\textsuperscript{147} The debate continued with a significant contribution from Elio Migliorini in 1930.\textsuperscript{148} Whilst reviewing Kjellén and Haushofer's 1930 text Die grossmächt vor und nach dem Weltkrieg, he commented that it was as well:

\textsuperscript{140} L. De Marchi, Fondamenti di geografia politica, Padua, 1929.
\textsuperscript{141} L. De Marchi, 'Politica geografia', appendix one in De Marchi, Fondamenti di geografia politica, 1929, pp. 177-191. Quotation from p. 190.
\textsuperscript{142} In 1929, the great depression was fuelling international tension.
\textsuperscript{143} G. Ferro, Fondamenti di geografia politica e geopolitica, politica del territorie e dell'ambiente, Milan, 1993, p. 20. De Marchi believed himself to be the first
\textsuperscript{144} De Marchi, Fondamenti di geografia politica, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{145} De Marchi, Fondamenti di geografia politica, pp. 15-75.
\textsuperscript{146} De Marchi, Fondamenti di geografia politica, pp. 77-175 and, on his apologia for Italian imperialism, pp. 160-167.
\textsuperscript{148} E. Migliorini, 'Recensione e annunzi bibliografici', Bolletino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana, serie 6, vol. 6 (1930), pp. 620-622.
...to make a neat distinction between political geography, as it is currently constituted... ...from geographical analyses which are basically political and which contribute nothing to our science.\textsuperscript{149}

During the period when Roletto and Massi began to develop their strain of geopolitics, it seems that such political geographies were already considered by at least one powerful mover in the Italian geographical establishment as a dubious part of geography to be marginalised and separated from 'legitimate' political geography. However, this need to disparage geopolitics is indicative of the growth of the phenomena in Italy. Certainly a debate had emerged in which prominent Italian geographers revealed themselves to be aware of the growing phenomena of political geography in Europe. Moreover, although not always in agreement, these Italians sought to domesticate an Italian version of political geography with which to analyse the state amidst the uncertainty of the interwar world.

This debate would continue throughout the 1930s, Almagià for example, would publish a political geography monograph in 1936 one year before the first edition of Umberto Toschi's much reprinted \textit{Appunti di Geografia Politica} appeared.\textsuperscript{150} Likewise, Ugo Morichine would develop aspects of the contemporary political geography debate to examine the political geography of historical periods.\textsuperscript{151} My concern thus far has been to set the broad and complex contexts within which Giorgio Roletto and Ernesto Massi developed their version of geopolitics. In this chapter my particular concern has been to demonstrate that \textit{Geopolitica} was far from being isolated in its use of its geographical expertise to gain political capital. Instead, it was part of a long-standing tradition whereby Italian geography, whether overtly or covertly, consciously or otherwise, supported the interests of powerful political patronage. \textit{Geopolitica} was merely an extreme expression of this process. Its story follows.


Chapter 3.

Trieste and the origins of Italian geopolitics

Introduction

When Ernesto Massi wrote his account of Roman and Mediterranean geopolitics for the 1939 *Festschrift* edition of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, he appended a lengthy footnote which outlined the brief history of Italian geopolitics.¹ Massi claimed that Italian geopolitics had originated in Trieste, in 1930, when he came across the writings of Haushofer. This chapter will outline the subsequent development of the Triestene ‘school’ of geopolitics from circa 1930 to 1936 - through a period when the Trieste geographers first rejected, but then slowly began to adopt the term geopolitics and to substitute it for their own ‘dynamic political geography’. This also entails portraits of its two major protagonists, Giorgio Roletto and Ernesto Massi, and of the very particular and influential political culture of Trieste which, I contend, influenced the development of their geopolitics. In this gateway city, the nascent Italian geopolitical movement blended the geopolitical ideas and theories emerging from Germany and France. This resulted in a hybrid version of geopolitics, and one informed by Italian contingencies and by the distinct situation in Trieste. It is this intermingling of place, politics, academic traditions and individual sentiments which set the stage upon which Italian geopolitics developed and which I will discuss here.

Trieste

Trieste had only become part of Italy in 1919 when the *Regia Nautica*’s frigate *Audace* docked by the city’s main piazza and raised the Italian Tricolor with the authority of the Versailles peace conference. Since the fall of the Napoleonic empire a century earlier, Trieste had belonged to Austria and had expanded at a phenomenal rate as the Hapsburgs developed it as the main port of *Mitteleuropa*, the southern focus of the central European rail network and the third city of the empire behind Vienna and Prague.² The Italian Risorgimento forced the Austrians out of Venice and the Veneto but could not evict them from the northern Alpine regions of the Trentino and the Alto Adige (the Sud Tyrol) and from their imperial port of Trieste.

Consequently, from the 1880s onwards, Trieste became the centre of Italian irredentist ambitions whereby this city, whose denizens were ethnically Italian, might be 'redeemed' to an otherwise united Italy.3

These local difficulties were overshadowed by the necessities of the continental balance of power which demanded that newly united-Italy become part of the 'Triple Alliance' with Germany and Austro-Hungary. However, when Italy's partners initiated the Great war in 1914 they failed to inform Rome who, by the terms of the alliance, was therefore free to declare Italian neutrality. Recognising the advantages of an Italian alliance, in secret negotiations the British and the French readily dangled territories in Africa and Dalmatia before Italian statesmen. Above all they promised them Trieste and the Trentino, and upon these promises, the Treaty of London was signed and Italy deserted its longstanding allies for the Entente powers.4

After three years of bloody and draining conflict the victorious powers despatched their statemens to Versailles to divide the spoils. Amidst the negotiations and recriminations, one of the least contentious episodes was the transfer to Italy of Trieste. Woodrow Wilson also contradicted his own 'fourteen points' to grant Italy a defensible northern frontier at the Brenner Pass. Buoyed by these successes and aware of the Italian peoples' sense that they should be amply rewarded for their suffering, the Italian statesmen pressed for further concessions.5 Chief amongst their ambitions was the redemption of the port of Fiume, on the southern side of the Istrian peninsula and the terminus of the railway to Budapest, it was again populated by ethnic Italians. However, its port function persuaded Wilson to grant Fiume to the infant Yugoslavia. The Italian delegation made the error of walking out in protest; by the time they had returned, the deal had been struck. Thus was born the myth of the 'mutilated victory' - the popular belief that Italy had been cheated by the western powers of her just rewards in 1919.6

Other consequences of the war were similarly unhappy for the Liberal regime which became increasibly unable, in the popular imagination at least, of satisfying promises of land reform, extension of the franchise and the improvement of peasant living standards. The left mobilised and throughout the Bienno Rosso (two red years) the

country appeared to be moving towards revolution on the Russian model. On the right, the poet, nationalist and adventurer Gabrielle D'Annunzio marched on Fiume with his self-styled Black-shirted ‘leggionaires’ in the name of Italy. His occupation of the city lasting fourteen months before the ineffectual Liberal government was forced to act by international pressure. The chaos, lack of government, and the fear of socialist revolution set the scene for the rise of Fascism.7

Figure 3.2
The University building, Trieste.

Once in power the Fascist regime, with its simplistic emphasis upon Italian nationalism, alighted upon Trieste as a symbolic location. With its annexation to Italy, Trieste had been abruptly cut off from its established hinterland and had suffered economically. In part to allay these fears, and in order to emphasize the Italianness of Trieste, Fascism immediately began excavating Roman remains and building sleek new Italian office blocks around the old Hapsburg quarter.8 On a hill overlooking the city a vast new modernist pile was taking shape - the new Italian university (figure 3.1). As part of the university’s expansion two new appointments were made which were intended to ‘Fascistize’ the institution: in the academic year of 1926-1927 Manlio Udina took the chair of international law and Giorgio Roletto taught briefly as chair of economic history before being awarded, in 1928, the chair of economic geography.9

9Vinci, ‘Geopolitica e Balcani'.
Giorgio Roletto

It was Roletto's reputation as a leading economic geographer which led to his appointment at Trieste. However, he had also acquired national eminence in a far more humanistic sphere of activity and one which was intimately linked to his background. Roletto was born in 1885 and grew up in a small hamlet called Bobbio Pellice, at the head of an Alpine valley a thousand feet above sea-level, enclosed by precipitous slopes and only five miles from the French border. The physical isolation of the valley also made it the home of a Valdensian community, a fourteenth century heretical sect who had been hounded by the inquisition to the highest and most impenetrable valleys of the Maritime Alps. They sustained their unique faith and culture in this harsh environment and this history left Roletto, a Valdesian himself, with an enduring interest in the relationships between society and natural environment.

Roletto left the valley for his education in Turin, a degree in natural sciences in Parma, and then to Bologna to study for a doctorate under Carlo Errera. It was Errera who had introduced Vidalien thought into Italy and under his supervision Roletto completed a brilliant thesis in 1915 upon the geographical imagination of a fifteenth century traveller. Yet upon its completion, Roletto returned to his interest in Alpine communities, reinforced by an awareness of Vidalien notions of distinct Genres de vie sharpened by a year spent at the University of Grenoble. He was soon publishing on the geographies of the Alpine communities and the way in which society and nature interacted to produce these particular landscapes. Throughout his career he never interpreted the environment as a determining factor, but as a set of constraints which was adapted by a community.

After a period of service in the Italian war effort, he moved to Bolgna to a lectureship in geography and the Istituto Tecnico Commerciale. In his seven years in Bologna, four as director of the institute, Roletto continued his studies of Alpine regions - producing eighteen papers in various Italian and French journals. He developed an international reputation and was crucial to the establishment of Italian

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14 Valussi, 'L'Opera scientific di Giorgio Roletto', p. 313.
Alpine Geography. His eminence was recognised when he was commissioned to write the entry on ‘Alps’ for the Enciclopaedia Italiana. He also developed his links with the Vidalien school of geography, forming friendships with Raoul Blanchard and Jean Brunhes. And as his thinking developed, he became ever more convinced that geography was central to the understanding of society and that his discipline was both an analytical and a synthetic science.

Throughout this period he also developed his interests in economic geography and the geography of resource location, resource control and transportation. In time, these concerns would become central to Geopolitica, but it was his standing as an economic geographer which earned him his post in Trieste. The city’s local business and political elite had been encouraging the local university to investigate Trieste’s ongoing economic problems and the new Fascist rector had been looking for academics sympathetic to Fascism. Roletto suited both parties and in his inaugural speech of 1928 proved why. Entitled: La Geografia come scienza Utilitaria (Geography as a useful science), Roletto first traced a history of the discipline and moved onto the relevance of economic geography. He emphasized the practical applications of this branch of geography and, so that these benefits might be realised, he called for the development of “...a geographical spirit and the geographical conscience.” His conclusion was unequivocal: “I conclude by insisting on the necessity of an awareness of geography for the rational conduct of commercial trade, to be able to choose with the highest probability the most certain route of economic progress.” Britain, the United States and France all used geography, this ‘science and practice’, for the national advantage, he continued. Italy should do the same. His Fascist credentials emerge in his final paragraph:

In this period of realignment, illuminated by the geographical clarity of the man which God has given to Italy, the Duce, the wise and never-sleeping constructor of the road to empire, geography has a great mission to undertake and geographers have serious responsibilities to perform.

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16 Valussi, ‘L’Opera scientific di Giorgio Roletto’, p. 322.
20 G. Roletto, La Geografia come scienza utilitaria, Trieste, 1929.
21 Roletto, La Geografia come scienza utilitaria, pp. 3-14.
22 Roletto, La Geografia come scienza utilitaria, p. 18.
23 Roletto, La Geografia come scienza utilitaria, pp. 18-19.
24 Roletto, La Geografia come scienza utilitaria, p. 20.
True to his words, Roletto immediately began to investigate the geographical problems of Trieste and to publish work which would be of practical assistance to businessmen and merchants. In the next two years he published on the urban geography of Trieste and on the economic prospects of the city as a gateway to the Danubian basin. He wrote on the global trade in wool and the resources of the Mediterranean. He would also compile a handbook for Italian businessmen working in the Levant which was designed to aid Triestene trade with the eastern Mediterranean. Although his work on Alpine regions continued, Roletto’s interests had very clearly turned towards the city of Trieste and its economic prospects. One of his students, a native of Trieste, would prompt him to reorient his interests further towards political geography and geopolitics.

Ernesto Massi and first encounters with geopolitics

Like Roletto, Ernesto Massi’s formative experiences were distinct and enduring. He was born in 1909 and spent his first ten years as an Austrian citizen. His mother spoke German in the home and Massi grew up bilingual. In 1930, by the time he graduated from his first degree in geography at the University of Trieste, he had already begun research under Roletto’s supervision. He doctorate was finished three years later and was a lengthy investigation into the geography of Gorizia, a frontier town in the foothills of the Julian Alps some 35 km to the north-west of Trieste and, since the 1919 Versailles adjudications, incorporated into Italy. He aimed to demonstrate how the geography of Gorizia, as a frontier city between eastern and western Europe had influenced the town. Its chapters outlined the natural environment, the historical development, the human environment and the economic climate of the area. He concluded with a broad section called ‘Commerce, communications and conclusion’. Finally, as a frontier city, the political-geography of the area enjoyed a particular importance and Massi labelled his final section "a geopolitical conclusion", indicating his familiarity with the term.

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27G. Roletto and M. De Vergottini (eds.), Guida per il commercio con il Levante, Trieste, 1931.
29E. Massi, L’Ambiente geografico e lo sviluppo economico nel Goriziano, Gorizia, 1933. What was in effect his Doctoral thesis was dedicated to his parents.
30Massi, L’Ambiente geografico, chapter 68, ‘Geopolitical considerations - a government for a more efficient development of environmental factors - conclusion, pp. 217-220. Lo Monaco claims that
Massi had written his thesis over three years in which Italy and the world had undergone significant change. Lo Monaco spelt this out in his introduction to Massi's Festschrift.\(^{31}\) The Great-depression which disfigured the end of the 1920s may not have bitten as deeply in Italy as in more industrially-developed nations, but it did signal a huge restructuring of the Italian economy, of her international economic-relations and of the peninsula's landscapes. From these ructions emerged much of Italy's modern structures, her productive system and her social-welfare. In addition, claims Lo Monaco, this period also moulded the career of Ernesto Massi.\(^{32}\) Amidst this uncertainty, and as a young student in this highly politicised city, Massi had first come across the work of Karl Haushofer. He would start to debate and disseminate these ideas through a Triestene geography journal which had just been launched: \textit{La Coltura Geografica}.

Massi's burgeoning interest in political geography and his formative thinking about geopolitics can be traced through the life span of this journal. \textit{La Coltura Geografica} was in print between January 1930 and February 1932, it was directed by Giorgio Roletto and can be regarded as a forerunner of \textit{Geopolitica} as many of its leading contributors would later be involved in the geopolitical journal. Another of Roletto's students, Gustavo Cumin, was the \textit{Direttore-responsabile}\(^{33}\) and Massi worked as a sub-editor on a voluntary basis. Equally \textit{La Coltura Geografica}, although a didactic journal aimed at schoolchildren and teachers, anticipated \textit{Geopolitica} in its programme which, in broad terms, laid claim to a special role for geography as a science capable of interpreting, analysing, and explaining (thanks to its wide-ranging vision) the dynamics of the contemporary world. As the editorial of the January 1931 edition put it:

\begin{quote}
The Italian of today has interests in all parts of the world: in commercial and emigratory flows, in political and colonial expansion, in the fundamental problems of our foreign policy - [these issues] will require clear reflection in all consciousness' and in all minds. Only a geographical culture is in a position to place these questions in their
\end{quote}

\(^{31}\)Lo Monaco, 'Ernesto Massi: mezzo secolo di analisi geografiche', p. 11.

\(^{32}\)Lo Monaco, 'Ernesto Massi: mezzo secolo di analisi geografiche', pp. 8-11.

\(^{33}\)The \textit{Direttore-responsabile} was usually the individual who supervised the actual day to day production of a publication as opposed to the Direttore who might only write leading articles or have final editorial control.
proper contexts, to prepare—with a strong commitment to study and propaganda— their solutions from a geographical perspective.\textsuperscript{34}

Furthermore, geographical-science had a duty to explicate and disseminate this perspective. From May 1930 the journal's subtitle was changed from 'A monthly review for students' to 'A monthly review of propaganda' and at the end of the year a bullish editorial talked of continuing the struggle against the misioneism and ignorance of the masses and "...the rubbish that blocks the road to the free development of geographical understanding."\textsuperscript{35}

La Coltura Geografica borrowed its name from Cesare Battisti and Renato Biassutti's short-lived journal from the turn of the century. La Coltura Geografica was similarly convinced of the importance of geography and similarly adopted an overt political stance. In 1930s Trieste and the wider context of Fascist Italy, this meant that the journal favoured Fascism. In its politics too, La Coltura Geografica anticipated Geopolitica.

Adorning the cover of the first issue in January-February 1930 and centred under the masthead was Mussolini's statement: "You know which errors were perpetrated only recently, and which must be attributed above all to an imperfect understanding of geography", from an address to the SGI, June 29th, 1924.\textsuperscript{36} The cover also bore the Lictor Fasces, the unmistakable icon of the regime. Under a title 'Per l'insegnamento della Geografia' (For the teaching of Geography), the journal's opening page reproduced a national circular from the minister of public instruction, Balbino Giuliano which announced that geographical teaching and the study of the political and economic conditions of Italy, her empire, and other states, did not receive the attention that its importance deserved. The remedy for this was an hour a week for the teaching of geography in Italian schools.\textsuperscript{37}

Following the ministerial pronouncement, came the journal's first article: 'Economic geography and general geography'.\textsuperscript{38} Although unsigned, this piece was probably

\textsuperscript{34}La redazione, 'Incominciendo', La Coltura Geografica, 2, 1 (1931), p. 1.
\textsuperscript{35}La redazione, 'Verso il secondo anno di vita', La Coltura Geografica, 1, 12 (1930), p. 229.
\textsuperscript{36}This reference was to the 'mutilated peace' and the widespread sentiment that Italy had been cheated: 'Atti della Societa, seduta straordinaria del 27 Maggio, Ricevimento di S.E. il Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, On. Benito Mussolini', Bollettino Della Reale Società Geografica Italiana, Serie VI, vol. 1, 5-6 (1924), pp. 221-224.
\textsuperscript{37}Giuliano Balbino, 'Per l'insegnamento della Geografia', reproduced in La Coltura Geografica, 1, 1-2 (1930), p1.
\textsuperscript{38}Anon., 'Geografia economica e geografia generale', La Coltura Geografica, 1, 1-2 (1930), pp. 2-8. The following quotations are on pages 2-3.
written by one or all of the editors\textsuperscript{39} and it ascribed a special role amongst the sciences for geography and for economic geography in particular. Geography was to be considered "...the science of the environment as adapted by man, and, reciprocally, of the human adaptation to the environment."\textsuperscript{40} And as it was geography which studied the ties connecting all the other types of knowledge (connections which specialists in other disciplines were often unaware of), the geographer "...can not only observe and describe, but can also often explain and therefore prescribe action: it is this possibility that fundamentally-characterises geography as a science of observation and of practical application."\textsuperscript{41} An immediate caveat stressed that the discipline could never be an applied-science in strict terms because geographical explanation was always rooted in local site-specific physical and human environments.\textsuperscript{42} However, the fundamental importance of geography to the understanding of the world had been established and five pages of examples went on to demonstrate the ways in which "...economic phenomena... [were] intimately tied to physical conditions."\textsuperscript{43} More specifically, three broad themes emerged: the geography of natural-resource location, the accessibility of these resources, and the problems of trading these resources, that is, their transportation and the routes used for this purpose. The article made clear that all of these basic economic practices were fundamentally dependant upon geography and this was taken as evidence of the importance of geographical-investigation.\textsuperscript{44} These same themes were to persist in \textit{La Coltura Geografica} and to underpin the work of these Triestini geographers throughout the 1930s. In particular they would become staple fare for \textit{Geopolitica} until its closure in 1942.

The supposed applicability of the geographical perspective to the modern era surfaced constantly in the substantial range of topics encompassed by the first volume of \textit{La Coltura Geografica}. Ernesto Massi contributed extensively to the journal, despite his status as a voluntary assistant and the work involved in completing the book that would earn him his \textit{Libero Docenze}.\textsuperscript{45} In the first double issue he wrote upon tourists movements in Italy, upon the geographical work of missionaries, and upon Hydro-electric power.\textsuperscript{46} Under the pseudonym 'Erma' (which he used consistently

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39}The piece was 'signed' by an asterisk, which in this period usually indicated the authorship of one, or more, of the editors.
\item \textsuperscript{40}Anon., 'Geografia economica e geografia generale', p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{41}Anon., 'Geografia economica e geografia generale', p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{42}Their chosen comparative was applied chemistry.
\item \textsuperscript{43}Anon., 'Geografia economica e geografia generale', p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{44}In the next issue, 'Geografia economica e geografia generale' continued with a section entitled: 'Il clima e la sua importanza per gli altri fenomeni geografici' (\textit{La Coltura Geografica}, 1, 3-4 (1930), pp. 39-44) which rehearsed more fully the influence of climate upon economic activity.
\item \textsuperscript{45}The book that entitles an individual to lecture in an Italian university. Massi's book was about the economic development of Gorizia and will be discussed later.
\item \textsuperscript{46}Ernesto Massi, 'Il movimento turistico in Italia', pp. 11-13; 'L'opera geografica dei missionari', pp. 17-19; and 'Il carbone bianco', pp. 25-28. All in \textit{La Coltura Geografica}, 1, 1-2 (1930).
\end{itemize}
throughout the 1930s), Massi also wrote an item for the 'Pagine Coloniale' section entitled 'From the Fourth Shore' in which he anticipated his later interests in Africa and revealed his political sympathy to Fascism and its colonial ambitions.\(^47\) In later issues of volume one, Massi would also write about railways, the merchant navy, India, and the production of natural and artificial silk.\(^48\) Elsewhere La Cultura Geografica was concerned with energy-supplies and industrial raw-materials; with communications-technology and ports. Apparently diverse topics, but linked here by a common interest in the location of resources and access to them. Two other main concerns of the journal are worth flagging for what they reveal of the Triestini's interests and priorities in the early 1930s. I will later show that these same concerns were sustained throughout the life of Geopolitica.

The first of these is the journal's concern with colonialism. In La Cultura Geografica colonial issues were often dealt with by Dante Lunder, later an important member of Geopolitica's inner circle. From January 1931 Lunder was named as the Redattore coloniale on the journal's masthead and had already contributed studies upon colonialism, agriculture and communication-routes in Libya and Somaliland\(^49\) in addition to an account of the French occupation of Algeria\(^50\) In some of these articles Lunder included maps which are clear precursors of his later cartography for Geopolitica. Massi too included maps in this period to explicated his arguments.\(^51\) We can see the origins of Geopolitica's emphasis upon cartography in this earlier

\(^{47}\) Enna, 'Dalla Quarta Sponda', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 1-2 (1930), pp. 14-16. Massi recounted the previous year's conquests over rebellious tribesmen in the Fezzan; the planting of the 'Bosco del Littorio', a 40ha forest of some 20 000 trees dedicated to 'Fascist Martyrs' and intended to afforest a liminal section of the Libyan desert; and the International Fair of Tripoli - this 'interafrican' fair being held in Tripoli due to its geographical position as a Mediterranean city, as a Euro-African bridge, and as a (supposedly) major trading point.

\(^{48}\) E. Massi, 'Le ferrovie', La Cultura Geografica 1, 5 (1930), pp. 76-80; 'La marina mercantile', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 6 (1930), pp. 100-103 in which he dealt with the strategic aspects of the Merchant Navy such as its role in colonial communications and development and in the maintenance of Italy's supply of raw materials. 'India', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 7-8 (1930), pp. 142-145, in which he related the history of Catholicism in India (Massi was, and remains, an ardent Catholic). He revealed some of his prejudices here - warning of the threats to Indian Catholicism of Islam, of Indian nationalism as led by Ghandi, and most of all in this orientalist pantheon, of the '...less legitimate, less sizeable, but more dangerous,...' movement of communism (...which seeks to spread into the east and would constitute an implacable enemy of the christianisation and pacification of India", quotation from page 144; 'La seta naturale', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 11 (1930), pp. 209-211, and 'La seta artificiale', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 12 (1930), pp. 235-236.

\(^{49}\) O. Lunder, 'L'agricoltura nella Libia', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 3-4 (1930), pp. 49-51; 'Le vie ed il traffico carovaniero della Libia', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 5 (1930), pp. 84-86; and 'Gli effetti della colonizzazione fondaria nella Tripolitania', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 12 (1930), pp. 244-246; and 'L'agricoltura e Somalia', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 10 (1930), pp. 192-199.

\(^{50}\) D. Lunder, 'Il centenario dell'occupazione Francese dell'Algeria', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 9 (1930), pp. 165-168.

\(^{51}\) Massi, 'India', maps on pp. 143 and 145; see also G. Cumin, 'Lezioni di geografia illustrata', La Cultura Geografica, 1, 11 (1930), pp. 219.
journal, just as we can find evidence of the active political role that Roletto and his school envisaged for geography.

This second concern, the Triestini’s ambition to render geography "...a fundamental element of the national culture and national education..." again anticipated the agenda of Geopolitica. Traditional geographical themes included brief-portraits of other countries, accounts of natural features like volcanoes and mountain-ranges and short hagiographies of historical Italian figures such as Marco Polo and Columbus. The journal was presenting the school-subject of geography to Italian children. Yet at times the journal’s allegiance to geography was almost evangelical and could bear a distinctly campaigning tone. During 1930 the journal reported (to teachers and children) upon the Italian Geographical Congress and the International Geographical Congress in Paris, and published a biography of Olinto Marinelli and an obituary of Jean Brunhes. More overtly, two leading articles entitled 'Geografia e scuola' appeared in the October and November editions. They were signed 'La redazione' but appear to me to be the work of Ernesto Massi. Both articles were vigorous polemics for geography and each departed from the claim that there was an inadequate emphasis upon geography in Italian schools at a time when the discipline had new roles to play within Fascist Italy.

The second of the two articles, from November 1931, outlined something of this new context. Problems and issues such as agricultural production, land-reclamation, the demographic problem, communications, colonies, allied and enemy states, exports, peaceful ways of expansion and if necessary non-peaceful ways were -according to the journal- all based upon, and found their solutions within, geography. It was in this new environment, continued the article, "...that the Italian people, if they want to mean something in the world, must become accustomed to thinking geographically." Geography teachers had to look upon a new Italy of expanded horizons with ten million sons disseminated throughout the world, to colonies that stretched to the tropics and the equator and to industries that quested insatiably across

54Unsigned, 'I benemeren della geografia; Olinto Marinelli', La Colitura Geografica, 1, 6 (1930), pp. 113-114; and G. Roletto, 'Jean Brunhes', La Colitura Geografica, 1, 12 (1930), p. 250, an apparently heartfelt obituary which he concluded by describing Brunhes as "...Maestro, Father and friend."
55La redazione, 'Geografia e Scuole', La Colitura Geografica, 1, 11 (1930), pp. 205-207, the quotation is from page 205; Issues such as land-reclamation and the demographic problem, for example, occupied high-profile positions on the national agenda at the turn of the 1930s. For a broad outline of these issues, see A. De Grand, Italian Fascism, London, 1987.
the world after the most disparate of raw materials,56 to show faith in this unitary science and its synthetic analysis, but most of all, to provide a steady through-flow of geographers from middle education to higher education. Without this input the ministerial demands (of Balbino Giuliano) for the teaching of political geography would fall flat: for Italian political geography was as yet in its infancy and geopolitics was still to be born.

Aside from this proselytising for geography, I want to highlight that although La Coltura Geografica acknowledged the modest status of Italian political geography and the complete lack of an Italian geopolitics, the writer was aware of these discourses and sensitive to their development in Italy. To my knowledge, Massi had already cited ‘geopolitical’ work. In the March-April issue of La Coltura Geografica, in an article about the economy of Sweden and the natural resources that powered its development, Massi supported his argument with citations from Zeitschrift für Geopolitik.57 The German journal was held in the university library in Trieste from the mid 1920s and was also taken by the Department of Geography. Equally, Zeitschrift für Geopolitik appeared each month in the listing of Foreign journals received by La Coltura Geografica.

Certainly, the article entitled 'Geografia e Scuola' from October 1930 engaged with German Geopolitik. Again school-level geography was criticised as "...that of yesterday, oppressed by the systems of yesterday and by the infertile and arid methods that render its study sterile and its teaching weighty."58 But in Fascist Italy, the subject could hope to teach students something of the period's international politics. As the authors appealed: "No more the mnemonic study of figures, names, territories and populations, but clear concepts and a complete and fair summary of the geographical organic state and a comprehension of the complex phenomena that are determined by geographical forms. The German school [of Geography] has already

56Carlo Errera, Roletto's supervisor, was chided for his conservative defence of Italian schools-geography in debate with Antonio R. Toniolo, whose sentiments paralleled those of this article. For their contributions to the debate see C. Errera, 'Sull'insegnamento della Geografia nelle Scuole Medie', Atti dello XI Congresso Geografico Italiana (Napoli 22-29 Aprile 1930), Vol. III. Testi delle redazioni e comunicazioni presentate alle sezione IV (economia) e V (coloniale) e VI (didattica), Indici degli autori, Naples, 1930, pp. 262-265; and A. R. Toniolo, 'Per l'insegnamento della Geografia politica nelle Scuole Medie Superiori', Atti dello XI Congresso Geografico Italiana (Napoli 22-29 Aprile 1930), Vol. III. Testi delle redazioni e comunicazioni presentate alle sezione IV (economia) e V (coloniale) e VI (didattica), Indici degli autori, Naples, 1930, pp. 266-269. It isn't surprising that Toniolo gained the favour of the Triestini. His paper called for a unitary geography with a synthetic address and, citing Kjellen’s organic-state theory, that political geography should have a greater role in Italian education.

57E. Massi, 'L'economia della Svezia e le basi naturali del suo sviluppo', La Coltura Geografica, 1, 3-4 (1930), pp. 59-60.

58La redazione, 'Geografia e Scuole', La Coltura Geografica, 1, 10 (1930), pp. 181-182; quotation from page 181.
resolved the problem."59 The proposals of Otto Maull to introduce geopolitics into German education were presented as evidence of such foresight. And although they then cited an article by Karl Haushofer which praised Italian schools for impressing upon students from an early age the shape and frontiers of their country through simple but clear geographical maps printed upon the covers of school books, La Coltura Geografica still maintained that insufficient attention was paid to geography in Italian education. The article concluded that: "Only with a remedy to this sorry state -to which the journal hoped to contribute- would the geographical and colonial consciousness’ of the Italian people materialise".60 These articles prove that Ernesto Massi, fluent in German, was reading Zeitschrift für Geopolitik in 1930. In the next few years moreover, amidst their efforts to encourage Italy's geographical consciousness, Roletto, Massi and their coterie would become considerably more interested in political geography and geopolitics.

The 1931 volume of La Coltura Geografica continued its self-appointed mission. Massi inaugurated the new year with an article about the world-economy of fossil-fuels, to inform from his geographical perspective the global 'carbon-crisis'.61 Likewise, resource location and control and Italian colonies and the regions subject to Italian expansionary ambitions, further occupied the publication's contributors.62 Similarly, the issues surrounding geography and education again enjoyed editorial favour. The Balbino directive was dissected and praised in March63 whilst a summer article responded vigorously to criticism's levelled at Italian geography by the Rome-based cultural review Augustea. Ugo Cuesta, the editor of this pro-Fascist publication, had bemoaned the discipline's peripheral status in Italy and the damning fact that only seven students had graduated in geography the preceding year.64 His proposed solution was a general geographical monograph with which to reach the public and sustain and cultivate in them a passion for geography. Unsurprisingly the

59La redazione, 'Geografia e Scuole', quotation from page 182.
60La redazione, 'Geografia e Scuole', quotation from page 182.
61E. Massi, 'Nuovi sviluppo nell'economia mondiali dei combustabili', La Coltura Geografica, 2, 1 (1931), pp. 6-12. This piece revealed Massi's revisionist sympathies. He criticised the Versailles prescriptions upon the amounts of coal permitted to Germany, Austria and Hungary whilst excess production from Poland was routed to the Nordic countries. Likewise, in a refrain which would become familiar over the next decade, he censured the Anglo-American control over the world market, and over the global reserves of a natural resource.
63La redazione, 'Geografia e scuole', La Coltura Geografica, 2, 3 (1931), pp. 57-58. The piece stated: "The duty entrusted to geography by these new regulations is to prepare the young citizen for the comprehension of [geographical] problems' (page 57).
64U. Cuesta, 'Geografia, scuola, giornalismo', Augustea, 7, 13, 15 July (1931), pp. 405-407. Cuesta listed these seven laureati, and even suggested cuttingly that their names be displayed in public glory on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. In 1930 'Libere docenze' (qualified university lecturers) were limited to two: Umberto Toschi and L. G. Nangeroni.
geographers of *La Coltura Geografica* decried this 'stigmatisation' of their subject, claiming that the problem was one of insufficient support for geography and geographers within educational institutions. They argued that such support was especially necessary at a time when geography—and especially political geography—was gaining in importance. The journal reflected this increased emphasis upon political geography in both theoretical and empirical work. Massi concluded a study of 'La Transahariana Francese' (The French trans-Saharan railway project) in which the political geography of the scheme was addressed with the claim that it was the duty of geography to present such projects and possibilities to politicians. In a similar fashion, his study of Cyprus began by attributing the political importance of the island to its geographical position.

On a more theoretical plane, Massi published an article called 'Political geography and Geo-jurisprudence', an assessment of (what might roughly translate as) 'geo-legal studies' in the light of their recent development in Germany. A certain Langhans-Ratzeburg had developed these ideas in 1928 and proposed simply to map legal phenomena and clarify and illustrate their location and distribution. By 1930, in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, his plan was to map the juridical-organisation of the state and expose sub-optimal patterns. What interests me here is Massi's commentary. His first question was to ask what geo-jurisprudence could do for his [geographical] science? He then commented that "...geo-jurisprudence, like geopolitics isn't a member of the geographical sciences. Like geopolitics it is a branch of the political sciences which wishes to use geographical methods for a greater and better understanding of the essence and the dynamics of the state." He characterised geo-jurisprudence instead as 'Crato-politics': belonging to the legalistic facet of Rudolf Kjellen's five-fold division of the 'organic state'. Massi did eventually settle upon a role for geo-jurisprudence: observing the treaties and legal-structures of the

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65La redazione, 'Geografia e Scuola', *La Coltura Geografica*, 2, 7-8 (1931), pp. 159-160; this response was also reproduced in *Augustea*, 7, 18, 30 September (1931), p. 556. In the September issue of *La Coltura Geografica* a further article upon education stressed yet again the role of geography in educating the nation and developing a national geographical consciousness: Unsigned, 'Giuste parole sul giusto insegnamento della geografia', *La Coltura Geografica*, 2, 9 (1931), pp. 201-202.

66E. Massi, 'La Transahariana Francese', *La Coltura Geografica*, 2, 5 (1931), pp. 118-121. More embryonic 'geopolitical' maps were included on page 120.


68E. Massi, 'Geografia politica e Geogiurisprudenza', *La Coltura Geografica*, 2, 4 (1931), pp. 81-82. The following quotation is on page 81.

69On Kjellen and his notion of the organic state within geography and geopolitics see, S. Holdar, 'The ideal state and the power of geography. The life work of Rudolf Kjellen', *Political Geography*, 11, 3 (1992), pp. 307-323. Kjellen's legacy was not uncontested in the 1930s, in 1938 an article in a Swedish journal attempted to distance Kjellen and his work from its contemporary application in German *Geopolitik*. E. Thermaenius, 'Geopolitics and political geography', *Baltic and Scandinavian countries*, 4, 2, 9 (1938), pp. 165-177.
international order. And as he concluded, the organic state had both a geography and a legal-structure, therefore geography and geo-jurisprudence could co-exist without a problem. It is clear from Massi's work that in early 1931 he was well aware of the contents of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* and was responding to the debates and developments therein. He also revealed his familiarity with Kjellen's notion of the 'organic-state'. However, of most relevance to this investigation are his asides about geopolitics. To Massi, geopolitics were distinct not only from political geography but also from the geographical sciences in general. Geopolitics were a branch of political-science, they merely touched upon geographical topics and methodologies and had no place in his vision of the discipline or his ambitions from geography. This same position was expounded more fully in a book written by Roletto and Massi that was published in May 1931 in which the two outlined their own conception of what political geography could and should be. In the next section I will examine the arguments of this book and suggest that, within the broader terms of their commitment to geography and their advocacy of the subject, the book contains evidence of their growing interest in, and increasing commitment to, political geography.

An outline of Political Geography

*Lineamenti di Geografia Politica* (An outline of Political Geography) was advertised in the May 1931 issue of *La Coltura Geografica* at a reduced rate of 14 Lire to subscribers. Its eighty-eight pages were supposed to constitute the first of a series of monographs on political geography. Only this first instalment ever appeared, but it did contain an introduction to the entire subject of political geography and part one of the series: 'Frontiers'. The Foreword explained that the book was drawn from courses taught by Roletto at Trieste and Ferrara and that Massi, described here as an 'assistant for political geography', had developed this material for publication. As their preface read: "The aim was not to examine in depth all of the geographical questions surrounding frontiers, but rather to summarise the work already done by scholars of the subject and to disseminate contemporary political geography amongst...

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70 At this stage he seems to have accepted the notion of the 'organic-state' quite unproblematically and without debate, unlike, for example, 'geo-jurisprudence'. However, as I will demonstrate in the rest of this chapter, this was not the case.
71 *La Coltura Geografica*, 2, 5 (1931), pp. 116. The full price was 18 L in a period of the 'quota novanta', the exchange rate of ninety Lire to the pound sterling that Mussolini maintained despite of the advice of economists, for reasons of national pride.
72 At Trieste Roletto taught political geography in the 'Facoltà di scienze economiche'; at Ferrara in the 'Facoltà di giurisprudenza e di scienze politiche e sindicali'.

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the many scholars who want to deepen their geographical understanding."\(^{73}\) To this end Roletto and Massi began with their broad *introduzione* to the sub-discipline.

After a brief history of geographical science up to and including Ratzel's 1882 *Anthropogeographie*, the remit of political geography was presented as "...the reciprocal influence of geographical factors on the life of the state, and of the state's activities on the environment..."\(^{74}\) - a definition and a dual analysis to which the Triestini would adhere for much of the next ten years. A glorious lineage of thinkers and philosophers was then enlisted into this tradition. 'I precursors' who had considered the connections between states and territory ranged from Herodote, Hypocrates and Strabo to Vitruvius and Machiavelli; from Bodin, Vico and Rousseau through to the German traditions of Hegel and Kant. Such an array of 'precursors' was clearly intended to lend legitimacy to a sub-discipline new to Italy.\(^{75}\) The history of a self-conscious political geography was then recounted from its late-nineteenth century roots, from amidst the biological paradigm of the period,\(^{76}\) and in the work of Friedrich Ratzel.

In Roletto and Massi's opinion, Ratzel's 1897 *Politische geographie* was a "...miraculous work of synthesis from which resulted the concept of the state as a territorial organism... [following from which] ...Ratzel continued his work [by] explaining the conditions of life for states conceptualised thus, and formulating laws for their history and development."\(^{77}\) It was, they continued, a truly fundamental work - the first political geography schema to be inserted into general geography and the first system to oppose effectively the juridical conception of the state. At Ratzel himself was reported as claiming, only this approach could provide the synthetic vision of the state which statology, law and sociology lacked. It was the science of land and territory -political geography- which would fulfil this role.\(^{78}\) The two

\(^{73}\)Roletto and Massi, *Lineamenti di Geografia Politica*, p. 10.  
\(^{74}\)Erneste Massi would use a similar list to legitimate his politicisation of geography in the inter-war years in a presentation given to the 1985 Italian Geographical Congress in Turin. It was published as: E. Massi, 'Geopolitica, Dalla teoria originale ai nuovi orientamenti', *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, Serie XI, vol. III, 1-6 (1986), pp. 3-45.  
\(^{75}\)Although here the co-authors were quick to disassociate themselves from an overly-deterministic position with regards to the biological paradigm of the nineteenth century. Biology, they claimed, couldn't account for everything.  
authors clearly respected Ratzel and attached a good deal of significance to his work. Yet this respect seems to have been paid primarily because Ratzel was the founding father of political geography and more importantly, because his was the first comprehensive attempt to explain the world by recourse to geography. Conversely, they seemed somewhat ambivalent about his concept of the 'organic-state' and failed to mention Lebensraum or its Italian derivation Spazio-vitale at all. In our received histories of geopolitics it was these theories that inspired German Geopolitik. In Italy such notions were of less significance. I will discuss this ambiguity later. Here I will note that the co-authors concluded their account of Ratzel by claiming that his work had been continued by Albrecht Penck and Alfred Hettner and had, in turn, provoked a series German and French studies in the immediate and later post-war period. It was this nascent political geography tradition which was their real concern.

These various political geography discourses were rehearsed by Roletto and Massi. Their emphasis upon the different versions of political geography that emerged from different national schools is, I will argue, a recurrent concern of the two Italians who demonstrated something of a whiggish sense of the historical development of political geography; yet refused to view it as a monumental discourse. Rather, they recognised that each of these political geographies was nuanced and all of them were contingent upon their national context. In the next few pages of their history this concern is obvious for the first time. The Politische Geographie of Arthur Dix was the first to be considered and was referred to as his [own version of] political geography. 79 Briefly, Dix studied the natural environment in order to provide practical laws for diplomats and statesmen. It was an applied approach and in hoping to inform what we would today call 'security intellectuals', Dix was explicitly advocating a relationship between political-geographical knowledge and political power. Isaiah Bowman, representing 'geografia politica americana', had his 'The New World' presented as 'exclusively political' and with 'an exaggerated practical agenda'.80 Roletto and Massi were well aware of the subjectivity of much political geography. Just as they recognised each movement was rooted in a particular national context, so too they appreciated that the analysis, conclusions and advocacy of any piece of political geography would be similarly influenced by the country of origin. Scientific 'objectivity' was not an issue for them, especially when science had such clear national and political roles to play. French political geographers such as Camille

79Arthur Dix's 1923 (Politische Geographie. Weltpolitisches Handbuch, II ed. Munich-Berlin) is little known in the Anglophone geopolitical literature, but was referenced quite widely in Italian Geopolitics, perhaps as a result of its early analysis in Roletto's and Massi's work; I. Bowman, The New World, Problems in political geography, New York, 1922.
80Roletto and Massi, Lineamenti di Geografia Politica, p.16.
Vallaux and Jean Brunhes, for example, had reacted to the work of Ratzel with their own, independent political geography. One which was, according to this account, in some respects better than the German versions. Lucien Febvre's *La terre et l'evolution humaine* proved further evidence of this more sensitive appreciation of a complex matrix of human factors and a 'geographical' perspective upon history. Further political geographies were examined, including those of Alexander Supan and Otto Maull, one of the four founding editors of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. Given all of these different political geographies, it is unsurprising that the *Triestini* wanted an Italian version of their own.

As they told it, the story of the 'Italian school' began with Italy's first political geography textbook of 1929. Luigi De Marchi's *Fondamenti di Geografia Politica*. The *Triestini* highlighted De Marchi's intellectual debt to the French school for the first section of his book but were silent upon De Marchi's espousal of geographical-determinism and more generally on the substantial controversy that surrounded the book. Rather, Roletto and Massi chose to emphasise that in deriving an analysis of political problems from a geographical perspective, De Marchi had created a 'dynamic' conception of political geography. This was the point that they wanted to make, and they added that it was a conception which was also confirmed by Roberto Almagià. His was an extremely authoritative voice within the discipline and his definition of political geography was prefixed by Roletto and Massi as 'almost complete': "Political geography is the study of states in their physical physionomy and their geographical structure, in their conditions of existence and development, and of their distribution on the earth's surface". Similarly A. R. Toniolo, another eminent Italian geographer, was noted for his geographical approach to real political problems. Toniolo's applied political-geography perspective would later appear in *Geopolitica*, but this notion of a 'dynamic' political geography -of a political geography developed in Italy- became a favoured emphasis of Roletto and Massi who saw this, *their* version of political geography, as a departure from traditional political geography, or, as they labelled it, 'static political geography'.

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86 A. R. Toniolo, 'I moderni concetti di geografia sociale e politica', *L'Universo*, 4, 3 (1923); 'Geografia e politica', *Giornale di Politica e letteratura*, Aprile (1930); 'Il Tirol unità geografica? Studio di geografia politica', *La Voce*, (1921).
A dynamic political geography was expounded more fully in the next section of their introduzione: 'The static and the dynamic in political geography'. It is worth quoting at length:

The study of the form, the size, the situation and the structure of a state, which we consider the static part of our study, could exhaust the investigations of a scholar who is limited to seeing the state as a simple geographical object, existing in a determined moment on the earth's surface. If, instead, one considers the state -as today most sciences concerned with these matters generally do- as an organism equipped with its own life, transcending those of the individuals of which it is composed, our investigations will have to extend over space and time: it will be our duty to ascertain is there exists a dependency of such a state upon the geographical factors that characterise the territory over which it extends. Such study is no longer simply static, but is essentially dynamic. And the state is considered not only as it presently appears, but also in the preceding and successive phases of its development through time.

Roletto and Massi paused here to stress emphatically that this approach did not constitute historical geography. Rather, a 'dynamic' political geography was of continued utility, had far greater duties to perform, and a far more complex mode of investigation. They continued to outline its benefits:

Following the state in its historical development, noting the influence of geographical factors on its birth, development and decline, we must determine which of these factors are favourable and which are contrary to the state's life and development. Not only this, but from historical accounts and from present conditions, we must deduce the requirements and the tendencies that will characterise its future life - but since the life, movement and action of a state is also that which constitutes its politics- such study can tell us of the requirements and tendencies that will characterise its political future. And it is this, the dynamic part of political geography formulated by Roberto Almagià which represents the continuation and the culmination of this first part, the static part of our study.

We have talked of tendencies rather than laws, because besides the influence of geographical factors there exist important and uncontrollable political, moral and sentimental influences [upon the state]. Besides materiality there is the spirit, besides the territory, the soul of the nation, besides natural possibilities, the power of will. There will be tendential-laws then, and no absolutes from our investigations. 87

The Triestini had spelt out a form of analysis which, by reference to the historical and contemporary connections between a state and its geography, might attempt to anticipate the future politics of that state. This was no small claim, and something of

87 Roletto and Massi, Lineamenti di Geografia Politica, p.17.
a qualification was offered in the final few lines of this section. More importantly, these lines also reveal significant opposition to talk of organic-states and the geographical determinism implied therein. Throughout the 1930s and the life of Geopolitica neither Roletto nor Massi nor any of their close circle subscribed to geographical-determinism. As I have shown, each of these men championed geographical explanation endlessly and both saw geographical influences as being of fundamental importance to the patterns and activities of the inter-war world. However, neither of them saw geography as determining this world. They always maintained that there were immaterial, unquantifiable factors which also influenced human society. This was no abdication of their aspirations for the explanatory capabilities of geography - it was, however, notice that they were unable to subscribe to geographical determinism. It was a significant stand, and one that has been stressed in the few Italian histories that have written about Geopolitica. I will return to these issues later. Here I want to note here that Roletto and Massi made this point, and made it forcefully, in 1931.

After establishing their immodest ambitions for a dynamic political geography, Professore Roletto and Dottore Massi proceeded to chart its relationships with what they labelled its auxiliary and sister disciplines. The first of these was historical geography and was charged with supplying political geography with an historical-awareness. Similarly, economic geography and the geography of communications had their specialised contributions to make. Social geography was also required to provide information upon ethnic, nationalistic, and demographic phenomena if it would assist political geography to make sense of the world. As also physical geography, too often neglected by their field in recent years according to the authors, had a contribution to make.

If we remember that only seven geography students graduated in 1930, and that the first Italian geography degrees were only available from 1926, then the almost pioneering-fervour of Roletto and Massi, their unceasing efforts to put geography on the map, can perhaps be contextualised and better understood. Two further ambitious claims for political geography were perhaps infused by this atmosphere. Firstly, political geography had the right to be called a science. Its ability to discover laws and make predictions about its subject-matter were sufficient qualification for

88 although here the authors digressed in order to answer accusations that social geography was merely an 'ugly' copy of sociology. Their (not unexpected) defence of the sub-discipline rested upon its geographical content which distinguished it from 'anthropocentric' sociology.

89 Roletto and Massi, Lineamenti di Geografia Politica, p.18-20.
'scientific' status. Secondly, political geography was situated as being potentially important to the 'new' social-science of the period. Given the recent advances of the social-sciences, and through the 'concezione-integrale' (complete conception) whereby these sciences aimed to weave all disciplines and all modes of understanding into a synthetic vision of society (according to this book) Roletto and Massi had their own suggestion: "We can't arrive at an effective vision of social reality without a clear and complete understanding of the environment; the environment conceptualised in a geographical sense...[of]...geography as a vast synthesis...". Massi would later align himself and his geography with the social-sciences; as early as 1931 he was claiming a 'pre-eminence position' for geography within social theory. Equally, the role of geographical science in explaining 'social reality' was to be an enduring theme for the Triestene school and one which they carried into Geopolitica.

Section ten of the introduzione was entitled 'Geopolitica' and began like this:

In the post-war era, and in the works of German writers above all, has spread a new discipline called 'Geopolitics' and which today has planted strong roots in the German earth, nearly supplanting the old political geography. In reality we're not dealing with a simple change of name, wrote Teleki, but an evolution of old concepts that no longer correspond to new scientific requirements.

For despite the work of Ratzel, the piece continued, German political geography had remained a science of static states. However, the 'restless and acute German spirit' recognised the need to study the state's politics, actions, and movements and the geographical bases of these. It was to this challenge that geopolitics had risen. Aside from their perception of geopolitics as solely a German phenomenon, Roletto and Massi already seemed to have a sense that this movement was a discrete discourse and through a brief account of its history they set about establishing its distance from political geography. "The word 'Geopolitics' was used for the first time by Kjellen in 1910, in the introduction to his 'Geography of Sweden' and successively, with greater precision and certainty, in his other works." After a precis of Kjellen's system,
distinguishing its five component parts including 'Geopolitics', they felt able to pronounce that:

Therefore 'geopolitics' should be essentially differentiated from 'political geography'; the latter which departs from geography to arrive at politics, from that which moves from politics to geography. One is a branch of geography which studies the states in their static positions on the earth's surface, the other is a branch of politics that considers the dynamics of territorial organic-states, that is, their movements and development. It follows that the essential difference between political geography and geopolitics -as was spotted by Sieger- lies in the possibility of geopolitics formulating a prognosis upon the situation it studies.\(^{96}\)

So we can see that geopolitics closely approaches -although it can't be [directly] identified with- that which we have called dynamic political geography.\(^{97}\)

To emphasise this difference between geopolitics and a dynamic political geography still further, the authors censured against dividing the study of population issues and of the state-economy apart from geopolitics and other geographical elements of the state as Kjellen had done. This risked losing sight of the connections between these elements and also threatened to divide the 'static' and 'dynamic' components of geography between different academic-subjects. A final point noted that it was the scholars around Haushofer who had advanced geopolitics most noticeably and a brief bibliography of their work appeared in the footnotes. In this, Roletto and Massi's first direct commentary upon geopolitics, the ideas were presented as being German, un­-geographical and of peripheral interest to political geography. Political geography was their main concern; as shown by a triumphalist finale to this introduzione which started with a brief section entitled 'Geografia politica e geografia'. Again the authors can speak for themselves:

The making of political propaganda isn't the duty of science but of statesmen; on the contrary it is the duty of science to provide public figures with instruments that are suitable, up-to-date, and perfected for their purpose: amongst these instruments the geographical map occupies a primary position, and opportunely adapted, can constitute a formidable instrument of political, expansionist and colonial propaganda. Sadly for us this awareness still isn't perfectly formed [in Italy]. Geographical understanding and political power are complementary terms.

Political geography and politics are opposites like theory and practice; one elaborates the concepts that the other must apply; one discovers the requirements and points out the way that the other must follow.

\(^{96}\) R. Sieger's work, 'Zur politisch-geographischen Terminologie', Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft fur Erdkunde (1917) was cited in Lineamenti di Geografia Politica, on page 46.

\(^{97}\) Roletto and Massi, Lineamenti di Geografia Politica, p. 23.
Geography, 'mother of history and politics' in the words of Napoleon, is pre-occupied with fulfilling the duties of this motherhood scrupulously, so much so that it has now become political geography. The necessity now is that politics does not become a degenerate daughter and that there is a political geography.  

Not content with this, Roletto and Massi concluded their introduzione to political geography with one last eulogy:

The politics of a state can not be considered separately from the geographical conditions that distinguish it...great political actions must be prepared on geographical bases, and all the politics of a state which desires positive, efficient and fruitful success must be firmly and skilfully enframed within this same geography, and more precisely within the dictates of a geography which seeks to formulate the natural requirements of the political aspirations of the people: such today, is political geography.

The history of Italy provided ample evidence of the veracity of these claims, they wrote. A long series of political errors were exclusively due to the geographical ignorance of Italian governments and, they concluded, "...politics can not and must not ignore the geographical reality of the state, therefore there has to be a Political Geography." And in their last paragraph Roletto and Massi returned to their fundamental belief: Italy needed a national geographical-consciousness, especially as she was so dependent on the 'iron laws' of the geographical environment. Italians 'had to get used to thinking geographically', whilst, in turn, political geography would make its precious contribution to Cesare Correnti's 1873 project to: "Constitute the people from geographical science".

These were bold and remarkable claims, yet however optimistic, they did appear to be part of a comprehensive vision of political geography and the service that it might provide to the state. And although the prose might appear extreme to late-twentieth century readers; it was not so out of place in 1930s Italy, where Mussolini had been building his own position as dictator since the start of 1925, and accompanying this concentration of authority came an increasingly degree of totalitarianism. Attending this was a flood of rhetorical and pro-regime writings alongside which the work of Roletto and Massi does not seem too unusual. Moreover, Roletto and his
student were writing in Trieste, a hotbed of Fascism, and in a university in which pro-regime sentiments were encouraged.

In the remainder of the book sixty pages were dedicated to the topic of frontiers. An international literature was scoured for exact definitions of geographical frontiers which all demonstrates the international perspective of the authors who cited more German and French literature than Italian work. This was not solely because they were drawing upon the more established discourses of Germany and France, but because they were consciously creating an Italian political geography from this milieu. A political geography which nevertheless also distanced itself from aspects of the French and German approaches; preferring to formulate a distinct Italian political geography adjacent to, but distinct and autonomous from, these other debates.

The book's eschewal of geographical determinism demonstrates this. Again Roletto and Massi cautioned against any devaluation of human factors in geographical explanation. Rather, they stressed the complexity of phenomena such as frontiers. Few of the various frontier types that they outlined - including ethnic, geographical, political and linguistic frontiers- would ever coincide in one near-perfect linear-boundary. Given this, a degree of pluralism and historical sensitivity was required of their study. It was this more sensitive approach to political geography that I want to highlight; noting that it was more reflective than our histories of geopolitics and political geography tell us. Moreover, Roletto and Massi's brief and, as far as I can tell, only analysis of Ratzel's term 'Lebensraum' in this period also demonstrates their nuanced and critical reading of other geopoliticians. Despite its diffusion through all of German political geography, wrote the Triestini, this term translates poorly into Italian. 'Lebensraum' didn't just mean (in their translation) 'Space for life' (later to be re-phrased 'living-space'). A 'living-space', by their understanding, had to enclose an economic region sufficient to support that particular state, including elements such as communications and settlements. Whilst frontiers which ebbed and flowed according to the demands of such a 'living-space' might seem to be a good idea, the resultant instability of such borders -prone to respond to all manner of changes of economic activity- would diminish the value and security of political frontiers. The theory of moving-frontiers was brought down to earth by Roletto and Massi' critical reading of political geography.

104 Roletto and Massi, *Lineamenti di Geografia Politica*, p. 32-37. The complexity of frontiers was invoked as one of the reasons why the geographical perspective was especially suited to their study. The authors also concurred with Lucien Febvre's concerns about the ideological roles of frontiers to legitimate territory and to anticipate future territorial acquisition.
105 The 'sternly practical' activity (to borrow David Livingstone's phrase) of Frontier analysis concluded, after a truly exhaustive and European-wide survey of the field and of the debate over the
Lineamenti di Geografia Politica had reviewed practically the entire discipline of political geography as it was represented in the German, French, Italian, and some parts of the Anglo-Saxon literature and complemented this with an exhaustive study of frontier types and frontier-making practice. The book articulated the ambitions of Roletto and Massi for their version of political geography. This 'dynamic' part of political geography, drawn from a wider European discourse, that was to inform and advise the state thanks to its privileged and synoptic perspective. In January 1930's La Coltura Geografica, the geographical project of the two Triestini was grounded in the importance of economic geography and economic factors. By 1931 the two had aligned the political alongside the economic within their geography. I now want to suggest that the political, and moreover the specifically geopolitical, increased in importance for Massi as he read more of the geopolitical literature from Germany and as such 'geopolitical' notions came to be seen by him as less of a particular and distinct German strain of political geography, and more as the version of geography with which he sought to analyse geographical problems and make this analysis available in Italy to the Fascist state.

Political geography and geopolitics

One month after the publication of Lineamenti di Geografia Politica in May 1931, Massi contributed an article to La Coltura Geografica called 'Geografia Politica e Geopolitica', until 1986 his longest reflection upon the nature, theory and methods of political geography and geopolitics. The discussion of geopolitics in Lineamenti di Geografia Politica was extended into nine-pages of densely-argued text, where Massi's embryonic appreciation of geopolitics took shape and matured. 'region' and 'regional synthesis', with an 'indice of frontier development' whereby the scholar might calculate the optimal (or otherwise) condition of his national boundaries. Italy, perhaps due to a poor performance on this criterion, was not one of the chosen examples. Roletto and Massi, Lineamenti di Geografia Politica, pp. 78-81. Massi contributed an 'Octopus-map' to the book (page 35): a world map that had an Octopus centred on Britain with its tentacles reaching out to all corners of the globe. This reach of the British empire, represented thus, was copied directly from a version in Zeitschrift für Geopolitik and proves that Massi was also taking account of that journal's cartography in 1930-1931. Massi, 'Geopolitica, Dalla teoria originale'.

106The sections upon 'geopolitics' and 'geo-giurisprudence' in Lineamenti di Geografia Politica appear to have been written by Massi. Roletto did not, as far as I can make out, have a command of the German language (upon which these discussions were based) whereas Massi did. Moreover, these sections of their co-authored book were reproduced almost verbatim in articles attributed to Massi in La Coltura Geografica. It is possible that Massi now had more space to consider these ideas away from the format of the book. After all, in Lineamenti di Geografia Politica geopolitics had been clearly and unequivocally distinguished from political geography. Given the fervent support for geography of
Massi’s agenda was threefold. Firstly to examine the scope, functions, and the recent evolution of the ‘old’ political geography in contrast to those of the ‘new’ geopolitics. Secondly to uncover the differences, the overlaps, and the relationships between (what he once more called) the two (separate) disciplines. Finally he would ascertain the raison d’être of geopolitics and whether political geography retained enough of its own specific objectives and identity to justify its continued existence. But first he dived back into the history of geography yet again: from Vitruvius to Kant in a paragraph, and from Ritter to Ratzel in another. He extended his discussions of the Ratzelian organic-state and his analysis of the foreign discourses which had developed in reaction to German political geography. He cited Lucien Febvre’s work as evidence of the efficacy, and indeed necessity of such studies for the internal and external propaganda of the state. He concluded his brief history by establishing the current state of political geography. It was to the advantage of Italian political geography, labelled by him here ‘a late-developer’, that it enjoyed its infancy amidst the circulation of these more established European political-geography discourses. The emergence of a ‘dynamic political geography’ demonstrated this. From the innovations of Maull, Dix, and Bowman through to the Italian mediations of Almagià, De Marchi, Toniolo to its “...explicit appearance in the recent work by Roletto.” This ‘dynamic political geography’, able to analyse the evolution and development of the organic state, to predict its future and advise on policy, had developed in Italy. After re-iterating the familiar warning against an over-deterministic geography, Massi ended, this was the current state of our conception of political geography. However, a further movement had arisen in Germany - one which sought to introduce and spread geopolitics.

Writing at length, Massi attributed the emergence of geopolitics in Germany not only to that nation’s ‘acute and restless’ spirit, but also to the wider post-war situation of the Weimar Republic. The study of political-geographical problems was considered useful to the economic and political reconstruction of Germany and to the sustenance and re-invigoration of national sentiments, meeting -as Massi put it- favour and

the Triestine department, an ancestry in the political sciences would not overly recommend geopolitics to Roletto or his student, despite the fact that even in their own writings they had described ‘geopolitics’ as practically adjacent to the dynamic political geography that they sought to promote. As manifesto for the geographical approach, Lineamenti di Geografia Politica could hardly promote what it had presented as a branch of the political-sciences. Away from the book, though, Massi was free to consider these ideas more extensively.

108E. Massi, ‘Geografia Politica e Geopolitica’, La Coltura Geografica, 2, 6 (1930), pp. 137-145, page 138 citing Febvre, La terre et l’évolution humaine, as -he suggests- evidence of political geography attempting to define, or re-define, the state and national identity at a time of crisis.


110Massi, ‘Geografia Politica e Geopolitica’, pp. 139-140.
fervour not only amongst scholars, but also in public opinion and in the press. It was in this way, he concluded, that geopolitics were grafted onto political geography. He allowed that "...geopolitics corresponds to that which we have called the dynamic part of our political geography; [but he again maintained that] although they have these many similarities there are essential differences, which I will now clarify briefly." What followed however was far from a brief rehearsal of the differences between geopolitics and political geography.

Massi indulged in a detailed and near-exhaustive survey of German geopolitics which revealed both his very close familiarity with its literature and an unceasing and perhaps pedantic obsession with defining geopolitics and tying-down its provenance, scope and legitimacy. Rudolf Kjellen's notion of geopolitics was again recounted and again refuted: "Conceptualised like this, geopolitics isn't a part of geographical science, but a branch of statology: Kjellen's original conception [of geopolitics] hasn't met with favour from the geopoliticians of today, who have sensibly thought to modify it." A series of German geographers were enrolled to support his point. Whereas Vogel saw geopolitics and political geography as one and the same, Seiger distinguishing the two on the grounds that geopolitics was able to divine predictions from its analysis. Penck, Hettner, Obst, Solchs, Volz and Uhlig had all, in Massi's opinion, looked to draw political conclusions from their work and thus signalled stages in the development of geopolitics. Yet none of these authors drew geopolitical conclusions deliberately or consciously: they arrived at such ends logically and naturally. It was Haushofer who initiated geopolitics 'true and proper', geopolitics recognised as distinct (my emphasis) from political geography and Haushofer who was the first to publish geopolitical publications consciously.

As seen from Trieste, Haushofer and his school had struggled valiantly to mould, define and delimit their 'geopolitics' from political geography. Massi predictably covered these debates in depth before arriving, perhaps with some relief, at an 'official' definition which had emerged from a September 1927 conference of the four...

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111 Massi, 'Geografia Politica e Geopolitica', p. 140.
112 Massi, 'Geografia Politica e Geopolitica', p. 141.
113 Vogel considered political geography the discipline which studied the relations between states and territory, which could be considered an 'under-branch' of political science and as such could be called geopolitics.
114 Seiger did so at the 21st German geographical congress at Breslavia (the same conference that Paul Teleki first delivered his influential paper upon political geography). Seiger's work, as Massi told it, initially revealed a marked geopolitical tendency, although Seiger at first denied the existence of geopolitics before eventually identifying them with political geography and finally distinguishing the two disciplines at Breslavia. Seiger had been a representative of the Austrian government at the Versailles Peace conference and Massi talked in admiring terms of the geographically-informed work he undertook there on Austria's behalf.
For Massi "...it signalled the final phase in the maturation of geopolitics: they needed to circumscribe the scope of the new discipline, to formulate its essence and roles (given that Kjellen's conception had been superseded), to demonstrate its scientific value and separated it decisively from the abundant production of dilettante-publications in which the word 'geopolitics' was used unconsciously and improperly." Massi reproduced their deliberations at length: "Geopolitics studies the ties that bind political events to the earth and to the factors of the earth"; geopolitics were based upon geography and political geography and it was from these foundations that geopolitics would inform and guide the political life of the state. In summation, Haushofer et al. trumpeted that "Geopolitics wishes to be the geographical conscience of the state". And apparently satisfied with this neat conclusion, Massi closed his account of Geopolitik and turned to the discipline's prospects beyond Germany.

It was with some scepticism that Massi wondered if geopolitics might enjoy similar success elsewhere. He pointed out the very unique context of Weimar Germany whence it came and then, alleging that geopolitics lacked a robust and comprehensive methodology and that it was not suited to school curriculums, cast doubts upon its future prospects. It would remain the preserve of a few 'impassioned' scholars, he decided. "In Italy geopolitics haven't yet thrown-out roots, neither, we believe, will it in the near future. Undoubtedly, however, it has served to impress onto geography, and specifically onto political geography, a collection of fruitful and fertile ideas." In conclusion, Massi talked again of the common-ground between geopolitics and his dynamic political geography. But again he insisted doggedly that there remained fundamental differences due to their disciplinary origins in geography on the one hand, and in political-science on the other. Moreover, political geography could hope to enter the universities and assert itself in the minds of the young, the politicians of tomorrow. "In this manner, little do we hear and little would we hear of the lack of a geopolitics. It is necessary, however, that political geography receives our definite affirmation [and that it] studies and spreads an awareness of our and others' political-geographical problems..." Massi had returned, unsurprisingly, to what he still

115 Massi referenced: C. Haushofer, E. Obst, E. Lautensach, O. Maull, Bausteine zur Geopolitik, Berlin/Grunewald, 1928. The Germans too differentiated geopolitics from political geography, although they situated their subject's origins within political geography. Massi had also reported Otto Maull's confused thinking on the subject especially, and Maull's prescient observation that if geopolitics didn't exist, they would have to be invented.
117 Massi, 'Geografia Politica e Geopolitica', p. 143.
118 Massi, 'Geografia Politica e Geopolitica', p. 144.
regarded as the real issue - the task of embedding geography and political geography in the mainstream of Italian education.

In 1931 Massi considered geopolitics to be an interesting, if peripheral, variation on his preferred version of a dynamic political geography. Although clearly intrigued by the developing debate he maintained that despite their similarities geopolitics and political geography were differentiated by both their disciplinary origins and their perspective. This was sufficient for Massi to separate the two, and in any case, geopolitics was the product of a unique German context and was unlikely to emerge elsewhere. At best geopolitics could, prove a useful prompt to Italian political geography. At worst, the implication was, they might never be heard of in Italy again. Yet by 1939 Massi would be an articulate spokesman for geopolitics, and especially for an Italian geopolitics. These later positions were grounded in his early 1930s analysis of geopolitical ideas, when Massi, almost grudgingly, imported geopolitical ideas over the Alps into Italy.

Geopolitics in the mid 1930s.

I have covered the earliest expressions of geopolitics at some length because they reveal persistent trends in the geography of the two Triestini. Yet however innovatory their ideas, their fortune did not hold. In 1932 La Coltura Geografica was clearly in some kind of trouble. In April 1932 and with no warning it merged with another journal, the Rivista di Geografia didattica to form the Rome-based Rivista di Geografia e Cultura Geografica. After a first year in the joint venture in which they enjoyed a reasonably high profile in the new journal, Roletto and his coterie vanished from what was then re-titled the Rivista di Geografia. It seems that, for whatever reason, La Coltura Geografica failed and was subsumed by La Rivista di Geografia, from which Roletto and his colleagues were eventually excluded. By any marker, this represented something of a failure and a setback to Roletto, his colleagues and their geography.

During 1932 though, in their last year in charge of a journal until the advent of Geopolitica, the Triestini marked their presence with a series of articles upon political

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120 The February issue of 1932 had apologised for two articles held over until March's La Coltura Geografica. The Rivista di Geografia didattica had been published in Florence between 1917 and early 1928, then suspended until a new series began in January-February 1932.

121 It isn't clear why the Triestini left, or were pushed from, the journal. I suspect that they would not have willingly spurned this medium from which to access the youth of Italy. There may have been financial reasons for the failure of La Coltura Geografica, this being the height of the Great Depression, but the journal had just secured a new publishing house.
and economic geography. An approach which they may have considered emblematic of their 'dynamic political geography', certainly some of these contributions originated from a seminar series held at the Trieste department and themed: 'Political Geography and the new Europe'. In June G. Mediani speculated upon a Danube-Black Sea canal and Paolo Veronese noted some 'Geographical considerations on the economic unification of Europe'.122 In the May issue Massi and Roletto contributed: Roletto on his Alpine specialism and Massi on 'The State as a geographical object'.123 Massi's article is recognised as the first Italian discussion of this crucial aspect of political geography. It also tells us something more of his ongoing evolution as a political geographer. I will consider this piece briefly - the last substantial article of this first abortive attempt by the Triestene school to write a 'new' Italian political geography between 1930 and 1932.

The state as a geographical object

Massi's work was a review article which he augmented with his own ideas and his ambitions for his discipline. He addressed the controversial questions surrounding the geographical study of the state. Through the contributions of Hassinger, Passarge and Demangeon to the debate, his intention was to introduce these issues into Italian geography for, as the article's abstract insisted, not only had foreign schools (of geography) already studied these problems in depth, but such issues were of great practical- as well as a scientific- importance.

The first representative of a foreign 'school' was H. Hassinger whose Ratzelian conception of the state allied to his emphasis upon the region earned him a rebuke from Massi.124 Hassinger's concern was only with the influence of the geographical environment upon the state. For Massi the geographical study of the state was a twofold pursuit: considering not only the influence of geography on the state but also the reciprocal influence of the state on its environment. Hassinger had neglected this second element but Massi sub-divided it further. He recognised 'direct' and 'indirect' action upon of the landscape; the first by individuals and the second "...exercised by

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122 G. Mediani, 'Il canale navigabile Po-Adriatico-Mar Nero', Rivista di Geografia, 32, 6 (1932), pp. 227-235; P. Veronese, 'Considerazione geografiche sull'unificazione economica dell'Europa', Rivista di Geografia, 32, 6 (1932), pp. 217-227. The Danube-Black Sea canal was only completed in the late 1980s whilst the economic unification of Europe subject to an ongoing debate. Today's geographers are writing on these very same topics.
man in deference to a superior will, in that he is a member and an organ of the state." Therefore, as a geographical actor, the state had to be studied as a geographical object. He called upon other Germanic geographers to support his point. Supan agreed that the state existed upon the earth's surface and therefore could be analysed alongside any other geographical object. Paul Teleki concurred: "If we can talk of young and old rivers and recent and ancient mountains, why can't we talk of [the] age and life-cycles [of states]?" Having proven his case, Massi went on to argue that the state could be studied dynamically, in its form and modifications through time, in its movements and in its politics. But this did not imply a complete acceptance of the state as a living, dynamic organism. Massi declared that "We can conclude [the study of the state] without having recourse to the organic conception of the state conceived by Ratzel and developed by Kjellen."

Apart from the increasing confidence with which Massi engaged with the political-geography debates that were circulating throughout Europe in this period, this article also confirms once more his rejection of the 'organic state', at least as it was theorised by German geography. The phrase 'organic state' was sometimes employed loosely by Massi and Roletto. This was unusual given their concern with definitional exactitude, but then, in Fascist Italy the term 'organic state' had a distinct and high-profile meaning quite aside from any geographical discourse. Alfredo Rocco, minister of justice from January 6, 1925 to 1932 had been a leading member of the nationalistic party and once brought into Mussolini's cabinet with the January 3, 1925 declaration of dictatorship, he inserted his notion of the 'organic state' into the legal structures of Italy, a country where all authority was slowly being collected into the state's apparatus and ultimately under the control of Il Duce. Rocco formalised his ideas in 1919 as 'national syndicalism', a vision which united the classes in professional syndicates, quelled inter-class struggle and which focused the nations'
collective-effort to universal benefit. Once enshrined in the legal structures of the state—in a society that was moving swiftly towards totalitarianism with a cult of the leader and the subjugation of the masses to this leader, his state and party—the notion of the organic state, of the individual as a part or organ of this greater body, was enforced. Moreover, between 1929 and 1934 the 'Corporate-State' theorised by Giuseppe Bottai was trumpeted widely as Fascist Italy's 'Third way' between Western liberal-capitalism and Bolshevism. The 'Corporate-State' adapted Rocco's ideas and took this same anti-individualistic stance. Envisaged thus, the state was divided into vertical sectors such as 'Agriculture' or 'Chemicals'. Italy was to structure itself via functions rather than class, region, or religious criteria, the state would arbitrate between employee and employer, and again the individual would be sub-sumed in these greater sectors of the state. Although Fascism eventually shied away from alienating its class-based and industrial support by the imposition of such a radical re-organisation (to the great chagrin of Bottai, Corporatism's architect), at the time Massi was writing the 'Corporate-State' enjoyed enormous publicity and approbation at the head of the national political agenda and as the officially-proclaimed summit of Fascist and Italian achievement. Massi was described as a 'Corporatist' even in his own laudatory Festschrift. As a committed Fascist, willing to believe the regime's rhetoric, he would probably be prepared to accept Fascism's notion of the 'organic-state' as a collective organisation of the Italian-nation. In addition, given the persistent scepticism of Roletto and Massi towards environmental determinism, the attention that they paid to the French geographical school which critiqued the Ratzelian 'organic-state', and more generally their sensitive and holistic analysis of the state, we might well anticipate their indifference to the type of 'organic state' pedalled by Kjellen and Haushofer. Massi was content to use the term insofar as it recognised the influence of geography on the state's form and development, but the failure to acknowledge the reverse of this relationship was the 'organic-state's

129 See De Grand, The Italian Nationalist Association. Rocco had first aired his ideas of the 'organic state' before 1918 in the nationalists' newspaper, L'idea nazionale. For Rocco the state-structure was the foremost determinant of national politics and economy, as De Grand encapsulated Rocco's sentiments: 'Italy was only a small power and only by unity could she conquer the resources that she lacked', p. 99.

130 Whether or not, and how far, Fascism was 'Totalitarian' remains a substantial debate. See D. Forgacs, 'Introduction: Why rethink Italian Fascism?', in D. Forgacs (ed), Rethinking Italian Fascism. Capitalism, populism and culture, London, 1986, pp. 1-10. Without doubt there was an enormous cult of the Duce, see: P. Melograni, 'The cult of the Duce in Mussolini's Italy', in Mosse (ed), International Fascism. New thoughts and new approaches, pp. 73-90. The 'Fascist syndicates' were established on the 3rd April, 1926. They drew upon contemporary international ideas of rationalism and corporatism, and, more prosaically, upon the idea of pulling together amidst the great depression. V. De Grazia, The culture of consent, pp. 7-13.

131 De Grand, Italian Fascism, p79-81.

fundamental flaw. The impact of humans, and their collective organisation - the state, could influence their environment just as their environment could influence them. It was this same idea of the organic state as sum of its human parts that prevailed in Italy in 1932 and was here adopted by Massi in preference to the one-sided, deterministic German model. And by establishing that the state had such a reciprocal-relationship with geography, Massi could also argue that the state was a legitimate subject of geographical investigation, and by extension, a legitimate object of his own political geography. This too suited Massi who, as I will shortly demonstrate, although impatient with the unsubtle German notion of the organic state, was becoming increasingly impressed by geopolitics.

Seigfried Passarge was the second geographer to be interrogated in this article. His advocacy of 'Landerkunde' (cultural regions) was praised by Massi for its vast synthetic qualities: the geographical study of the state demanded a similarly broad analysis. Yet such analysis would encompass elements beyond territory, frontiers and the other staples of political geography. And once such an holistic analysis moved beyond the traditional limits of political geography, it was not a great step, Massi reported, to create a new discipline that was based upon political geography. This new discipline would be geopolitics. Despite apparently admitting a role for geopolitics as some kind of amorphous grand-synthesis, as ever, Massi was keen to put distance between this subject and political geography. He cited his previous analysis where he had highlighted the movement's weaknesses and potential problems. But he didn't agree with the 'violent prose' contained in the 'slating' dealt out by Demangeon in his 'exaggerated' account of geopolitics. Demangeon's virulence was explained by the continuing problems between France and Germany but the Frenchman's apparent intransigence precluded any further discussion of his work for, as Massi wrote, nobody could now deny that geopolitics had a serious scientific base and a function to fulfil. It had demonstrated this through its liveliness and its diffusion, as ideas and as method if not by name, beyond the German frontiers to other states. He asked rhetorically, who could object to the necessity of a discipline that collects all the facts about a state, and that also relieves political geography of a quantity of elements and disparate data that hampers its way and obscures its aim?  

133 Again geopolitics were represented as being specifically German, as originating in political-science, and having a different conception of the state - as a living organism. He did also attribute to its a wider range of analysis than political geography.  
134 Massi, 'Lo stato quale oggetto geografico', pp. 174-175.
Although ambiguous, these points are important to my account as it appears that Massi had acquiesced to the existence of geopolitics beyond Germany and, moreover, to their utility in the analysis of the state. He was even prepared to allow such analysis, an apparently all-encompassing vision, to alleviate some of the workload of political geography. However, he wasn't yet prepared to admit geopolitics to his political geography, which retained its specialist role as interpreter and predictor of the dynamic in geography. Rather, on this occasion Massi situated geopolitics adjacent to the 'new', integral 'social-sciences' that he had discussed in Lineamenti di Geografia Politica. He used the occasion -as he had in his book- to discuss the contribution of geography to this new social-scientific methodology. Here too that the state could be studied as a geographical object in the terms of his dynamic political geography. And on these terms, the extremely important dynamic element of political geography could determine tendential-laws about the politics and evolution of the state. Massi concluded that adjacent to descriptive and explanatory geography there existed a normative geography which was political.\(^{135}\)

**An appetite for political geography?**

The Italian geopoliticians had a wide-ranging vision of the world. Unlike their German contemporaries, their geography was not tied to the earth, nor indeed to localism. Rather, their dynamic political geography, which they would soon come to associate with the term 'geopolitics' was a synoptic view of the world. They continued to develop their own, distinct form of geopolitics throughout the 1930s.

This new appetite for political geography was exhibited when Roletto published his next book in 1933. *Lezioni di Geografia Politico-economico* was the first methodological consideration of the subject in Italy, wrote Bonetti in 1967, and was worthy to stand alongside his classic *Lineamenti di Geografia Politica*.\(^{136}\) Drawn from his university courses of 1932-1933, it began with a chapter which outlined the history and development of political geography in the same way, and for paragraphs at a time in exactly the same words, as the book he wrote with Massi. Equally, the section titled 'Geopolitics' which concluded this chapter mirrored his 1931 writings apart from its summation. Roletto had dutifully-listed the familiar reasons why political geography was not to be confused with geopolitics and commented that the latter couldn't hope to advance much further unless it identified itself with dynamic

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135 Massi, 'Lo stato quale oggetto geografico', p. 175.
political geography. But then: "The term geopolitica, which we use frequently in the course of these lessons is understood to correspond with dynamic political geography. Therefore the terms will often incorporate the static part [of political geography]." 137

With this conclusion Roletto embarked upon his survey of France, the Far-East, the oil-industry, Switzerland, Russia, Danzig, and of the near frontiers of Italy and of those far to the East. A broad vision of the modern, dynamic world underpinned by political and economic geography, but one prefixed by a conflation of geopolitics and dynamic political geography where Roletto himself identified the two together. This could have been merely a simplification for his anticipated student-readership; but then, he had just written fourteen careful pages outlining political geography, geopolitics, and their differences. I suspect, instead, that it signals a softening of Roletto and Massi's distinction between their dynamic brand of political geography and that which came from Germany. Certainly Roletto's book is evidence of his emphasis upon the political in geography. 138

The consistent theme that geography could best comprehend the changing world recurred in the next substantial piece of political geography from this Triestene school. By this stage the group was a little more dispersed. Upon the completion of his libera-docenze Massi moved to Lombardy to take up simultaneous part-time positions at the University of Pavia and at Milan's new Università Cattolica del Sacro Coeur (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart). 139 His article 'Geopolitical aspects of Danubian-Europe' was published in mid-1935 in the Rassegna di politica internazionale, the Milan-based journal of the prestigious Istituto per gli studi di politici internazionale (ISP). 140 This highly influential body was only one aspect of a wider Fascist culture in Lombardy in which Massi became deeply entwined.

By including the word 'geopolitical' in his title, Massi revealed himself happy to be associated with a genre that he had considered a parvenu discipline only a few years previously. What is more, he began to define and delimit the nature of geopolitics, but on this occasion he defended the subject. Given that the word 'geopolitics' now appeared frequently in political and economic reviews, he complained that its

138 Roletto also included a series of maps, some of which were reproduced from other, foreign, works. Proto-geopolitical maps can be found on pages 17, 47, 54, 58 and 117. That on page 76 was cited as from Kohn, Orient v. Oktidort, and that on page 95 after De Maurette, Les grands marchés des matières premières: (no further bibliographical information was provided by Roletto).
139 The Università Cattolica del Sacro Coeur was established in the early 1920s by an influential Jesuit academic and educationalist, Agostino Gemelli. Although occasional spats over the leisure-time control of youth ruffled the relationship between Gemelli and the regime, in general Fascism was pleased to accommodate his right-wing, catholic-conservatism.
meaning was ill-defined. Although geopolitics had to be distinguished from political geography, once again the two were described as being closely connected. Rather geopolitics were to be identified with that labelled *Géographie humaine* or *Géographie de l'histoire* in France, *Social geography* in the Anglo-Saxon world, and *Geopolitik* in Germany: that is, geopolitics studied political and economic problems from their geographical bases. Their was an interesting caveat however: "In Germany, *Geopolitik* had without doubt crossed beyond the limits of science, pushed to excess by National-Socialism." However, this didn't compromise the wider value of this science, sited as it was among the political and social disciplines and utilised in coordination with these. And as Fascist Italy constructed for itself a new place in the world, it was more than ever necessary, Massi continued in a familiar vein, that Italian students, youth, and the population in general should, when considering Italy's international expansionism, her political evolution, and the life of states in general, interpret these things geographically.

Much of the above is Massi's familiar rhetoric. But by 1935 he had diluted still further his opposition to geopolitics, associating geopolitics with fully-blown geographical sub-disciplines throughout Europe and claiming for geopolitics an enduring value -especially to Italy- despite their unscientific bastardisation in Nazi Germany. So whilst geopolitics were no longer marginalised as a German derivation of political science, their mobilisation by Nazism in the newly-proclaimed Third Reich drew Massi's censure. Aside from Massi's sensitivity to the politics surrounding geopolitics, this anti-German sentiment resonated throughout the remainder of his article and can probably be attributed in part to the wider political tension between Italy and Germany in this period over growing Nazi influence in Austria.

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141 He cited De Marchi, *Fondamenti di geografia politica*, and Roletto, *Corso di geografia politica ed economica*, Padua, 1933. This last citation was probably intended to be Roletto's 1933, *Lezioni di Geografia Politico-economica*, in which Roletto, as I have just discussed, did make a lengthy -if eventually ambiguous- attempt to define geopolitics. Moreover, much of Roletto's words were directly transcribed from his 1931 co-authored book which Massi fails to mention here. He did though, cite his own articles *'Geografia politica e geopolitica'* (1931) and his *'Lo stato quale oggetto geografico'*(1932).

142 Massi, *Aspetti geopolitici*, p. 15: "In Germania la *Geopolitik* ha senza dubbio varcato i limiti della scienza, spinta agli eccessi dal nazional-socialismo..." 

143 Massi, *Aspetti geopolitici*, p. 15.

144 Massi, *Aspetti geopolitici*, p. 15.

145 Massi, *Aspetti geopolitici*, p. 15. There was, of course, a great deal of exceptionalism and ambiguity in Massi's argument that while German geopolitics had overstepped the boundaries of science, geopolitics could hope to play a useful role in Italian expansionism. But then, Massi doesn't locate the border that *Geopolitik* transgressed, and within which the political application of 'science' is acceptable.
In his article, a range of hydrological, morphological and other geographical factors were enlisted to evidence a recognisable and unitary Carpathian-Danubian region. A region that despite the arguments of some German writers, could not be amalgamated with Germany into an artificial unity called Mitteleuropa.146 Rather this region's dominant 'historical-political direction' was to the South-East. And given this, the twin ports of Trieste and Fiume, linking the Danubian basin to the Adriatic across the most passable stretch of the mountains that circumvent the Mediterranean, enjoyed their most historically-important function as the western gateway to this great region.147 Despite his move to Milan, Massi was still promoting his native city and Italian expansionism in the Balkans.

Yet, aside from their academic publishing, the Triestini also promoted their geography -increasingly a geopolitics- to other organisations including pressure groups and political lobby organisations. From 1934 Roletto began contributing his geographical expertise on a regular basis to the Rome-based journal of the Fascist Institute of Businessmen, Commercio. Elsewhere outside the academy, along with Ernesto Massi and other of his students, Roletto became involved in the popular-education of the Fascist regime and above all, in the educational work of the Istituto Coloniale Fascista. From within this organisation they continued their project to introduce geography, and especially political geography and geopolitics to Italian youth.

Geopolitics, the colonial conscience and the Istituto Coloniale Fascista

Giorgio Roletto became president of the Sezione dei Tre Venezie of the Istituto Coloniale Fascista in January 1935, a post he held until the early 1940s.148 Although a body with branches throughout Italy, the ICF's strongholds were in Trieste and Lombardy and Roletto and his students became national figures in the organisation.

146Massi, 'Aspetti geopolitici', p. 16. Hassinger again incurred Massi's displeasure: Hassinger, 'Das geographische Wesen Mitteleuropas', in Mitteilungen der K. K. Geographischen Gesellschaft in Wien, Vienna, 1917; As Massi put it, with the death of the dual-monarchy the concept of Mitteleuropa endured a similar decline. Braun recognised this: 'Das Donauproblem und Mitteleuropa', in Erde und Wirtschaft, (1932), where he divided 'Mitteleuropa' from 'Südeuropa', including the Danubian countries in the second. In Italy, Toschi defined the region as 'Greater Carpathia' ('La grand-Carpazia', 'Il Solco' Città di Castello, 1923). De Marchi and Ferdinand Milone talked of a 'Boheme-Carpathia-Danubian' region in: Regioni e stati d'Europa, Padova, 1931.


148Annuario delle colonie 1935; also L'Azione coloniale, 10 Gennaio 1935, p. 4. L'Azione coloniale, the ICF's national newspaper, reported Roletto's nomination by Admiral Cerrina Feroni, Royal Commissioner of the ICF, to the Presidency of the Tre-Venezie section of the organisation. His responsibilities were to run the section, especially youth work, and answer to national head-quarters. He was also asked to encourage his charges to take trips to Libya.
In Trieste Roletto, with a particular remit to direct his efforts at the youth of the city, presided over slide-shows, filmshows, lectures, and excursions. I have already mentioned how he had encouraged Massi to introduce geographical-education into such occasions in the early 1930s. Once president of the Triestene section its 'Course of colonial ideas for those afterwork' was expanded to include new elements upon physical, political and economic geography and Dante Lunder contributed his expertise upon 'Colonial geography' to its 'Course of culture'. Another geographer who would later be involved with Geopolitica, Angelo Fillipuzzi, was appointed head of the section's 'Committee of action for colonial propaganda and culture'. More innovatively, the section began to use radio-broadcasting to spread its message. The growth of radio communications in 1930s Italy has been taken by some as a marker of the advanced totalitarian methods of the regime. Through this medium the official pronouncements of Fascism, and on many occasions the hectoring and cajoling rhetoric of Mussolini himself, reached all corners of the kingdom and, it was hoped, the ears of all Italians. In Trieste Angelo Fillipuzzi broadcast a radio competition for the young. The winners would have successfully drawn the political frontiers, major towns and cities, and the two fronts of the war upon their map of East Africa, for by now, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia was underway.

On 21 November 1935, seven weeks into the war, L'Azione coloniale reported Roletto's inaugural lecture to Trieste's fourth 'Course of colonial culture'. Local dignitaries, military officers, teachers and students heard Roletto claim that Italy's colonial policy had not sprung from greed or national pride, but from her right to expand. There were two reasons for this. Italy needed to find the necessities for her life, and a destination (preferably permanent) for her excess population. Secondly, and overlooked by her foreign critics, Italy had a civilising-heritage that had historically diffused throughout, and inter-connected, the Mediterranean, Africa, and

149 Corsi di nozioni coloniale per dopolavoristi', including geographical components taught by one Prof. Ezio Quarantotto (whom I cannot trace). Reported in L'Azione coloniale, 24 Gennaio 1935, p. 4.
151 'Vita delle Sezioni', L'Azione coloniale, 17 Ottobre 1935, p. 4. on Fillipuzzi's promotion, in this same section of the newspaper was reproduced a letter from the then minister responsible for the ICF, A. Fani, to Roletto congratulating him on his work and progress in his first months in the job, 'Complemiento di S.E. il Presidente', 'Vita delle Sezioni', L'Azione coloniale, 17 Ottobre 1935, p. 4.
153 Roletto's speech to open the fourth 'Colonial culture' course is found in, 'L'inaugurazione del IV Corso di Cultura Coloniale a Trieste', L'Azione coloniale, 21 Novembre 1935, p. 4. The course lasted until June 1936. A month after the Italian Empire in Africa was proclaimed by Mussolini from his balcony above the crowds in Piazza Venezia in Rome (on 9 May, 1936). The course was described as a success and a member of the exam committee was Eliseo Bonetti, a teaching-assistant at the University and destined to be the most prolific contributor to Geopolitica. L'Azione coloniale, 12-13 Giugno 1936, p. 3.
Asia. This process continued in the late 1930s, and: "Here geopolitical problems re-enter [the scenario], assuming a forever increasing immensity and grandeur in relation to the rising political power of the metropoles."\textsuperscript{155} The ramifications of these metropolitan 'geopolitics' were expressed most clearly, continued Roletto, in the inter-connections of 'Eurafrica'. Could Italy, as a great European power, expect a fair and fitting role in Eurafrican politics? In order to ensure this, Roletto proposed a fairer redistribution of the economic and political spoils of Africa in a spirit, as he put it, of European-continental-collaboration. Once Africa was re-partitioned equally, a newly-cooperative and self-sufficient Europe would be able to concentrate upon seeing-off the rising challenge from other continents. The obstacle to this plan was Britain. The closure of the world into relatively discrete economies was only a recent development wrote Roletto. The internality of the British economy, its geographically-fractured condition and Britain's refusal to countenance European collaboration threatened Europe's future world-predominance.\textsuperscript{156} Moreover, Britain's mistaken opposition to Italy at Geneva was unfounded, the British should be working with population-rich countries like Italy.\textsuperscript{157} \textit{L'Azione coloniale} finally reported Roletto's exaltation of "The Roman clearness of the political thought of the Duce, in whose name the legionaries open in Africa the ways to civilisation and human progress in a country that was still barbarous but that was assured a great civil and economic importance tomorrow."\textsuperscript{158} Roletto sat down to a sustained ovation.\textsuperscript{159}.

Relevance here is the way Roletto uses the term 'geopolitical' in a very colloquial manner. This suggests that his audience are \textit{au fait} with its meaning and also that on this occasion at least he was prepared to use the term unrigorously and as shorthand for the geography of international politics. Whatever the explanation, it appears that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{155} 'L'inaugurazione del IV Corso di Cultura Coloniale a Trieste', \textit{L'Azione coloniale}, 21 Novembre 1935, p. 4: "Qui rientrano i problemi geopolitici, che vanno assumendo una vastità sempre più grandiosa in relazione alla crescente potenze politica della metropoli".
\item \textsuperscript{156} Presumably Roletto was referring to the diffuse British empire and the preferential-tariffs that protected intra-imperial commerce. Such a dispersed and closed economy would not assist in the creation of a united Eurafrican large-space economy.
\item \textsuperscript{157} Again, in November 1935, I assume that Roletto refers to Britain's opposition to Italy at the League of Nations in Geneva.
\item \textsuperscript{158} 'L'inaugurazione del IV Corso di Cultura Coloniale a Trieste', \textit{L'Azione coloniale}, 21 Novembre 1935, p. 4: "...la Romana chiarezza del pensiero politico del Duce, nel cui nome i legionari aprono in Africa le vie di civilità e dell'uman progresso in un paese ancora barbaro e che assurerà domani a grande importanza civile ed economica." At Roletto's branch of the Istituto Coloniale Fascista, as with others throughout the peninsula, the film \textit{Abbissinia} had been shown in September 1935, as Italy began to justify the forthcoming conflict to her population. This propaganda, which was also presented to the League of nations in Geneva to mitigate Italian aggression, represent Abyssinia as a barbarous, under-developed country with little civilized rule or law and a propensity for lynchings. See 'Vita dell sezione di Trieste', \textit{L'Azione coloniale}, 19 Settembre 1935, p. 5. There was, of course, no mention that extrajudicial beatings and killings were a fundamental plank of early Fascist activity.
\item \textsuperscript{159} His talk had also, we read, been continually interrupted by warm applause. 'L'inaugurazione del IV Corso di Cultura Coloniale a Trieste', \textit{L'Azione coloniale}, 21 Novembre 1935, p. 4.
\end{itemize}

122
'geopolitics' had eventually been adopted by Roletto. A concept which he then associated with 'geopolitics' was that of 'Eurafrica': an idea that would become extremely influential within Italian geopolitics and European geopolitics more generally and which I want to flag here. A third theme that emerges from Roletto's speech is the notion that Africa was divided unequitably and that some powers, notably Britain and France, enjoyed far more than their fair share whereas some countries, above all Italy, had insufficient territory for their needs. This idea of the 'haves' and 'have-nots' colonial powers can be traced back to Italian irritation at the paltry territorial gains in Africa that they were granted by Britain and France at Versailles. Sanctions then imposed by these 'haves' on 'have-not' Italy as she tried to rectify her colonial-poverty only heightened the Italian sense of injustice. Roletto's call for a 'cooperative Europe' masked the demand that African possessions be re-distributed. Italy would be a prime beneficiary, although nowhere in this speech, despite talk of cooperation and egalitarianism, is discussion of a distribution of land to Africans.

Roletto's stock continued to rise in the ICF. In July 1936 Alessandro Lessona, the newly appointed Minister for Colonies, made Trieste's Colonial conference his first official function and Roletto welcomed his guest: "...to whom the Great head of the new Italy, with his deep understanding of men, has trusted the organisation of the Empire, to work out its highest capacities, to animate its geopolitical spirit..." Trieste, Roletto told him, needed "...to create a stronger colonial conscience, synonymous with the geographical consciousness - that fundamental of patriotic-education, symptom and proof of the development of a national-political conscience, and indicator of the paths that a young people...must choose to reach the peak of its

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160antine Lunder articulated the 'Eurafrican' idea at length in April 1936, starting with the proposition that: "The African continent represents for Europe a neccessary and inseperable appendix. Rather, today's geographers don't talk of African and European continents, but of Eurafrica, the brand-new expression that synthesizes the geographical premises of European colonisation." (Il continente africano rappresenta per l'Europa una necessaria ed inscindibile appendice. Anzi i geografici dell'epoca attuale non parlano più di continente africano ed europeo, ma di Eurafrica, nuovissima espressione che sintetizza le premesse geografiche della colonizzazione europea.) 'Vita delle sezione', L'Azione coloniale, 18-18 Aprile 1936, p. 3.

161By November 1936 Roletto had also been promoted to the Royal Higher council for Research, a body established by the government to coordinate and, implicitly to control, research activity. L'Azione coloniale, 26 Novembre 1936, p. 6.

162In his speech Lessona mused that perhaps it was destiny which had brought him to Trieste for his first official duty. Lessona also distributed the certificates and prizes of Trieste's fourth course of colonial culture. The Adriatic Navigation Society's travel-award to Rhodes was won by university-student Bruno Nice, another Triestene geopolitician in the making.

163"...a quale il Grande Capo dell'Italia nuove, conoscitore proondo degli uomini, ha affidata l'organizzazione dell'Impero, sfruttandone le alte capacità specifiche, lo spirito geopolitico animatore..."
imperial power." The *dopolavoro* organisations of the city were striving to these ends and Roletto requested rhetorically that Lessona relay to Mussolini Trieste's promise to be worthy of the new duties ascribed to it by geopolitical laws and by Eurafriea. Roletto certainly wasn't stranded in any ivory tower. Upon reaching Trieste, his geography took a decidedly practical turn and was responsive to current events and debates. Likewise his protégé Massi had busied himself with the ICF and the *coscienza-coloniale*.

Below the report of Roletto's November 1935 speech, *L'Azione coloniale* reproduced a photograph of a twenty-metre-square map of East Africa, flanked by four six-metre high *Lictor Fasces*. The map was located in the centre of Milan's *Galleria* - the focus of the city's social and cultural life - and had been created by the Lombardian branch of the *Istituto Coloniale Fascista* as part of their contribution to the comprehension of African war. This picture was also featured prominently in the Lombardy section's own Monthly newspaper: *Impero Italiano*. *Impero Italiano* was first produced in October 1936 by which time Ernesto Massi was well esconced in the local ICF. The first documented activity I have found mention of is from February 1935 when he organised a film-show and talk upon Dancalia and the history of Italian expeditions to the area. This was only the first of his many talks for the organisation. Soon boasting the title 'Director of the cultural section' and from December 1935 'Director of the school of colonial culture', Massi organised and inaugurated Milan's first 'Corso di cultura coloniale' through the winter of 1935-1936. In early 1936 when Luigi Silva, Fascist party member since 1919, veteran of the March on Rome and

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164 *L'Azione coloniale*, 10-11 Luglio 1936, p. 3: "...di crearsi una sola coscienza coloniale. Sinonimo, del resto, di coscienza geografica, ch'è il fondamento dell'educazione patriottica, è il sintomo e documento dello sviluppo di una coscienza politico-nazionale, la indicatrice delle vie che un popolo giovane...deve scegliere per raggiungere il culmine della sua potenza d'imperio."

165 *L'Azione coloniale*, 10-11 Luglio 1936, p. 3. Lessona went on to talk of the new imperialism of Italy, of an historical duty to guide and civilise other races, and the role of Trieste in this project.

166 *L'Azione coloniale*, 10-11 Luglio 1936, p. 3. L'Azione coloniale, 21 Febbraio 1935, p. 4: Massi discussed colonial and foreign-policy problems and advocated corporatism as a suitable developmental model for the colonies. The anonymous author of the review reported Massi's contribution at great length and in a style similar to Massi's own. It could well have been Massi who recounted his own speech upon Italian youth's romantic attraction and urge towards Africa and of their 'colonial will' to a 'Eurafria'; *Vita delle sezione*, *L'Azione coloniale*, 9 Maggio 1935, p. 4.  

167 *Impero Italiano*, 1, 3, 12 Febbraio (1936), p. 3; see also, 'L'intesa attività culturale, propagandistica e assistenziale della sezione milanese', *L'Azione coloniale*, 12 Dicembre 1935, p. 4. Unveiled on the 28 October, 1935 - the thirteenth anniversary of the March on Rome - this initiative had, we are told, provoked enormous interest among the Milanese. So much so, that the Fascist Mayor asked that it might remain in position for the duration of the campaign.


parliamentary deputy took over the Presidency of the Lombardian branch of the ICF, Massi accompanied him upon a pilgrimage to the Milanese 'Tomb of the Fascist martyr' and quickly became one of Silva's right-hand men.\textsuperscript{171} It was doubtless as Direttore della sezione cultura e della scuola coloniale that he was introduced to sundry Nazi top-brass on Silva's official visit to Germany in December 1935. More prosaically however, Massi's fluent German and his daytime job as a geographer qualified him for this trip as their destination was Frankfurt where they would attend the centenary of the Frankfurt Geographical and Statistical Society.\textsuperscript{172}

![Figure 3.2](image)

Ernesto Massi (far left) and colleagues, Reichs Kolonial ministry, 1936

As national vice-president Silva represented the ICF at Frankfurt and also relayed the salute of Colonial minister, Lessona. The occasion was infused with geographical themes but especially colonial issues: both Albrecht Penck and Erich Obst talked upon colonial politics. When he addressed the delegates, including the Third Reich's Minister of Finance, Schakt, and many illustrious geographers from Europe and the United-States, Silva stressed the close cultural relations between Italy and Germany. An economic and cultural axis that should become still closer, he concluded.\textsuperscript{173}

\textit{L'Azione coloniale}'s report concluded with the line: "Professore Massi, Director of the Colonial school of Milan and who accompanied the honourable Silva, then illustrated..."

\textsuperscript{171}'Il cambio della guardia nella sezione milanese', \textit{L'Azione coloniale}, 14 Febbraio 1936, p. 3.
the concepts that influenced the development of the study of geopolitics."174 From a scepticism towards geopolitics that would later be echoed by one of their fiercest critics, Roletto and Massi had adopted and adapted the term so that, by the mid 1930s, they were ready to develop an Italian geopolitics.

Chapter 4.

Bottai and the first issue of *Geopolitica*

*Introduction*

The first issue of *Geopolitica* appeared in January 1939. Its masthead bore the names of Roletto, Massi and above them both, that of Giuseppe Bottai, Minister of National Education. This chapter will outline the process by which Massi and Roletto inaugurated their journal and won the attention and support of Giuseppe Bottai. I will also consider the reasons why Bottai might have wanted to assist the geopoliticians and I will situate *Geopolitica* within his broad cultural-political project. Finally, I'll address the contents of the first issue. I'll look at the introductory statements by Bottai, Roletto and Massi, and at what each proposed and claimed for this new venture. I'll comment upon the message penned especially by Haushofer, upon the editorial board which the Triestini managed to co-opt, and at the articles themselves which appeared in January 1939. The nature of Italy's new geopolitics, its gendered and modernist assumptions, and its claim to a synoptic, synthesising vision by which Italians might understand and direct their place in the modern, dynamic world system will all be addressed.

**Part I: Founding *Geopolitica* and finding influential friends**

Ernesto Massi himself told me the story of how he gained access to Bottai, and how he won from him the use of his name and reputation and, in more material terms, state-funding for his journal.\(^1\) It all began at the 13th Italian Geographers Congress in Udine, Friuli, 1937 when Massi fell into dispute with Roberto Almagià.\(^2\) According to Massi himself, he met Bottai at the Congress and, after some debate, Bottai offered him the opportunity to use his name and reputation on the masthead of a new journal he was planning to publish. Massi was eager to help, and agreed to the proposal. He later told me that Bottai was a man of great influence and that he had approached Massi with a request to use his name on the journal. Massi agreed to the proposal and the journal, *Geopolitica*, was born.

\(^1\) Interview with Ernesto Massi, 1 June 1994. In sections of this thesis I rely upon the testimony which Massi gave me in two interviews which took place at his Rome apartment in the summer of 1994. (Dates 1 June and 8 June) I use his information especially in cases where documentary sources fail - in elements of the 'invisible college' and personal recollections, for example. I first regarded his recollections with some scepticism, as will become evident in chapter nine, he still contest the legacy of Italian geopolitics. However, in conversation with me, my feeling was that he was talking relatively openly about his geopolitical past. The accounts he gave me tally with those he gave to Marco Antonsich and correlate with the textual picture which I was compiling. When he addressed a conference entitled 'Dalla geopolitica alla geografia politica' at the SGI in May 1994, he also talked freely about his days as a Fascist geographer. My sense is that although we should maintain a healthy scepticism towards him, particularly towards his un-reconstructed and highly offensive politics and his written accounts of Italian geopolitics, in general, he told me something approximating the truth as he remembers it.

\(^2\) Consiglio Nazionale di Ricerche, Comitato nazionale per la Geografia, *Atti del XIII Congresso Geografico Italiano, Tenuto in Friuli dal 6 al 17 Settembre, 1937*, volume 1, Udine, 1938. The conference's venue, in the 'redeemed' territory of Friuli-Venezia Giulia was no accident. Rather it was
to Massi, Almagià black-balled a presentation which the young Triestine geographer planned to give upon a proposed rail-link between Trieste and Tarviso. This railway would re-vitalise his native city by re-connecting it to an economic hinterland and the rail network of southern central Europe. Yet, as Massi recounted the story, Almagià was opposed to his voicing this proposal because Almagià was influenced by the Confederation of Venetian Businessmen concerned at this threat to their local industries. The Venetian urban fabric suffered far fewer interventions from Fascist architecture than other Italian cities and its status as a cultural centre grew from the inauguration of the Venice Biennale art exhibition and the annual film-festival. However, the city had enjoyed a good many infrastructural improvements under Fascism. The one significant new building in the sestieri was the elegant station which delivered a new rail-link across the lagoon. A road accompanied the railway across the causeway and at its landward end the port of Mestre was expanded significantly. With the encouragement of Fascism and leading Venetian industrialist-financiers like Giuseppe Volpe di Misurata, Venice expanded its electrical, chemical and manufacturing industries. This was Massi's problem. His proposed rail link, potentially re-establishing Trieste as the Northern Adriatic's major port, would damage the commercial trade which was returning to Venice after the 1919 territorial changes. Venetian interests didn't want this to happen and, as Massi tells it, persuaded Almagià to silence him.

Massi had quite possibly presented a controversial figure at the proceedings. As Fascist protocol demanded, the conference was inaugurated by official greetings from local dignitaries, government officials and senior geographers in turn. Massi too rose to address the floor, but not as a geographer from Milan (as he was named in the list of conference participants), but on behalf of the ICF. In Almagià's eyes, perhaps his youth, his temerity and his chosen affiliation to the ICF counted against him, as might have his trips to Berlin and promotion of the German colonial cause. Possibly Almagià was worried by the increasing momentum of Massi and Roletto's putative geopolitics as a competitor to his own preferred version of political geography; or

an assertion of the Italianness of the region and a celebration of the memories of Giovanni and Olinio Marinelli who were both Friuliani.

We've met Volpi already as an Italian negotiator for the Ouchy peace which settled the Italo-Libyan war. He also helped represent Italy at Versailles, was also the main figure behind the Italian electrical industry, was an early governor of Tripolitania, and Finance Minister (1925-1928). From the late 1920s he was president of the Venice Biennale and from 1934 president of the Confindustria (the Italian business lobby). He was close to Federzoni and Bottai and eventually a patron of Geopolitica. See: Cannistraro, 'Historical dictionary', pp. 565-566.


Il XIII Congresso Geografico Italiano di Udine, Impero Italiano, 2, 9 (1937), p. 1. Massi's greeting was reported only in the ICF's organ, and not in the official conference proceedings.
perhaps Massi was simply leant on by Almagià on behalf of the Venetian industrial lobby. Whatever the case, Massi did not address the conference after his greeting from the ICF, the question of the Trieste-Gorizia railway was avoided, and Massi returned to Milan upset at his treatment.  

Back in Lombardy, Massi complained to Padre Agostino Gemelli, the rector of the Catholic University. Gemelli must have listened sympathetically, for he arranged Massi an appointment with Giuseppe Bottai in the Education Ministry in Rome. As Massi recalled events, he journeyed to Rome and upon meeting Bottai, explained his situation and took the opportunity to expand the discussion to the prospects and potential of geopolitics. Bottai must have been impressed by what he heard from the young geographer, for Massi was invited to return a few weeks later with a proposal for a journal. Roletto and Massi had been considering the prospect of a geopolitical journal for some time when Bottai provided them with this opportunity. They returned to Rome with the proposal which would develop into Geopolitica. Bottai was pleased to endorse their project. Yet there still remained the issue of funding the journal.

There is some ambiguity surrounding the existence or otherwise of government funding for Geopolitica. With the benefit of access to the Bottai family archive, Alexander De Grand mentioned in passing that Geopolitica was funded from the Ministry of Popular Culture and the Ministry of National Education. According to Massi, however, there was another element to the story. When Roletto and Massi arrived outside Bottai’s office, they found themselves waiting next to a representative from Sperling and Kupfer who was there to lobby the minister for the contract to produce the Italian Schools’ Atlas. Bottai seized the moment. He told the Milanese publisher that his firm could have the Schools’ Atlas contract if they also agreed to publish Geopolitica. By Massi’s account, Sperling and Kupfer agreed and Roletto and Massi had their journal. In all probability, Geopolitica’s funding came from a combination of these two sources. Sperling and Kupfer certainly didn’t seem to begrudge their new journal; they even provided an annual prize for the best geopolitical essay by a student. Likewise, De Grand’s source is sound. Regardless

Likewise, there is no trace of any contribution in the proceedings by Massi.


Gemelli was a strong supporter of Fascist Corporatism (see later) and probably enjoyed influence with Bottai because of this: Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, pp. 243-244.


This is Massi’s recollection.

They also published a 'Universal Geographical Atlas' which reached its fifth edition in late Autumn 1941; its fourth having been issued in January 1940. Although the political map of the world was changing rapidly in this period (as a reviewer noted), a new edition every eighteen months or so
of the precise source of *Geopolitica*'s funding, by mid November 1938 Massi was able to write to Haushofer and tell him about the imminent publication of an Italian geopolitical journal. The key element in this had been Giuseppe Bottai.

**Giuseppe Bottai.**

According to one account: "Mussolini particularly detested the quiet sarcasm of Bottai, whose tone contrasted strongly with the crassness and volume of the regime's official oratory." A good writer, adroit negotiator, and an able administrator [who was] clever, witty, malicious and indiscrete," the *Duce* eventually tapped the telephone of his second longest serving minister. It is quite clear that Bottai was an extremely complex individual and one of the more enigmatic, colourful, and clever Fascists (although Mussolini's hierarchy was never known for being over-blessed with great intellects). Alexander J. De Grand begins his account of Bottai and his impact upon Fascist culture thus:

Giuseppe Bottai was always a rarity in the Fascist movement: a Roman in a party guided by provincials, an intellectual amongst men who heaped praise upon violence, a long-term supporter of programmes and strategies in the middle of opportunists and tacticians.

Giuseppe was born the son of a Tuscan wine merchant resident in Rome on 3 September, 1895. Brought up in relatively comfort, his outlook was initially socially and economically conservative. Politically, however, his background and his schooling encouraged deep patriotic and irredentist sympathies. He had inherited a strain of Mazzinian nationalism and republican sentiments from his father and amidst Italy's interventionist crisis of 1914-1915 when the country debated whether to enter the Great war, these emotions combined with his idealism to considerable effect. He dropped out of university, agitated for Italian intervention and, upon the declaration of

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suggests that sales were booming, and not all, I imagine, because of the success of Bottai's project to increase the national geographical consciousness. Rather, Sperling and Kupfer probably had won the right to service the monopoly on textbooks in Italian classrooms as far as Atlases were concerned. Massi may well have told me the truth. See: *L'Atlante Geografico Universale*, (fifth edition) Milan, 1941; and, a review by Luigi Visintin: L. Visintin, 'L'Atlante Geografico Universale, della casa Sperling and Kupfer, cartografia e stampa dell'istituto Geografico De Agostini', *Geopolitica*, 3, 11 (1941), pp. 495-496.

16De Grand, *Bottai e la Cultura Fascista*, p. 3.
17De Grand, *Bottai e la Cultura Fascista*, pp. 4-5.
hostilities, enlisted immediately at the age of twenty. The war was Bottai's formative experience.

In the army Bottai found companionship, patriotism, excitement, and danger. He eventually became a member of the elite Arditi shock troops and fought with some distinction against the Austrians. Given the adrenalin of his wartime experiences, Bottai shared the widespread disquiet at the immediate aftermath of the war. Becalmed by the armistice and unable to influence the deliberations at Versailles, the soldiers had to watch and endure their politicians induce the 'mutilated peace' whereby Italian territorial ambitions were snubbed and the troops' sacrifices seemed to have been made in vain. Moreover, the promised land reform and extension of the franchise were postponed indefinitely. Bottai found solace in the Veterans' Association and in Futurism, both were seedbeds of Fascism and propelled Bottai towards a remarkable career in Fascist Italy.

In 1919 he co-founded the Rome branch of the emergent Fascist movement and in the elections of 1921 was the sole Fascist deputy returned to parliament. He played a major role in the 'March on Rome', leading his squadristi through the working-class San Lorenzo district - by far the most violent route into the city where fighting caused seven fatalities. Once in Rome, many of the rural, provincial Ras (local Fascist leaders) who had visited beatings, burnings and terror upon socialist organisations throughout the Biennio-Rosso, intended to continue their violence and subdue the entire state apparatus to the Fascist party. Opposition from within the Fascist party coalesced around Bottai who became de facto leader of the movement's intellectuals and theorists and of the more conservative or moderate urban Fascists who opposed the lawlessness of the provincial Ras. These 'Revisionsists' or 'elitists' wanted to integrate Fascism into the states' structures through constitutional reform and through government support for their social and economic projects. Their vision of an authoritarian regime of limited pluralism clashed with the proposed totalitarianism of the Ras. Throughout this 'Revisionist crisis' of 1922-1923, Mussolini negotiated a middle-line which eventually neutralised both wings of his party. Bottai won the
role of 'loyal opposition' within the PNF and enjoyed the freedom to maintain a limited cultural and ideological critique of policy. Some consider this "...uninhibited and often perceptive criticism of the party" the elitist's most productive role. Indeed, Bottai founded his famous and influential journal of culture and politics, *Critica Fascista* in 1923. However, for an individual who had a particular vision of Fascism, 'loyal opposition' was not enough.

As I mentioned in chapter two, Bottai's project was the creation of a new Italian society through Fascism. A complex web of priorities underpinned his politics but throughout his long career, two major themes stand out. First, his envisaged Fascist society was to be directed, organised and managed by an elite of selected technocrats and intellectuals. The post war years had convinced him of the inadequacy of parliamentary democracy; his solution was to transform the PNF into an elite cadre to govern the nation. His elitism and various of his actions whilst in office in the 1930s (which I will discuss later) did reveal an essential social-conservatism in his project. In one respect, he merely wanted to replace the old Liberal political class with a new, technocratic, Fascist one. Yet despite this, he was also a moderniser who envisioned this new ruling class leading a revitalised Italy from the chaos of the post-war years through to a glorious future.

Second, Bottai believed that this utopian future would only be achieved if the Fascist party maintained a vigorous and self-critical internal debate. The stifling of the Fascist revolution and the bureaucratic ossification of the regime that Bottai feared did indeed occur in the 1930s, but this was not for a lack of effort on his behalf. *Critica Fascista* had quickly developed into a major forum for questioning and critical voices within the regime, especially from the managerial and technocratic currents which Bottai patronised. Art and high culture also attracted his attention. He founded the Bergamo modern art prize in 1938 and two years later he launched *Primato*, a literary review. Both institutions challenged the cultural orthodoxy of later Fascism and attracted some of Italy's finest artists and writers. Several other journals were also founded or patronised by Bottai. His readiness to provide fora in

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26Lyttelton, *The seizure of power*, p. 152.
29De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, pp. 45 and 140.

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which ideas might be considered and critiqued and, it was hoped, re-generated, was another mark of the priority he gave to intellectual debate in his planned transformation of Italy.\(^{32}\) *Geopolitica* was an element of his project.

Before his tenure at Education, Bottai had championed 'Corporativism' as first, Undersecretary and then, Minister of Corporations between November 1926 and July 1932. His technocratic, managerial and elitist sentiments found an outlet in this new Fascist model of social organisation.\(^{33}\) The corporate state was to be divided into vertical, hierarchical categories such as agriculture, industry or banking. In Bottai's vision, each sector would be supervised by his governing elite which would arbitrate between labour and capital - hence the much trumpeted 'Third way' between communism and capitalism.\(^{34}\) Indeed, the publicity Italy reaped from these innovations far outstripped any real benefit. The proposed reforms were not to the liking of industry and financiers and the National Council of Corporations which was established in 1930 was bereft of any real influence. Bottai was frustrated by these stymied plans and continued to agitate for the Corporatist organisation of the state throughout the 1930s.\(^{35}\) Here was further evidence of his modernising project for Italian society which involved new ways of thinking about society, the state and the world. True to form, he also launched a journal called *Archivio di Studi Corporativi* to develop and articulate these plans.

Bottai was removed from Mussolini's cabinet in 1932 and was forced to continue his cultural project elsewhere. During his sabbatical from ministerial office, Bottai became President of the *Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Nazionale Sociale* (Italy's new national welfare organisation) which introduced the first elements of social welfare payments into the country.\(^{36}\) In 1934 he was also appointed Governor of Rome and involved himself in the ongoing excavations, clearances, and road-building which characterised the Fascist re-building of the city.\(^{37}\) His interests in Fascist culture flourished and new journals appeared as he indulged a new-found interest in urban design and planning.\(^{38}\) Still Governor, he left the eternal city for the final stages of the Abyssinian campaign and the Governorship of Addis Abeba. The Abyssinian

\(^{32}\)De Grand, *Italian Fascism*, pp. 150-152.


\(^{34}\)De Grand, *Bottai*, pp. 71-130.

\(^{35}\)On Bottai's hopes that Corporatism might be applied in Africa, see G. Bottai, *Sostanza dell'Impero*, *Critica Fascista*, 15 June (1936); and also: M. Morandi, 'Ritorno alla normalità', *Critica Fascista*, 15 July (1936), again in Guerri, *Giuseppe Bottai*, p. 151.

\(^{36}\)On these years, see De Grand, *Bottai*, pp. 132-171.


\(^{38}\)Bottai founded *L'Urbe* and, whilst Governor, was overall editor of *Capitolium*; both of which still exist: Muñoz, 'Ricordo di Giuseppe Bottai', p. 36.
campaign had prompted Bottai to claim, with timely retrospect, that: "From the 1920s I've maintained that Italy needs to expand, to conquer new overseas territories for her well-being and her power."\(^{39}\) With hostilities imminent his rhetoric was belligerent and throughout the war he argued that the empire should be built upon Corporatist lines.\(^{40}\) His interest in international affairs was increasing. Nevertheless, he remained divorced from genuine political influence with little opportunity to impose policy until November 1936 when he was recalled to the heart of the regime to run the Ministry of National Education.

![Figure 4.1](image)

Giuseppe Bottai (left) hands over the Governorship of Rome to Prince Boncompagni-Ludovisi, November 1936.\(^{41}\)

\(^{39}\) Guerri, Giuseppe Bottai, p. 150.

\(^{40}\) G. Bottai, 'Abissinia: impresa rivoluzionaria', Critica Fascista, 15 July (1935); Bottai also labelled the war another 'March on Rome', in Critica Fascista, 1 November (1935), both references from Guerri, Giuseppe Bottai, p. 150. On Corporativism and Africa: Bottai, 'Sostanza dell'Impero'.

Bottai's promotion to education solved two problems for Mussolini. First, Education would keep Bottai busy and absorb energies which would otherwise be invested in his critical writings. Second, Mussolini realised that the regime's relations with the schools and the young required restructuring and Bottai and his journals had displayed a long-standing interest in education. Bottai would remain at Education until February 1943 and as I mentioned earlier, his tenure is remembered for his intransigent application of the 1938 racial laws and for his 1939 Carta delle Scuole.

The Carta delle Scuole contradicted Bottai's earlier urban and moderate Fascism by reinforcing the rural orientation of the late 1930s Italy. Rural and craft schools were built to increase the attachment of children to the land whilst, in claiming to mould a 'new Fascist man', the charter introduced manual labour into the education system and tied schools more towards the Fascist youth organisations. It attempted to tackle the chronic emphasis on over-subscribed professions by directing lower-middle class children through technical schools and away from the universities - offering a conservative entrenchment of the social system. The reasons for Bottai's apparent volte face and the dilution of his criticism of the regime has been debated. Some suggest that he had some Jewish blood and in a period of increasing state anti-semitism he was eager to prove his Fascist credentials. However, Bottai did retain his scepticism towards the regime he served and was volubly Germanophobe and opposed to the Axis. Whatever his rationale, during the late 1930s, this complicated individual demonstrated an increasing support for geography in all of its forms as a part of his own cultural project and of his remit to educate the citizens of a new Fascist Italy.

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42This history is traced in: De Grand, Bottai, pp. 175-216.
43Mezzatosta, Il regime fascista tra educazione e propaganda, esp. pp. 41-156.
44Contemporary critiques also mentioned disquiet at the more elitist currents of the Giovanni Gentile reforms of 1923: L. Volpicelli, 'La scuola Italiana dopo la riforma del '23', Civiltà Fascista, 4, 1 (1939), pp. 35-51.
45Mezzatosta, Il regime fascista tra educazione e propaganda, esp. pp. 157-218; G. Bottai, La Carta della Scuola, (second edition), Milan, 1941; I could not trace a copy of the first edition of this document. Bottai had earlier been an adherent of the Stracitò movement which glorified the modern city, he even founded the journal of the same name which drew upon a cosmopolitan range of influences from across Europe. De Grand, Bottai, p. 255. The alternative voice to the Stracitò movement was the Strapaese idea which celebrated a sentimental vision of an eternal and pure Italian peasant life and peasant landscape. By the early 1940s, Bottai was celebrating the Italian landscape and preserving it with legislation, see: C. Coperta, Dal Paesaggio al Piano Paesistico, saggio di geografia applicate, Bari, 1992, pp. 15-27.
46On this episode and its rationale: Barbaglì, Educating for unemployment, pp. 187-211.
47De Grand, Bottai.
Bottai and the geographers

Roletto and Massi's request for ministerial support reached Bottai at a good time. The empire had been won for two years and ever more elements of an Italian Imperial Geography were emerging. Bottai's interest in geography and the geographical imagination was waxing as well. He even read geography in his leisure time, albeit amongst a great many other subjects. In 1938 he pushed through a decree which created more dedicated geography school teachers and a constant flow of such positions was guaranteed for the future. A commission to investigate the state of geographical teaching in Italian schools and universities also reported in 1938. Bottai implemented one of its recommendations: that the third year of university teaching should be of a more applied character. A year earlier he approved the new constitution of the Florentine Società di studi geografici, emphasising that this society too had fallen under the influence of the regime.

That same year he had addressed the same XIII Italian Geographical Congress that Massi attended and, in his plenary lecture to the gathered geographers, had first expressed his support for their discipline.

The stilted language of the official proceedings recounts how Bottai praised the earlier lectures from Toniolo and Zoli for their proposals to increase the national geographical imagination and to find for geography a more appropriate position in middle schools and universities. Bottai would reiterate these imperatives, but from the more authoritative and influential position as Minister of Education. His role, Bottai claimed, was to help them [geographers] recognise the course which Italian geography had to take given the global changes which had occurred since the last world war.


In his 15th July, 1937 diary entry, Bottai noted that he was currently reading Almagià's La Geografia (no date nor more accurate title provided by Bottai), in: G-B. Guerri (ed.), Diario Giuseppe Bottai, Milan, 1982, p. 119.


Biasutti, 'I geografi Italiani convocati dal Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale', p. 75. A lengthy and involved argument around these themes is rehearsed by Biasutti in pp. 76-79 of this article.

R. Biasutti, 'Regolamento', Rivista Geografica Italiana, 45, 1-2, (1938), pp. 278-279. By the late 1930s the Rivista Geografica Italiana had become the official organ of the CNR's committee for geography.


Consiglio Nazionale di Ricerche, Comitato nazionale per la Geografia, Atti del XIII Congresso Geografico Italiano, p. 29.
Geographical understanding is now so much more necessary in so far as to understand is to possess and scientific possession is the optimum, indispensible introduction to any other form of possession. For this reason, geographical recovery is always correlated to political recovery and the highpoints of scientific and geographical activity always coincide with the highpoints of political activity.\footnote{Consiglio Nazionale di Ricerche, Comitato nazionale per la Geografia, \textit{Atti del XIII Congresso Geografico Italiano}, p. 29.}

Another reason for [Bottai's] presence, he continued, was to finally affirm the necessity of developing Italian geographical science to the level of the new imperial situation. Italy's new position demanded a new understanding of the world.\footnote{Consiglio Nazionale di Ricerche, Comitato nazionale per la Geografia, \textit{Atti del XIII Congresso Geografico Italiano}, p. 29.} From his ministerial vantage point, Bottai clearly appreciated the practical uses which geographical knowledge lent to the governance of territory and, additionally, the importance of the geographical imagination to a newly imperial nation. Moreover, he concluded his speech with a call to arms. It was not enough that the scientific development of geography continued. "The geographical imagination of the population had to be disseminated through schools..." and those responsible for this had a duty to put geography back in its place "...not at the margins, but at the centre of the study of a modern nation: where it could perform its duty to coordinate and unify every aspect of human knowledge in the understanding of the earth and the understanding of the world."\footnote{Consiglio Nazionale di Ricerche, Comitato nazionale per la Geografia, \textit{Atti del XIII Congresso Geografico Italiano}, pp. 29-30.}

Apparently, a great ovation crowned this magnificent speech by the minister; not surprisingly, given his call for the diffusion of a popular geographical imagination. His proposal for a new, central and synthesising role for geography within national education would also have added to the applause he received. Bottai left the podium to tour an exhibition of historical Friuliani maps with senior academics and local dignitaries. He would return to the topic of geography and to these same themes again over the next few years.

In January 1939 academic geographers were absorbing three new documents authored by Bottai and which affected their discipline. The most important was the \textit{Carta delle Scuola}. Two years in preparation, the document enshrined geography within this new pedagogic system.\footnote{Thompson, \textit{State control}, sets the 'Carta' into its wider cultural context, pp. 105-108.} Geography surpassed history in middle schools with a two-hour
slot each week. According to one commentator at least, the new school programme could be broadly outlined as follows: the geography of Italy and its empire was studied first in its physical, human and economic elements. Europe and major world powers were considered next. Finally classes studied "the position of Italy amongst these great powers in the light of the principal political and economic problems of the contemporary world". Geography was to be analysed and considered rather than learnt by rote. Malesani concluded that:

In the new schools, which want above all to be the political schools of Fascist and imperial Italy, geography must have and certainly will have a position of prime importance. One can safely trust the clear vision on geographical issues of his excellency Bottai. He affirmed that geography "is an indispensible instrument of action for a people that, after regaining their imperial position, must compete, and desire to compete, with other peoples."  

To the satisfaction of geographers, Bottai made sure that geography, and particularly political and economic geography, was embedded in the classrooms of Italy. The next task was to reach a wider public.

As I mentioned earlier, in 1939 the Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana also appeared in a new, popular format as I paesi del Mondo. This re-orientation was welcomed by Massi who wrote in the first few pages of both versions and 'Aims for Geographers' began by pointing out that it was a serious responsibility "...to open this instrument for the affirmation and diffusion of Italian geographical science". He then used the same argument with which he had addressed the geographical conference in Udine. "Scientific geography, at its most significant, desires to observe and to understand, that is, it desires to scientifically possess the world." And this was especially the case now that Italy was an imperial nation and had to understand the geography which underpinned her potential 'action'. He began his final section with the following statement:

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62 Malesani, 'La geografia nella nuova scuola Fascista', pp. 174-175.
64 A special assembly meeting at the SGI in April 1939 (unsurprisingly) endorsed Bottai's actions: B. Francolini, 'Geografia e etnografia coloniale', Rivista delle Colonie, 12, 6 (1939), p. 819.
65Biasutti, "Della nuova'Geopolitica";pp. 64-65; Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana, Paesi dell'"Ordine nuovo".
68 Bottai's article is clearly developed from his 1937 speech.
70 Bottai, 'Mete ai Geografi', p. 2, this word is stressed by Bottai.
I have talked up until now of geographical science. But, descending to more popular realms, the problem doesn't change. Together with responsible, organic and methodical scientific activity, an empire demands a vivid and widespread geographical consciousness in the population. Here is another duty which I for one don't hesitate to place alongside [the scientific duty]71

He concluded with his very best wishes for the journal and hoped that it would "...battle victoriously for our Italy, in this fight that we can see is both beautiful and necessary."72 The rhetoric didn't stop there. A delighted Renato Biasutti, editor of the Rivista Geografica Italiana, praised this timely re-orientation of the journal towards the interests of its membership and the 'realities' of the day. He wrote: "...rarely in our discipline have we read words so lucidly appropriate and so happily expressive about its nature and its essential responsibilities... and never have they been heard from a Minister of National Education."73

The attention Bottai directed at geography must have had a significant impact for Biasutti, one of the most senior and respected geographers of the day, to write in such glowing terms. Certainly, it seems that Bottai consciously identified geography as a discipline which might be of particular use to Fascist Italy and his cultural project. He appreciated both the practical scientific techniques which made geography a useful tool of governance and also the discipline's ability to influence the geographical imagination of the population at large. In Bottai's envisioned Fascist society, one element of citizenship would be a wide-ranging and informed geographical imagination. Future Fascist leaders would not find their imperial ambitions hamstrung by the provincialism of Italian people. Rather, a clear picture of the Italian state and its needs and requirements would be allied to an understanding of Italy's place in the world order.

Bottai's promotion of his message through education, culture and journals was further evidence that he had awarded geography a particular role in his wider cultural project and his utopian Fascist vision. Indeed, when Bottai summoned all of Italy's professional geographers to Rome in January 1941 to debate and resolve the problems still identified within university geography, his patronage was so well established that some geographers felt confident enough to chide him gently towards further

71 Bottai, 'Mete ai Geografi', p. 3.
72 Bottai, 'Mete ai Geografi', p. 3.
73 Biasutti, 'Della nuova Geopolitica'; p. 65; Biasutti continued by stressing that Bottai should finish the job he started by establishing the national graduate school in geography, also consult: Dainelli, 'Scuola Nazionale di Geografia'; 'Geografia coloniale. La creazione di una scuola superior di geografia', Rivista delle Colonie, 15, 5 (1941), pp. 698-700.
promotion of their subject.74 Biasutti urged further state support for geography which would build upon Bottai's "...courageous programme for the renewal of geographical studies and of the national geographical conscience, that he began with the foundation of Geopolitica....".75 Geopolitica was identified as a major element of Bottai's project by a disciplinary leader in early 1941. In January 1939, the launch of Geopolitica was the third of Bottai's interventions which impacted upon Italian geography that month.

Part II: The First issue, January 1939

Geopolitica, subtitled a 'Journal of political, economic, social and colonial geography', was first published in January 1939. Seventy-two pages long, it's first issue began with programmatic statements from Bottai, Roletto and Massi and a greeting from Karl Haushofer. Articles on Italian access to raw materials in Africa, and upon 'Roman geopolitics', followed. In this section, I consider these statements and articles. They reveal something of the aims and objectives which Geopolitica's leading lights reserved for the publication and how these individuals sought to position Geopolitica within wider discourses and debates. Equally they give a flavour of the style, issues and concerns which motivated the geopoliticians to write their geopolitics. This chapter deals with Geopolitica's first edition of January 1939 and what it can tell us about the ethos of the journal.

Giuseppe Bottai alla Geopolitica

Bottai's support for Geopolitica was based upon its potential to expand the geographical imagination of the Italian people and to inform them of their place in the international order of the post-war world. The importance of this task had exercised his mind for some time. As we have seen, he patronised Italian geography from 1937 onwards and from this same period began to publish articles which addressed Italy's place in the Mediterranean and the international order in his flagship journal, Critica Fascista.76 In later years he would also devote special issues of Prima to Slovenia

74Biasutti, 'I geografi italiani convocati dal Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale', esp. pp. 76-79.
75 Biasutti, 'I geografi italiani convocati dal Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale', p. 79.
and Dalmatia as part of his drive to increase popular interest in these newly Italian sectors of the Balkans. However in January 1939 his eminence and the impetus he had given the project ensured that the first few pages of *Geopolitica* were reserved for him to outline his vision for the journal in a piece titled: 'Giuseppe Bottai alla *Geopolitica*'. His statement began with echoes of the post-Versailles dissatisfaction that led Haushofer to initiate German *Geopolitik*:

The first Fascist generation was confronted forcibly by the geographical facts of the war. It faced these facts, which had profoundly transformed physical, economic and political geography, without a precise, clear, or organic understanding.

More importantly, he continued:

...the geographical knowledge which Italy did possess had not been disseminated sufficiently amongst the soldiers of the war; neither amongst those who started the war, nor those who managed it, nor those who drafted the post war settlement. From the most elementary deficiencies of local topographical information with which to fight the war, through to the more general realms of physical or political geography which were necessary for strategic and diplomatic considerations, Italian geographical knowledge was lacking.

To avoid repeating these same errors in the future, Bottai prescribed a total re-evaluation of Italy's conception of Geography and its study. He claimed that the 'sometimes fateful deficiencies' of Italian geography were not so much due to an 'inadequate scientific conscientiousness', as to an "...insufficient awareness of the political elements of geography". Whilst he didn't want to dispute the necessity of an exact understanding of the physical world -which he saw as the unchangeable basis of geographical science- neither could he understand why geography limited its investigations to mere description. Rather, he urged geographers to also address 'human elements' such as social, economic and political organisations and the 'creative and revolutionary forces' which spring from them. Once geography has established its basic understanding of the world:

...to avoid academic stagnation, [geography] had to raise itself to a political understanding of the world and of the laws which direct and

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Fascista, 17, 1 Marzo (1939), pp. 340-342. The Mario Morandi who was a sub-editor of *Critica Fascista* and a close colleague of Bottai was not the same man who drew maps for *Geopolitica*.

77See, respectively: *Primato*, 2, 1 Agosto (1941) and *Primato*, 2, 1 Novembre (1941), and De Grand, *Bottai*, pp. 275-276.


79Bottai, 'Giuseppe Bottai alla *Geopolitica*", p. 3.

80Bottai, 'Giuseppe Bottai alla *Geopolitica*", p. 3.

81Bottai, 'Giuseppe Bottai alla *Geopolitica*", p. 3.

82Bottai, 'Giuseppe Bottai alla *Geopolitica*", pp. 3-4.
concern it. All in all it has to acquire what I have been calling a political conscience. 83

Bottai intended Geopolitica, with its 'decisive geopolitical orientation', to contribute a politically-conscious geographical perspective to the more traditional substance of geographical science. 84 His geopolitics therefore transcended orthodox geography in order to address the political aspects of world affairs yet significantly, Bottai didn't divorce geopolitics from more traditional geography but insisted that both elements were part of the wider geographical consciousness which he wanted to promote in Italy. Geopolitica was to be the politically-conscious geographical imagination of Bottai's envisioned Fascist future.

Per una Geopolitica Italiana

This ministerial statement was followed by a longer introductory article by the two editors. In 'Per una Geopolitica Italiana' Roletto and Massi immediately revealed their sympathy with Fascism - a quotation from Mussolini headed the page: "Geography is the immutable fact that conditions the life of peoples." 85 This preceded an opening line which read:

We believe that in the picture of the new relationships that exist between science and politics in the Fascist state, Italian Geography has new duties to perform. 86

Likewise, they continued, given the growing complexity and interconnections of the inter-war world, geography also inherited a new range of responsibilities. It was to geography that other disciplines were increasingly turning to explain this modern globe due to geography's ability to synthesise the world's disparate elements. 87 However, the studies of political and economic geography which were so crucial to this understanding were sadly lacking in Italy, and as a consequence, Italians were forced to translate or adapt foreign studies "...and to impose upon our readers, under the guise of objective science, their point of view...their interests, their ideologies and their national politics." 88 And whilst Roletto and Massi welcomed these new directions in political geography, they demanded "...the urgent and absolute right to

83 Bottai, 'Giuseppe Bottai alla 'Geopolitica'”, p. 4.
84 Bottai, 'Giuseppe Bottai alla 'Geopolitica"”, p. 4; this was his final point
85 This utterance was from Mussolini's 1924 visit to the SGI in Rome.
86 G. Roletto and E. Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', Geopolitica, 1, 1, (1939), pp. 5-11, quotation from p. 5.
87 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana", p. 5.
88 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana", p. 6.
react with energy and Fascist resolution to conquer ...the autarky of thought that imperial Italians can legitimately demand.” In less rhetorical terms, they were complaining about the subjectivities of foreign political geographies and demanding an Italian voice in this new debate: an Italian political geography with which to understand the modern world.

The two Triestene geographers were acutely conscious of both their own positionality as Italian geopoliticians and also the politics and subjectivities of other national geographical discourses. They proceeded to complain about the 'pseudo-scientific' geographical evidence presented by some powers at the Versailles conference table and then outlined a brief history of political geography which introduced each major participant, from Ratzel and Maull, to Vidal de la Blache and Febvre through to Brunhes, Vallaux, Demangeon and Siegfried primarily in terms of their stance in the Franco-German possibilism versus determinism debate. The Italians clearly saw themselves as standing to one side of these protagonists. In addition, they had a very clear sense that this Ratzelian-Vidalien debate had outgrown human geography and was now being negotiated through competing approaches to geopolitics: "The most recent developments of political geography in Germany and in France have accentuated the distance between the methodologies followed in these two countries.”

German geopolitics were introduced, with a lineage from Ratzel and Kjellén to Haushofer, as a dynamic political-geography which researched "...the geographical bases of political problems, applied to the life of the state considered as a political organism." But just as Bottai suggested that Italian geopolitics should transcend orthodox geography and provide a new political conscience for the state, equally, Roletto and Massi stressed that German geopolitics was not merely political geography under a new name but an 'natural evolution of old concepts' which built upon the basis of political geography to provide a new perspective upon the changing world. Its ambition was to ascertain the geographical laws of states and, as they realised, to press for a revision of Versailles.

Roletto and Massi then identified the French reaction to these deterministic geopolitics from over the Rhine. In the Italians’ nuanced appreciation of European political geography, this was a further group which, they pointed out, "...did not

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89 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 6.
90 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', pp. 6-7.
91 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 7.
92 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 7.
93 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 7.
hesitate to assume the label 'geopolitics', so as not to surrender this word to the
German science." 94 Jacques Ancel was introduced along with his Vidalien
methodologies, his interest in 'nations' rather than 'states', and his alleged legitimization
of the Versailles settlement. 95 Yet, although Roletto and Massi readily identified the
nationalism of French and German geopoliticians, even commenting that they didn't
wish to 'deepen this antagonism between the two geopolitics', they then announced
that:

...we are convinced that only scientific investigation, with its impartial
analysis of scientifically collected data, can bring peace and clarity to
the consideration of these problems which have been confused and
muddied more than ever by human prejudices and interests. ...today,
political geography must have the capacity to contribute its clarifying
insight to international controversies. 96

It appears that they were staking a claim to an unbiased, objective political geography
with which they might understand the modern world. And whilst French and German
discourses were presented as innately subjective, the Italian voice they called for
earlier would seem to be exonerated from its context and to float free as an objective
perspective. This line of argument continued. In answer to the criticisms of 'orthodox
géographiers' that recent developments in dynamic political geographies had been too
political and insufficiently scientific, they responded that it was only these new forms
of political geography which could explain features of the modern world such as
expansionism, colonialism, alliances and war which fell outside the remit of orthodox
geography. Traditional, 'static' political geography -which remained the foundation of
such studies- simply couldn't match the new requirement to synthesise all these
elements of the modern world. 97

[Our approach is] about studying the geographical conditions of the
life and development of states and the geographical basis of political
problems which emerge from their relations. In this manner one enters
completely into the sphere of Geopolitica. 98

Once in this sphere of Geopolitica, traditional divisions of the discipline such as
political, social, economic and colonial geography (where normative law-making had
previously been practised) were now to receive special attention:

94 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 8.
95 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 8, the hostility of Italian geopolitics towards the
Versailles settlement and towards France and Britain who they saw as having unfairly benefitted from
the process at the expense of Germany and, to a greater extent, Italy is obvious again here in the
opening statement of Italian Geopolitica.
96 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 8.
97 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', pp. 8-9.
98 Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica Italiana', p. 9, emphasis as in the original.
The first duty of Geopolitica is to summarise, elaborate and develop the eclectic material supplied by these normative parts of geography from the particular perspective of the organic state. [Geopolitics] is thus intimately tied into the principal chapters of human geography, and from here developing its research and completing its inquiries.99 Therefore,

One [could] superimpose the geopolitical position which is essentially changeable in relation to alliances, to the national gravitation and to political-economic contingencies. For these reasons, every territory has a geopolitical value which must be added to the [value ascribed by] political geography.

So then, while political geography measures the value and the hierarchies of states... geopolitics extends this analysis to a wider basis which also considers cultural factors, spiritual factors, and the will to power and to empire.100

The Triestini were proposing a new geographical perspective which, whilst rooted in the empiricism of traditional geographies and the knowledges they had already established, nevertheless transcended these understandings. 'The first duty' of Geopolitica was to synthesise these existing knowledges in combination with the dynamic aspects of the contemporary world. A synoptic vision was to emerge which departed from established geographical knowledge to encompass elements such as alliances and expansionism - phenomena which orthodox political geography couldn't accommodate. This process would provide a new, transcendental, geopolitical understanding of the world. There does remain the suspicion that the Triestini stressed their roots in traditional geography so as to preempt potential critics who might label them too political rather than geographical. However, as we saw in chapter three, Roletto and Massi were genuinely committed to the discipline and their project was to render geography relevant to their times, their politics and their society. From the early 1930s they had been seeking to mould a geography which might address the dynamism of the modern world. In Geopolitica they thought they had found one.

One quite ambiguous comment is their claim that the geopolitical vision was based upon the idea of the state as an organism. We saw a good deal of scepticism towards such geographical determinism as Roletto and Massi were formulating their position throughout the 1930s. Equally, the final line I quoted above and the final page of

99Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica italiana', p. 10, emphasis as in the original.
100Roletto and Massi, 'Per una geopolitica italiana', p. 10.
Roletto and Massi's article prove that their adoption of the organic state model was a far from uncritical acceptance of Ratzelian tradition. Rather, within its broad remit Geopolitica would also embrace cultural and spiritual factors and notions of empire rather than simple and exclusive geographical determinism. The article continued:

[Mussolini] has established the element of will amongst the determining factors of national life [and these] spiritual and dynamic elements conquer and overcome the opposition of the environment, but also lead men to obey without question this categorical imperative when the environment is favourable. Environmental determinism, possibilism and Le geographie humaine must be concurrent and complementary, not antithetical: in their equilibrium the insuperable forces are the geopolitical laws.  

So it appears that Roletto and Massi were not absolutely deterministic, but more pluralistic in their epistemology. Their emphasis upon 'the dynamic' had led them to flirt with the organic state metaphor, but the possibilism of Roletto's earlier years, or quite simply the arguments of the French geopolitical discourse which they had read had convinced them that human agency could (when convenient for their arguments) supersede environmental determinism. Whatever the situation, it was geopolitical laws, they claimed, which mediated these phenomena. Final ambitious claims for the importance of geopolitics followed.

Geopolitics was 'educative', 'formative', and especially suited to the Italian case. The precise role of Italian geopolitics was as the "...geographical doctrine of empire. Such a geopolitics responds to Fascism and is an expression of the dynamism of the times." The foreign, domestic and colonial policies of the regime were labelled as essentially geopolitical and, unsurprisingly, fell within Geopolitica's remit. To hammer home their points, the authors finished by trumpeting:

Italian geopolitics should express in the most complete manner the geographical, political and imperial consciences of the Italian people.

The Triestini didn't lack ambition. Indeed, the third piece in Geopolitica was by Karl Haushofer, by this time fast gaining notoriety in America, bête noire of French geographers, and the most famous figure in the geopolitical conversation. In 1939 he wrote a 'Salute and Greetings' to the Italian geopoliticians upon Massi's invitation.
Haushofer had been in touch with Massi, his "Italian friend in Milan", since the late 1930s. Haushofer eventually came to call Geopolitica his 'godchild' whilst Massi, concluded his letters to the Bavarian General: "Hoping that geopolitics can be developed as an effective tool for the Axis". Haushofer had even attempted to persuade Rudolf Hess to accept an Honorary Doctorate in Political Science from the University of Pavia on behalf of Massi and visited the ICF in Milan and Pavia on his almost annual Italienfahrt (Italian trips) which took place between 1937 and 1941. He also maintained close links with the Institute for Middle Eastern and Oriental Studies and the Centre of German Studies in Rome and along with Demangeon, Georges Hardy, Erich Obst, Renato Biasutti and other protagonists and observers of the geopolitical debate of the time, attended the 1938 Volta conference upon the theme of Africa. He was no stranger to Italy and appeared happy to contribute to Geopolitica.

In a typically dense and impenetrable text (written in German) Haushofer claimed that geopolitical ideas had been debated since the emergence of state-craft which took into account the influence of the earth and of space. His goodwill extended to explaining his points with examples from the Roman empire and admiring words about Julius Caesar. He concluded by noting that 1938 had been a particularly good year for geopolitics. Such geopolitical experiences had to be collected in books and journals and he welcomed his like-minded colleagues in Italy: 'the passionless voice of geopolitics' provided wise council and its understanding had to be collected north and south of the Alps.

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A précis of Haushofer's contribution in Italian completed these introductory articles. In a little over a dozen pages, *Geopolitica* had situated itself within the cultural project of Bottai and established its own ambitions as an explicitly Italian expression of the European conversation in geopolitics. Moreover, it had also received the blessing of Europe's most famous geopolitician who, in turn, reproduced his own article and that of Bottai in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. Geopolitica was even advertised in Haushofer's journal as a sister journal of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. It was distributed by the same Heidelberg firm (Vowinkel Verlag) which published *Geopolitik* and sample copies were available to interested readers throughout Greater Germany. Geopolitica thus launched itself into the wider inter-war circulation of geopolitical ideas.

*Geopolitica*'s position in the midst of the European geopolitical conversation (about which Roletto and Massi were obviously so acutely aware) was cemented by the range of the editorial board's membership. By 1942 *Geopolitica* had boasted Haushofer, Ancel, Vicens Vives and Dimitri Jaranoff, professor of Geography at the University of Sofia, as members. Some three dozen Italians were mentioned, predominantly academics but with some Fascist organisers, military figures, and Italian representatives overseas. The editorial group included Mario Morandi, Dante Lunder, and Ugo Morichini in addition to Roletto and Massi. Bottai, Corrado Zoli, Giotto Dainelli, Amadeo Giannini, Carlo Boidi, Fulvio Suvich and Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata were Patrons. This list of collaborators impressed one commentator at least. Biasutti welcomed the publication and concurred with Bruno Francolini in indentifying an important educational role for *Geopolitica*.

### The geopolitical view of the modern world: a first example

The remainder of the first issue consisted of two main articles. The first was by Massi and entitled: *Democracy, colonies and raw materials*. Amidst the increasing complexity of the world economy Massi, as ever, was interested in the distribution of raw materials, the political control of their sites of production and of their distribution to the world powers. Such issues were amongst the most urgent of the day and

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114 Biasutti, 'Della nuova "Geopolitica"', p. 64.
manifestations of dynamic phenomena including alliances, imperial competition and ideological struggles. As such they acquired an "exquisitely geopolitical content. Consequently, the problem entered into the field of [Geopolitica's] investigations."\textsuperscript{118}

According to Massi,

...all the post-war policies of the 'Great democracies' had been directed towards the consolidation of their supremacy, the impediment of every alteration to the balance of power and the obstruction of any change to boundaries. The League of Nations... ...perpetuated this hegemony, neutralising every innovatory movement and force. Humanity would therefore continue to be divided into rich peoples, abundantly supplied with raw materials, tropical territories and a higher potential for industry and for an elevated standard of living, and poor peoples, hard pressed demographically, scarcely supplied with raw materials, at low standards of living\textsuperscript{119}

He continued on this point. Whilst the first group imported, the second exported; the first accumulated wealth and the second were scantily rewarded for their labour. This uneven development was sustained by the application of 'democratic principles' by these powerful states to the pliant world order.\textsuperscript{120} Such was Massi's analysis of the 1939 global political economy.

Instead, Massi called for a new world order: one which would provide a fairer distribution of global resources for the world's dispossessed nations. Deserving peoples would be measured by spiritual criteria such as historical tradition, national consciousness, cultural or religious eminence or, amongst others, the 'will to power and empire'. "It was these factors, upon which one could base a criteria for a geopolitical differentiation between states."\textsuperscript{121} It was also such factors which defined deserving nations: in Massi's analysis, these were the revisionist powers dispossessed by the Versailles treaty and other nationalist movements which opposed the established European imperial world order. His article was an attack on Britain, France and North America - whose machinations to maintain global commodity control he outlined.\textsuperscript{122} His call was for a redistribution of global colonial resources and a collaborative approach towards their exploitation.\textsuperscript{123} This path would avoid future conflict between the dispossessed revisionist nations and the democracies. Despite his earlier complaints at the inequity of the world order, Massi seemed

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{118}Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', p. 17.
  \item \textsuperscript{119}Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', pp. 18-19.
  \item \textsuperscript{120}Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', p. 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{121}Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', p. 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{122}Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', pp. 20-27.
  \item \textsuperscript{123}Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', pp. 28-34.
\end{itemize}
uncritical of this same colonial system if Italy and her allies were permitted a share of the spoils.

Finally, Massi's geopolitical perspective led him to the conclusion that the political elements of alliances and empires were the key to understanding the global economy. This was doubtless his aim for as *Per una Geopolitica Italiana* had stressed, it was in the analysis of such dynamic phenomena that *Geopolitica* claimed a special advantage. Four maps had illustrated his argument and abstracts in French, English and German followed.

Here was an example of the geopolitical imagination at work. A simple political geography perspective would have identified a given state's resources, population size, industrial capacity and other such 'static' phenomena. *Geopolitica* could work from this valuable empirical basis but also take into account the political contingencies of empire, treaties and mandated territories. Likewise, the ideology of the democracies and the maintenance of their hegemony through the League of Nations was the more ephemeral and dynamic currency which *Geopolitica* dealt in. It was such a transcendental vision which permitted *Geopolitica* its privileged understanding of the world.

Within contemporary Anglophone human geography, the vigorous movement which identifies itself as a critical geopolitics has frequently identified the significance of a geopolitical vision or a geopolitical gaze. It is just such a privileged vision, whereby the initiated geopolitician *observes* and thus *comprehends* the world as it really is, which the geopoliticians of Italy claimed to possess. Their shift from orthodox political geography to a geopolitical analysis had lent them an additional perspective from which to read a world which was, in turn, rendered increasingly legible to them; and this in a period when the world appeared to be getting more and more complex, messy and complicated. Despite this, the important realities of this inter-war world were supposedly revealed to geopolitical eyes. Such unique insight was a recurrent theme of the Italian geopoliticians and the geopolitical vision characterised their journal throughout its four years.

124 Massi, 'Democrazia, colonie e materie prime', p. 35.
Equally, Massi's article is emblematic of the essential modernity of *Geopolitica*. I will address this theme throughout the chapters which follow and am conscious that I risk a caricature of important concepts. Nevertheless, it is important to at least gesture towards these concerns and it helps here to highlight the modernist assumptions of Massi's project as an example.

Massi's first single-authored article in *Geopolitica* was not a challenge the colonial system *per se*, but an attempt to argue for Italy and her revisionist allies, a 'fairer' share of colonial wealth. Such a process would, he claimed, eliminate harmful and potentially de-stabilising inequalities from the global economy. That is, the colonial system was to be streamlined, improved and made more efficient in its exploitation of the colonial world once Italian territorial demands had been satisfied. Massi's only concern with colonialism was to acquire for Italy the resources and space it needed to match the other industrial economies of Europe and to attain a higher standard of living. He was quite open about this. In Italy, colonies were seen as a right for 'modern' European powers - hence the disquiet at the perceived unequal distribution of colonial space. For Massi, as throughout Europe, modern progress, indeed modern civilisation, was frequently associated with the European subjugation of the colonial world. Massi never questioned the rationale of near-universal European economic and political control of the third world - indeed, he had argued for precisely this project throughout all of his years in the ICF. Consequently, he would have considered the rational administration and control of colonial territory to be entirely justified. In supporting and legitimating this international political order, *Geopolitica* (albeit in a minor way) was a handmaiden to modernity.

In addition though, *Geopolitica's* own epistemology was in significant respects modernist. The geopoliticians claimed a privileged, rational and unique perspective from which an accurate appreciation of 'reality' might be obtained. Such Cartesian perspectives were equally modernist in their assumptions of exactitude and their own infallibility. *Geopolitica* had little time for alternative voices or for different readings of global geography. By reducing the world, and all of its different, complex and interwoven geographies into a singular geopolitical representation, they obliterated difference. Moreover, they did so from an authoritative position. The geopoliticians

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128Geopolitics was not alone as either a geographical or, indeed, western academic discourse in legitimating and reinforcing modernism, for further discussion, see: Godlewska, 'Napoleon's Geographers (1797-1815): Imperialists and soldiers of modernity'; or the seminal text which reveals *inter alia* the modernising assumptions of western knowledges: E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, London, 1979.
maintained that geopolitics constituted a dispassionate mode of access through which to understand, analyse and explain the world - it even had its own technological pretensions as a science and its own language of geopolitical mapping (see chapter five). As a supposedly transcendent and encompassing perspective it claimed to order a chaotic globe and to reveal what was really happening. As a consequence, the geopoliticians advocated their own expertise: a modern form of understanding for a modern world. Such assumptions render Geopolitica a modernist discourse.

Geopolitica is also gendered. Its heroic claims to an uncontested understanding of reality and the triumphalism of some passages are only the more obvious manifestations. Critical geopoliticians are increasingly recognising the gendered way in which the distanced eye and supposed objectivity and realism of the geopolitical expert is inherently masculinist. There is consensus too that geographical science is essentially gendered as a objective pursuit which constructs nature, or 'unscientific' knowledges as feminine in contrast to the rationale, objective masculine mind. Fascist Italy treated women as mothers and home-makers. They had no place in the masculine world of industry, the military, government or the academy. These were very much mens' world and mens' activities and, moreover, the realms which were considered to be truly 'Fascist'. As I have suggested already, Geopolitica was produced by hard-line Fascists and colonial agitators. Their prejudiced view upon the world are perhaps to be expected.

In January 1939 Geopolitica also published brief notes upon French colonial agricultural practice, Italian rural geography and reviews of books, statistics, the foreign press and a notice board of recent international affairs. However, these were minor contributions. The final aspect of Geopolitica which I want to draw out here is exemplified by the only other significant article in this first edition. Ugo Morichini, the journal's Rome-based sub-editor and an official of the Italian Fascist Business Association's Education office contributed an article called 'A brief history of twenty-five centuries'. This article traced the geography which underpinned the

129 Ó Tuathail, 'Problematising geopolitics', esp. p. 270; Dalby, 'Gender and critical geopolitics'.
130 Rose, Feminism and geography.
134 U. Morichini, 'Breve storia dei venti cinque secoli', Geopolitica, 1, 1 (1939), pp. 36-41.
growth of Classical Rome from city state to the maximum extent of the empire under Trajan. From the geographical configurations of Rome's seven hills to the geographical unity of the Mediterranean - the *Mare interno* or *Mare Nostrum* - whilst it was under Roman rule.

The importance of Rome as an historical precedent for Fascist expansionism is much commented upon, although less frequently interrogated.\(^{135}\) It is increasingly apparent though, that the memory of Classical Rome, a sense of *Romanità* (Romaness), was significant in the maintenance of the popular approval which the regime enjoyed throughout the 'years of consent'.\(^{136}\) Equally, in many sources I have uncovered - including this one - the extent of Rome's ancient possessions is used to argue for the restitution of these lands to the 'new Roman imperialism' of Fascism. However, aside from the historical arguments advanced to legitimate expansionism, this article is noteworthy for what it assumes and for what it leaves unsaid. Nowhere in *Geopolitica* is the contemporary unity of the Italian state questioned - and this despite the appalling disparities in wealth, literacy, life-expectancy, living standards and in the functioning of civil society which characterised 1930s Italy. Equally, the study of the state as an object of geographical investigation - a concept which Massi and Roletto had to propose strenuously in the early 1930s - is unquestioned. Consequently, the legitimacy or otherwise of *Geopolitica* 's geographical analysis of states and international relations is side-stepped neatly. Likewise, in adopting the assumption of a unified Italian state as the 'given' basis from which the remainder of *Geopolitica* 's investigations begin, Roletto and Massi avoided the uncomfortable fractures and uneven development of the Italian state itself. They were free to argue an international role for Italy and to direct their gaze overseas to the territories subject to Italian expansionist ambitions and to what they considered the inequitable relationships of the international political system. Their only engagement with the Italian state, as here in this first issue, was to emphasise its glorious history and imperial heritage. Their conscious silence about its internal fractures helped them deflect attention towards their international geopolitical perspective.

\(^{135}\) Denis Mack Smith, for example, called his 1976 tome on Fascist Foreign Policy "Mussolini's Roman Empire", although references to the cult of antiquity or the use of Roman precedent to claim territory in the twentieth century barely rated more than a line or two. Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire*.

\(^{136}\) Visser, 'The cult of the Romanità'; also: Gentile, *Il culto del Littorio*. 

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On 15 January 1939, Roletto and Massi met Mussolini. Accompanied by Bottai, they took a copy of the first *Geopolitica* to present to *Il Duce*. As they reported, their leader was 'most satisfied'-and in-a brief, lucid and concrete conversation, laid bare the situation of geographical studies... ...with a synthetic definitions and at the same time charismatic, individual and revealing insight." As they recorded their moments in Palazzo Venezia,

"*Geopolitica*, he said, is much more than political geography", and he spoke then of our duties, assuring us that he would be following them, he concluded: "I will be the most attentive and most assiduous reader of your review". Fired by these words and conscious of their duty, the Director, Collaborators and Editors of *Geopolitica* closed ranks and set about their work with great energy.

The *Duce* had directed that the review "...must become the political and imperial conscience of the Italian people." This first edition of the journal established the perspectives and ambitions of Italy's geopoliticians. In the next three chapters of this thesis, I will consider some of the ways in which this geopolitical vision was argued and illustrated.

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137 Il Direttori di "Geopolitica" ricevuti dal Duce', *Geopolitica*, 1, 2 (1939), pp. 75-76.
138 Il Direttori di "Geopolitica" ricevuti dal Duce', *Geopolitica*, 1, 2 (1939), p. 75.
139 Il Direttori di "Geopolitica" ricevuti dal Duce', *Geopolitica*, 1, 2 (1939), p. 75.
140 Il Direttori di "Geopolitica" ricevuti dal Duce', *Geopolitica*, 1, 2 (1939), p. 75.
Chapter 5.

Mapping the geopolitical imagination: the geopolitical cartography of *Geopolitica*

*Introduction*

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Roletto and Massi reserved a particular role for cartography within their journal. This chapter is an account of the distinctive strain of geopolitical cartography which was developed and used rigorously, consistently and very frequently in *Geopolitica* and in other publications by the geopoliticians. It narrates the development of what I believe to be a generic type of mapping - geopolitical cartography, and mentions the circulation and re-negotiation of these ideas and techniques around Europe as part of the geopolitical conversation. It also tells of how this cartography was supposed to articulate visually the geopolitical imagination of Fascist Italy, and was supposed to express this vision above and beyond geography. Finally, I consider some of the techniques of these maps and the ways in which they represented and misrepresented the geography of the inter-war world.

Cartographic concerns in the inter-war world

The cartoon above was published in *Current History*, the American popular journal of current affairs. It was reproduced by Karl Haushofer in *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* in 1939 and is evidence of the widespread appreciation and concern about the political role of maps in the inter-war world. When hostilities commenced in 1939, this concern grew significantly as cartography, as ever, became a prominent player in warfare. The efforts of Nazi propaganda like *The War in Maps* atlas have already been discussed, as has the furore which attended George Renner’s map of a possible future world order. Meanwhile, other geographers were attempting to use widely-publicised maps with new global projections in another attempt to increase the American geographical imagination. And such efforts were not confined to geographers or 'security intellectuals', but also by the arbiters of popular geographical imaginations like the *National Geographic* magazine as well. In Europe, a political scandal broke over the so-called Reynaud map which was said to exist in the French Foreign minister’s Quai d’Orsay office and to have France’s preferred post-war territorial alignment of Europe etched upon it. Maps were becoming more and more politicised, although often not without indignant or scathing criticism.

In Europe, as we have already seen, concern about the particular map-making style of *Geopolitik* was expressed frequently by Bloch and Febvre in the mid 1930s. This was part of their wider attempt to police the cartography of the Third Reich, from the maps in its school books to its historical atlases. Equally, the maps of Nazi Germany garnered much coverage, comment and reaction in The United States where they were another pillar of the hysteria which surrounded the assumed threats of *Geopolitik*.

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And like *Geopolitik*, they were subjected to a range of hysterical responses as well as a number of more measured criticisms which called for Americans to turn these new mapping techniques against Germany.

The more sensationalist headlines announced that 'geopolitical maps were 'weapons', 'liars', a form of 'magic geography' or 'propaganda' which signalled 'war on the visual front'. All were united in the need to recognise this new threat, but as with the perceived problem of *Geopolitik*, there were differing views in America as to the appropriate response. Some indignant authors railed against the sinister prostitution of scientific-cartographic method to Nazi ends. Hans Speier, for example, complained that:

Propagandists [rediscovered the] symbolic values in maps, and by exploiting them, turn geography into a kind of magic. In propaganda maps, truth and accuracy of presentation are of interest only to the extent that they are instrumental to propagandistic effectiveness. The propagandist's primary concern is never the truth of an idea but its successful communication to a public.

And, as he concluded: "The propagandist who uses [maps] borrows the prestige of science and at the same time violates its spirit." Other writers were keen to denigrate the German maps but qualified their comments with caveats which called for the development of a 'just' and 'democratic' American geopolitical cartography. For instance, Hans Weigert began his commentary by lamenting that, "...the map has become a psychological weapon in a warring world where the souls of men are as strongly attacked as their lives." But he concluded that "...the map as a weapon is not a secret, a mystery, or something on which Hitler has a monopoly. But to meet this weapon and to use it ourselves we... must learn how to read, how to digest a map." And thus reoriented as a 'good weapon', rendering the nation 'map-conscious' and, consequently, 'world-conscious', he concluded, "it can bring hope to the suppressed nations and fright to their suppressers. And here, too, the attack is the best defence". Other writers agreed. American geographers were even told that: "As map makers they must strive to make their maps accurate and in harmony with the

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8Speier, 'Magic geography', p. 313.
10Weigert, 'Maps are weapons', p. 528.
11Weigert, 'Maps are weapons', p. 530.
12Weigert, 'Maps are weapons', p. 530.
13Soffner, 'War on the visual front', esp. pp. 475-476.
democratic ideals of our cause." Once again it seems that the American use of such 'unscientific' practices was an opportunity for democracy, let alone for those American geographers who saw a chance to widen the national geographical imagination further.

Yet although the appropriate American response to these maps was debated, the notion that Haushofer and his geopoliticians produced a regular supply of sophisticated propaganda maps was never queried. In 1942 Whittlesey included a lengthy analysis of their rationales and techniques in his government report, and Richard Strausz-Hupé preached:

Maps of every kind and description are the indispensable means of diffusing the findings of Geopolitik. There is, according to Haushofer, no valid geopolitical theory which cannot be illustrated by a map, and German map-making has met his challenge. Geopolitical maps cover

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14 Quam, 'The use of maps in propaganda', p. 32; my emphasis.
16 From: R. von Schumacher, 'Zur Theorie der Raumdarstellung', Zeitschrift für Geopolitik, 11 (1934), pp. 635-652. The map was supposed to demonstrate the supposedly intolerable threat posed to Germany by the Czechoslovakian airforce due to the geography of the two nations' frontiers. It does not consider the threat which Germany presented, and realised, towards its smaller neighbour.
17 Whittlesey, German strategy of world conquest, chapter 7, pp. 107-159, and on 'Maps' especially, pp. 122-155.
every conceivable subject and are designed for every conceivable audience. *Geopolitik is a sermon in maps.*

Given the lack of attention paid to geopolitics in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, where *Geopolitik* was mentioned; these notions were perpetuated. In 1963, in one of the few political geography textbooks of the decade, Norman Pounds repeated that:

Haushofer made his points with the aid of maps, which were simple, striking, and misleading. Arrows were used to suggest action, expansion or attack; shading was used to suggest the associations which Haushofer desired to convey, and his maps were drawn, not upon the projection which gave the least distortion, but upon that which emphasised the relationships which he wished to exaggerate. He was a master of cartography as a tool of propaganda used for nationalistic purposes.

Meanwhile, mass-circulation texts of the time, like John Cole's *Geography of World Affairs* included the geopolitical map reproduced in figure 5.1. As a result, the impression which informed the 1980s revision of geopolitical histories was one in which *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* had indeed been a sermon in maps. Even the very valuable work of Guntram Herb which has recently provided a more nuanced picture of the 'persuasive-cartography' produced under Nazism, nevertheless left unchallenged the belief that Haushofer's journal was replete with adroit propaganda cartography.

My argument here is that far from representing the pinnacle of geopolitical mapping in inter-war Europe, the cartography of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* was far less frequent and sophisticated than that of *Geopolitica*. In addition, what was quite clearly a generic type of *geopolitical cartography*, a form of mapping for expressing geopolitical ideas and perspectives, accompanied geopolitical theories and writings as they migrated around the inter-war world. Along this circuitous path these ideas were re-worked and re-negotiated in each national context, but nevertheless remained recognisable expressions of geopolitical cartography. I will quickly introduce this circulation of ideas before analysing Italian geopolitical cartography, its origins and practices.

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18Strausz-Hupé, *Geopolitics*, p. 114, my emphasis.
Geopolitical cartography

When Derwent Whittlesey penned his section upon cartography, he concluded his examples with a series of maps which portrayed the Mediterranean basin and a range of geopolitical axes which had dissected it at various historical moments. They were supposed to be emblematic of the best possible examples of geopolitical mapping practice. Yet these maps were not drawn by a German geopolitician, but by Mario Morandi - the chief cartographer of Italian Geopolitica and a close colleague of Roletto and Massi. Indeed the maps had illustrated Massi's contribution to Haushofer's Festschrift edition of his journal in 1939. And although Morandi's work would be eventually reproduced by Haushofer in the final volumes of Zeitschrift für Geopolitik as a salutary example of geopolitical-mapping excellence, Morandi owed a considerable degree of his techniques to those promoted and developed by Haushofer and his colleagues in the early 1930s.

It was in 1928 that Haushofer first identified the need for German Geopolitik to develop its own form of cartography with which to counteract the maps which the allies had used at Versailles to impose an 'unfair' settlement upon Germany. In calling for 'suggestive maps', Haushofer emphasised the need for selective map-making whereby features that supported the chosen argument were amplified and highlighted whereas those which were unhelpful or contradictory were omitted from the image.

His call was heeded by Richard von Schumacher, one of the more prolific German geopoliticians and one who sustained a strong interest in the sub-discipline's methodology. In 1934 he theorised a reductionist, simplified form of mapping which would be accessible and comprehensible to the average German in the street. A year later he published a paper entitled 'The theory of geopolitical signs' which contained a series of over 130 graphical signs and symbols with which the geopolitical cartographer might represent movement, resistance, attack, encirclement and various other geopolitical phenomena which were ill-catered for by conventional

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21Whittlesey, 'German strategy of world conquest', pp. 154-155.
22Morandi's work was reproduced with glowing comments, presumably by Haushofer, see, for example, figure 6.7 reproduced in: Zeitschrift für Geopolitik, 19, 5 (1942), pp. 252-253.
25Gyorgy, Geopolitics, p. 192.
26von Schumacher, 'Zur Theorie der Raumdarstellung'.
'static' map symbols (figure 5.2). At one level these symbols were supposed to enable the drafting of the widely-comprehensible maps von Schumacher advocated. Yet at another level, they were an attempt to wrest from the graphical-language of cartography a new vocabulary of symbols by which geopoliticians might represent the dynamic elements of the world system which they claimed to identify and understand. Schumacher had developed a way to visually-articulate the geopolitical perspective.

Figure 5.3
Geopolitical cartography symbols (after von Schumacher)

A mapping-language which could portray the "degrees, relationships, antagonisms and collisions of political power" which Europe's new geopoliticians sought to

highlight might expect to find a number of adherents amidst contributors to the 'geopolitical conversation'.29 This was indeed the case, and the newly-explicit relationship between maps and politics were acknowledged by those involved in the geopolitical conversation - on both sides of the Atlantic (as the cartoon in figure 5.1 reveals). Moreover, I would label this 'new strain' of cartography 'geopolitical cartography' rather than 'persuasive cartography' or 'suggestive cartography' because it was a very particular type of map which was honed amidst the 'geopolitical conversation' to articulate the various geopolitical imaginations of inter-war Europe.

Likewise, the title 'propaganda cartography' is rendered redundant by the advances made in the critical study of cartography in the last ten years. The late Brian Harley showed us that all maps, as social texts, are inevitably and immutably politicised - they all reflect to a greater or lesser degree the contexts in which they were made and the contexts they were made for.30 One consequence is that the old dualism of cartographic histories is no longer tenable. A neat distinction between 'good', objective and 'scientific' maps and 'bad', biased, subjective and politicised maps, propaganda maps, cannot be sustained if we recognise that all maps, whether consciously or otherwise, are political. Propaganda maps, such as those used by Haushofer, are just one end (admittedly an extreme) of this sliding scale between maps which are comparatively apolitical and those which are blatantly so. Thus, a discrete distinction between such 'bad' maps and the remainder of cartography will not work.31 American geographers and cartographers of the 1940s used this strategy to avoid the genuine interrogation of such maps. I am suggesting that these maps are relevant because of their attempts to articulate the geopolitical imagination. Equally, their histories in inter-war Europe amount to much more than a simple sermon in maps from Haushofer and the Geopolitikers.

A further point I want to introduce is that, just as with the wider 'geopolitical conversation' which circulated around inter-war Europe, so too did this nascent 'geopolitical cartography' journey through the geopolitical discourses of the inter-war world. From its Germanic roots, as we have seen, it earned the ire of Annalistes in France and the censure of commentators in the United States. In America, its maps

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29 These words were von Schumacher's: von Schumacher, 'Zur theorie der Geopolitischen signatur', p. 251, (reference from Herb, 'Persuasive cartography', p. 293.)
30 Harley, 'Deconstructing the map'; Harley, 'Maps, knowledge and power'.
31 Harley himself, despite his wider project, still draws a distinction between such deliberately-political 'propaganda maps' and mainstream cartography which is politicised by virtue of its textuality; Harley, 'Maps, knowledge and power', p. 287.
were frequently reproduced.\(^\text{32}\) In addition, the series of geopolitical signs were often reprinted as proof of the meticulous and detailed lengths Nazi geopoliticians would go to pursue their 'pseudo-science'.\(^\text{33}\) In Europe too, such cartography attracted attention. Geopolitical mapping appeared in the Finnish geopolitical movement and geopolitical cartography was prominent enough to provoke complaints about the "profusion of arrows" and "...the geopolitical worship of arrows."\(^\text{34}\)

In Spain, Jaime Vicens Vives paid geopolitical cartography a great deal of attention. I have already mentioned that his 1940 *España, geopolítica del estadio y del imperio* contained over eighty geopolitical maps and reserved a central role in the book for these images. One example is reproduced in figure 5.4 below. The monochromatic colour scheme and the stark angularity of the lines had all been advocated as good 'suggestive' mapping technique by von Schumacher in the 1930s. Evidence that Vives Vives had read and absorbed von Schumacher's prescriptions, even to translating directly the term 'suggestive maps', can be found in his introductory chapter, in a section entitled: 'The geopolitical graphic'.\(^\text{35}\) He wrote: "Cartographic representation isn't a secondary element of geopolitics, but is completely and inseparably integrated into these theories..."\(^\text{36}\) And he continued:

> The geopolitical maps must have an essential quality: it must be suggestive, that is, in their words, it must express in a manner which is perspicacious, impressive and, therefore durable, an act, a tendency or a geopolitical concept.\(^\text{37}\)

Moreover, before his narrative embarked upon the series of 84 maps, he too reproduced some of the signos geopoliticos which von Schumacher had developed five years earlier. He had some words of caution about the expertise required to make these techniques work consistently well, but -as the map below shows- he eagerly adopted the 'fronts' and arrows of geopolitical map-making.\(^\text{38}\) However, quite clearly for Vicens Vives, geopolitical cartography was the way to articulate the geopolitical

\(^{22}\)Whittlesey, 'German strategy of world conquest', pp. 128-155; Weigert, 'Maps are weapons', pp. 529-530; Speier, 'Magic geography', p. 319; Quam, 'The use of maps in propaganda', pp. 23-30; Soffner, 'War on the visual front', pp. 68 and 72.

\(^{23}\)Whittlesey, 'German strategy of world conquest', pp. 130-139; Quam, 'The use of maps in propaganda', p. 22; Weigert, 'Maps are weapons', p. 530.

\(^{24}\)For the maps, see V. Auer, 'Tuleva Suomi talousmaantieteelliseä kokonaisuutena', *Terra*, 53 (1941), 206-217 (reproduced in Paasi, 'The rise and fall of Finnish geopolitics', pp. 60 and 62.) The quotations originate in I. Leiviskä, *Poliittinen maantiesed (geopolitiikka)*, Helsinki, 1938, p. 6, and, again, are drawn from Paasi, p. 55.


\(^{26}\)Vicens Vives, *España, geopolítica del estadio y del imperio* p. 23

\(^{27}\)Vicens Vives, *España, geopolítica del estadio y del imperio* p. 23

\(^{28}\)Vicens Vives, *España, geopolítica del estadio y del imperio* p. 24, these words of caution, and Vicens Vives' definition of geopolitical cartography, were also reproduced in Toschi, *Appunti di Geografia politica (Geopolitica)*, third edition, 1943, p. 65.
imagination. It was this understanding circulating throughout Europe of the potential of geopolitical cartography which the Italians appreciated and fully-recognised too.

**Figure 5.4**

Accompanying commentary entitled: *Estructuación geopolítica de la península* 39

Given that Massi was reading *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* throughout the 1930s, he very probably came across the work of von Schumacher in the original language. Regardless, the phenomenon of geopolitical cartography had already received coverage in the Italian geographical literature by the late 1930s. von Schumacher's schema for the construction of geopolitical maps was reprinted, after Vicens Vives' reproduction, by Umberto Toschi in 1940 in his highly successful introductory text to political geography. 40 By the third edition of 1943 the book had been given the subtitle of 'Geopolitica' and was the most overtly pro-Fascist of Toschi's seven

39 Vicens Vives, España, geopolítica del estadio y del imperio p. 32 (commentary on p. 33)
editions, being littered with quotations from Mussolini. In Toschi's opinion, the geopolitical map had to be clear and able to encompass 'abstract' features (such as sentiments and spiritual impulses) and 'real' features (objective facts which, in his words, could receive an abstract geopolitical significance). He discussed the schematic designs in black and white of von Schumacher and concluded that:

For all of these reasons the construction and design of a geopolitical maps must command the spirit of synthesis, a critical faculty for selection, shrewdness of design, and in the final analysis, a delicate sense which encompasses all of the existing variables without loss to the clarity of expression and its scientific credibility.

His comments reveal that within the wider Italian geographical discourse, geopolitical cartography was considered a discrete practice and one which demanded a deal of subtlety and sophistication. By 1943, Toschi would have read the final number of Geopolitica and learnt much about geopolitical cartography from the journal. For the idea of expressing the geopolitical imagination through geopolitical cartography took a particularly firm hold upon the geopoliticians from Trieste. Initially through their work for the ICF and then consistently and rigorously in the pages of Geopolitica, the geographers around Roletto and Massi developed and advanced perhaps the most sophisticated oeuvre of geopolitical cartography of the period. This history follows.

*Italian geopolitical maps - origins*

The use of cartography for political purposes was a long-standing tradition in Italy. As the Fascist movement was forming in 1919, the Liberal state was using maps to argue its case for a defensible northern frontier at the Alps. The public and political

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41 Toschi, *Appunti di Geografia politica (Geopolitica)*, third edition, 1943, p. 66. That the phrase *Geopolitica* was allowed as a subtitle was perhaps another mark of the advances the term had made under Fascism.
45 Anon, *Why Italy must have her frontier on the Brenner*. 1918, (no place of publication). This pamphlet had also been published in Italian and was translated into English probably in order to influence the English speaking press and politicians before the Versailles Peace conference. It used geographical arguments to support the drawing of a new 'natural' Northern frontier at the Brenner pass (p. 3). Once these territories were 'redeemed' to Italy, other geographical texts were used to cement their *Italianità* (Italianes): L. Giannitrapani, *Le terre redente. Venezia Tridentina, Venezia Giulia, Dalmazia*, Florence, 1919. Maps too were used in this way: G. Bertoldo, *Carta-base dei nuovi confini d'Italia, secondo le aspirazioni nazionali*, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara, 1919; A. Dardano, *La nuova Europa politica secondo l'ultime convenzioni internazionale*, Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara, 1922.
roles of cartography continued into the Fascist era, with wall maps of the new Italian empire appearing in the public squares of towns and cities, in the propaganda, murals and the many exhibitions of the regime.\textsuperscript{46} Equally, as we have seen in figure 2.1, a form of stylised geopolitical mapping was printed in Italian school books in an attempt to familiarise future Italian generations with Italian expansionist aims and to inculcate in them a wider geographical imagination. Maps were commonplace in Fascist Italy.

As committed geographers, Ernesto Massi and Giorgio Roletto had been using maps for years.\textsuperscript{47} Massi especially appears to have appreciated the particular use of cartography to the kinds of geography he wished to pursue. In \textit{Lineamenti di Geografia politica} they produced what I would call embryonic geopolitical maps which attempted to portray something of their dynamic political geography.\textsuperscript{48} \textit{La coltura Geografica} also included thematic maps which used monochromatic designs to display particular patterns. Maps containing arrows were also published in an attempt to portray their 'dynamic political geography'.\textsuperscript{49}

However, the first geopolitical map produced by the Triestene geopoliticians was published in 1937 and was drawn by Mario Morandi - the man whose remarkable maps would remain perhaps the most memorable aspect of Italian geopolitics. Encompassed within an article by Massi which addressed 'The colonial problem in Germany', Morandi used maps to highlight the ex-German colonies which had been made mandates after the First World-war.\textsuperscript{50} Massi, his German sympathies to the fore, argued that German demographic and economic problems could be solved by the restitution of the German empire's former colonies.\textsuperscript{51} He argued that their mandate status was a direct consequence of their various locations - blocking the \textit{direttrice geopolitica} (geopolitical principles) of the British Empire.\textsuperscript{52} This idea was translated into cartography: German East Africa (now Tanzania) is emphasised by its dark tone

\textsuperscript{46}Wall maps can still be seen in Rome (On the \textit{Via dei Fori Imperiali}, I will discuss these again in chapter 7), and also, to my knowledge, in Benevento and Padua. On their wider use, see contemporary comment from Kemp, 'Mussolini: Italy's geographer-in-chief', p. 140; examples of the regime's use of cartography in exhibitions are also to be found in: P. Gioia, 'L'impero, la Libia e Rodi all'esposizione internazionale di New York', \textit{Rivista delle Colonie}, 12 (1939), pp. 1625-1630.

\textsuperscript{47}Roletto, \textit{Lezioni di Geografia politica-economica}, pp. 17, 47, 54, 58, 76, 95 and 117.

\textsuperscript{48}Roletto and Massi, \textit{Lineamenti di Geografia Politica}, pp. 35, 63, 69, 71, 75, and 79. The map on page 35 was signed 'Erma', a pseudonym of Massi's. It replicated the image of the British Empire as an 'Octopus', centred on the British Isles with its tentacles reaching to all corners of the globe. Although a popular image in anti-British propaganda of the time, it was also used in \textit{Zeitschrift für Geopolitik}, where Massi may have adopted the idea.

\textsuperscript{49}Erma, 'Dalla Quarta Sponda', p. 14; EM, 'India', pp. 143 and 145; Massi, 'Cipro', p. 232; E. Massi, 'La Transahariana Francesce', \textit{La coltura geografica}, 2, 5 (1931), pp. 118-131, map on p. 120

\textsuperscript{50}Massi, 'Il problema coloniale in Germania'.

\textsuperscript{51}Massi, 'Il problema coloniale in Germania', pp. 3-7.

\textsuperscript{52}Massi, 'Il problema coloniale in Germania', p. 4.
and is enclosed between two black arrows to North and South. These represent the British Cape-to-Cairo notion of a swathe of colonial-territory from the Mediterranean coast to South Africa. This British direttrice-geopolitica was dissected by German East Africa, hence the seizure of German colonies at Versailles.

![Geopolitical map from an article entitled 'The colonial problem in Germany'](#)

Elsewhere on the map, the German idea of Mittelafrika (a colonial swathe across the continent from the Cameroon's to Tanzania) was portrayed, but in half-tone lines rather than the bold, dark lines of the British geopolitical principle which had defeated this German ambition. For the first time in Italy, geopolitical ideas were thus translated into the language of geopolitical cartography.

Little is known about Mario Morandi. The son of a forester, he seems to have become involved with Milanese Fascist circles in the mid 1930s. His politics are demonstrated by a few relatively extreme articles throughout his Fascist career: in October 1937, for example, when the alliance with Germany was unpopular with many Italians, Morandi, like Massi, was arguing for the restitution of German

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54Interview, Ernesto Massi, Rome, 1 June 1994.
colonies in Africa. With such sentiments he would have been welcomed into the Milanese branch of the ICF and this appears to have been the case. It was doubtless here that he met Ernesto Massi and became involved in the Triestene circle of geopoliticians. It was the ICF which provided support and a base for his activities and the geopolitical cartography which he developed and produced from the late 1930s until 1942.

His maps first featured in an August 1937 pamphlet by Massi that dealt with the distribution and control of global resources such as rubber and cotton after the First World War. Here Massi concluded that the extant distribution of colonies and particularly French and British dominance in Africa, was unfair. A more equal distribution, with resources controlled and exploited by nations such as Italy, would be of benefit to all. Such a conclusion was typical of Massi's arguments in the late 1930s. But of relevance here is the way in which he introduced geopolitical cartography into his work to explain and illuminate his point. From 1937 it was obvious that in the work sponsored by the ICF and in Geopolitica, Morandi's geopolitical cartography was to be clearly privileged.

The maps from Massi's pamphlet also featured in the August edition of Impero Italiano, enjoying a full page of coverage. In the same edition was a note which reported that a cartographic office had been established at the ICF's Milanese base. This was in response to a perceived requirement for maps that could represent the 'geographical, political, military and economic factors' that were featured in the numerous lectures and courses provided by the institute. The local branch had been working on maps to represent such phenomena 'synthetically and concisely' for the past year or so, and were now able to open:

...a cartographic office which, under the guidance of a specialist in the subject, was preparing a series of original maps, graphics and diagrams illustrating the various physical, economic and political aspects of Italian East Africa and of colonial problems in general.

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55Mor., 'Il blocco africano francese a l'asse Roma-Berlino', Impero Italiano 2, 10 (1937), p. 1. In this article, he proposed an axis connecting Rome with the former German colony of the Cameroons. On one of his first geopolitical maps, he drew an arrow to represent this link travelling due South from Rome and bisecting French West Africa.

56E. Massi, La partecipazione delle colonie alla produzione delle Materie prime, Milano, 1937, (a second edition was published in 1939). This work is typical of Massi's interests in the second half of the 1930s on African resources, their distribution, transportation and political control, for instance, E. Massi, 'L'Africa nell'economia mondiale', Conferenza di Alta Cultura Coloniale, Fasc. 3, 1937 and Massi, 'Il problema coloniale in Germania'.

57Massi, La partecipazione delle colonie;
58Impero Italiano 2, 8 (1937), p. 3, in the launch of the subsection 'Collana di studi Coloniali'.
59'Un ufficio cartografico istituto in sede', Impero Italiano 2, 8 (1937), p. 6.
60'Un ufficio cartografico istituto in sede', p. 6.
Furthermore, the local branch hoped to produce an "...absolutely original geographical map destined for use in the schools and offices of the empire," but one which would "...also be of use to teaching and scientific organisations in the Mother country"\(^6\)

Finally, the branch hoped that all those who participated in its activities in the forthcoming year would "take the opportunity to use the new facilities and would demonstrate their scientific phenomena within this new cartographic medium."\(^6\)

With the arrival of the academic year 1937-1938 the geopoliticians had already recognised the potential and the synoptic qualities which cartography might contribute to their project. They saw such maps as being of sufficient worth to warrant the support of a dedicated cartographic office. It was under the auspices of this office that Mario Morandi worked to develop his craft and to create a synoptic genre of maps which could encompass all of the phenomena and the dynamism of the contemporary world.\(^6\) The geopolitical perspective was to be visualised and etched onto maps. Two years later he would put his skills to regular and quite spectacular use as the main cartographer of *Geopolitica*.

*The Geopolitical Synthesis*

The January 1939 issue of *Geopolitica* included a double-page map which was the first in a series entitled 'geopolitical synthesis'. This series would eventually run to over forty different images - one in each monthly edition of the journal. Called the geopolitical *synthesis*, these images proposed to incorporate all of the elements of the modern world in geopolitical maps. They sought to articulate the geopolitical vision of Fascist Italy and brought this unique perspective to bear at a global scale. More than any other examples, these images indicate the level of sophistication which Morandi brought to geopolitical map-making. The maps were isolated images which stood-alone and were scarcely ever accompanied by any text or explanatory comment. They are testimony to the faith *Geopolitica*'s editors placed in the communicative ability of maps and their capacity to express the geopolitical imagination. They were, in effect, a geopolitical topography of the modern world.

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\(^6\) 'Un ufficio cartografico istituto in sede', p. 6.
\(^6\) 'Un ufficio cartografico istituto in sede', p. 6.
\(^6\) A geopolitical map by Morandi also graced the October edition of *Impero Italiano*. Morandi, in a self-authored article, proposed an axis connecting Rome with the former Cameroons colonial territory of Italy's new German ally. He drew this arrow travelling due South from Rome and bisecting French West Africa: Mor., 'Il blocco africano francese a l'asse Roma-Berlino', *Impero Italiano*, 2, 10 (1937), p. 1.
The first map was introduced by a framed note at the foot of the preceding page. It was an introduction to the concept of geopolitical maps and a guide which demonstrated how to read one. It began:

---On-the-following-page—we-publish.the.first.of.our.geopolitical.synthesis. The geopolitical maps serves to complement the geographical map. For this reason, we refer the attention of our readers to the naval bases, communication routes, oil pipelines and the geopolitical gravitation and principles of the countries in this delicate and crucial point of the Mediterranean sector in which the European powers encounter a front of young Asiatic nationalism and pan-Arabic and pan-Islamic movements.

The position of Italy, based upon the importance of our naval bases (in the Aegean, Libya and the Red Sea), represents a challenge to the Islamic politics. Amongst other things, the reader may notice in Egypt examples of the economic and cultural penetration of the country by The Arab nations.64

SINTESI GEOPOLITICHE

M. I - IL VICOLO E MEDIO ORIENTE

![Geopolitical synthesis no. 1: The near and middle East](image)

This readers' guide to geopolitical cartography is significant. Firstly, it consciously positions geopolitical maps as separate and different to geographical maps. Secondly, it represents these maps as possessed of a unique and privileged perspective which explains the geopolitical realities underlying the contemporary politics of the near and

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64Geopolitica, 1, 1 (1939), p. 57.
middle East. So not only is geopolitics established as a crucial and insightful way of understanding the contemporary world, but the geopolitical map is established as the new and best way of visualising and comprehending this perspective. The geopolitical imagination and its visual expression are to be found only in this new journal which demonstrated its recognition of 'geopolitical maps' as a distinct category by granting them their own section in the yearly index. Only one other readers' guide to a geopolitical map ever appeared, two months later in the third edition. This indicates that these images were supposed to be easily interpreted. It is also further proof of the editorial faith invested in these maps.

The most striking element of this first map is the large serrated 'front' which divides the image down the centre. Vicens Vives labelled this geopolitical symbol the innocuous-sounding 'zig-zag', but it clearly has its roots in a tradition of military mapping wherein it represents aggression. This was the meaning which was translated through the geopolitical conversation to Morandi. Here the symbol signifies the 'Nationalistic front of the Islamic states of the Saidabad pact', a mutual-aid treaty signed by Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Turkey, Egypt, the Arabian principates and Iraq in the early 1930s. The other most noticeable features, by virtue of their dark tone, are the circular symbols containing the icons of The Soviet Union, Turkey and Italian Fascism. These symbols, and the arrows which extend from them, are intended to represent the political pressure exerted on the region by these powers. The serrated front of the Islamic states seems to counteract this pressure, as does the 'unknown quantity' of Arabic nationalism in the Arabian peninsular.

Having established these various contestants in the region, Morandi also demonstrates why the area is important in geopolitical terms. As was pointed out in the guide to the map, the reader had first to take note of the 'communication routes and oil pipelines' which characterise the region. These routes link the oil fields of Iraq and Iran (behind the 'Nationalist-Islamic front' and subject to the creeping advances of Soviet Pressure which outflanked this front from the North) to the Mediterranean, that is, to the Western world. And as the reader's guide stressed, Italy -thanks to its Eastern Mediterranean naval bases- was in the vanguard of European attempts to contest the region with Islamic-nationalism. In this 'crucial sector', Italy was providing the bulwark against Islamic-nationalism and its threat to the West's oil.

The map was an attempt to portray some of the very real phenomena of the inter-war world such as political pressure, nationalism, and the political control of resources. In

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so doing it articulated a geopolitical perspective which explicitly claimed an ability to identify such factors. However, the map is also a socially-constructed text and a clever piece of draughtsmanship which reflects Morandi's Fascist sentiments, his nationalism and the wider cultures of Fascist Italy.

For a start, Italy was not the most significant 'Western' power in the region. That distinction fell to Britain. Furthermore, the French presence in Syria was far more significant than the more distant Italian presence. Despite this, the French are not represented on the map and the British, although the predominant power in the Eastern Mediterranean, are shown in a very understated manner. In contrast, the Italian base at Rhodes which was geographically-distant from the area is portrayed by a large, bold black circle. Italian bases in Libya and the Red Sea, which aren't even within the areal-scope of this large-scale map also enjoy symbols far larger than those allotted to adjacent powers or to Britain or France.

Secondly, in representing Italy as the western bastion against Islamic nationalism, Morandi tapped into the latent orientalism of the 'West' and into Italian histories in particular. These recounted the struggles of Rome, the Papacy and Venice against the East and Islam. More recent opponents resurrected here included the Ottoman empire in the 1911-1912 Libyan wars and the threat of Bolshevism which Fascism claimed to have vanquished in Italy in 1922. Finally, oil was a highly sensitive issue in an Italy still smarting from the 1935-1936 League of Nations sanctions which followed the invasion of Abyssinia. It was important for Italians to understand the importance of this resource, its location, and the political control exercised over its transportation. Morandi's selective representation of only the pipelines which ran to the Mediterranean (rather than those which terminated at the Persian Gulf) also emphasises this East-West flow of oil. As a consequence, the role of Italy as heroic Western guarantor of essential oil supplies against the dangerous potential-threat of Islamic-nationalism both justifies a supposed Italian role in the region and downplays the actual position of France and Britain.

It should be clear that this map is a highly contrived image which is selective in what it reveals of the geopolitics of the region. This geopolitical imagination was obviously not an objective new vision, but was firmly situated in Fascist Italy. In this instance, oil was seen as significant and an important international role had to be

67 This issue will be addressed at greater length in chapter eight.
68 Although oil was the one resource excluded from sanctions (and the one resource which could have stopped the Italian war effort almost immediately), this episode had heightened the Italian awareness of their vulnerability to such
constructed for Italy. This was done through omissions and silences and the privileging of only chosen elements of the political, economic, and social geographies of this region. Other geographies were neglected with the consequence that the near and middle East was reduced to little more than an oil-producing region which was contested by world powers, with Italy to the forefront of these. The classic techniques of geopolitical map-making were thus employed whilst the map claimed to present an insightful new perspective to its readership. I will deal with some of these issues in further maps which will also demonstrate the frequency, consistency and sophistication of Morandi's cartography for *Geopolitica*.

**Geopolitical visions and partial geographies**

The next map I will consider claimed to apply the insight of the geopolitical-synthesis to the Adriatic basin and Yugoslavia. It was published in the June-July edition of 1941, two months after German forces had swept through Yugoslavia and ended the military stalemate which had existed in the southern Balkans since the poorly-equipped Italian attack on Greece of October 1940.

One consideration in Italy's decision to intervene in the Second world-war was the fear that the German *Blitzkrieg* might leave them with no territory to conquer, especially in the Balkans where German and Italian ambitions coincided. In 1939 Mussolini had annexed Albania (although it had been under effective Italian control for some time) in pique at Hitler's move against Czechoslovakia. And with the Germans having conquered Yugoslavia in weeks whilst the Italians had failed to do so in months, it became increasingly clear that Italy was the subservient partner in the 'Pact of Steel', even relying on her senior ally for oil, coal and raw materials. The annexation of parts of Dalmatia to Italy had been agreed between Foreign ministers Ciano and Ribbentrop in Vienna in April 21, 1941. They used a large map and a

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69ÓTuathail and Agnew note the same contradiction in their analysis of some of the geopolitical texts by which Cold war 'security intellectuals' claimed to represent the reality of global affairs whilst pedalling un geographical representations of this same world: G. ÓTuathail and J. A. Agnew, 'Geopolitics and discourse: practical geopolitical reasoning and American foreign policy', *Political Geography*, 11 (1992), pp. 190-204.


71Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, pp. 149-158; although for a critique of Mack Smith's recurring thesis that Mussolini was little more than an opportunist fool, see: Corrado-Azzi, 'The historiography of Fascist foreign policy'.


pencil to divide the remainder of the country into German and Italian zones of influence and to establish puppet states such as Ante Pavelic's Croatia. Their careless actions were criticised at the time and today still fuel the ongoing tragedy of Yugoslavia. Although a disclaimer at the foot of the image states that the maps refer to the Adriatic situation before the most recent events, it is pretty clear that in June 1941 Morandi was eager to cement this new territory as Italian through his maps. The pressing issue of raw materials was also high on his agenda.

This map is a fine example of the sophisticated graphic-design Morandi increasingly produced by the early 1940s. The overall effect is balanced and visually-pleasing. Similarly, Morandi's subtle use of monochromatic tones is evident as thicker black symbols and lines portray important features and divide the graphic into separate areas which pursue different lines of argument.

The eye is first drawn to the four sub-graphics framed by heavy black lines, three to the right of the main image and one to the left. This latter graphic represents the

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74 Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 25-28.
75 Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 25-26.
76 Geopolitica, 3, 6-7 (1941), pp. 294-295.
climateology of the Adriatic and Aegean region and reveals that much of the Italian
peninsular and Dalmatia (and Albania) share the same conditions: three to four month
summers and the capacity to grow olive trees. In geographical terms therefore, both
coasts of the Adriatic are presented as part of the same region. To the right of the
main image are three smaller maps which, from the top of the page, describe historical
and strategic reasons which justify Italian occupation of Dalmatia. Firstly, Morandi
reminded his readers of the sixteenth-century Venetian empire in the region; he then
portrayed the Dalmatian territory which Italy claimed to have been promised at the
Treaty of London. Finally, he constructed an image of Italy surrounded by France
and French Algeria and by their ally, Yugoslavia. Italy also deserved her new
Dalmatian territory on historical and strategic grounds.

The main part of the image was a geopolitical map of Italy and Yugoslavia. Its main
argument justified the Italian control of western Yugoslavia thanks to the
geographical and political reasons selected and proposed by Morandi. In this reduced
geography of Italy, only a skeletal physical geography of major rivers and the
Apennines is indicated. The other symbols are the angular blocks which surround
Italy’s major cities and are explained as ‘industrial zones’ in the key. Industrial Italy
stands adjacent to Yugoslavian territory which is rich in raw materials (indicated by
the small circular symbols) but totally devoid of the industry to process them. The
equation is obvious and Morandi had loaded his map further with features which
explain Italy’s right to these resources and this territory.

In this image, geography proves to be no barrier to proposed connections between the
resources of Yugoslavia and the industry of Italy. Along the western Adriatic coast,
the Julian and Dinaric Alps are regularly breached by major passes which connect the
Yugoslavrian interior and its resources to the sea. More especially, Trieste is
represented as the hub of its pre-1919 hinterland, encompassing Ljubliana, Zagreb
and all of the resources of Slovakia and northern Croatia and funnelling them towards
the industry of northern Italy. And whilst Trieste regained its traditional and lucrative
‘gateway’ role, the Adriatic is otherwise represented as a closed, inland lake. The
Italian coastal cordons which enclose the Dalmatian and Greek coastlines, as well as
the Italian barrier across the mouth of the Adriatic between Otranto and Albania
signify this. However, the selective use of geography is again applied. Significant

77 The ‘olive-limit’ was given a good deal of significance in the kind of discourses which I am dealing
with here. For a good many in Fascist Italy, the ability to grow olive-trees was seen as a sign of a
region’s Mediterranità (Mediterraneanness).
78 Although Albania, newly added to the Italian realm, was not represented here as this would have
spoiled the effect.
79 These zones are intended to indicate the extent of Italian industry, are therefore over-large and
include regions with precious little industry such as the Roman campagna.
'river-corridors' provide inland Yugoslavian territory with alternative coastal access now that the Adriatic is closed by Italy. The Danube led to the Black Sea and the Vardar corridor to the Aegean.\(^{80}\) Thus, Italian control of both Adriatic coasts does not unduly disadvantage Yugoslavs.

Once more it seems, the geopolitical map transcended the geographical map with geography used selectively to support Morandi's arguments and Italy's wider position in the Balkans. Climate, morphology, mountain passes and river corridors are all invoked at times to support quite ludicrous arguments such as coastal access for Serbia via the Vardar corridor. Likewise, simplistic, large-scale equations between the raw materials of Yugoslavia and the resource-hungry industry of Italy are portrayed with the geographical 'reality' of the location of these features as a rationale. The actual complex geographies of the region were reduced to a straightforward geopolitical imperative.\(^{81}\) When represented thus, the geopolitical perspective was also a very partial and selective view.

*Privileging geopolitical cartography*

The editors of *Geopolitica* were nevertheless delighted by the geopolitical cartography of Mario Morandi. Together with another geopolitical cartographer, Dante Lunder, Morandi enjoyed a virtual monopoly upon the cartography which was printed in the journal.\(^{82}\) This meant that their brand of mapping went uncontested and benefited from the authority which cartography enjoys in most geographical publications.\(^{83}\) In addition, maps enjoyed an extraordinarily privileged role throughout the journal and not just in the monthly 'Geopolitical synthesis' series. *Geopolitica* eventually totalled some 2000 pages plus. Within these appeared over 300 geopolitical maps. By contrast, in the same period the 2700 pages of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* contained 258 maps and practically all of these were of a far cruder

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\(^{80}\) Although in reality the Morava river portrayed is a tributary of the Danube and the supposed pass through the Macedonian mountains, via Skopje to the Vardar, provides no viable outlet to the coast, certainly not in lieu of an Adriatic port.


\(^{82}\) A longstanding member of the group surrounding Roletto and Massi, Lunder was involved in *Geopolitica* from its inception but only drew about 10% of the journal's maps. Neither was his style as sophisticated as Morandi's although he too was quite obviously schooled in the techniques of geopolitical cartography and constructed his images just as carefully as did Morandi.

\(^{83}\) Indeed, the only time when the maps of other people were reproduced in the journal was to demonstrate the paucity of their design or function, see: 'La caccia agli errori!', *Geopolitica*, 2, 8-9 (1940), p. 377.
standard and much smaller than those created in Italy.\textsuperscript{84} Given his importance to the journal, Morandi, who began 1939 as one of Geopolitica's two 'official cartographers', was promoted in 1940 to the new position of 'Editor of cartography' - a title in itself which reflects the importance accorded to maps. In 1941 he stepped into the co-editor's role as Massi volunteered for a spell of national service and by 1942, as other academics began to desert Geopolitica, Morandi wrote an increasing proportion of the articles, many of them heavily map-oriented.\textsuperscript{85}

Geopolitica clearly pursued a pro-map policy which privileged geopolitical cartography as the medium for articulating the geopolitical perspective. No other contemporary Italian journal boasted such as policy and often only contained occasional thematic maps or maps demonstrating location. In contrast, Geopolitica even added its own geopolitical cartography to articles contributed by commentators or academics who had little other contact with the journal. It was often just as inventive as the maps of the 'Geopolitical synthesis' series. Indeed, it also appears that Geopolitica exercised an element of quality control in relation to the maps which it published. Figures 6.6 and 6.7 were supposedly drawn by the same man. Yet, the quality of the 'Transafricana Italiana' map which first appeared in Impero Italiano was clearly not up to the standards demanded of its cartography by Geopolitica.\textsuperscript{86} By the time the image was printed in Roletto and Massi's journal, it had been redesigned in a far more neat, 'clean' and sophisticated manner.\textsuperscript{87} Even the maps which accompanied the articles of other geographers had to be of a sufficient quality to satisfy Geopolitica's editors. An example follows (figure 5.8) from an article in the June-July edition of 1940.

This map is a particularly emphatic representation of the Pan-region concept as applied the Americas. I will discuss this notion in the next chapter, but briefly, Geopolitica adopted the German Pan-regional model of a world divided into three vast self-contained longitudinal zones: Eurafrica, Pan-Asia and Pan-America.\textsuperscript{88} Here Morandi contributed a map to an article by Eliseo Bonetti entitled: "The geographical problem of self-sufficiency in the United States" which discussed American raw

\textsuperscript{84} Of this German figure, 12 were by Morandi in Massi's 1939 article in Haushofer's journal. The figures are 1939: 876 pages, 84 maps; 1940: 632 pages, 60 maps; 1941: 694 pages, 62 maps; 1942: 562 pages, 52 maps. Only the most sophisticated of the German maps (such as figure 5.1) are reproduced in analyses of German geopolitical mapping. The vast majority of their maps showed nothing like the standards of consistency and sophistication that Geopolitica provided.

\textsuperscript{85} On Morandi's comments upon the conclusion of his year as Milan's co-editor, see: Geopolitica, 3, 12 (1941), p. 610

\textsuperscript{86} A. Biondo, 'Studi e progetti: La transafricana italiana', Impero Italiano, 5, 10 (1940), p. 1.

\textsuperscript{87} p. 571 in A. Biondo, 'La transafricana italiana', Geopolitica, 3, 12 (1941), pp. 569-575.

\textsuperscript{88} O'Loughlin and van der Wustern, 'Political geography of Pan-regions'.
material requirements, their location and the geopolitics inherent to this situation. Morandi complemented this with two images, the largest of which is reproduced above. The most striking features on this map are the broad, black bars which delimit the western hemisphere longitudinally and are complemented by the serrated 'hostile front' symbol. The isolationism of the original 1823 Monroe Doctrine suggested by these barriers is augmented by the ongoing isolationism of the 400 mile Pan-American exclusion zone which was established in 1939 upon the outbreak of hostilities in Europe and beyond this, the more extensive zone demanded by the United States to protect its own territory.

**Figure 5.8**

'Pan-American isolationism'

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89 Bonetti, 'Il problema geografico dell'autosufficienza negli Stati Uniti d'America'. Bonetti's article was inspired by a piece by R. B. Hull in the 1940 Geographical Review (R. B. Hull, 'American raw material deficiencies and regional dependence', 30, 2 (1940)). Bonetti congratulated his American colleague for recognising the 'geopolitics' of American resources; yet the fact that he was reading the American journal The Geographical Review and -furthermore- was responding to it, is further evidence of the circulation of ideas amongst the geopolitical discourses of the period.


91 p. 299, in E. Bonetti, 'Il problema geografico dell'autosufficienza negli Stati Uniti d'America', Geopolitica, 2, 6-7 (1940), pp. 296-299 and 302.
Within the isolationism the map also suggests the subservience of South America to the United States. To this end, the black bars which flank South America combine with the black mass of the United States to enclose the nations of the continent which are, in spite of their political differences, all shaded in a uniform and lighter tone. Graphically these countries are dominated by America and this hold is symbolically indicated by the two black arrows which advance upon the continent. Their curvature suggests dynamic movement as their pincer-movement encloses Central America. And whilst Canadian territory to the north is differentiated from the United States and South America, the maps failure to distinguish other British possessions such as The Falkland islands, British Honduras, British Guyana or indeed wealthy Argentina and its sizeable Italian emigrant population compounds the impression that the intention here was to suggest the efficient exclusion of European powers from this Pan-region, the subsequent American hegemony in the region and the desirability of such large-space economies.

The use of the edges of this map to argue Morandi's agenda was another innovation of Geopolitica. Morandi seldom boxed his images within a frame and frequently used partial frames, or a transgression of the map-frame as a part of his visual-persuasion. The essential North-South relationship of figure 5.8 and that of figure 6.4 are suggested by the straight black lines which border and hem-in each image to east and west, but not to north and south. The map-frame is usually considered to be neutral, but in figure 5.9 it dominates the map.

Here the bold, dark border which is the most noticeable feature on the map is indented to the east where the 'British imperial corridor' visually breaks out of the map frame to continue its journey to India. This thick black frame dominates the centre of the map too, suggesting the strength and permanence of the British imperial route, labelled the highway of empire by Mackinder and a continual aggravation to Italian ambitions in the Mediterranean and near east. The remainder of the map is constructed from lighter tones so as not to detract from the central theme. Yet even amidst this peripheral information, symbols representing British influence in the region such as mandated territories, allies and naval bases are still represented in a darker tone than, for example, the anti-British 'fronts' of Iran or Turkey which are drawn with slender lines and implied as being comparatively weak. The surrounding text explains how Iraq, a territory mandated to Britain in 1930, now provided the British with an

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92This is in contrast to the visual effect of straight lines. These, as I will suggest later by reference to Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4, imply and unyielding strength and the impression that one territory has been anchored to another. This distinction was recognised by the geopolitical cartographers of the time and it is reasonable to suggest that Morandi would therefore be aware of this.
additional buttress to the middle Eastern influence, an alternative route to India and vast oil reserves. The text and map combine in a familiar complaint against British hegemony in the region.

![Map of Mediterranean to India route](image)

Figure 5.9

The position of Iraq in the British organisation of the Mediterranean to India route

These last two maps were typical of the cartography which complemented the articles of Geopolitica. That they approach similar standards of sophistication as the 'Geopolitical synthesis' series is testimony to the privileged position that geopolitical cartography enjoyed in the journal. Before I conclude this chapter, I will consider briefly some of the ways in which these maps attempted to persuade their readership of their veracity.

**Appeals to authority - how the maps worked**

Brian Harley wrote about two kinds of 'power' which maps possessed: 'internal' and 'external' power. Despite criticisms, Harley's basic propositions are significant and

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94Harley, 'Deconstructing the map', (first published with the same title in Cartographica, 26, 2 (1989), pp. 1-20).
revolutionised the history of cartography. The 'external power' of the map has already been mentioned in chapter two. The roles which maps can play in the definition, categorisation, ordering and organisation of territory make cartography a frequent tool of governance. The 'internal' power of the map is more subtle. It relies upon the popular credibility which cartography enjoys within society and upon the aura of truthfulness which surrounds maps. Propaganda cartography has a long tradition of bending the nominally-accurate practices and techniques of map-making to convey its own particular message. However, the efficacy of propaganda maps is based precisely upon the assumed accuracy of maps. Therefore, maps which portray a selective vision, but do so from within the medium of a map, retain a vestige of cartography (albeit an extreme, politicised form) and are still able to draw upon the popular faith which surrounds maps. Morandi recognised this and used it in his work.

Most techniques of persuasive mapping are employed by the cartographers of Geopolitica. Projections and perspective were exploited wherever possible and disproportionate symbols and lettering were frequently evident. I will note such occurrence in the maps that accompany the rest of the thesis. It should now be evident just how carefully-constructed these images were. In this last section I will consider a few of the techniques which Morandi applied in an attempt to gain increased credibility for his images and the messages they bore.

The gendered nature of these maps should be obvious. Their primary conceit was access to a transcendental perspective and a mode of explanation for the modern world. This owes a good deal to their origins amidst the heroic modernity of the


96Harley, 'Deconstructing the map'.

97Wood, The power of maps', pp. 20, 60 and 105. As Woods consistently points out, no one is more vehement in denouncing propaganda maps than cartographers themselves, before they then, in the light of this, pass off their own maps as accurate representations of 'reality' (p. 105).


inter-war period, to which Mario Morandi's cartographic design is indebted. The modernity of his images is unmistakable. Roletto, Massi and their contributors created a discourse which claimed an uncontested and Cartesian vision with which they might explain the world. Their maps articulated this perspective from a position of monopoly in the journal and, in the flagship series of the 'Geopolitical synthesis', without even any written-text to qualify these cartographic statements. Moreover, the maps represented the modernist assumptions of Fascism whereby its interventions in Africa or the Balkans might be reduced to a simple range of benefits for a triumphant 'progressive' and 'superior' Italy. Without ever contemplating an alternative reading of the world than their own geopolitical perspective, these maps became ethnocentric. In their assumptions of the accuracy of this new perspective upon the world, and in the voicing of this uncontested yet prescriptive vision, they were essentially 'modern'.

Consequently, the modernist aesthetic which infuses Morandi's cartographic design is probably no accident. The 'modern' had been associated with Fascism from the early days of Futurism, and although Mussolini had attempted to accommodate both modernism and more conservative artistic movements within the Fascist state, his regime often celebrated its own modernity. Consequently, the stark monochromatic images, the angular lines and the neatness and clarity of Morandi's maps would be identified as emblematic of Italy's progressivism by many of its readers. For example, Morandi's calligraphy often replicated the stilo Fascismo, the favoured Fascist style of the day which could be found on posters, school books, magazines, and on the walls in the public spaces of Italy and the empire. The lettering in figure 5.8 provides ample evidence of this style and if nothing else, lent the image a contemporary air in 1940. The use of this semi-official style might also have been an attempt to curry favour with the regime or to visually-suggest some semblance of an official sanction for the maps and their messages.

Likewise, the clarity with which Morandi drew his maps, whether their symbolisation was simple or sophisticated, all helped to increase their credibility. In J. K. Wright's contemporary words: "The trim, precise and clean-cut appearance that a well drawn map presents lends it an air of scientific authenticity that may or may not be deserved." This would be especially the case when novel symbolisation (such as Morandi's) was used. A scrappy and crude image which used such unorthodox symbols would be hard pressed to retain any measure of faith from its readership.

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101 Wright, 'Map makers are human', p. 527.
whereas a clear, balanced and neat map carries the aura of science and factual exactitude.102

Finally, the maps appealed to cartography - to the very 'science' whose reputation they were exploiting. In attempts to make his images appear more 'map-like', Morandi often included compass-roses, scales, the graticule, or other icons of cartography. As we have seen, figure 5.6 is a very ung-geographical representation of the middle East. Yet, it is nevertheless surrounded by a 'chequerboard' border which marks degrees of longitude and latitude and reminds the reader that they are looking at a map.

These maps were highly-considered and carefully constructed images which not only used 'hidden' propaganda techniques such as selection and misrepresentation to doctor the map, but also knowingly-invoked the credibility of cartography to legitimate themselves and their agendas. Despite their unorthodox geopolitical symbols, they made a premeditated appeal to the internal power of maps, to the authority of clean, simple, striking images - in line with the advice of geopoliticians such as Haushofer, Vicens Vives and Toschi. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, Roletto, Massi and Morandi realised that their geopolitical agenda and their geopolitical topography could be enshrined fruitfully in the language and credibility of maps. They therefore attached a special importance to their geopolitical cartography.

102 Harley, 'Deconstructing the map'.

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Chapter 6.

Africa, empire and colonial space

Introduction

In 1875 Cesare Correnti, founder member of the SGI and recently national minister of education, addressed the assembled membership of the Italian geographical society as their president.2 “Africa for our society is a kind of vocation” he pronounced.3 As one of the individuals who did most to ensure that the SGI became Italy's chief apologist for colonialism, it is unsurprising to learn that he warmed to his theme. He argued that as both Italy and Africa "...look out onto the same waters, and are only a few hours distance apart, [Africa] is endowed with irresistible fascination for us Italians... ...and it [Africa] is something to which we are unstoppably drawn. It is destined so to be."4 I have suggested elsewhere that from the very origins of the SGI,

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2 "Philosopher, artist and patriot" (p. 9) - Correnti was president from 1872 to 1879: De Agostini, La Reale Società Geografica Italiana, pp. 9-12.
3 Gambi, 'Geography and imperialism', p. 78.

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a long relationship developed between Italian geographical practices and theories and Italian colonial interventions in Africa. I argued that one of the last and most extreme expressions of this broad and complex relationship was the journal *Geopolitica*.  

Although *Geopolitica* claimed and maintained a 'global scope' for its geopolitical perspective, I have chosen to examine the place of Africa and the Mediterranean in the journal. Both were regions of particular interest to Italy and zones in which the regime claimed a particular right to expand. I will consider the ways in which the geopoliticians negotiated their own agenda for these regions amidst those of Fascism and the historical interests in both regions of Italy. I am aware of the difficulties of generalising about *Geopolitica's*, or indeed, Italian geography's intellectual engagement with colonial issues. As Nicholas Thomas suggests, the colonial experience changed from place to place and from time to time depending upon local conditions, practices, and the individuals involved. What this sixth chapter attempts is an examination of some of the ways in which Africa was represented in *Geopolitica*, a journal which claimed to have a special interest in 'colonial geography'. Practically all of Italy's colonial domain was to be found in North and East Africa and, as we have seen already, from the early 1930s, Roletto and Massi (the latter in particular) were concerned with Italo-African colonial issues, resource-access, and the distribution of African colonial territory among the European powers. This chapter examines some of the maps and texts of *Geopolitica* and through them considers the ways in which the Italian geopoliticians imagined, represented, and speculated about Italian Africa and the remainder of the continent between 1939 and 1942.

**Italy, Africa, geopolitics and geographical science**

The possession and control of African territory was crucial to Fascist Italy in several ways. The regime made much of its colonial settlement programme, 'Demographic Colonisation', whereby Italy's traditional drain of emigrants was to be re-directed to Italian territories rather than 'lost' to the country. Some 110,000 Italians were

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5 Atkinson, 'Geopolitics, cartography and geographical knowledge'.
6 N. Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture, Anthropology, Travel and Government*, London, 1994. Too frequently accounts of Italian colonisation read the phenomena in the light of French, British or German experiences with the result that the distinctiveness of the Italian experience is diluted. See, for example: Franz Ansprenger, *The dissolution of the colonial empires*, London, 1989.
7 Colonial geography' was one of the four sub-fields of geography to which *Geopolitica's* sub-title claimed to have a special relevance.
8 On the Italian colonisation of Libya, see: Segrè, *Fourth Shore*, and on the origins of the term 'Demographic colonisation', pp. 12-16.
established in Libya by the early 1940s and optimists hoped that up to five million colonists would emigrate to the Ethiopian uplands. Italian forces were to expand across Africa, settling emigrants on colonial farm-holdings in their wake.\(^9\) The Pro-colonial lobby also stressed the value of Italy's African possessions as a resource base.\(^10\) Given that few of the raw materials required by a modern state could be found on the Italian mainland, and that this problem was brought into sharper relief by the League of Nations sanctions which followed the invasion of Abyssinia, resource-rich Africa appeared a tempting opportunity. In self-sufficient 'Autarkic Italy', the extension and development of the Italian colonial empire was seen as the potential source of the resources Italy needed.\(^11\) In addition, there were strategic motives which underlay the importance of Africa. Mussolini's long-term goals included making Italy a great power and the undoubted master of the Mediterranean. The conquest of the Libyan 'Fourth Shore' and its incorporation into metropolitan Italy enclosed the central Mediterranean between Italian provinces and acted as a bridge into Africa.\(^12\) Equally, some Italians considered the possibility of linking the East-African empire to Libya, by-passing British-controlled Suez (and thus of the Mediterranean) and thereby creating a greater Italy extending from the Alps to the Indian ocean. Finally, the country's international status as a colonial power and the attendant prestige was of great significance to Mussolini and to the party members, functionaries and various lobbies which flourished under Fascism.\(^13\)

Of course, within the various texts of Geopolitica, these five themes were seldom divided as neatly as I have just suggested. In some examples, the legitimacy of the Italian political agenda in Africa is the main theme of the text. In others, Italian arguments are more covert. The one constant factor in these arguments was the way in which Africa was considered as little more than a resource or commodity, an expanse of empty resource-laden space which was to be contested and controlled by various of the European colonial powers. Geopolitica's representation of Africa was a reductionist picture which said virtually nothing of the various social, cultural,
economic, and political geographies of the continent. Equally, African peoples were disenfranchised from the rights and sovereignty of their European contemporaries. In a classic example of 'Orientalism', they were regarded as uncivilised 'savages' who had no rights and little say in the imposition of 'civilised' European colonial structures on their territory. "Geopolitica ignored Africans and African geographies in a series of accounts which represented Africa solely from the Italian perspective. Geopolitica was not unique in this position. The professional geographers who constituted the bulk of Geopolitica's contributors would have been very familiar with such geographical accounts of Africa.

In chapter two I mentioned the extent to which institutional geography had long been involved in the creation of a colonial domain in Africa. In the case of Italian *Libia* for example, Governor Italo Balbo had incorporated the older colonies of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica with the expanses of the Fezzan in 1934. In 1938 the two coastal provinces of this vast colony were made part of metropolitan Italy proper. Yet before the apparatus of a European state such as frontiers, administrative regions and a colonial capital were grafted onto the Saharan sands, the Italians embarked upon a huge exercise in gathering geographical information about their territory. It was the collection, organisation and categorisation of knowledge about *Libya* which enabled the Italians to create a colonial domain there which they might understand and be able to control on their European terms. As I mentioned, the SGI were at the forefront of this 'colonial science' which Zoli labelled a 'civilising mission'. Zoli's account credited Nicola Vachelli (former SGI president) with the conception of the 'methodical research plan' by which this 'scientific exploration' would be directed.

Vachelli's vision of geography as a synthesising science found abundant expression as the SGI sent seven expeditions into the Libyan Sahara between 1932 and 1936. The first collected anthropological and ethnographical data; the second (April-May 1933) dealt with botany and pre-history; whilst the third (August-October 1933) and the fifth (February 1934) concerned themselves with parasitology, biology, medical issues and zoology. The archaeological concerns of Biagio Pace and Giacomo Caputo occupied the fourth (October 1933), whilst the sixth, led by Elio Migliorini and Emilio Scarin, and the seventh, headed by Ardito Desio and Cesare Chiesa, investigated human and physical geography respectively. Whilst the latter pair

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considered the morphology and geology of the Sahara, Migliorini and Scarin surveyed the economic and 'human' geography of Libya. Migliorini, later to be wartime President of the SGI, busied himself with details of Libyan economic and productive patterns, agricultural systems, settlements and resources. His companion Scarin, a geographer on his fourth Libyan expedition, began mapping major settlements, population density, and, in a more sinister fashion, family composition and population characteristics. From his 'scientific' investigations, he deduced that the Fezzanesi were in an advanced state of moral and social decay due to the total absence of any recent political stability in their region. And given their history of slavery, their familial structures, their 'indolence' and their 'poverty', as far as Scarin was concerned, they would be unlikely, or indeed unable, to change their lot.\textsuperscript{18}

Similarly racist accounts of an indigenous people's inability to help themselves and their urgent requirement for a 'civilising' and modernising European colonial presence to save them from their decadence could be found throughout the European 'imperial sciences' in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{19} Here Scarin argued that the paternalistic colonisation and political stability provided by Italy would be to the benefit of these uncivilised Fezzanesi.\textsuperscript{20} Scarin was not isolated in his views: he spoke with the official sanction as the leader of a 'scientific' expedition.\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, his expedition was only one element of a wider, rolling programme which appeared to investigated almost every aspect of Libya. In addition, by 1943, the IGM had captured practically all of the colony within the scientific medium of cartography. Said revealed the ways in which the 'west' was


\textsuperscript{19}Said, Orientalism; on fears of human degeneration even within Europe, with examples from shortly before the period I deal with here, see: D. Pick, Faces of Degeneration, A European disorder, c. 1848-1918. Cambridge, 1989, especially pp. 109-152 on Italian fears of a degenerate class within. An Italian Eugenics movement, and a review entitled Genus (edited by Corrado Gini) existed in this period and sometimes included accounts of the 'racial types' of Libya. Almagià and Biasutti were foremost amongst the several geographers involved with this journal. Gini was also asked to contributed to the SGI's 1937 report, writing on 'Demographic conditions': C. Gini, 'Condizioni Demografiche', in Reale Società Geografica Italiana, Il Sahara Italiano. Parte Prima. Fezzân e Oasi di Gat, Rome, 1937, pp. 401-449. On the wider question of such racial determinism within geography see: Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition, pp. 216-259.

\textsuperscript{20}Del Boca, Gli Italiani in Libia, pp. 274-275; the notion that political stability had now arrived betrays considerable optimism on Scarin's part, as the reconquista (reconquest) of Libya was only recently completed after a ten-year long pursuit and persecution of Sanussi rebels.

\textsuperscript{21}Apart from his citing of Scarin's racist findings, Del Boca appears to accept that much of the remainder of the Italian survey of Libya was indeed 'scientific' and motivated (primarily, at least) by scientific questions. My contention, however, is that even if this mission was not overtly political at the ground level, by the time it was published, and on the wider international stage, Italy's geographical survey of her Libyan territories was a highly political intervention in colonial politics. Fabio Lando too has no doubts that there existed a strong relationship between Italian Geography and Italian colonial politics: Lando, 'Geografie di casa altrui'. Also: Del Boca, Gli Italiani in Libia, pp. 272-275.
systematically "...able to manage -and even produce- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively...".22 Italian geography was sweeping its synthesising vision across Libya, capturing all it surveyed in its 'scientific' gaze, 'possessing' regions of Africa and constituting them as 'colonial space'.23 Geopolitica was thus engaging with an established practice whereby geographical science abetted Italian imperialism in Africa.

African resources and African peoples

In 1931 Massi visited the Esposition du Colonie at the Parc de Vicennes outside Paris.24 Contemporary French critics railed against its celebration of imperialism and the exhibition of live colonial subjects.25 By contrast, Massi described his pleasure upon arriving at "An ideal Africa without fevers and without wild animals, without savages and without snakes...". It was an ordered, European Africa exhibited around an elegant European lake - the kind of Africa which Massi preferred.26 The representation of Africa in such exhibitions confirmed European colonial authority over these lands and engaged with the additional pleasures of viewing, consuming and experiencing Africa from the privileged position of European dominance.27 Massi was clearly representative of this latter position. Despite the work he would undertake upon Africa, there is no record of his ever visiting the continent, or any trace of sympathies for Africans. For Massi and many of his future colleagues on Geopolitica, Africa was an uncivilised place which was at Europe's disposal.

Aside from his periodic commentaries upon the growth and development of geopolitical ideas, as a national figure in the ICF, much of Ernesto Massi's writing throughout the 1930s exhibits his simplistic and unwavering attitude towards Africa. The continent was a resource for the European powers who enjoyed every right to exploit its territory, raw materials, peoples and environments. As we have seen, he reiterated time and again his concerns about the Anglo-French domination of global colonial territory, their subsequent domination of the resource bases and their control of the trade and transportation of these commodities. Situating himself with the

22Said, Orientalism; p. 3.
23Atkinson, 'The politics of geography'.
26T. Mitchell, Colonising Egypt, Cambridge, 1988, esp. pp. 1-34, is especially good on the ways in which nineteenth and early twentieth century Europeans and North Americans created replicas of Oriental landscapes which reconfirmed the European power.
revisionist groups which wanted to overturn the Versailles treaty, he even became an advocate for the restitution of German colonies besides his ongoing agitation through the ICF and his writings, for an extension of the Italian colonial empire. Roletto too was a longstanding member of the ICF and similarly argued for what he saw as a more equitable distribution of resource wealth and colonial space in Africa. Given this, perhaps it is not surprising that once in control of a monthly review, they gave Africa, colonial issues and resources a high priority which was demonstrated as early as the first edition with Massi's article on *Democracy, colonies and raw materials*.

These same themes pervaded *Geopolitica's* commentaries upon Africa as it followed in the tradition established by more orthodox Italian geographical discourses. Other contributions to the journal examined international trade in African commodities. Luigi Scognamiglio published an investigation into the 'Italian Banana Routes' which had developed from the mid 1920s when Italian colonists in Somaliland began the intensive cultivation of several strains of the fruit. The production and shipping of this colonial produce was explained in a well-referenced, fact-laden article which, he concluded, had hopefully demonstrated that bananas were a "...geoeconomical and geopolitical problem [based on the relationships between] the geographical, economic and technical aspects which are essential to the Italian banana trade." Likewise, Eliseo Bonetti decided that African rubber resources were too concentrated in the hands of the Belgians, and whilst the French and British enjoyed alternative supplies, Italy had better develop its own productive capacity in East Africa. The chronic shortages of natural resources on the Italian peninsular was clearly exercising the minds of these geopoliticians.

One good example of *Geopolitica's* claim to an overarching perspective upon 'political, economic and social and cultural geographies' was a contribution from Antonio Giordano entitled: 'The Union of South Africa and its geopolitical elements'. This investigation was premised upon the fact that South Africa's economy, whilst robust thanks to the numerous resources the country boasted, failed to contribute as much as might be expected to Africa's internal economy. Instead,
the Union's economy was largely directed beyond Africa and towards the world economy, in part due to the continuing influence of the British empire which valued the mineral wealth of its erstwhile colony and its strategic significance. Through control of the gold industry and capital flows, "...to which the South African economy was tied hand and foot," the British were actively damaging the regional African economy.36 In addition, along with their American allies, the British were also exploiting the Union as a safer route to India and the east than the Mediterranean. The argument concluded with a reminder that the Anglo-sassone were typically exploitative here as in other parts of their empire - prepared to countenance an anti-Africa slant to the economy for their own benefits.37 But it was a combined understanding of economics, politics and strategy which had allowed Giordano his insight, and it was this perspective which he wanted to transfer to others through Geopolitica.

Linked to resources and their access was the issue of transporting products back to Europe. Many studies in Geopolitica dealt with the questions of trade-routes and communications.38 The Suez Canal frequently excited geopolitical interest. It was emblematic of British influence over the Mediterranean and in more practical terms, levied tolls upon- and threatened potential control over- the Italian passage to and from their East African empire. Some commentators argued that Italy had played a crucial role in the project's realisation.39 Other writers were more direct. Paolo d'Agostino-Orsini di Camerota emphasised that: "The principal function of Egypt in the Mediterranean is to be the eastern gateway on behalf of Europe, not the guardian of the canal only on behalf of England."40 Furthermore, with Italian possessions to west and south, and with Italy the growing power in the Mediterranean, it was in

37Giordano, 'L'unione del Sud Africa nei suoi aspetti Geopolitici', pp. 32-33; Giordano claimed that after the war the 'Eurafrican' system of economic integration which would be implemented would signal the end of such exploitative relationships. Italian colonialism, he implied, was a fairer process (p. 33). See also: "Economia dell'Unione Sudafricana', Geopolitica, 2, 10 (1940), pp. 442-444.
39The idea that it was Italian expertise, in the shape of the canal's chief engineer Luigi Negrelli (born in the Trentino as an Austrian and to die in Vienna as an Austrian) was a common story: A. Monti, 'Il contributo italiano all'impresa del canale di Suez', Geopolitica, 3, 1 (1941), pp. 32-34. See too: G. Gaeta, 'Il contributo di Trieste alla realizzazione del Canale di Suez', Geopolitica, 2, 10 (1942), pp. 429-433.
40P. D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'L'Egitto', Geopolitica, 2, 10 (1942), pp. 434-441, quotation from p. 440, emphasis in original.
Egypt's interests, he continued magnanimously, to ally itself with Italy. An optimistic argument, for D'Agostino-Orsini an Italo-Egyptian alliance would transfer control of the eastern gateway to the Mediterranean to Italy and make the country's own 'highway of empire', between Italy and East Africa less strategically vulnerable and dependent upon British goodwill at Suez.

Livio Chersi was more aggressive and argued that Suez was the 'World centre of geopolitical interest' and that here could be found "...a true and proper politics of communications... ...which demonstrated the plutocratic powers' domination of the seas." However, with Rommel advancing on Egypt, Chersi felt that the old order was changing. Egypt was fast becoming one of the most important theatres of the war, and Geopolitica's readers were informed that it was here that "...England could be attacked and fatally wounded. The loss of Egypt would signify not only the end of British dominion over the canal and the highway to India, but probably the loss of all colonies in central and east Africa too." A sizeable range of facts and figures then demonstrated just how vital Suez was to the British empire before Chersi closed his analysis with a call for the expulsion of the British from Egypt.

Finally, although Geopolitica argued against the current distribution of colonial territories in Africa, European colonisation was never questioned per se. Colonialism was regarded as the natural and obvious way in which Africa should be organised politically, socially and economically and colonies were seen as a natural extension of the modern European state: a phenomena to be studied with a view to improving administration or organisation, or for identifying potential problems or future dangers. For example, Bruno Francolini -seen as an expert Africanist at the time- wrote what was intended as a serious reflection upon the nature of European colonisation in Africa. He began:

Indigenous African life -on the whole uniform and unchanging due to racial and cultural characteristics and the conditions of the geographical environment- developed for the most part in an isolated fashion without significant internal differences. The native peoples -especially blacks and negroes- from Guinea to Sudan, from the Sahara to South Africa, followed from time immemorial the same economic

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41D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'L'Egitto', pp. 440-441.
42L. Chersi, 'Suez: Centro geopolitico d'interesse mondiale', Geopolitica, 3, 1 (1941), pp. 42-45. quotations from p. 43.
43Chersi, 'Suez: Centro geopolitico d'interesse mondiale', p. 43.
44Chersi, 'Suez: Centro geopolitico d'interesse mondiale', p. 45; the British communications network in Egypt was also the subject of: A. Troni, 'Le comunicazioni in Egitto e la politica inglese', Geopolitica, 4, 4-5 (1942), pp. 224-227.
practices and customs and the same traditional morals in the great regions which, for reasons of climate, fauna, flora, and terrain, hadn't experienced the penetrating pressure of a Europe in search of space and of raw materials. It is here that the isolated white can still confront and observe with curiosity the classic "savage" or the wretched negro in their natural state.46

According to Francolini, all Africans were the same and all had been trapped in a 'wretched' state of timeless 'savagery' until the 'penetration' of white Europeans brought them face to face with civilisation. The gendered nature of this account is painfully evident as is its highly offensive racism.47 Yet Francolini continued by talking about a whole new set of problems which would emerge with white settlement and the inevitability that Africans "...would come into contact with the life and civilisation of the superior race."48 He rehearsed a whole series of problems which colonisation raised: from the "serious racial, economic, social and problems and inconveniences" raised by 'racial mixing' to the issues of acclimatisation.49 The ability of Europeans to populate the continent was also addressed and celebrated as an heroic project for the post-war world.50 Nowhere were the assumptions of European supremacy or their right to colonise Africa questioned.51

This article is evidential of some of the ways in which Geopolitica was an orientalist discourse in the tradition established by Edward Said. Again, it is too reductionist to talk of a singular 'orientalism' abstracted from place or period. My example is of a particular strand of Italian orientalism, distilled further through the pages of a geopolitical journal.52 Nevertheless, it remains orientalist in Said's sense of the term. Indeed, geopolitics proved to be one more 'scientific' discourse which "...[dignified] simple conquest with an idea [and turned] the appetite for more geographical space into a theory about the special relationship between theory on the one hand and civilised or uncivilised peoples on the other."53

47On these issues, see: Brantlinger, 'Victorians and Africans'.
49Acclimatisation and the position of 'whites' in Africa had also been the subject of vigorous debate in the British Empire: M. Bell, 'The pestilence that walketh in darkness': Imperial health, gender and images of South Africa, c. 1880-1910, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 18 (1993), pp. 327-341; and M. Bell, 'A woman's place in a white man's country'. Rights, duties and citizenship for the 'new' South Africa, c. 1902, Ecumene, 2, 2 (1995), pp. 130-148.
51See too: B. Francolini, 'Aspetti della civilizzazione Italiana in Etiopia', Geopolitica, 3, 6-7 (1941), pp. 342-347.
52As Said himself comments, there is still a good deal of work to be done on Italian orientalism, Said, Orientalism, p. 17.
53Said, Orientalism, p. 216.
Talk of African 'barbarism' and 'savagery' counterpoised by Italian 'civilisation', had been prompted by the invasion of Abyssinia. Pius XI called the Italian invasion a crusade of civilisation and this notion was repeated in the classrooms of the period.\footnote{De Magistris and Pico, *L'Impero d'Italia*, pp. 57-59.}

Mussolini, in words which were broadcast throughout Italy thanks to the regime's realisation of the propaganda potential of radio, expressed his anger at the League of Nations sanctions and what he saw as the culpable nations of France, Britain and Belgium who had benefited from Italian intervention in the Great war but were now:

... conjuring against Italy. But what is the crime that Italy supposedly perpetrated? None, unless it is a crime to bring civilisation to backward lands, to build roads and schools, diffuse the hygiene and the progress of our time. ...what we find disgusting in the sanctions in their moral character. It is this having put on the same plane Ethiopia and Italy... ...the people who has given so many contributions to world civilisation.\footnote{B. Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi*, vol. X., Milan, 1934-1940, p. 14, reference and abridged quotation from: S. Falasca-Zamponi, 'The Aesthetics of Politics: Symbol, Power and Narrative in Mussolini's Fascist Italy', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9 (1992), pp. 75-91, p. 88. On the regime's use of radio: F. Monteleone, *La Radio italiana nel periodo Fascista*, Venice, 1976.}

The Italian treatment of African rebels and prisoners of war was often appallingly brutal, especially during the 1935-36 campaign.\footnote{Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed*, pp. 3-43, esp. pp. 3-5.} Although inexcusable, as I mentioned with regard to the first Geopolitical synthesis map, such sentiments drew upon a longstanding tradition whereby Italians imagined themselves as a focus of Christianity and civilisation in the front-line against the barbarism of the Islamic world. The popular currency of such ideas in Fascist Italy is attested by the ways in which Francolini had introduced these themes unproblematically into *Geopolitica*. A year earlier he had published upon these same themes and highlighted four areas which, if recognised and placed at the heart of colonial policy, guaranteed 'near-perfect colonial administration'. 'Race, sanitation, religion and economics' were his four touchstones for colonial organisation.\footnote{B. Francolini, 'L'evoluzione della vita indigena nella politica coloniale italiana', *Geopolitica*, 2, 1 (1940), pp. 17-23, phrases from p. 17.} Followed correctly, he claimed that, all 'distinct races and societies', and all 'separate peoples' would have the chance to fulfil their own (different) capacities.\footnote{B. Francolini, 'L'evoluzione della vita indigena nella politica coloniale italiana', p. 23.} His basic assumption was that Africa now accommodated civilised whites and backward 'natives' - peoples who were irreducibly different. The only issue was how best to employ, organise and control these Africans.\footnote{Francolini, 'Gli studi coloniali per l'Africa di domani'; also, referring to the control of African nationalism: G. B., 'Un importante questione politico-economico sociale: l'afrikanesimo', *Geopolitica*, 2, 10 (1942), pp. 426-428.} He would repeat these claims yet again as would other geopoliticians.\footnote{Francolini, 'Aspetti della civilizzazione italiana in Etiopia'.}
However, this systematic denigration of Africans adds up to more than just a continuation of historical prejudice and antagonisms. Such representations also allow for the modern appropriation of African territory.

In representing Africa as an empty territory, to all intents and purposes ownerless save for the natives who are labelled as backward 'savages', this clears the way for European colonisation. If Africa was seemingly emptied of any relevant or worthy human traditions, cultures or settlements, then imperial interventions are viewed in the metropole as far less of an invasion of other lands than the exploration and colonisation of open, empty spaces. The symbolic capture and control of vacant African space was pursued through maps and literary texts. And where Africa populations were patently established, their representation as 'savages' allowed Europeans to perpetuate the myth of a 'civilising mission' by which their invasion was in fact an act of mercy to bring civilisation and salvation to the 'wretched' natives. These discourses were, of course, entrenched in western culture in this period. Yet Geopolitica, despite its claims to see the world in a new way, nevertheless perpetuated these ideas so as to legitimate the imperial agenda to which the journal subscribed.61

Colonial space and Pan-regions

Another reductionist vision of Africa which demoted the continent to little more than an economic hinterland of Europe was that of 'Eurafrica': that is, the notion that Europe and Africa together formed a single, functional geopolitical unit. The origins of the 'Eurafrica' idea are unclear. Histories of academic geopolitics usually accredit it to the 'Pan-region' theory of German Geopolitik whereby the world was to be divided into three longitudinal blocks of discrete space: 'Eurafrica', 'Pan-America' and 'Pan-Asia'. Each zone, or Pan-region, would therefore contain a full range of the earth's climateological zones and resources. In theory each would constitute a self-sufficient 'large-space economy' with a developed, industrial core and a resource-rich,

61 Other examples include: L. Filippo de Magistris, 'Noi e l'Africa', Geopolitica, 4, 3 (1942), pp. 115-119.
agricultural hinterland. Commercial exchange within these economies would be sufficient for the development of all parts of the Pan-region and, as a consequence, future conflict over raw materials, their access and transportation would be unnecessary.

In Italy the word received a famous airing in the 1934 text *Eurafrica: L'Europe per L'Africa e L'Africa per L'Europe* by Paolo D'Agostino-Orsini di Camerota, an expert on colonial geography who by the late 1930s was one of Italy's leading geopoliticians and an individual who participated in the European geopolitical conversation - contributing his understanding of Italy's colonial situation to the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. D'Agostino-Orsini opened his text with the comment that: "One finds these days a great deal of talk of Eurafrica. But what is Eurafrica? In its natural elements it is a replication of Eurasia, that is, the fusion of two continents through the earth, the seas which unite them and the peoples that live there." No doubt in the light of Italy's ongoing attempts to expand its control over the Libyan interior, to increase its influence in East Africa and to locate new natural resources and attain national self-sufficiency (autarky), D'Agostino-Orsini argued that ever closer economic links between Europe and Africa signalled the way forward - especially if, as I have suggested, colonialism was seen as being a very natural and unproblematic form of social organisation. Indeed, after a survey of the contemporary colonial powers and their colonies, the peoples of Africa and issues of white settlement, and the potential value of African territories, D'Agostino-Orsini concluded with yet another claim for the redistribution of colonial territory in favour of Italy - a nation which possessed the will and the ability to instigate this Eurafrican system.

With the help of D'Agostino Orsini di Camerota, the idea of 'Eurafrica' found its way into Italy's geographical and public discourses in this period. Roletto used it in his

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63 O'Loughlin and van der Wusten, 'The political geography of Pan-regions'; whilst the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact held in 1940, geopolitikers were forced to come up with a fourth Pan-region which encompassed the Soviet Union and parts of Asia. When Operation Barbarossa commenced in 1941 this pretence was dropped and the tripartite division of the Pan-regional world was reinstated.
64 D'Agostino Orsini di Camerota, *Eurafrica: L'Europe per L'Africa e L'Africa per L'Europe*, Rome, 1934. The title means: Eurafrica: Europe for Africa and Africa for Europe. Roletto was aware of this book, his personal copy is preserved in the library of the Geography department, Facoltà di Magistero, University of Trieste. The book also contained embryonic geopolitical maps, apparently drawn by D'Agostini-Orsini himself and possibly influenced by German Geopolitik.
65 D'Agostini Orsini di Camerota, *Eurafrica*, p. 3.
1937 paper on the geopolitics of the Axis alliance and other geographers eventually used it as shorthand for the overlap between the two vast continents.\(^{69}\) Given that it theorised the availability of all necessary resources through the incorporation of a hinterland with the metropole, this prospect ensured the concept some detailed attention in *Geopolitica*. Equally, a theory that proposed resource self-sufficiency would gain support in a country where 'Autarky' had been an ambition since the mid 1930s.\(^{70}\) The geopoliticians, who often liked to proclaim certain situations or ideas as being *squisitamente geopolitiche* (exquisitely geopolitical) were not about to neglect such an established geopolitical concept and the idea made regular appearances in *Geopolitica*.\(^{71}\)

In a brief introduction to an article on African rubber resources (mentioned above), Eurafrica was introduced as one, singular continent with its own "...perpetual and complete cycle of duties."\(^{72}\) In addition, in the light of current hostilities (in March 1940), *Geopolitica* speculated that Pan-regions might also become zones of political exclusion as well as economic self-sufficiency.\(^{73}\) This theme was extended in a significant article on Pan-regions from February 1941 called: 'Geo-economic notes on Eurafrica'.\(^{74}\) Paolo D’Agostino-Orsini outlined a classic exposition of the Pan-region concept.

He began with an account of the state of the inter-war world system. Its ever-increasing interconnections and the relentless growth of European economies spelt trouble. With little potential for agricultural expansion but with increasing industrial over capacity, Europe had become the "...manufacturing-export continent par excellence."\(^{75}\) Yet, with unequal access to raw materials, it was also the best example of a continental-importer of raw-materials. What was more, given the limited resources and space available to Europe and its increasing population, the continent was also "...an exporter of humans."\(^{76}\) Continuing his continental-scale analysis of the world, D’Agostino-Orsini described the natural balance of the Americas and of

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\(^{70}\) The 'Battle' for Autarky was a response to the 1935 League of Nations sanctions against Italy, it was not insignificant in furthering popular consent for Fascist imperialism.


\(^{72}\) Bonetti, ‘Il caucciù africano’, p. 110.

\(^{73}\) Bonetti, ‘Il caucciù africano’, p. 110.


\(^{75}\) D’Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, ‘Note geo-economiche sull’Eurafrica’, p. 90, emphasis in original.

\(^{76}\) D’Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, ‘Note geo-economiche sull’Eurafrica’, p. 91, emphasis in original.
Asia, each with sufficient industrial and agricultural regions. Each of these other Pan-regions was also centred upon a zone which connected its industrial and agricultural components: an American Mediterranean (the Caribbean) and an Asiatic Mediterranean (Indonesia).

By contrast, Africa was scarcely industrialised and its indigenous peoples were largely incapable of exploiting its resources. Yet the continent boasted huge agricultural potential and was largely habitable by white settlers. Moreover, as Europe's primary colonial continent, Africa was both politically and economically dependent upon Europe. So, whilst Europe's economy didn't complement that of any of the other continents, "...only Europe and Africa were directly complementary." Better still, there were a host of geographical reasons which proved this special link between Europe and Africa. At the most basic level:

...one finds Africa precisely upon the axis of Europe, with the two continents exactly perpendicular - one on top of the other. They could be considered the northern and southern parts of the same land mass... almost one territorial unit at the Straits of Gibraltar and almost united at the central channel between Sicily and Tunisia...

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77 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 91.
78 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', pp. 92-93, Mario Morandi provided a map of the African regions which might be intensively populated by Europeans (p. 95).
79 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 93, emphasis in original.
80 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 93, emphasis in original.
The mountain chains which surrounded the Mediterranean, the climateological and agricultural similarities between northern and southern shores, the European communities on the North African coast and the frequent contact between the two shores made "...our Mediterranean the soldering zone between the two continents." Consequently: "For all of these reasons we can conclude that the two continents can be also considered together and form a singular territorial and maritime entity which is also patently geopolitical, this is Eurafrica." Again, geography blessed this union and economically, the African and European economies complemented one another perfectly. Consequently: "The Mediterranean is in the middle of the geographical manifestation of the 'Eurafrican living space'. That's why Africa is... ...the living space of Europe."

D'Agostino-Orsini concluded with a prophecy of a future Eurafrica, organised and ordered by the Axis powers, with the Mediterranean as the crucial 'soldering zone' of the supercontinent. As D'Agostino-Orsini foretold this future, Italy's geographical location would also lend the country a crucial role in the 'Eurafrican new order'. All communications and trade between the north and south would flow safely through Italy and Libya and across the Mediterranean - to the benefit of all Europe and as a means to realise the potential living space of Africa. And whilst Suez would remain

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81 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 94.
82 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 93, emphasis in original.
83 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 94, emphasis in original.
84 D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 95-96.
the primary east-west passage, what the author called the 'transafricana' would enable the great and glorious futures of Europe.86

D'Agostino-Orsini had described the rationale and proposed the realisation of the Eurafrica Pan-region. He did so in a very knowing fashion. In 1941 Pan-regions were exciting controversy all over the world. They appeared in The War in Maps in America and the 80,000 circulation Facts in Review.87 Meanwhile, in Germany, a 'Centre for the study of Large-space economies' was established at Heidelberg University.88 Within the Axis Pan-regions were a source of tension. As even the wartime commentaries of America pointed out, long before the 'Pact of Steel' had formalised the Axis alliance, German Geopolitikers had disparaged Italian claims to a sizeable living space and had represented the peninsular as yet another part of Greater Germany's agricultural hinterland - an interpretation well at odds with Italian visions of their global role.89 D'Agostino-Orsini was well aware of these tensions and elsewhere had worked to diffuse them.90 His emphasis on the crucial Italian role in the Mediterranean 'soldering zone' was a neat circumvention of the potential conflict between German and Italian ambitions.91 Regardless of the relative positions of German and Italian allies in this scheme, the role of Africa was fixed. Once more it was a commodity to be organised, ordered and exploited at the behest of European colonial powers. Neither was ambition lacking; as befits the apogee of European modernity, the entire continent was to be incorporated and its wealth funnelled through Italy and her colonial capital in Tripoli. It was precisely this idea that was developed into one of the most ambitious and remarkable proposals aired in Geopolitica.

86D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'Note geo-economiche sull'Eurafrica', p. 96.
87Both publications released by the German Office of information which lobbied to keep American public opinion on the side of neutrality from 1939 to 1941: O'Loughlin and van der Wusten, 'The political geography of Pan-regions'.
89Strausz-Hupé, Geopolitics, pp. 126-127.
90D'Agostini-Orsini di Camerota, 'La nuova Eurafrica e l'asse'.
91It seems that D'Agostini-Orsini was sympathetic to the Germans. This might explain his contributions to the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik and his efforts to calm Italo-German relations over the sensitive issues surrounding German and Italian interpretations of Pan-regions. It might also explain his sudden use of the term Spazio vitale (an Italian term for 'living space', possibly derived from Lebensraum) which he appears to have tacked on to his article here. Elsewhere he didn't use the phrase (as far as I can see), and although the subject of some debate (which I'll discuss in chapter eight), the phrase itself never appeared to have had a great deal of purchase in Geopolitica although the search for sufficient economic space and resources and settlement space were primary concerns of the journal.
As it circulated through Fascist Italy, the 'Eurafrica' theme was incorporated into the idea of an Italian transafricana, an heroic engineering project of vast proportions which, had it been realised, would have constituted one of the greatest projects of twentieth-century modernity. The transafricana was a proposed railway which departed from Tripoli and travelled across the width of the Saharan desert to the heart of central Africa beyond; integrating the north and south of the continent, and connecting in the African interior with all of the railways and roads from the Indian and Atlantic oceanic coasts. Thus, with the heart of the continent spatially integrated, the resources of central Africa were to be opened to Europe and, via the transafricana, transported to Tripoli, the Mediterranean and Europe. The imagined wealth of central Africa was to be revealed and made accessible to Europe by Italian expertise and engineering. This was due in part to Italy's location in the 'soldering zone' between Europe and Africa and thanks also to its colonial base in Libya which constituted a bridge across the Mediterranean.

Figure 6.4
La transafricana italiana, Impero Italiano (1940)\textsuperscript{92}

The project was first proposed -to my knowledge- by Alfio Biondo, a member of the ICF in Lombardy and eventually editor of Impero Italiano. He first published his ideas in this newspaper and reserved a front page spread for the purpose.\textsuperscript{93} I have already mentioned that before the map which accompanied his Impero Italiano article (figure 6.4) was reproduced in Geopolitica, the editors must have insisted that it be 'cleaned-up' to meet their standards of cartographic sophistication and neatness. This

\textsuperscript{92}A. Biondo, 'Studi e progetti, La Transafricana Italiana', Impero Italiano 5, 10 (1940), p. 1
\textsuperscript{93}Biondo, 'Studi e progetti, La Transafricana Italiana'.
revised version was one of only a handful of maps in *Geopolitica* that was not drawn by one of the staff-cartographers.\textsuperscript{94} It appeared in *Geopolitica* in December 1941 and can be seen in figure 6.5.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 6.5}

La Transafricana Italiano, *Geopolitica*, (1941)\textsuperscript{95}
\end{center}

Under a broad heading 'Problemi Eurafricani', 'La Transafricana Italiana' was a justification for the project. It reveals the particular attention which the Italians gave to the Pan-regions concept and their subsequent development of this notion given their own paucity of raw materials and the ambitions of their German allies.\textsuperscript{96} As Biondo introduced his proposal, his project would enable "...the necessary function

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{94} Although my suspicion is that Morandi drafted the image from the original design of Biondo, hence the latter's name on the map.
\textsuperscript{95} A. Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano', *Geopolitica*, 3, 12 (1941), pp. 569-575. The map is on page 571.
\textsuperscript{96} Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano'.
\end{footnotes}
which destiny had marked for Africa as the indispensable geo-economic complement to the entire European living space."97 He continued:

Because of its geographical position, Italy is called by destiny to be the natural centre of African produce in transit to Europe and of European produce in transit towards Africa. With its immense pier stretching out into the middle of the Mediterranean it is the natural port of Africa. And with this projection towards the south Italy, is like the head from which one can trace an ideal backbone for Africa which connects Rome with Cape Town.98

The logistics of the project were explained along with its potential benefits - to both passengers and cargoes- of cost, time, comfort, safety and simplicity. The spatial integration of the continent would permit its resource value to be tapped. The potential for Hydro-electric generation, especially in the Belgian Congo, was also stressed. Uplands throughout the Italian peninsula had been subject to the early and extensive development of Hydro-electric power in response to the national deficiency in fossil-fuels and here it was planned as a cheap source of power for the railway.99

Finally, although the argument was couched in egalitarian terms whereby the circumvention of the Anglo-French stranglehold upon African resources would be of universal benefit in peacetime, a more nationalist slant surfaced in the argument that the Transafricana also provided a strategic guarantee of adequate raw materials during conflict.100

The map which accompanied the text reinforced these points. Biondo employed shading contrasts to encircle and highlight Italy and her adjacent Mediterranean territories in dark tones. Italy's unique location to the north of Africa and the trans-Mediterranean base in Libya are emphasised and it is from here, and in the same dark tone, that a root-like system descends from Tripoli through the barrier of the Sahara, to branch out into the regions of central Africa. This root-system, its strength implied by its angularity and straight lines, proceeds to integrate the communications of the African interior by connecting the Transafricana to all the major rail-lines to the coast. The organic metaphor of a root system breaking through an arid barrier to reach the riches beyond is reinforced in the text by phrases such as 'vital artery' and

97Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano', p. 569.
98Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano', p. 569.
100The inevitable hostility of Britain and France to such a scheme would reflect their loosened grip on African resources and commerce.
talk of "...the firm, lasting and intimate coupling of Africa to Europe." Likewise, the impression is that these roots appear to be nourished by the centres of potential hydro-electric power which they gravitate towards. The 'penetration' of Africa by this modern Italian railway also resonates with the gendering of Africa as feminine and submissive in the face of this paternalistic, modernist Italian project. The Pan-region theme is also emphasised by the North-South axis of the map which frames Africa to either side with substantial black lines, denying East-West linkages. Meanwhile, the north and south borders of the map remain open, suggesting a neat and natural longitudinal segmentation of the globe into 'pan-regional' blocks.

The cultural resonance's of this project are more striking still in a section entitled: 'The obstacle to conquer: the Sahara'. Biondo described the task as 'ultra-secular' and pronounced:

The need is to convey the interior of Africa to the shores of the Mediterranean and direct contact with Europe. The requirement is to penetrate the heart of Africa and, because it bars the path of human will, to defeat the extent of the desert from the outskirts of Tripoli to the savannah to the north of Lake Chad.

Defeating the desert is not something which will intimidate the abilities and the steadfastness of Italian engineers, who, masters of the art of road-building have already given the world luminous examples of their skills. They have never failed in projects to defeat the Sahara desert and the technical feasibility of the exercise is well stated.

The technical capacity of Fascism and the pride the regime invested in its public works projects doubtless informed Biondo here. And whilst the Italians were ever conscious of their colonial rivals in Africa and potential competitors to the Italian transafricana were reported with suspicion, Biondo was referring to the successes already wrought by Fascist planners in the Sahara. The Littorania Libica, a 1300 mile long coastal highway which connected Libya's Egyptian frontier to the Tunisian border, had been completed in just eighteen months from late 1935. Its official opening, beneath the huge modernist monumental arch which marked its mid-point

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101 Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano', p. 570.
102 Although organic metaphors such as this were rare in the Sintesi Geopolitiche and the maps of the journal.
103 Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano', p. 569.
104 Biondo, 'La Transafricana Italiano', p. 569.
105 The British Cape to Cairo railway envisioned by Rhodes remained an ambition of the British in the 1930s and ongoing French plans for a trans-saharan railway were also watched carefully by the geopoliticians.
106 It was this highway which was represented on the Transafricana map to the east and west of Tripoli. On its construction, for a contemporary comment: C. Moore, Fourth Shore: Italy's mass colonisation of Libya, London, 1940, esp. pp. 197-214; La strada Littoranea della Libia, Milan, 1937.
hundreds of miles from the nearest town, was attended by Mussolini and 400 international journalists who feasted on fresh produce from colonial farmsteads. All of the attendant publicity emphasised Italy's conquest and domestication of the desert - seen as a mark of the regime's strength, vigour and power. It was, Il Duce told the *Daily Mail*, "...a highway of civilisation."  

Likewise, roads were driven into the Saharan interior and luxury buses transported Italy's rich and famous to modern hotels amidst the sands. Fascism's modernity was represented as a source of strength at the time; the *Transafricana* was a geopolitical contribution to the debates on how best to control and command the desert and how to access the resources of Africa. The author pursued the notion of a productive African hinterland, integrated and developed by Italy thanks to the country's geographical location and ability to transcend the barrier of the Sahara. The reductionist geography, in text and map, of Africa as an open resource base waiting to be exploited reinforced a familiar theme in *Geopolitica's* representations of Africa.

I have been unable to discover what became of the *Transafricana* project. In *Impero Italiano* in July 1941, six months before his article appeared in *Geopolitica*, Alfio Biondo reported upon the proposed committee which would oversee the realisation of the project. At the same time, other commentators were speculating upon the project's potential. To my knowledge, the route across the desert was never begun. However, the project does demonstrate the way in which such geopolitical ideas had entered the discourses of popular and political cultures, and notions such as Eurafrica and living space enjoyed an increasing currency.

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108 Although many commentators noted an obvious military rationale behind the route by which the Libyan garrison might be quickly moved to the Egyptian border for an invasion of Egypt and the hoped-for connection between Italian possessions in North and East Africa: Wright, 'Mussolini, Libya and "The sword of Islam"', pp. 29-30.


110 I couldn't trace a copy of *Impero Italiano* for this date, my source is a note in *Geopolitica's* monthly list of interesting or relevant articles in other publications: *Geopolitica*, 3, 8-9 (1941), p. 443.

The Geopolitical synthesis and colonising Africa

As befits their claim to a synoptic perspective, the Geopolitical synthesis maps of Mario Morandi collate many of the themes mentioned above. *Sintesi Geopolitiche* number 15 was published in August 1940 with the title *L'Africa Bianca*. It applied the geopolitical perspective to North Africa. It was another example of African as an unproblematical source of space and resources; Africa as part of a Eurafrica Pan-region and of Italian ambitions to access the resources south of the Sahara.

![Figure 6.6](image)

Geopolitical Synthesis no. 15: White Africa

Morandi's monochromatic style of mapping, developed throughout his years as a cartographer, is especially evident here. The most striking features on this map are the three vertical arrows that represent the transfer of European imperial authority into Africa by the French, the British and the Italians, the dominant trinity of colonial powers. The Italian insistence that they were one of the foremost European colonial powers of the day was a constant refrain during the imperial stage of Fascism. These arrows, broad, dark, and die-straight, convey visually a sense of this supposed strength and permanence: the unbreakable nature of the European presence in Africa and its firm anchoring of the continent to Europe. That the lines terminate in

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112 *Geopolitica* 2, 6-7 (1940), pp. 300-301.
113 One can trace, for example, Italian efforts to have their new African empire recognised by the international community and their special role policing the Mediterranean in: Ciano, *Ciano's hidden diary*, pp. 4-15.
arrowheads lends an impression of dynamism, of a continuing push to the South.\textsuperscript{114} In contrast, the northern ends of the arrows are securely rooted in metropolitan France, in Britain's North African capital in Cairo, and in Rome and the Italian colonial capital of Tripoli. Morandi's 'modernist' lettering style is also to be found upon the arrows - signalling the translation of Fascist Italy's modern superiority onto her colonies. The arrows take no account of the sketchy population and physical geography with which the map represents North Africa. Through their modernity and strength they reduce the region's complex human, geographical, and historical fabric to the simple commodity of space - here represented once more as part of the 'Eurafrican' supercontinent.

The 'Axis' idea that we see here was a familiar one to the Italian geopoliticians.\textsuperscript{115} A geopolitical axis represented the spine of a territory or of a politically-united block of space, and thus the Italo-African axis signifies the strong cohesion between European and African Italy. Extension of the axis beyond Libya implies an optimism of increased Italian influence beyond the Sahara. This last ambition ties in to the specific nuance of 'Eurafrica' as a means by which Italy might tap central Africa as a resource-base.

Figure 6.6 also addresses the colonial settlement issue. Whilst the Italian axis was on the same scale as those of Britain and France, implying that Italy was a colonial power of similar magnitude and prestige, only the Italian expatriate communities are indicated on the map. The proportional circles convey the impression that Italians were by far the most populous of the European minorities in North Africa: thus justifying Italian claims to a significant role in Africa on an equal footing with her colonial rivals.\textsuperscript{116} This position is emphasised by the sub-graphic to the right of the main image which supposes a tripartite division of Africa in which the Northern and Southern sections are well populated by Europeans. Central Africa on the other hand, is comparatively under-populated. Consequently, the substantial migration shown by the curving arrow that connects Italy to East Africa is justified because it does not interfere with the balance of existent colonial settlement. Rather the Italians are colonising a region that previously enjoyed little European attention. With the help of

\textsuperscript{114}Reflected by projects such as the British Cairo-Cape railway, and French interest in a Trans-Saharan railway.

\textsuperscript{115}G. Roletto, \textit{Le tendenze geopolitiche continentali e l'asse Eurafrica}, Milano, 1937.

\textsuperscript{116}Note that the French 'Axis' does not originate from Paris, as the arrow would obscure the scale of the circle that represents the Italian community in Tunisia. Also note, after Segré, \textit{Colonization in the French Maghreb}, p. 34, the reality that Italians totalled only a small proportion of the Europeans in North Africa.
further propaganda-mapping techniques, Italy's role as a colonial power in North and East Africa is thus simultaneously proposed and legitimated.

From Fascist Italy, Africa was also seen as a place to settle Italian colonists. The dispossessed peasant from Italy's rural regions became a favourite figure of Fascist iconography and the focus of several significant strands within Fascist ideology. The idea of a 'proletarian nation' was developed to encompass the nine-million Italians who were living abroad by 1927, and quite apart from the 'demographic imperialism' of these Italians d'estero (Italians abroad), the regime made huge funds available for the re-settling of future emigrants on the reclaimed lands of the peninsular itself, or under the Italian flag in Africa. Colonial minister Alessandro Lessona proclaimed that the empire was not 'for the privileged few', but to provide 'proletarian Italy' with 'an outlet for its exuberant life'. Italian 'Demographic colonisation', intended as an egalitarian and emancipatory project, was to show the old plutocracies how best to colonise Africa.

In the making of Italian colonies, the recipient sites of this 'Demographic colonisation', 'colonial science' and geography had played a significant role. As I mentioned previously, geographical knowledge was essential to the imaginative and cognitive creation of Italian colonial space. This process is apparent in the admiring words of a National Geographic writer who was fêted by the colonial authorities on a 1930 visit to Cyrenaica. She concluded her piece in the sentimental fashion typical of the magazine:

There is in Bengasi a slightly built man of middle age with far-seeing eyes, an Italian Army engineer, the colony's foremost geographer. He knows and loves his Cirenaica. The day before I left the country I sat

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117 The history of Italy's pursuit of space on which to settle her emigrants is told admirably in: Miège, L'impérialisme coloniale Italian, esp. pp. 9-46 and 132-150.

118 For example, in the Strapaese movement, (Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary. pp. 519-520); or in Malvano's 1933 film, Camicie Nere which traces the Fascist revolution through its impact upon the life of a peasant family living on the Pontine Marshes.

119 Enrico Corradini, an important theoretician of the Nationalist Association, developed the notion of the 'proletarian nation' whereby the strength, vitality and expansion of the Italian people were demonstrable proof of the nation's greatness: T. Henen, Le nationalisme d'Enrico Corradini et les origines du fascisme dans le revue florentine 'Il Regno' 1903-1906, Paris, 1973. See too: G. Bottiglione, 'Italiani in dominio straniero', Geopolitica, 3, 8-9 (1942), pp. 376-385. Details on the funding of colonial settlement projects at home and abroad are found in: G. Palloni, I contratti agrari degli enti di colonizzazione in Libia, Florence, 1945. On Italian colonisation in Africa: G. L. Fowler, 'Italian colonisation of Tripolitania', Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 62, 4 (1972), pp. 627-640. Figures for the relevant sums spent are: 960 million Lire (at a rate of c. 90 ITL to £1 Sterling) were spent on Libya between 1937 and 1942, colonisation and agricultural projects absorbing some 654 million of this sum; in the same period 33.8 million was spent in East Africa and a huge one billion Lire were spent on the Pontine marshes from 1926 to 1936, see: C. G. Segrè, 'Italo Balbo and the colonization of Libya', Journal of Contemporary History, 7 (1972), pp. 141-155, esp. p. 154n.

120 A. Lessona, Minister of Italian Africa, Atti parlamentari, Legislatura XXIX, la sessione, Tornata del 19 Maggio 1937; reference from Segrè, 'Italo Balbo and the colonization of Libya', p. 141.
beside him with a new map of his own making spread out before us. As he talked his pencil moved rapidly across the sheet, and the black dots and lines took on color and came to life. ...The engineer's pencil, touching boundaries definite and indefinite, came back lovingly to the north, and here he drew a wide crescent on his map of Cirenaica.

"We have," he said, "no great illusions about the gaunt steppe or the interminable desert; but here, within this crescent I have drawn, on coastal plain and fertile plateau, where climate and soil resemble those of southern Italy and Sicily, and where we are sure of sufficient water for irrigation, we shall continue to build highways and railways and settle our colonists. Here, where the Greeks of old developed the Garden of North Africa, which our ancestors, the Romans, later called their granary, we shall again make this old-new land bloom."

Alongside the archaeological, engineering and building projects with which Italy marked its presence in Africa and constructed a modern, 'civilised' colonial domain, geographers provided theories and justification for these interventions in Africa. They also produced accounts and representations of Africa as a fertile, productive and ordered colonial realm - which reinforced their arguments for colonisation and the Italian right to settle Africa. As we might expect, Geopolitica was at the forefront of these efforts by the late 1930s: explaining the significance, roles, and legitimacy of the Italian presence. Further to this, Italy's remit to settle and 'civilise' African soil and to bring it to bloom was supposedly founded on scientific geopolitical reasoning, historical arguments, and the superior ability of Italian colonial administration and small-holders to make good use of African resources. Finally, Italy had a right to be one of the big three European colonial powers in Africa. These arguments all suffused the texts which dealt with Italian colonisation in Africa.

The final two Geopolitical synthesis maps are further evidence of Italian ambitions in Africa and of the encompassing gaze of Geopolitica. I will especially concentrate on one final theme: that Italy was a great colonial power which enjoyed the same rights, privileges and capacity as Britain and France to contest and colonise Africa.

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121 H. C. Adams, 'Cirenaica, eastern wing of Italian Libia', The National Geographic Magazine, 57, 6 (1930), pp. 689-726, quotation from p. 726. National Geographic writers were always treated well by the regime, ever conscious of the value of good publicity. Other laudatory accounts of Fascism and its supposed 'moral' rejuvenisation of Italy and its various modernisation programmes include: G. Casserly, 'Tripolitania, where Rome resumes sway. The ancient Trans-Mediterranean empire, on the fringe of the Libyan desert, becomes a promising modern Italian colony', The National Geographic Magazine, 52, 8 (1925), pp. 131-162. On the magazine's alleged sympathy towards Fascism, consult: H. Abramson, National Geographic; behind America's lens on the world, New York, 1987. The geographer in question was probably Achille Dardano, chief cartographer to the Ministry of Colonies who was based in Libya in this period.

122 On the building and engineering in Libya, see: M. Fuller, 'Building Power, Italian Architecture and Urbanism in Libya and Ethiopia'.

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Figure 6.7
Geopolitical synthesis 17: Black Africa\textsuperscript{123}

The seventeenth \textit{Sintesi Geopolitiche} dates from October 1940 and was one of a small number of this series to be accompanied by explanatory notes.\textsuperscript{124} These notes -a guide to reading geopolitical maps- reveal that despite the three sub-graphics that deal with demographic statistics and the arrows indicating migratory patterns, population issues are not as central to the argument as they might initially seem. Instead the notes direct attention to the distribution of imperial territory and influence across this terrain, and to the expansion of South Africa in particular. Morandi complained that South Africa imperialism:

\textsuperscript{123}Geopolitica, 2, 10, (1940), pp. 420-421.
\textsuperscript{124}Geopolitica, 2, 10, (1940), pp. 420-421; The first \textquote{Sintesi Geopolitiche} (1, 1 (1939), pp. 58-59) and the third (Figure 4) were the only two of the series to boast a reader's guide. These guides introduced geopolitical mapping, pointed out the main themes of each Geopolitical Synthesis, and were intended to be tutors in the reading of geopolitical maps.
...especially towards Rhodesia and Niassa. South-West Africa, in open violation of the Mandate statute, is practically annexed to the Union. And also in Mozambique the interests of British South Africa have assumed concrete form, especially in the economic field.\textsuperscript{125}

The aggressive expansionism of South Africa is represented by the serrated 'front' symbol. For the geopoliticians it was yet more evidence of the scale and resources of the British empire in Africa. However, this recognition did not imply solidarity with other smaller colonial powers. Here the only non-British empires indicated are those of Portugal and Belgium - and these are named as 'minor colonial states' and their territories are labelled 'politically amorphous'. The weakness of these colonial powers is suggested by their constant loss of population by emigration.

Having established the expansionist ambitions of South Africa along with the weakness of the adjacent Belgian and Portuguese colonies, Morandi finally spelt out the problems inherent to this situation. The 'amorphous' colonies of Belgium and Portugal were located on or around the British Cairo to Cape trans-African route. He implied that this strategic location explained the British pressure which was being applied to these colonies. 'Minor colonial states' Belgium and Portugal were in no position to counteract such British influence. No other colonial powers are indicated on the map. The vast French possessions are ignored and on the map appear as blank, seemingly empty, territories. More surprising still, the Italian empire is similarly omitted. However, the silence may imply that only an Italian presence in Sub-Saharan Africa could counteract the spread of British power in the region and that only the Italian empire was politically strong enough to halt the insidious expansionism of the British. According to a common geopolitical argument, Italy was qualified for this task because she developed her colonies more productively than her competitors, and in this case, better than the 'lesser powers'.\textsuperscript{126} Where the Portugal and Belgium failed, Italy might succeed. This echoes the recurrent theme that, rather than being another 'minor colonial state', Fascist Italy was one of the three foremost European powers in Africa, with a consequent remit to contest the continent with the British and French. The map was not only a lesson in seeing Africa geopolitically, it argued for, and justified, an Italian presence south of the Sahara, appealed for her status as a major regional power, and articulated Italian attitudes towards her colonial rivals.

The final map, another Sintesi Geopolitiche from January 1940, provides one last geopolitical gaze upon Africa. The subject here is the Italian East African empire which was so carefully downplayed in the last map I discussed. Although Italian territory is central to this image, the ongoing contest between the British, Italian and also the French empires surfaces again. Concern at the influence of the British empire is expressed by a bar of arrows that represent South African pressure in central Africa and by the delimitation of the Italian territory to the north by the economic barrier along the Egyptian border. In the Horn of Africa, British Somaliland and French Djibouti, although partially enclosed by Italian arrows, each constitute a hostile presence and a potential threat to Italian Africa. The 'unknown quantity' of Arab nationalism in the Arabian peninsular adds another variable to the various political forces which, in Morandi's interpretation, are contesting the Red Sea's access into the Gulf of Aden. Italian control of this region would make redundant Britain's control of Suez and lessen the Royal Navy's hold over the Mediterranean. Equally, Italian ambitions to bypass Suez via an overland Libya-Ethiopia route were also in response to Britain's hegemony over the Mediterranean and, although at some distance, the Italian presence in Libya is still represented on the map as an expansionary force.

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127 Geopolitica 2, 1, (1940) pp. 24-25.
It was precisely such geopolitical topographies that *Geopolitica* aimed to construct - providing this new way to understand the dynamic world.\(^{128}\) The six smaller images that flank the main map help the 'synthesis' to provide a more comprehensive coverage; providing limited thematic narratives that are related to the central image. In this case, they seek to contextualise the geopolitical representation of Italian East Africa in terms of local geographies, histories, economics and communication routes: all factors included in a geopolitical analysis. But again, *Geopolitica*, was also a situated account, concerned to support Italian claims to colonial influence. Two of these smaller maps position East Africa within a wider geopolitical context. Firstly, the Italian empire figures prominently within a representation of 'Eurafrica' and, at a smaller scale, plays a prominent role alongside Britain and France in African colonialism: enclosing the mouth of the Red Sea and attempting to connect Libya to East Africa in opposition to the British Cape to Cairo route. It was in the envisioning and comprehension of this kind of scenario that *Geopolitica* claimed a unique advantage. Yet, once more Africa was only partially represented and, as always, from the European perspective. Rather than a resource-base or a potential settler-colony, this time Africa had strategic and political value which the Europeans fought over. *Geopolitica's* concern was to demonstrate that Italy was a significant participant in this struggle - this was an important element of Fascist Italy's official self-image and a major pillar of national pride.

**Conclusion**

In mid 1941, after the Italian East African empire had been overrun by the British Army and, to Mussolini's particular chagrin, a division of Belgian forces; Bruno Francolini could nevertheless still claim that the British had only 'momentarily prevailed'.\(^{129}\) He continued to talk of the final victory and the recapture of Italy's place in the sun.\(^ {130}\) Even Francolini fell silent about East Africa by the Autumn of 1941, and *Geopolitica's* analysis of African topics was restricted to the Eurafrica theme and a couple of commentaries about north Africa where Italy's remaining African possessions were situated. Geopolitical dreams of vast African possessions were slowly constricting.

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\(^{128}\) The map also notes the extent and the economic and settlement potential of the Ethiopian highlands and of adjacent regions.

\(^{129}\) On Mussolini's particular distress at having some of his troops surrender to Belgians - a people he didn't think fit to be a nation, let alone an imperial power: Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, p. 267.

\(^{130}\) B. Francolini, 'Aspetti della civilizzazione italiana in Etiopia'.

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However, the one constant factor in Geopolitica's representations of Africa had been the way in which the continent was considered as little more than a commodity. Whether of value politically and strategically or as a plank of national pride; or as colonial space on which to settle emigrants; or again, as a resource base from which to build national self-sufficiency, Africa was forever an expanse of empty space to be contested and controlled by various of the European colonial powers, with Italy chief amongst them. Whatever significance the geopoliticians invested in the Africa, their representations were always reductionist and said little of the various social, cultural, economic, and political geographies of the continent. When indigenous peoples were mentioned it was in derogatory terms: they were to be modernised or civilised. When such arguments were inconvenient, Africans and their geographies were ignored and disenfranchised.

Numerous 'western' geographical discourses were culpable of exactly this same offence. What makes the Italian case interesting is the way in which it represented an Africa in which Italy was one of the three major colonial powers alongside France and Britain. Similarly, in Geopolitica's representation, Italy enjoyed the role of primary agent of 'civilisation' and 'modernisation'. These aspects of Fascist Italy's imperial imagination were reflected and reinforced by the 'science' of geopolitics. Ironically, in claiming to encompass every aspect of the modern world, Geopolitica produced very partial representations of Africa.
Chapter 7.

*Mare Nostrum*: the Mediterranean and the Balkans

*Introduction*

This chapter will deal with the Mediterranean region as it was represented in the pages of *Geopolitica*. Just as Africa played a fundamentally important role in Fascist society, a role which was reflected in the pages of *Geopolitica*, so too did the Mediterranean enjoy great significance in the geographical and political imaginations of Fascist Italy. From the highest reaches of the regime's hierarchy, through the various study-centres, journals and think tanks of the period, and into education and the popular sentiments of the Italian population, the Mediterranean was imagined as Italy's particular zone of interest and influence.

As a consequence, the geopoliticians lent the Mediterranean a great deal of attention. I will consider the ways in which the Italian geopoliticians interpreted and dealt with the Mediterranean basin amidst a wider set of discourses. Italian visions of 'great power' status often chrysalised around the notion of an Italian-controlled Mediterranean. And then, when tied into the Axis relationship with Germany, Italian ambitions focussed upon running a campaign in the Mediterranean 'parallel' to that their allies would wage in northern Europe. The presumed result of this 'parallel war' would be a new world order in which the Mediterranean region would be recognised as Italy's natural and obvious zone of influence. I will consider *Geopolitica*’s claims to this wider region and to more local interests in the Adriatic and the Balkans. I will also address their ongoing conflict with the British and the French in yet more regions where their ambitions clashed.

*Part I: The Mediterranean*

The importance of the Mediterranean to the state of Italy was an omnipresent and deep-rooted theme. In his later years the prophet of Italian nationalism, Giuseppe Mazzini, often invoked the civilising role of Italy in the Mediterranean and thus justified a renewed Italian *imperium* in the region.1 From the inception of the Italian

Kingdom and the Liberal regime memories of the Roman *Mare Nostrum* (our sea) flourished and calls of the reincorporation of this Italian 'lake' enthused nationalists and the expansionist lobby endlessly.\(^2\) One such commentator argued that:

...it is Italy who, by her history and her very nature, is destined to gather the people of the Mediterranean together with those of Europe in her lap; it is she that will give the other life, being and civilisation... Egypt, Tunisia, Tripoli, Algeria: all these countries lie at only a little distance from us; they are our natural colonies; they have, in every age of history, been the first places to be occupied by Italian commerce or colonies.\(^3\)

With the removal of the capital from Florence to Rome in 1871, a profound political and geographical shift also took place whereby Italy's government and state apparatus moved still further away from the northern influence and heritage of Piedmont and nearer to the Mediterranean world where the notion of a reborn Rome took firmer hold. With the ruined-grandeur of ancient Rome only yards away from the Government's Palazzo dei Montecitorio, memories of Rome's former dominions and empire would seldom escape Italian deputies. And frequently led by Southern premiers, and in earshot of the vocal colonial lobby, the SGI, the Italian Naval League and other movements keen to see a reborn Mediterranean hegemony, parliament, statesmen and diplomats often found the Mediterranean on, or near the top of their foreign policy agenda, contested only by ambitions in African and the desire for influence in the Balkans.

Under Fascism, the symbolic importance of the Mediterranean grew still further. Numerous acts of symbolic appropriation were sponsored by the regime. Balbo led 61 flying-boats with a combined crew of almost 200 airmen around the Western Mediterranean basin in May-June 1928.\(^4\) He would later tell an American audience that the Mediterranean, with many Italian colonies scattered along its shores, was a natural region for [Italian] aerial expansion.\(^5\) Five years later he flew a further 36 planes around the Eastern Mediterranean; the highly-publicised *Deccenale* cruise celebrated ten years of Fascism and gave notice of Italy's expansionist ambitions in the region.\(^6\)

\(^3\) L. Campo Fregoso, *Del primato italiano sul Mediterraneo*, Turin, 1872, p. 169, quotation abridged from Gambi, 'Geography and imperialism in Italy', pp. 75-76.
\(^6\) Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, pp. 204-213.
Back in Rome, the Decennale was also celebrated by the opening of a huge triumphal Avenue, the Via dell'Impero which connected perhaps the grandest monument of Classical Rome, the Colosseum, to Palazzo Venezia and Mussolini's office. This symbolic link between the classical empire and the purportedly-reborn empire of modern Fascism was emphasized in 1934 with the erection of four large marble maps alongside the route. These traced the spatial growth of the ancient empire from city state to its maximum extent. In 1936, after victory in Abyssinia, a fifth map of the new Roman empire was added to the series with the white territory of Rome enclosing and surrounding the 'Mare Interno' once more. The idea of empire, and more especially of a reborn Italian empire surrounding the Mediterranean, became very much a part of Fascist culture. Mussolini had his photograph taken before the maps and Bottai explained their significance in another of his new journals. The maps entered all Italian classrooms as the 'introduction' and 'conclusion' organising structure of de Magistris and Pico's compulsory school-book L’Impero d'Italia. In their lessons, young Italians learnt that their nation was positioned in the centre of the sea with a role to watch over its and to dominate it. They read Mussolini's statement that: "For others the Mediterranean is a routeway, for us it is life" and were told that the new Italy, thanks to the history of Rome, the will of God and the guidance of Fascism, would recapture, after fifteen centuries, its Mediterranean and world empire.

Such ambitions were inscribed throughout Fascist cultures and even infused authoritative tomes such as the Enciclopedia Italiana. In the lengthy entry entitled 'The Mediterranean' was a sub-section 'The political geography of the Mediterranean' by Umberto Toschi. Toschi had consulted an international literature but the essay

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7On this route, its articulation of the Fascist concerns with Romanità and Modernità, see: Atkinson, The Road to Rome.
8The symbolism of these maps were also interesting. The white marble which represented the 'civilised' and enlightened territories of Rome were surrounded by the black marble of 'barbarian' territory. The colours were recognised at the time by Bottai and later by American commentators worried about the high-profile and effective roles which these maps played in Fascist Italy: G. Bottai, 'La carta marmorea dell'impero Fascista', L'Urbe, 1, 1 (1936), pp. 3-5; L. B. Thomas, 'Maps as instruments of propaganda' Surveying and Mapping, 9, 2 (1949), pp. 75-81; Kemp, 'Mussolini as geographer'.
9See: Darrah, Hail Caesar, pp. 275; 'Note' Augustea, 30 Aprile 1934, pp. 231-232; G. Bottai, 'La carta marmorea dell'impero Fascista'.
10See: De Magistris and Pico, L'Impero d'Italia, pp. 7-9 and pp. 95-96.
11De Magistris and Pico, L'Impero d'Italia, p. 95.
12De Magistris and Pico, L'Impero d'Italia, p. 96.
13U. Toschi, 'Il Mediterraneo nella geografia politica', Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. 22 (1934), pp. 762-763. Toschi's Fascist sympathies were well known at the time. Nevertheless, Almagià still selected the young academic to write on such a sensitive issue which is perhaps indicative of Almagià's personal politics.
which was published was a largely unapologetic tract which betrayed its author's nationalism and Fascism.\textsuperscript{14} It concluded:

Italy also needs to pay attention to the persistent attempts to 'denationalize' her sons abroad, especially in France and her dependencies, in Dalmatia and in Malta. By contrast to these efforts, the unparalleled moral and cultural prestige of Rome and the Fascist regime draws minds and spirits towards these qualities, qualities which will return in ever higher spheres and become the ideal centre of the Mediterranean world.\textsuperscript{15}

Finally, had Mussolini survived the war, calls for Rome to regain its ancient hegemony over its \textit{Mare Nostrum} would have even found concrete form as the city of Rome itself was re-oriented to migrate down-river towards the Mediterranean shore. The \textit{Esposizione Universale di Rome} 1942 world-exhibition site which was planned to celebrate the twentieth anniversary and achievements of Fascism was also envisioned in the longer-term as a monumental centre of a huge new imperial capital.\textsuperscript{16} This planned city of twenty million souls was to extend from the Alban hills forty miles inland to the ancient port of Ostia on the Tyrrhenian sea. From Ostia, Fascist Rome would dominate a reborn Roman empire in the Mediterranean and stretching to Africa beyond. It is quite clear that the Mediterranean enjoyed a great deal of importance within all levels of Fascist Italy.

\textit{Strategy: the Italian sphere}

In May 1938, Hitler paid a state visit to Italy. Historians often use the occasion to mention anecdotal insights into the two dictators.\textsuperscript{17} Yet despite the four trainloads of Nazi acolytes and wagons full of special dress uniforms that accompanied Hitler to Rome and led some Italians to talk of a second barbarian invasion, the \textit{Fuhrer's} purpose was to coax Mussolini closer to a firm and binding alliance.\textsuperscript{18} One key concession to this end was announced at the official banquet at Palazzo Venezia on 7 May. In his speech to the assembled Fascists, Nazis, Italian aristocrats and the diplomatic community, Hitler recognised the Alpine frontier granted to Italy at

Versailles. He also proclaimed the Mediterranean as being Italy's natural sphere of influence, in his exact terms, Italy's 'living space'.

In describing the Mediterranean as Italian in so high profile a fashion, Hitler had not only alerted the diplomatic community to his concession but had also discursively established this idea in the wider 'popular' imagination. This representational practice, the 'scripting' or geo-graphing of the world, defined the Mediterranean as Italy's living space and thus established the Italian right to dominance within the Mediterranean in the Axis world view. It was just such a tactic that Neville Chamberlain used at Hendon airfield later that same year upon his return from Munich and a meeting with the two dictators. When he labelled Czechoslovakia a far away, insignificant little country, Chamberlain justified his sacrifice of the Sudetenland by describing it as a meaningless, distant place. Upon Mussolini's return from Munich, he entered Rome via the new Triumphal route which was already planned as the axis of Rome's shift to the Mare Nostrum.

It is clear that the Italian role in the coming war, and more especially its supposed Mediterranean sphere of interest, had a momentum of its own from long before 1938. From his party headquarters in Munich in 1928, Hitler had talked to Italian diplomats and industrialists about a possible future alignment with Fascist Italy should his Nazi movement attain power. To avoid any future clash of interests, he had promised to remain silent over the Sud-Tyrol Germans and had proposed an Italian hegemony in the Mediterranean in exchange for a future German sphere of influence in northern and eastern Europe. By the late 1930s, with Hitler at the head of a totalitarian state and military machine far more ruthless and efficient than anything Mussolini could muster, in alliance with Italy from 1936 and formally tied into the 'Pact of Steel' from May 1939, the concept of the 'Parallel war' was on the lips of Axis politicians. In 1936 Italy had intervened in the Spanish Civil war on the side of Franco's Nationalists. One rationale being to increase Italian influence in the Mediterranean.

In November 1937 Mussolini had formally announced that Italian foreign policy

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19Although this frontier and Hitler's pledge remained a bone of contention throughout the alliance: Knox, Mussolini unleashed, pp. 59-63.
20E. Wiskemann, The Rome-Berlin Axis. London, 1949, p. 137. Haushofer, at that time branded the mastermind behind Nazism in the US, discovered how sensitive was the German need to placate its Italian ally when his 1927 book Grenzen (Berlin) was banned upon a complaint from Italian ambassador Dino Alfieri about its call to re-unite the 'Germans' of the Sud-Tyrol with the Greater German Reich once again.
21For more contemporary examples: ÓTuathail and Agnew, 'Geopolitics and discourse'; Dalby, 'American security discourse'.
22Mussolini even finally agreed to meet his admirer after several prior refusals: Mack Smith, Mussolini's Roman Empire, p. 23.
23Mack Smith, Mussolini's Roman Empire, p. 23; De Grand, Italian Fascism, p. 94.
centred upon the Mediterranean. In the forthcoming 'Parallel war', these regional interests would be formalised into grand strategy. Italy would subdue the Mediterranean world and the southern Balkans whilst Germany would conquer northern, central and eastern Europe. The arrangement was not without its tensions. Neither side trusted the other or seriously confided about strategy. Hitler had private designs on Trieste which the Italians were aware of. More concretely, the invasion of Czechoslovakia was enacted without consultation with Rome and, piqued by this affront, Mussolini annexed Albania. Nevertheless, however sceptical the Germans were about the military capacity of their ally, on the eve of war, they had ceded the Mediterranean theatre and the Balkans to Mussolini's Italian forces.

So fundamental was the Mediterranean to Italian prospects that in 1939, whilst outlining Italian war aims to the Fascist Grand Council, or - as Knox labelled them - "...a lapidary statement of geopolitical vision which the dictator had entertained since the mid-1920s," Mussolini claimed that:

States are more of less independent according to their maritime position... Italy is bordered by an inland sea which communicated with the ocean through the Suez Canal... and by the Straits of Gibraltar, dominated by the government of Great Britain. Italy has in fact no free access to the oceans. She is really a prisoner in the Mediterranean, and the more populous and powerful she becomes, the more she will suffer from her imprisonment. The bars of this prison are Corsica, Tunisia, Malta and Cyprus. Its sentinels are Gibraltar and Suez.

Italy's interests were Mediterranean. And to emphasize their different spheres, Mussolini also wrote to Hitler at the turn of 1939-1940, reminding him - amongst

25De Grand, Italian Fascism, p. 121.
27Mussolini, for example, wouldn't allow German troops into the Mediterranean zone originally: Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, p. 48.
28Mack Smith, Mussolini's Roman Empire, p. 45.
30In contrast to received wisdom, James Sadkovich has recently demonstrated how the Italian high-command were actually very sceptical of the military and strategic grasp of their German counterparts: J. Sadkovich, 'German military incompetence through Italian eyes', War in History, 1, 1 (1994), pp. 39-62.
31Deakin, The Brutal Friendship, p. 19. First quotation from: Knox, Mussolini unleashed, p. 39, later in the same speech, Mussolini would claim: "From this situation, whose geographical rigour leaps to one's eyes..." which suggests that Mussolini did indeed have some appreciation of geopolitics - however abstracted they were from the intellectual tomes of the Triestini (Knox, p. 40). The Fascist Grand Council was Mussolini's cabinet and nominally the most powerful body in the state. From 1925 until 1943 it rubber-stamped the Dictator's decisions - only when the war was lost did it propose the vote of no confidence which precipitated the downfall of Mussolini.

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other things—that Germany's *Lebensraum* was in Russia.\(^{32}\) Thus, in Deakin's analysis:

> The conception of an Italo-German alliance, apart from its ideological significance, was therefore, from the Italian point of view, to cover and secure by treaty with the greatest European land power the continental position of Italy, and free her to pursue her 'vital interests' in the Mediterranean and in Africa.\(^{33}\)

Italy's 'Parallel war', which had aimed to win "...limited aims in the Mediterranean, the Balkans and Africa," would eventually become embroiled and taken over by the German war effort.\(^{34}\) The disastrous course of the conflict would also signal the fall of the regime. Before the hostilities began Mussolini's generals had warned him that the country and its forces were in no condition for a fight.\(^{35}\) However, the train of events and the Germany's lightning successes against France and the low countries convinced Mussolini (with some prompting from Hitler) that to win his Mediterranean empire, he had to join a war which might soon be over.\(^{36}\) This was a huge mistake, but of relevance here is that, in one sense, Italy's entrance into the war was premised upon its ambitions for hegemony in Africa and the Balkans but above all in the Mediterranean.

*Italian claims to the Mediterranean and the geopoliticians*

If the German willingness to allow Italy a Mediterranean sphere was generous, it was no more than Italy expected. Italian interests in the Mediterranean had been a standard rhetoric under Fascism. Mussolini had been making frequent claims upon this same domain since the mid 1920s.\(^{37}\) His first foreign policy adventure was an expedition which occupied Corfu briefly in August 1923 and as the regime became more established throughout the 1920s, Italian influence in the Adriatic was strengthened by the formal annexation of Fiume in January 1924 and in the Eastern Mediterranean with the consolidation of Italian rule in Rhodes and the Dodecanese islands in the Aegean.\(^{38}\) In late 1926 enough money was made available from Rome to persuade the newly crowned King Zog to break with his Yugoslavian backers and


\(^{33}\)Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship*, p. 20.

\(^{34}\)Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship*, pp. 30-47, quotation from p. 32.


\(^{36}\)Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, p. 206; Duggan, *Concise history of Italy*, pp. 235-239.

\(^{37}\)Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, p. 16.

\(^{38}\)Lyttelton, *The seizure of power*, pp. 424-429; Mussolini slowly dissolved the entrenched and conservative influence of the Italian Foreign office throughout this period also.
to sign a treaty with Italy which rendered Albania a semi-protectorate. It was becoming evident that Italian designs on the Mediterranean were to the fore in those initiatives which were pursued by Rome.

In addition, the Italians were acutely aware of the strategic importance of the Mediterranean and of their own vulnerability to a closure of Suez or Gibraltar. In 1938, 75% of Italian imports and 98% of national oil imports arrived via its sea lanes. In 1940 80% of raw materials and foodstuffs passed through allied-occupied Suez or Gibraltar. As Wright comments: "geography, history and the increasing need for middle east oil and oil products prompted Fascist Rome to view the Eastern Mediterranean as a rightful field for commercial, and eventually political, expansion and influence." Or in a famous quotation from Mussolini:

"It is increasingly neccessary that the Italians must face their insular mentality, because this is the only way in which they will place at its correct level the problems of the naval defence of the nation. Italy is an island which is immersed in the Mediterranean. For others, the Mediterranean is a routeway, for us Italians it means life."

Italy's geographers were not slow to contributed their scientific authority to the cause. They found geographical proof of the Italianità of Corsica or Dalmatia for example. Antonio Toniolo, one of the country's leading physical geographers, decided that the flora, fauna and geological strata that characterised Corsica proved that the island was part of the Italian peninsular in geographical terms. Opposition from academic
geographers to national expansionism, of the kind which had occasionally surfaced in Liberal Italy, was nowhere to be seen under Fascism. An 'Institute for Mediterranean Studies' was established in Rome in 1931 and published a weekly magazine called *Il Mediterraneo* until 1943. The 'Institute for International Political Studies' published Pietro Silva's monograph 'The Mediterranean from the unity of Rome to the unity of Italy' in 1938. Meanwhile, the National Institute of Fascist Culture turned its attention in the same direction with a 192 page booklet explaining: 'The problems of the Mediterranean'. It commenced with Mussolini's words: "We Italians are Mediterraneans, and our destiny, without replicating others, is and will always be on the sea."

Finally, from amongst the complex network of interwoven Fascist institutes, study groups and journals of the northern cities, emerged Egidio Moleti di Sant'Andrea's *Mare Nostrum, Rome in Mediterranean civilisation* with 16 maps by Morandi. Once again, the special role of Italy as the Mediterranean's leading nation and agent of civilisation was expounded at length: from antiquity and Christendom, through the Renaissance, to the new Italian colonial empire and the Axis alliance. Geopolitical concepts like Eurafrica were prominent amongst these final chapters, suggesting that geopolitical ideas were by 1939 reaching beyond geography into other disciplines and communities. The geopoliticians were informing and influencing their context at the same time as they developed within and reflected their context.

Italian influence had reached the island. This is interesting not only because it indicates the ways in which the term 'geopolitics' was diffusing through Italian geography, but also because the BRSGI was positively discriminating against geopolitics, at least as exemplified in the Triestene current. This will be expanded upon in the next chapter. Toniolo hawked his findings around the geographical circuit of the day, speaking to 'The Italianness of the geographical landscape of Corsica' at Bologna University in February and March 1942. Commenting upon this, *Geopolitica* (probably Roletto) pressed the point that work such as this (in a Vidalien vein) was one of the staples of a geopolitical investigation: 'Cronache', *Geopolitica*, 4, 11 (1942), pp. 520-521, esp. p. 521.

At least to my knowledge. One of the rare occasions upon which a geographer had criticised Italian ambitions for the Dalmatian shore for example: C. Marinelli, 'Sui rapporti economici con l'altra sponda dell'Adriatico', *Atti del sesto congresso geografico italiano*, Venice, 1 (1907); C. Marinelli, 'Il problema dell'Adriatico', *Unità*, 12 March (1915); C. Marinelli and G. Salvemini, *La questione dell'Adriatico*, Rome, 1918; references from Gambi, 'Geography and imperialism', pp. 80-82.

See, for example: U. d'Andrea, 'La storia della Corsica è storia d'Italia', *Politica Sociale*, 12, 10 (1940), pp. 264-265.


Ambrosini, *I problemi del Mediterraneo*. p. 3.

Ambrosini, *I problemi del Mediterraneo*. p. 3.

Moleti di Sant'Andrea, *Mare Nostrum, Roma nella civiltà Mediterranea*, (no place of publication), 1939. The cover of this book, which I cannot reproduce here, is a striking piece of modernist design. A map of the mediterranean has a gigantic lictor fasces positioned in its centre, surrounded by the icons of Italian modernity - ocean liners and a sky full of the silhouettes of fighter aircraft. Lettering in the modern Fascist style completes the image.

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As eager Fascists and colonial-advocates, the Triestene geopoliticians showered a great deal of attention upon a region which had concerned them throughout the 1930s. Indeed, they were influenced themselves by the geographical problems they encountered living in Trieste and Roleto had been appointed with a remit to explore precisely the politics of Trieste, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. Roleto wrote prolifically upon the Eastern Mediterranean, the area's Italian possessions, their economic prospects, and the potential geopolitical advantages of future expansionism in the region. He disseminated his findings through mediums as various as Commercio, ICF publications and in projects such as his 'Commercial guide to the Levant'. I will deal with some of these publications later where they have relevance to the themes I will discuss.

Other geopoliticians had sustained interests in the Mediterranean alongside Roleto. Witness Ugo Morichini's *Mediterranean civilisation* of 1928 and his *The Adriatic Basin and Dalmatia* of 1932.53 The first of these books concluded with chapters that pronounced Rome the 'Heart of the World' thanks to its Mediterranean hegemony in classical times and the later papal empire of Christendom.54 This heritage "...had made from Italy a land of conquest and a race of conquerors and from the Mediterranean, from time to time, an area for their expansion...".55 The geography of the region was also accorded a special significance: "The function of the Mediterranean is given by its shape and its climate, and by the shape and the climate of its central diafram: Italy."56 In Morichini's conclusion, geography and history -when augmented by the 'will' of the government- together argued for a contemporary Italian empire. He also located this empire: "The struggle for the Mediterranean is the struggle for empire."57 Seldom had this strain of rhetoric diluted by the time it reached the pages of Geopolitica, Chersi, for example, claimed the region as a singular historical and geographical entity from the Roman empire onwards "...the Mediterranean, from Rome and beyond, save the period of islamic imperialism, was always an Italian sea."58

Yet the unity of the Mediterranean, although unquestioned when Geopolitica argued for an Italian 'soldering zone' or 'sub-empire' in the region, was nevertheless fractured on other occassions. In addition to the centre of the sea which was supposedly

57Morichini, *Civilità Mediterranea*, p. 274.
dominated by Italy, distinctions were sometimes drawn between the eastern Mediterranean and the western basin. And even within these distinctions there was at times a notable degree of ambiguity in *Geopolitica*'s interpretation of the region. I've already included two close readings of Geopolitical synthesis maps which concentrate on the Mediterranean region (figures 5.6 and 5.7). The first portrayed Italy as a bulwark of western civilisation against eastern nationalism in the eastern basin and this same theme appeared elsewhere in geopolitical writing. Roletto had a longstanding academic interests in the eastern basin and the Levant and in addition to those works I have mentioned already, he also cultivated an interest in Rhodes and the geopolitics and economics of this capital island of the Italian Dodecanese archipelago. In 1937 he taught a summer school there for Italian businessmen - providing them with the geographical insight they might need for successful commercial expansion in the region. Out of this work came a monography entitled: ‘Rhodes: the imperial function in the eastern Mediterranean’ which argued for Italian military and economic expansion in the region.59

However, at other times Fascism posed as the friend of the Arab world, hoping to win favour in the eastern Mediterranean by posing as a friendly western power, less exploitative than the western democracies and sensitive to Islam. From 1935 the regime targetted what many regard as the first propaganda radio service at the eastern Mediterranean and its arabic population. Radio Bari declared the British and French as decadent imperialistic oppressors and Fascist Italy as the primary power in the Mediterranean and its leader to be the 'Protector of Islam'.60 The 'Sword of Islam' with which Mussolini was presented during his 1937 visit to Libya represented his special sympathy with and respect for the Arab peoples.61 Yet Mussolini's triumphalist visit to Libya in 1937 was also designed to demonstrate that modern Fascist Italy now straddles the Mediterranean and controlled the centre of the sea.

*Bringing the Mediterranean and blocking the English*

When the four coastal provinces of Libya were incorporated into metropolitan Italy proper in 1938 Italy, like France, straddled the Mediterranean.62 The benefits that trans-Mediterranean territory was supposed to lend Italy in the access to and exploitation of African resources has already been discussed. Likewise, we

61Wright, 'Mussolini, 'Libya and the "Sword of Islam"', p. 32.
have already witnessed Italian attempts to define for themselves a special 'soldering' role in the Eurafrika Pan-region. A debate which was also influenced by the Italo-German tension over spheres of influence and the extent to which both nations would be equal allies in a new world order; D'Agostino-Orsini having to calm these tensions at a joint conference of Italian and German colonial experts.\(^\text{63}\) For the Transaficana project too, Italy's unique role as a bridge across the Mediterranean was fundamental. Yet at least one commentator claims that the 'Fourth Shore's' true value lay with the strategic benefits which it lent to its mother country across the Mediterranean basin.\(^\text{64}\) Here I will deal with these strategic benefits and the roles Geopolitica attributed to Libya in the Mediterranean.

![Geopolitical synthesis 3: The Mediterranean](image)

**Figure 7.1**

Geopolitical synthesis 3: The Mediterranean\(^\text{65}\)

I begin with the third Sintesi Geopolitiche dates from March 1939. As an early example of the Sintesi Geopolitiche series, the map was preceded by a reader's guide which directed attention to the "...importance of [our] compatriots distributed throughout the basin...".\(^\text{66}\) The 1930s Italian population of the African Mediterranean coast was represented exclusively amongst the foreign

\(^{63}\)D'Agostino-Orsini, 'La nuova Eurafrika e l'asse'.  
\(^{65}\)Geopolitica 1, 3 (1939), pp. 160-161.  
\(^{66}\)For the 'reader's guide': Geopolitica 1, 3 (1939), p. 159.
communities with the benefit of large proportional symbols.\textsuperscript{67} Again this selective mapping gave an exaggerated impression of a Maghreb populated largely by Italians, especially in the central and eastern section. The spatial unity of the region is hinted at by the sub-graphic which depicts the integrated nature of the Mediterranean basin's migratory patterns.\textsuperscript{68} Such unity is emphasised on the main map by the use of tonal contrasts. These picture a Mediterranean that is enclosed by the dark-tones which represent Italian territory, the 'authoritarian states' allied to Italy, the circles that portray Italian expatriate communities, and the sweeping arrow that represents the Italian colonisation of East Africa.\textsuperscript{69} The map is constructed to persuade the reader visually that the Mediterranean is centred upon Italy and surrounded by an Italian presence; that it is, in fact, a distinct geopolitical region in which Italy was the natural hegemonic power.\textsuperscript{70}

Libya also plays a further part in the integration and control of the \textit{Mare Nostrum}. Another vertical arrow reflects the idea of 'Eurafrica' as it anchors Africa to the Rome-Berlin axis. Its passage through Libya and the sizeable Italian population in Tunisia facilitates the continuation of the Axis presence across the Mediterranean, blocking the British imperial passage to Suez as it does so.\textsuperscript{71} The inclusion upon the map of naval bases and zones of maritime control furthers this argument and emphasises the strategic utility of Libya as a continuation of Italian sovereignty across the sea. This is because the maritime zones, indicated by horizontal lines for French control and vertical lines for the Italians, depend upon the adjacency of metropolitan territory: a criterion that produces Italian hegemony in the central and eastern Mediterranean thanks to its Libyan shore, Aegean and Adriatic possessions and the extent of mainland coasts. In contrast, the Royal Naval presence upon 'The Highway of Empire' is reduced to a slender line that is broken regularly by symbols that represent Italian force. On these terms Italy's African 'Fourth shore' functions as a buttress to Italy's hegemonic ambitions in the Mediterranean region. As ever, it is also proof of Italy's great power status based on its prestigious African empire. In only the third issue of \textit{Geopolitica}, and in

\textsuperscript{67}\textit{Geopolitica} 1, 3 (1939), pp. 160-161.

\textsuperscript{68}This ties into a further point. The arrows that indicate migratory-shifts leave Italy to colonize other territory, whereas France apparently has no emmigration, but is subject to immigration from several nations. This ties into the Fascist refrain that France, with a declining birth-rate, was a 'decadent' and diminishing power in contrast to Italy.

\textsuperscript{69}This curving arrow implies dynamism and movement just as a straight arrows suggest strength.

\textsuperscript{70}Such arguments and the use of Italians living outside Italian frontiers to prove this, was the subject of: G. Bottiglioni, 'Italiani in dominio straniero', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 8-9 (1941), pp. 376-385.

\textsuperscript{71}These themes were also rehearsed in: D. Deambrosis, 'Importanza del Mediterraneo centrale nell'espansione coloniale Italiano', \textit{Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana}, serie VII, vol. iv, 3-4 (1936), pp. 226-232.
their privileged Geopolitical synthesis series, the geopoliticians had chosen to
highlight these themes in their portrayal of the Mediterranean.

These imagined strategic advantages that control of the central Mediterranean
bestowed upon Italy were also acknowledged elsewhere. When he visited Palermo in
August 1937, Mussolini had proclaimed Sicily the geographical centre of the empire
and the bridge between Italy and Africa.72 In his Enciclopedia Italiana article three
years earlier, Toschi talked of the European Mediterranean powers as possessed by a
'tendenza all'altra sponda' (the trend towards the opposite shore) by which they
gained control of the sea; a phenomenon which figure 6.6 attempts to express.73 And
in a collection published by the Trieste branch of the ICF, Dante Lunder blustered
that Libya also formed "...a block which dominated, or rather strangled all maritime
and airborne communications from the west to the Levant [due to] this military bridge...".74

Italian domination of the central Mediterranean was justified on a number of criteria.
Toschi used the length of national coastline to distinguish the major Mediterranean
powers in the Italian Enciclopaedia. With 1600km from Libya alongside 3500km
from various islands and 4000km from the mainland, Italy totalled over 9000km of
Mediterranean coastline. The French total of 3700km was the only other figure to
come close.75 Figure 7.2 pursues a similar line. Here again, it is the adjacency of
national territory and naval bases which underpins Italian claims to the centre of the
sea and the Adriatic; thanks to its vast Libyan territory, Italy claimed a dominance in
the central Mediterranean upon these terms. The surrounding article claimed that
such influence was essential to Italian independence. It suggested that Italy should
become the "new Gibraltar" in the central Mediterranean.76 Such claims were not
without relevance. Many contemporary analysts noted that the Littorania Libica
highway allowed Italy to deploy along the entire Libyan coast almost immediately.
Likewise, the thirty bloody months of the north African campaign and the shorter but
no less bitter fighting for Malta attest to the strategic importance of the central
Mediterranean in these years.77

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72Critica Fascista, 'Elementi per una nuova geografia italiana', p. 353; see also: G. Maggiore,
73Toschi, 'Il Mediterraneo nella geografia politica', p. 762.
74D. Lunder, 'La funzione della Libia nel Mediterraneo', in A. Contento (ed.) L'Impero Coloniale
Italiano, Trieste, 1938, pp. 97-103, quotation from p. 100, emphasis as in original.
75Toschi, 'Il Mediterraneo nella geografia politica'.
76A. Palumbo, 'Mediterraneo in guerra visto da Parigi', Geopolitica, 2, 5 (1940), pp. 216-220,
quotation from p. 218. The article from which this map came was an analysis of French reactions to
the war and speculations upon the Mediterranean and possible future scenarios for the region.
77Wright, 'Mussolini, Libya and the "Sword of Islam"', pp. 29-33.
All of these arguments for an Italian bridge across the Mediterranean and a zone of Italian influence were acutely aware of the constant irritation of the British control of Suez, Gibraltar and, consequently, of the Mediterranean itself. By the late 1930s Italy's longstanding diplomatic policy of friendship with Britain had been abandoned.\(^79\) Not only were the British perceived to have profitted at Italian expense from the conference table at Versailles, but in 1935 they had also appeared to betray Italy over Abyssinia.\(^80\) Mussolini believed, with some reason, that he had the tacit approval of Britain and France to realise his ambitions in east Africa. Yet, when both nations appeared to rescind their private approval, and worse, supported the League of Nations sanctions which attended the Italian invasion, Mussolini was furious.\(^81\) Furthermore, as the foremost naval power in the Mediterranean, the Royal Navy was in the vanguard of the Italian blockade and at any moment could have closed Suez and scuppered the Italian war effort. After the Abyssinian campaign, Mussolini moved ever more into the sphere of Nazi Germany and further away from the 'plutocracies' of Britain and France.\(^82\) The British Mediterranean presence, a 'New

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79De Grand, Italian Fascism, pp. 117-129;
Carthage' in the rhetoric of Fascism, was a frequent target of *Geopolitica's* Mediterranean.\(^{83}\) Toschi complained that Britain's coastline in the Mediterranean "...didn't achieve a thousand kilometers, but this was enough for this power to control the political and economic life of the Mediterranean from its vitally important strategic positions...".\(^{84}\) These concerns were expressed more obliquely in the various articles in which Italian trade routes and commercial flows were examined. The policy of national autarky had heightened awareness of Italy's dependency on imports and of the fundamental importance of national self-sufficiency and access to resources.\(^{85}\) Thus, in the series of articles about Italian ports, maritime trade and the merchant Navy, these imperatives, and the influence of Suez and Gibraltar, were constant themes.\(^{86}\) The call for free passage through the Mediterranean's two 'gateways' was frequently heard.\(^{87}\) More explicit was Bruno Francolini's ironic commentary about the 'benefits' of western-democratic free trade from which the states of southern and eastern Europe might supposedly draw advantage.\(^{88}\) Whilst Renzo Sertolis Salis, one of the most extremist Fascists in the *Geopolitica* circle, called the struggle for "...international justice against the Anglo-saxon powers [a] 'holy war'".\(^{89}\) Finally, Livio Chersi, 'secretary to the editor' of *Geopolitica* in Trieste, stated that from the moment when it proclaimed its reborn empire, Italy became a state with global interests.\(^{90}\) The Mediterranean question immediately raised its head:

> Italy's vital interests are, by nature, situated in the Mediterranean basin whilst Great Britain is installed there only due to its desire for power and dominance. [Yet] whilst England, which exists outside the Mediterranean, possesses gateways to the open oceans, Italy not only lives in this sea but doesn't possess the gateways towards the open seas

\(^{83}\)The phrase 'New Carthaginians' or 'Neo-Carthaginians' infiltrated numerous discourses in this period, even for example, the 'Juridical Review of the Middle and Far East and colonial justice': V. Taormino, 'Italo Balbo', *Rivista Giuridica del Medio ed Estremo Oriente e Giustizia Coloniale*, 5, 7-10 (1940), p. 290.

\(^{84}\)Toschi, 'Il Mediterraneo nella geografia politica', p. 762.

\(^{85}\)On the Italian claim that the Mediterranean was not only a highway but also their 'life', see: A. Petrucci, 'Mediterraneo: la via e la vita', *Politica Sociale*, 12, 10 (1940), pp. 266-267.


\(^{87}\)Anon, 'Il Mediterraneo e le vie di rifornimento dell'Italia', *Geopolitica*, 2, 6-7 (1940), pp. 303-304, (review of: G. Tagliacarne, *Il Mediterraneo e le vie di rifornimento dell'Italia*, Rome, 1940, in which (apparently) these same issues and conclusions are reached.

\(^{88}\)Francolini, 'Il Mediterraneo nella guerra e nella geografia eurafricana', p. 289.


\(^{90}\)Chersi, 'Problemi geopolitici del Mediterraneo', p. 214.
which are instead in the British hands, for such reasons... ...its is clear that the neccessary conditions for peace and for civilised development in the Mediterranean basin and therefore also in Europe are intimately connected to the freedom and the effective security of Italy in the Mediterranean and outside. 91

Yet as figures 7.1 and 7.2 emphasize, the British and French did maintain an undeniable presence in the Mediterranean throughout Geopolitica's four years - proving a constant irritant to Italian hegemonic ambitions in their Mare Nostrum. However, by contrast, in the 1940s the Adriatic sea was more readily recognised as an enclosed Italian lake.

Part II: The Adriatic, the Balkans and south-eastern Europe

Control of the Adriatic was fundamental to Italy's conception of itself as a frontline Mediterranean power. 92 Italy's European strategy as war approached was to gain Mediterranean hegemony and to secure influence over the Balkans. Possession of the Adriatic promised both results. From the Great war when Italian territorial aspirations in the Adriatic and Dalmatia gained their first recognition in international diplomacy, Italian geography had been contributing its expertise to the efforts to prove the legitimacy of an Italian expansion across the Adriatic into the Dalmatian coast. 93 Giotto Dainelli had in 1917 used his academic authority to announce that, as far as the supposedly incontrovertible evidence of natural science was concerned:

Dalmatia may well be a physical part of the Balkan peninsular [but] it is an area to itself whose natural character links it closely to nearby Italy... ...the strip of land that makes up Dalmatia and the mountain range which closes it off are the geological -one could almost say morphological- continuation of the mountains at the back of Venice. Opposite Dalmatia, along the whole eastern coast of Italy... ...we find the same kind of landscape, the same geological features, the same lack of surface water, the same rivers emerging just before the sea. 94

91Chersi, 'Problemi geopolitici del Mediterraneo', p. 215.
92Deakin, The Brutal Friendship, p. 22.
94G. Dainelli, 'La Dalmazia', in Reale Società Geografica Italiana (ed.), Pagine geografiche della nostra guerra, Rome, 1917, pp. 123-145, reference and abridged quotation from: Gambi, 'Geography and imperialism', p. 84. Dainelli's contribution was to a SGI text which sought to explain and justify the Italian war effort, in this case in terms of the anticipated territorial gains which Italy might expect.
Although they 'redeemed' Trieste and much of Istria in 1919, Italian claims upon Dalmatia were dashed by Woodrow Wilson's intervention at Versailles. His fourteen points and his principle of self-determination for the peoples of the former Austro-Hungarian empire established instead the state of Yugoslavia. The culture of the 'mutilated peace' which fuelled Fascism's rise to power and its expansionist aspirations on the world stage therefore crystallized especially around Fiume and the Dalmatian coast. Italians had convinced themselves of their right to these lands: Mussolini talked to his cabinet of 'unfinished business' in the Adriatic in February 1939. More urgently, the Anschluss in March 1938 and the Munich Agreement of September meant that Germany, although an ally, was by 1939 in a position to extend its interests into the northern Balkans and the Danubian lands. Italy pressed its claims in the region and, reflecting this agenda, Geopolitica brought its geopolitical vision to bear.

The third issue of Geopolitica in March 1939 was devoted to the city of Trieste in the light of the German moves into Austria and Czeckoslovakia. The journal had already hinted darkly at the implications for Italian interests in the Balkans given the incorporation of Austria into the Reich. These veiled warnings mixed uncomfortably with standard pro-Axis rhetoric throughout the commentary on Trieste and its possible futures. In 1941 Roletto would publish a book about Trieste as part of the series on the problems of Italian ports commissioned by the Consiglio Nazionale di Ricerca. His agenda upon appointment, to explore the future economic possibilities for the Friulian port, clearly remained a personal priority which was translated into his new journal. When the prospective Balkan hinterland of Trieste was threatened, the journal was prepared to voice local interests.

However, with increasing evidence of German informal imperialism in the Balkans, this position became unsustainable and Geopolitica was forced to accept the
inevitability of German hegemony in the Danubian basin. At times the journal was even forced to negotiate this volte face in its editorial pages. An April 1940 editorial concluded that: "...the artificial ties of the post-war era are no longer holding in the light of the new geopolitical realities which impose new orientations and gravitations [on the Balkan region]." However, earlier in this same article, Geopolitica had admitted that the Danubian region complemented the German economy and that Germany was now the leading Danubian power. It quickly added that with the enlargement of Hungary (an Italian ally with close economic ties) and the advent of Rome in Albania, Italy was the leading Balkan power. Later that same year another article stated that the Germans were better equipped than Italy to exploit the Balkans economically. It seems that the 'new geopolitical realities' of a growing German influence in the northern Balkans had compelled the Triestini to admit a German role in that region and to abandon Italian claims there. Instead, Geopolitica turned its gaze southwards to the Balkan regions which were not so directly influenced by Germany.

The southwards shift is reflected in Geopolitica's pages. In 1940 articles on the northern Adriatic were scarce. Editorial policy and contributors looked more favourably upon countries to the south of the Balkan peninsular. Albania, the latest extension of the Italian Kingdom, offered a range of advantages. This former Italian protectorate had been annexed by Mussolini in pique at Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia; in some respects it was a statement of Italian interests in the southern Balkans in response to the German impingement on their ambitions to the north. Certainly, Geopolitica began to develop the themes of Albania as both enclosing the Adriatic and as providing a route into the south-east Balkan lands.

In the first Geopolitica of the 1940s, Renata Pess (another of the Triestini geopoliticians) had published a lengthy article called: The geopolitical aspects of Albania. As Pess narrated, Italy was a Mediterranean country, and: "One of the most important elements of this Mediterranean life was certainly the Adriatic problem.

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101 Vinci, "Geopolitica" e Balcani", pp. 118-119. The Germans had entered the Balkan and Danubian markets aggressively from 1933 and their Italian rivals had been damaged by sanctions in 1935-36 and by the intervention in Spain which drained the treasury: De Grand, Italian Fascism, pp. 120-121.
102'Panorami', Geopolitica, 2, 4 (1940), pp. 143-146; quotation from p. 146.
which has today, finally, its definitive solution with the conquest of Albania.\textsuperscript{106} There were three factors behind Italy's action: one geographical, one historical and one political. Geographically, Albania was only 75km from the Apulian coast "...or better, [75km] separates their unity, for one can consider this land as the natural extension of the [Apulian] shore. Nature has decisively orientated Albania towards the Adriatic."\textsuperscript{107} The argument that the eastern Adriatic shore was an extension of the Italian west coast was a common one; enlisted by Dainelli in 1917 and used again here. Moreover, Albania's hydrology all drained westwards to the Adriatic - a natural feature which isolated the country from the rest of the Balkans and had made it receptive to maritime, and principally Italian influences through history. The country was entirely dependent upon these interventions and as a consequence - Pess continued - Albania could not hope to last for long as an independent state. Albania needed a superior civilisation to provide friendly protection and disinterested guidance.\textsuperscript{108}

A long history of Italian involvement and development of Albania followed. Combined with the distinctive geography of the land, and the close connections across the Straits of Otranto to Italy, this history had helped to create a distinct Albanian people quite separate from other Balkan races.\textsuperscript{109} Politically, Albania had an important role to play in Italian imperialism. With the conquest of the empire in Africa, the eastern basin of the Mediterranean was now the fulcrum of the Italian empire, Pess wrote. Albania was central to this. In addition, the 'natural and logical' consequence of Italian imperialism was that it would oversee and guide the Balkan peoples as they learnt to live in peace and economic well-being. Quite blatantly Pess continued:

The most rapid and superficial look at the geographical map will be enough to understand the geopolitical capacity of the territory as the key position in the Adriatic, and as an embankment against the eventual vain expansionist ambitions and as head of the bridge for our political-economic penetration in the Balkans.

To fulfil her function as as Mediterranean power, Italy must have the security of the Adriatic, in other words, she must have control... The possible future developments of current conditions in south east Europe creates a new solidarity amongst the Balkan powers. In this coalition of interests and power, the function of Italy, which [possessing] Albania is a Balkan power, couldn't be of a higher order.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{106}Pess, 'Aspetti geopolitici dell’Albania', p. 9.
\textsuperscript{107}Pess, 'Aspetti geopolitici dell’Albania', p. 9.
\textsuperscript{108}Pess, 'Aspetti geopolitici dell’Albania', pp. 9-10.
\textsuperscript{109}Pess, 'Aspetti geopolitici dell’Albania', pp. 10-12.
\textsuperscript{110}Pess, 'Aspetti geopolitici dell’Albania', p. 13.
These two points, that Albania secured the Adriatic and opened the Balkans for Italy, were hammered home relentlessly. A stream of other ideas followed in an almost vulgar fashion. Pess' assumptions of Italian supremacy and rights to colonise the southern Balkans were breathtaking in their bluntness. Albanian frontiers with Greece and Yugoslavia and, supposedly, Bulgaria and Romania would provide opportunities for Italian exporters. Albania would also cement Italian control of the eastern Mediterranean. From Albania a road would be driven eastwards through the Balkans so circumventing British maritime power in the Mediterranean. As Pess admitted, Albania would—in his plans—prove essential to Italy's Mediterranean and imperial futures.

Geopolitica's other accounts of the Balkans in 1940 were sometimes more subtle, but together reflected extremely accurately the international politics of the times. As Italy first intervened in the Balkans, retreated, was reinforced by the Germans and then finally oversaw the creation of a puppet state in Croatia, Geopolitica followed every move—commenting, justifying, analysing and explaining Italy's imperialism. The reasons for this erratic coverage is explained by the explosion of the myth of the 'Parallel war'. Already undermined by the tensions between the Axis powers in the Danubian lands and by the mutual distrust and, increasingly, dislike, that characterised the hierarchies of both regimes, throughout 1940 it became abundantly clear that Hitler was the most powerful of the two Axis leaders. German forces had swept through Poland, the low countries and France whilst Mussolini was forced to remain neutral as his fabled war machine was in no state for conflict. And when Mussolini did declare war, it was at the last moment, and ineffectually, against a already beaten France. Realising there would be no equal division of the war effort (and, subsequently of the spoils), Mussolini scrambled to carve out an Italian zone in the Balkans before Hitler could turn his attention there. It was this ad hoc war making which Geopolitica reflected.

Albania, Italy's most recent conquest, and the path it provided into Italy's new sphere of interest in the southern Balkans continued to attract attention from Geopolitica in the spring and summer of 1940. Dimitri Jaranoff, Geopolitica's Bulgarian

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112This had been obvious before, but each leader made some effort to appear unified on the world stage. On the fall of the 'Parallel war': Deakin, The Brutal Friendship, pp. 29-34.
113Knox, Mussolini unleashed, pp. 44-115.
114Knox, Mussolini unleashed, pp. 116-145.
115De Grand, Italian Fascism, p. 124.
correspondent, contributed a piece on 'Italy in the Balkan peninsular' in June. 116 Although a professor at the University of Sofia, Jaranoff replicated Geopolitica's justification for the Italian presence in Albania almost verbatim. As he represented the situation, Albania was geographically distinct from the rest of the Balkans and ought indeed to be associated with Italy. He also hoped that the stability and order which Italy had brought to Albania might be extended to other Balkan nations. In May Dante Lunder reported that work upon a trans-Balkan railway, starting from the Albanian coast, had begun. 117 It would integrate Italy with the Balkans and the orient and would provide a route by which the mineral and agricultural produce of the region could be exchanged for Italian manufactured goods. Its eventual destination was Bulgaria and it was emblematic "...of the peaceful expansion of Italy in this adjacent sector of the Balkans." 118 A month earlier the agricultural surplus of the southern Balkans was the topic of another Lunder article. 119 This overproduction, in part due to the expertise in agronomy which Italy had been contributing to these nations since 1925, had an important wartime function, he continued. A comprehensive array of statistics and trade details comprised a further article called: 'Economic notes on Bulgaria'. 120 Over the summer in which Italy entered the war so as not to be cheated of any territorial gains, Geopolitica appeared to be arguing that plentiful and accessible resources were available in the southern Balkans. 121

In the realms of practical statescraft, the Balkans remained Italy's main priority. Rather than engaging the British in Egypt, in the early autumn of 1940 Mussolini threatened an attack on Yugoslavia and eventually invaded Greece via Albania on 28 October. 122 Although once more a response to German advances in the Balkans (Hitler had brought Romania under German control on 12 October), the invasion of Greece had been a Fascist ambition for some time. 123 Yet historians are scathing about this shambolic campaign. 124 One writes: "From the Italian point of view the

118D. L. 'La grande ferrovia transbalcanica', p. 238.
120E. Corsi, 'Notizie economiche sulla Bulgaria', Geopolitica, 2, 6-7 (1940), pp. 285-290.
121 These were the only articles in Geopolitica in this period to deal substantially with the Balkans - which suggests that there may have been an editorial policy at work to suggest further Italian interventions in the Balkans whilst northern Europe fought. Certainly, this was the idea circulating the Italian High Command at the time: Deakin, The Brutal Friendship, pp. 28-29.
122Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 15-23.
123Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, pp. 263-264. Indeed, a strategic road network had been initiated in Albania for this very purpose.
124M. Cervi, The Hollow Legions. Mussolini's blunder in Greece, 1940-1941, New York, 1971; Mack Smith, Mussolini's Roman Empire, pp. 232-233; De Grand, Italian Fascism, p. 124; M. van Creveld, Hitler's Strategy, 1940-1941. The Balkan clue, Cambridge, 1973; Knox, Mussolini unleashed, pp. 189-230. Although Mack Smith's readiness to label Mussolini an opportunist often frequently leads him to foreclose on a more nuanced analysis of Fascism, it is hard to disagree with his analysis in this case.
Greek campaign was a masterpiece of ineptitude that threatened to become a national humiliation when the Greek army won a series of major victories. The November 1940 issue of *Geopolitica* would have reached its subscribers as did news of these defeats. However, in *Geopolitica*, Greece and the southern Balkans offered a bright future.

The editorial began by discussing the Greek campaign in triumphalist tones. It was followed by a whole spate of contributions which analysed the southern Balkan lands. In the same way that earlier articles of 1940 suggested that these territories could prove a profitable hinterland for imperial Italy, this themed issue of *Geopolitica*, prompted by the Greek invasion, pursued similar themes. A brief note after the editorial informed readers that the journal would continue to publish special issues which dealt with the issues or regions made relevant by political or military events. As Italian forces attempted to realise their leader’s ambitions in the southern Balkans, *Geopolitica* sought to inform Italy’s imperial consciousness.

Jaranoff wrote again: he claimed that Bulgaria was geographically, economically and geopolitically part of the ‘Mediterranean space’ due to its historical and trading connections to the Aegean sea. Although Bulgaria’s northern frontier was formed by the Danube, across which it faced Nazi-occupied Romania, Jaranoff was keen to emphasize that his country was not really part of the Danubian sphere. Jaranoff’s aim may have been to position his country in the Italian sphere of the Balkans rather than the German-occupied zone. Regardless, for *Geopolitica* it was confirmation from a foreign authority that Italy’s remit extended through to Bulgaria and the Black sea.

The geopolitical perspective also surveyed the ‘Economic unity of Hungary after its absorption of northern Transilvania’ and the contested region of Dobroudja (by the mouth of the Danube). These two articles made mention of the harmonious order the Axis nations had brought to the region: in these instances, reinstating the

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127 The note can be found on p. 466 at the end of: ‘Panorami’, *Geopolitica*, 2, 11 (1940), pp. 463-466.
129 His earlier sympathies for Italy suggest he was an Italophile; perhaps he envisaged a better future under Italian influence than as one of Germany’s satellites.
130 Jaranoff was also given his title at the end of his contribution so as to emphasize his authority and the fact that he was a foreign academic. Before his previous article for *Geopolitica*, an editorial note similarly promoted of his eminence and authority. *Geopolitica* was clearly pleased by the status which foreign academics lent their cause.
economic viability of Hungary and solving to the satisfaction of both the Rumanians and the Bulgarians their longstanding claims on the Danube's lowest reaches. A Geopolitical synthesis map and an article on Italy's role in the Balkan economies since 1918 similarly suggested the peaceful and rational order which the Axis had brought to a region which, as a further page of maps demonstrated, had a history of great instability. It was from within the paramenters of this apparently benificent 'new order' that Italy's own claims were couched. One writer staked Italy's historical interests in the Balkans by reproducing Mazzini's calls for an Italian imperium there. Finally, it was perhaps with lingering notions of a Parallel war and separate spheres of interest that Ernesto Corsi penned an article on Macedonia. After another trawl through selective historical episodes, he concluded that: "...in a Europe reconstructed on the basis of theories of living space... ...Germany inherits Viennese Danubia, but not the Hapsburg empire." The lower Balkans were not German space, he insisted, but Italian. Their interests in the south of the peninsular were outlined unequivocally: "To fairly resolve the Macedonian question, one must remember that Macedonia is the key to the vault of the entire Balkan system and therefore of extreme interest to Italy, which is the principal Balkan power."

Such optimism was tempered by the headlong Italian retreat which followed the invasion of Greece. It cost Italy a third of Albania and along with the British attack on Taranto and the disasters in the north African campaign signalled the end of any remaining semblence of a 'Parallel' high-command. Rommel was drafted into North Africa and the Italians were ground into a humiliating stalemate in Greece and Albania. Geopolitica fell silent about the Balkans. For the next five months, only one brief column dealt with Balkan issue, and this in a region which Italian geopoliticians had presented as the new Italian hinterland only shortly before. Such glaring discontinuities suggest very strongly that by the end of 1940, a strict editorial policy operated where Italy's Balkan adventures were concerned. As I

132'Sintesi geopolitiche n. 18: Il Danubio', Geopolitica, 2, 11 (1940), pp. 484-485. Pracchi, 'L'Italia nell'economia degli Stati balcanici dal 1918 al 1938'. It was Pracchi's article which suggests (p. 495), that Germany might be the more suited economic power to exploit the Balkans (see earlier). The page of maps is more evidence of the role which this privileged medium enjoyed in the journal. It plays upon the reputation of the Balkans as the 'powderkeg' of Europe: 'Travaglio dell'asseo politico dei Balcani', Geopolitica, 2, 11 (1940), p. 498.
133A. Scocchi, 'L'Italian e i Balcani', Geopolitica, 2, 11 (1940), pp. 486-490.
134E. Corsi, 'La Macedonia e la questione Mecedone', Geopolitica, 2, 11 (1940), pp. 481-483.
135Corsi, 'La Macedonia e la questione Mecedone', pp. 482-483, emphasis in the original.
136Corsi, 'La Macedonia e la questione Mecedone', p. 483.
137Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 23; Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, pp. 263-264 and 527.
139O. Lunder, 'Il canale Danubio - Mar Nero', Geopolitica, 3, 2, (1941), p. 108. In a sobre note, with no mention of Italy's defeat in the region, this canal across the Dobroudja plain from the Danube to the Black sea was forecasted to take six or seven years to complete. It was finally finished in the early 1990s.
mentioned in the previous chapter, a similar editorial policy appears to have also applied to Italian fortunes in Africa.

With no new Italian territories to locate, introduce or analyse for its imperial citizens, the journal cast around for topics. The wider Mediterranean theatre remained uncensored for example, and various contributors, amongst them Jaime Vicens Vives, speculated upon its geopolitics. However, the German military—forced by events to support their failing ally—set Geopolitica’s agenda by occupying Yugoslavia and Greece in early April 1941. We recall that in Vienna on 21 April, foreign ministers Ciano and Ribbentrop took a pencil to the map of Yugoslavia and delimited two totally arbitrary spheres of influence. By default, the Italians found themselves in a position to seize long-coveted sections of the Dalmatian coast and cities such as Zara, Dubrovnik and Split; all of which were promptly incorporated into metropolitan territory as Italian provinces. Slovenia was divided between the two Axis allies and the southern section was annexed to Italy—Trieste thus regaining its immediate hinterland. To these territorial acquisitions—bought through German effort—Italy added control over Greece and Montenegro. From the remainder of Yugoslavia were carved a German-controlled Serbia and the new state of Croatia which was divided between both powers: Italian influence extended over the western section.

Hitler had trusted his Italian allies, if competent at little else, with the role of sitting upon these conquered peoples. He was also keen to finally provide Mussolini with the semblence of the territorial rewards for which Italy had been fighting all year. As Steinberg has demonstrated, the division of Yugoslavia had devastating effects: sparking ethnic hatreds which still inspire atrocities and occupy world attention. Yet, aside from this, one of the more inane episodes of this tragic debacle was the Italian annexation of regions like Slovenia which had practically no ethnic Italian population. Even prominent Italians such as industrialist Alberto Pirelli saw no logic in the move save prestige and bombast. Yet, to the trained or informed eye, there was a geopolitical logic to all of this. From the May 1941 edition of Geopolitica, the Balkans, unmentioned for some five months, were again predominant in its pages.

141 Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 20-24.
142 Steinberg, All or nothing, p. 27.
143 Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 24-27.
144 Steinberg, All or nothing, p. 28.
145 Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 15-49.
146 Steinberg, All or nothing, pp. 25-28.
The journal set to work on these new Italian possessions and the benefits they might bestow.

Gustavo Carelli taught imperial politics on the 'Doctrine of Fascism' course at the School of Mystical Fascism in Milan - a base for some of the most extreme and committed Fascists of the day and which maintained links with *Geopolitica* and with Massi in particular. In May 1941 Carelli wrote 'Dalmatia and its frontiers' for *Geopolitica*. A portentous introduction, heavy with the significance of Italy's new acquisition, was followed by a formidable array of geomorphological and natural evidence was again enlisted to support the *Italianità* of the region. Once again Italians learnt of "...the Dinaric ridge which neatly separates Dalmatia -with its extremely different geographical, climatological, geological, economic and human variables- from the rest of the Balkan hinterland." History justified the Italian presence too. Rome and Venice had rendered Dalmatia "...the bulwark of Latin civilisation against the infiltration of Maygars and especially Slavs... [and later] the bastion of western Christian resistance against the Turkish threat." Only with its incorporation into the Hapsburg empire and then, after Versailles, into the rest of Yugoslavia did Dalmatia lose its historical function as a centre of Italianess. His geographical and historical arguments established, Carelli turned to the present day. The only problem, he continued, was how best to tie these Dalmatian lands into the Italian imperial community and to conceptualise the frontiers not on national terms, but to think of them *imperially*. The task was to integrate Italy and Croatia and then to determine the extent of the empire beyond here. Where the ancient Romans drew their boundaries, Carelli called for the great Mediterranean community of Rome to be re-established. After its long silence, *Geopolitica* was suddenly arguing vigorously the *Italianità* of the Balkans.

The campaign continued. A 'Geostampa' article addressed the various religious and ethnic groups of Yugoslavia, their numbers and their distributions. A series of maps and commentaries traced the origins, growth and development of

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147 I will talk a little about this organisation and *Geopolitica* in the final chapter. A good analysis in found in: D. Marchesini, *La scuola dei gerarchi*, Milan, 1976.
149 Carelli, 'Dalmazia e i suoi confini', pp. 244-245, quotation on p. 244.
150 Carelli, 'Dalmazia e i suoi confini', pp. 245-248, quotation on p. 246.
151 Carelli, 'Dalmazia e i suoi confini', pp. 248-249, my emphasis.
152 Carelli, 'Dalmazia e i suoi confini', p. 249.
153 D. Lunder, 'Razze e religioni nel mosaico Jugoslavo', *Geopolitica*, 3, 5 (1941), pp. 270-271. 'Geostampa' literally means geo-press. An occasional series, these two-page articles consisted of a sophisticated Morandi map and attendant facts, figures and a few short salient points about a given situation or region. Again, they were evidence of *Geopolitica*'s emphasis on the encompassing potential of geography and geopolitics.

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Montenegro. The 'Geopolitical synthesis' number 22 (reproduced in figure 5.7) was also published this month, the implications and suggestions of which I have already discussed. And statistics relating to the agricultural productivity and mineral wealth of Slovenia, Dalmatia and Montenegro were compiled to further fulfil the journal's self-appointed task to encompass and describe every aspect of these territories. It does seem very clear that, in the case of the Balkan lands at least, Geopolitica maintained a firm editorial policy which sought to respond to the course of the war and to inform Italians of the new territories and their potential which fell under Italian influence. This informative perspective was the geopolitical perspective.

Attention was also directed at Italy's new Greek sphere of control. Lino Cappuccio claimed to explain 'geopolitically' why Epiro, Acarnania and the Jonie islands on the west coast of the Peloponnesus peninsula were really Italian. Again, the reasons were mainly due to a mixture of physical geography and the longstanding historical influences of Rome and Venice. But finally, and quite blatantly, Italian dominion over these territories would also assist Rome's control over the Adriatic and would help to bring Greece further into Italy's sphere of interests. As a consequence, "...it would be possible to reduce the Mediterranean to a Mare Nostrum... [and provide] ...the civilised contact which would elevate the living standards (presently incredibly low) of the population." These disparaging remarks about the Greek people characterised the worst elements of Fascist rhetoric. Cappuccio even boasted of the historical brilliance of Romans in contrast to the Greeks and finished by stating:

Also the empire of the Littorio [Fascism] proceeds in the same [Roman] sense, asking the collaboration of all the peoples which enter into its living space so that from this war will emerge a new and fairer Europe, in which every state will have its duty and every people the honour of bringing their own torch to the altar of human civilisation.

The quotation above betrays once again the ethnocentric assumptions which pervaded Geopolitica. Although the extent of Italian racism in the Fascist era is much disputed, the racial legislation of 1938 officially sanctioned such opinions and questions of race.

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154 M. Morandi, "Analisi geostoriche: lo sviluppo spaziale di uno stato: il Montenegro", Geopolitica, 3, 5 (1941), pp. 274-275. The 'Geohistorical analysis' or 'Geohistorical synthesis' series were likewise map-based texts which dealt with a particular historical phenomenon through geopolitical cartography.
155 'Economia Adriatica', Geopolitica, 3, 5 (1941), pp. 297-299.
159 Cappuccio, 'Epiro, Acarnania ed Isole Jonie, territori geopoliticamente italiani', p. 256.
and the supposed inferiority of other peoples began to infect various sectors of Fascist culture.\textsuperscript{160} In this May 1941 edition of \textit{Geopolitica} the issue of Balkan religious and ethnic groups was addressed as part of the journal's wider attempt to contribute a comprehensive overview of Italy's new Balkan territories.\textsuperscript{161} Although not as prejudiced as the Cappuccio's article, this second contribution was nevertheless dismissive of the Serbian Orthodox Church as 'a traditional enemy' of Rome and Catholicism.\textsuperscript{162} Other contributors also analysed the ethnicity of the Balkans. A series of reports were published throughout later 1941 and 1942 which stressed the complex mixing of races and religions in the Balkans and the attendant issues of territoriality which threatened instability in the new world order.\textsuperscript{163} Elsewhere such themes were developed with more ominous intent when race and ethnicity were used to legitimate the Italian presence in the Balkans. One article attempted to demonstrate the continuity of an ethnic Italian presence in the region throughout Dalmatian history.\textsuperscript{164} A second claimed the enduring presence of the Roman race in the peninsula and, secondly, the total absence of Nordic influences in the southern Balkans - the area which Italy contested with the Germans.\textsuperscript{165}

\textit{Towards the end of Geopolitica}

Even as Italy careered towards defeat in 1942, the journal continued its contributions towards a better geopolitical understanding of the Balkans.\textsuperscript{166} It suggested improvements to the efficiency of the Italian economic exploitation of the region and

\textsuperscript{160}Knox, \textit{Mussolini unleashed}, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{161}'L'influenza religiosa nella questione balcanica', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 5 (1940), pp. 288-289.
\textsuperscript{162}'L'influenza religiosa nella questione balcanica', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 5 (1940), p. 289.
\textsuperscript{164}E. Alesani, 'L'italianità ininterrotta della Dalmazia', \textit{Geopolitica}, 4, 3 (1942), pp. 149-152.
\textsuperscript{165}R. Battagli, 'Slavi primitivi e slavi meridionali', \textit{Geopolitica}, 1, 5 (1939), pp. 275-285. The most extreme argument was proposed by Roberto Pozzi - a Fascist extremist who had caused some controversy with an earlier claim that the Italian race was of Mediterranean origins and had never been contaminated by 'inferior' races, particularly by the Aryans. \textit{Geopolitica} gave him a platform to extend and revise his theories: he eventually proposed that both the Aryan and Roman races had strengthened one-another in a pre-historic encounter as the Aryans migrated through the Italian peninsula. Vinci, ''Geopolitica'' e Balcani'', p. 122.; R. Pozzi, 'Nostri problemi della Razza', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 5 (1941), pp. 292-293; R. Pozzi, 'Autoctonia originaria della razza italiana, Parte I.', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 8-9 (1941), pp. 386-391; R. Pozzi, 'Autoctonia originaria della razza italiana, Parte II.', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 10 (1941), pp. 463-471.
\textsuperscript{166}Although the remainder of \textit{Geopolitica}'s issues from 1941 also included pieces on the Balkans, for example: R. Sertoli Salis, 'Croazia storica e politica', \textit{Geopolitica}, 3, 6-7 (1941), pp. 303-311.
continued to justify the Italian presence.\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Geopolitica}'s interests in the south-eastern Balkans were compounded by their links with \textit{L'Europa Sud-orientale}, a Milanese periodical which promoted economic and cultural exchange between the Italy and the region.\textsuperscript{168} Perhaps as a consequence, \textit{Geopolitica} also published several articles upon Hungarian economic potential and possible trading links.\textsuperscript{169} In the springtime of 1942 Roletto also ran a course for Italian businessmen working in south-east Europe. He enjoyed the support of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Corporations and the Association of Businessmen, yet his primary intention, according to Vinci, was to use the opportunity to establish a centre for the study of south-eastern Europe at Trieste, or rather, an Italian 'Centre for geopolitical and geoeconomic studies'.\textsuperscript{170}

His proposal for a seems to have won some influential support: initially from useful allies like the Ministry of Popular Culture and the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations.\textsuperscript{171} In addition, Roletto's interests were also recognised when the Hungarian government invited him, Morandi and Bonetti to make an official visit to their country in the summer of 1942.\textsuperscript{172} Their trip was funded in part by the Italian government and their remit was to forge links with Hungary's emergent geopoliticians in the Royal Hungarian Society for Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{173} The proposed \textit{Centro Italiano Studi Geopolitici e Geoeconomici} (CISGEO) was announced to \textit{Geopolitica}'s readership in the final issue of 1942.\textsuperscript{174} A note from the editors broke the news that, due to the problems of "...printing, the reductions in the editorial staff, the natural delays in postal and rail communications, and other causes..." the journal would now be issued only six times a year. Nevertheless, they assured their readers of the ongoing importance of their 'dear review': the six issues of the next volume and the new CISGEO would remain vigilant, despite the difficulties of the period. The editors then paid tribute to the regime's hierarchy, the publishers, editorial boards, contributors and readers. "In this manner, \textit{Geopolitica} enters its fifth year of life, an

\textsuperscript{167}For example: D. Costa, 'Il mercato del piretro della Dalmazia', \textit{Geopolitica}, 4, 8-9 (1942), pp. 366-373.
\textsuperscript{168}Vinci, "Geopolitica" e Balcani", p. 124.
\textsuperscript{170}Vinci, "Geopolitica" e Balcani", pp. 124.
\textsuperscript{171}Vinci, "Geopolitica" e Balcani", pp. 125.
\textsuperscript{173}Vinci, "Geopolitica" e Balcani", pp. 125-126. Links had already been established through the Italo-Hungarian journal \textit{Forum} which had itself adopted geopolitical ideas by 1942.
\textsuperscript{174}\textit{Geopolitica}, 4, 12 (1942), p. 554.
industrious life, eventful, and for what it is worth, given the times, not a perfect life, but full of fruitful results." 175

These were the last words published by Geopolitica's editors. Geopolitica failed to appear in 1943, probably a victim of precisely the problems the editors had foreseen. Yet up until December 1942 the regime had supported the journal financially and even provided funds so that Roletto and his group might spread geopolitical ideas still further throughout Europe. Even as the last vestiges of the Italian war machine were collapsing in the western desert, the Fascist regime was supporting proposals for a formal centre for geopolitical studies. Indeed, in June 1943, one month before Mussolini was toppled from power, the Ministry of Popular Culture wrote to Roletto inviting him to resume his work in a 'Centre of study and action for the new order'. Roletto refused. His was concerned about the scientific integrity of geopolitics. As he wrote to the minister:

My firm intention is to transform the geopolitics section which already existed in the Institute of Geography in Trieste into a more scientific organisation, given that this discipline tends to deviate and to become happily bogged down in pleasant fancy or to respond simply to the current news... Italian geopolitics was born as a science in my institute and it is better that... it remains in service here. 176

I will deal with the legacies and memories of Geopolitica in the final chapter. I will also discuss some of the debates and arguments which circulated around this controversial journal and I will assess its likely impact and its place in the state's efforts to expand the geographical imagination of Italy.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that Geopolitica consistently represented the Mediterranean region as a territory where Italy enjoyed the right to a dominant role. Military leadership in the sea was supposedly contested with the British and the French, and in this struggle, Italian possessions such as Libya gained strategic value for enclosing the central Mediterranean and providing a bridge to Africa. The Italians also claimed a role in the eastern Mediterranean which held a heightened significance for them since the invasion of Abyssinia.

Geopolitica claimed a special Italian prominence in the Adriatic sea and the Balkans. The Adriatic and Albania were represented as areas which were rightfully Italian; geopolitical evidence was always on hand to prove this. The journal also claimed a privileged position for Italy as a leading power in the Balkans. The peninsula was not regarded as a desocialised, empty space as was Africa, yet the Balkans were nevertheless represented as resource-rich territories which were to be divided into the spheres of influence of the Axis powers. Talk of racial superiority and a paternalistic, civilising mission - strategies the journal used to justify the domination of Africa - were not used so bluntly in the case of the Balkans. Italian ideas about the historical civilisation and domination of the region under Rome and Venice were enlisted to support an Italian presence, but for the mainpart, Geopolitica talked of economic cooperation with Balkans peoples.

However, given the competing German ambitions in the Danubian basin, such economic cooperation was subject to a delicate editorial policy whereby Geopolitica tried to avoid antagonising Mussolini's Axis ally. Consequently, geopolitical analysis of the south of the peninsula which Italy felt able to claim without deference to Nazi Germany, was frequently published. To the north and in the Danubian basin, a region coveted by Italian expansionist lobbies for many years, Geopolitica only commented upon the 'new order' imposed by the Axis partners and at times even admitted the greater compatibility of the German economy and the Danubian lands. Certainly Geopolitica seldom addressed Germany or its proposed Lebensraum to the east of the Reich. Neither did it ever really publish upon Metropolitan France or mainland Britain although their imperial possessions were a constant source of irritation to the geopoliticians sense of a just world order. On the other hand, smaller European powers such as the Netherlands, Portugal or Belgium received a good deal of attention as did the Americas and Asian countrys which were far away from Italy's immediate interests. Geopolitica, as with the other Italian geographical discourses of the period, was clearly subject to the political contingencies of the times. It analysed Italian interests with a heightened sensitivity to these and was often reluctant to deal with uncomfortable issues when they were raised.

Its vision was also essentially statecentric. The Italian state was assumed to be an established actor in international affairs with no internal tensions or disparities. Equally the integrity of Germany, France and Britain remained unquestioned. These nation states were regarded as the basic and irreducible elements of the world system and were consequently exempt from analysis. Rather, Geopolitica analysed the activities of these great powers in other parts of the globe which they contested and controlled. Italy was consistently presented as one of these powers. The corollary
being that Italians also enjoyed the right to colonise and exploit regions of Africa and the Balkans. The geopolitical perspective was presented as a unique and privileged medium through which one might understand the complexities and the supposed realities of this world system. The 'realities' thus uncovered frequently argued for an increased Italian role in this system: as the major western power in the Eastern Mediterranean for example. Therefore, the geopolitical vision enabled Geopolitica to attempt to legitimate Italian imperialism. Yet, Geopolitica also sought to inform and influence Italian imperialism. This was a major part of its role as described by Bottai and the two editors in the first edition in 1939. In the final chapter I will begin by assessing the extent to which Geopolitica might have helped to constitute Italy's imperial imagination as well as to explain the global 'reality'.

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CHAPTER 8.

Contestation, constituencies and controversy in geopolitics

Part I: Contesting Geopolitica

In January 1943 when Geopolitica ceased publication, the materiality of geopolitics declined markedly. Few Italian libraries nowadays shelve the four volumes of Geopolitica. In Britain, Geopolitica numbers just a handful of individual issues. As a teaching-resource for post-war generations, or as an ongoing part of Italy's geopolitical discourse, Geopolitica has a slender claim on our attention: Roletto's proposed centre of geopolitics was stillborn and as an academic pursuit, geopolitics was finished in Italy in any meaningful way. In Germany, the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik continued publication until 1945; Haushofer on occasion even reproducing some of Morandi's cartography as evidence of good geopolitical-mapping practice. Yet here too the eventual collapse of the dictatorship was attended by the closure of the German geopolitical journal. This final chapter is concerned with the various ways in which geopolitics were remembered throughout the post war era in Italy and in our geographical discourses. Before that I want to briefly consider the possible impacts of Geopolitica and its constituency.

I also want to address the controversies that attended Geopolitica throughout its lifetime and the ways in which the meaning of terms such as geopolitics and living space became subject to quite heated debate. As we saw in chapter four, the Triestini had high hopes for their new journal and its geopolitical perspective. However, as this section will suggest, their notion of geopolitics and even their definition of this 'science' would be contested and challenged over the four years of Geopolitica's existence and beyond. I spoke in chapter one of the multiple meanings and contestation of geography and suggested that we might take the same approach to inter-war academic geopolitics. Geopolitics was re-negotiated in each national context and different versions emerged into the international conversation. However,

1 Almost complete runs of the journal can be found in the Società Geografica Italiana and in the Biblioteca Africa-Italiana (the erstwhile Istituto Coloniale (Fascista), which also inherited materials from the library of the Italian Colonial Ministry). The Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan) holds a near-complete run and isolated copies can be found in the Biblioteca Vaticana. Two runs of the journal are kept in the Departmental library at the University of Trieste. The Istituto di Geografia and the Biblioteca Marcelliana in Florence also hold copies (my thanks to John Agnew for this information). In Britain, copies from September 1939 to May 1940 are housed at the Royal Institute for Strategic Affairs, Chatham House, London. No others are known to exist in Britain.
geopolitical ideas, theories and definitions were contested within Fascist Italy as well - creating different understandings of geopolitics within the nation that were as fundamental as the actual meaning of the word 'geopolitics' itself. In the intervening chapters I have been relatively silent about the various voices which disagreed with what the Triestini were writing. This was for the sake of narrative and ensured, I hope, that a clear picture of Geopolitica has emerged. However, the situation was not as straightforward at the time.

The impacts of Geopolitica

Geopolitica had a print run of about one thousand copies and was available upon public bookstands until April 1941. Sperling and Kupfer boasted a national distribution network and Bottai encouraged all middle and higher educational institutes to subscribe to the journal. In 1942 in L’Azione Coloniale - the national newspaper of the Istituto Fascista dell’Africa Italiana (IFAI, the erstwhile ICF), one of these Fascist organisations- Giuliano Ongaro wrote about the IFAI’s local section in Milan. His piece sheds light upon the relative importance of Geopolitica to the construction of Italy’s geographical imagination. He began by talking about the role of the Milan section in the expansion of the Italian geographical imagination. He named the local chair, Luigi De Magistris, the ‘Collona di Studi Coloniali’ monograph series and the newspaper Impero Italiano as contributors to this process. He continued by discussing the work undertaken by the Consociazione Turistica Italiana (CTI, the old TCI) to the formation of the Italian imperial and colonial consciousness. Their guidebooks and their popular magazines Le vie d’Italia and Le vie del Mondo were in the vanguard of these efforts, he wrote, and the 1938 Guida della Africa Orientale Italiana "...distributed free to the society’s membership, [was] with 490,000 copies, a contribution of evident usefulness to colonial propaganda." The Institute for the Studies of International Politics (ISPI) was also mentioned "...then Geopolitica merits a particular mention, as does the Rivista dell’Università Cattolica."

For this commentator, writing about the IFAI’s Milanese branch which, after Trieste, was the seedbed of Geopolitica, Roletto and Massi’s journal rated little more than an

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3 Antonsich, La coscienza geografico imperiale, pp. 78-82; A. Vinci, “Geopolitica” e Balcani”, pp. 112-113. Geopolitica never matched the 3000-4000 copies its German equivalent boasted in the late 1920s.
4 Ongaro, ‘Milano’, L’Azione Coloniale, 7, 46, 12 December (1942), p. 3. The IFAI was the new name of the erstwhile ICF.
5 Ongaro, ‘Milano’, p. 3.
6 Ongaro, ‘Milano’, p. 3.
afterthought. Far more important in his opinion were the efforts of the CTI who distributed maps, guidebooks and their journals to almost half a million households.\(^7\) The CTI reached a massive constituency and had a significant impact upon Italian culture. Other geographical journals also enjoyed far greater circulation than did *Geopolitica* and, inevitably had a greater potential to transmit their geographical concepts and approaches to the Italian people. The SGI's *Bollettino* and its popularised version, *I paesi del mondo* which was sent to a relatively modest subscription list of 1730 with a further 400 copies sold on public bookstands each issue, nevertheless more than doubled *Geopolitica*'s print run.\(^8\) Likewise, the ISPI published a historical and geographical journal called *Popoli* (peoples) which initially sold 25,000 copies every fortnight between April 1941 and April 1942.\(^9\) However, in the entire print run of *Popoli* (April 1941-April 1942) I found no mention whatsoever of geopolitics - and this despite the fact that it was also supported and funded by Bottai as part of his drive to equip Italians with a geographical imagination suitable for their new imperial status.\(^{10}\) Edited by the noted historian Frederico Chabod and Carlo Morandi, the magazine was extremely important in the dissemination of geographical and historical knowledge and in the promotion of an imperial consciousness.\(^{11}\) As its opening statement read: "The ISPI, with this new publication intends to make connections between those historical and geographical understandings which are the necessary premise for an intelligent comprehension of contemporary political events.\(^{12}\) However, its failure to even comment upon the phenomena of geopolitics means that for its 25,000 readers, the term was effectively invisible.

The *Bollettino* of the SGI, *Popoli* and the CTI's various publications reached far more readers than *Geopolitica* ever did. Of relevance to my argument here is the fact that whilst *Popoli* said nothing about geopolitics, the CTI and the *Bollettino* both presented the Italian public with different definitions of the term 'geopolitics' to that

\(^7\) Ongaro also discussed the map of Ethiopia which the CTI distributed to its membership in 1935 at the start of the Italian campaign: Ongaro, 'Milano', p. 3.

\(^8\) Vita Accademica. Attivita della Reale Societa Geografica Italiana nel 1939, *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia*, 14, 4 (1940), pp. 269-270. The anonymous author excused these 'modest figures' on the grounds that this was a new venture and that the new version of the journal nevertheless remained rigorously scientific (p. 269).


\(^{10}\) Montenegro, 'Politica estera e organizzazione del consenso.', pp. 812-817; I traced copies from the first in April 1941 until number II, 7 (April 1942).


\(^{12}\) La Direzione dell'ISPI, 'Ai Lettori', *Popoli*, 1, 1, 15 Aprile (1941), p. 1.
adopted by Geopolitica. As a consequence, Geopolitica's influence over the meaning of geopolitics and their control of the geopolitical perspective was tenuous at best and insignificant at worst.

In August 1940, Bruno Migliorini wrote in Bottai's literary and arts journal *Primato* about the 'The War and the Vocabulary'. He recorded the entrance of "...[new] geopolitical terms: lebensraum and spazio vitale." Such phrases had already escaped the realms of academic geopolitical theorising. The term 'geopolitics' even entered debates surrounding geological exploration in 1930s Italy. As early as 1937 the journal Raw Materials of Italy and the Empire had repeated a definition of geopolitics.

Geopolitics is, in substance, a convenient mentality recently introduced into the world of economists and statesmen of powerful nations destined to preach to humankind that the politics of every nation must be adjusted to their geological constitution and their mineral resources buried in the ground... nations which are poor underground must become satellite states around nations which are rich in minerals and or better at geopolitical surveys and exploitation.

Written in the aftermath of international sanctions, this piece was probably a response to German Geopolitik's division of the world into core states and hinterlands. Given the prospect of Italy becoming a rural satellite of industrial Germany, the author proposed a further conception of geopolitics based upon a 'legion' of geo-mineral experts, in his words, "...capable of crossing frontiers and oceans to win everywhere certain victories with the armies of science, technology, and of the rational and modern exploitation of the many and immense subterranean resources of the earth." Even the discipline of geology tried to use geopolitics as a method of seeking the state's favour in Fascist Italy. They were not alone in adopting the term for their own ends.

By 1938, the year before Geopolitica appeared, the Consociazione Turistica Italiana had been sending *Le vie d'Italia* to its membership for 44 years; the society's newer publication *Le vie del Mondo* was starting its sixth volume. Whilst the more established magazine was dealing with Italian issues such as the Pontine Marshes or the Italian colonial exhibition, its more recent partner was talking about foreign

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13 B. Migliorini, 'La guerra e il vocabolario', *Primato*, 1, 12, 15 August (1940), pp. 3-4.
14 Migliorini, 'La guerra e il vocabolario', p. 4, emphasis in the original.
16 Savalli, 'Geopolitica', p. 743.
17 Savalli, 'Geopolitica', p. 744.
countries and international issues. There was a considerable degree of overlap between the themes addressed in *Le vie del Mondo* and those popular in *Geopolitica*. The CTI's publication dealt with the problems of raw materials, the imperial possessions of rival European powers, Italian colonial territories and strategic issues. Moreover, when discussing such matters, *Le vie del Mondo* used the term geopolitics. In the January issue of 1939, when Bottai, Roletto and Massi had just published their version of the scope and methods of geopolitics, a different definition of geopolitics was outlined.

"The geopolitical situation is never claimed as being stable, neither by the followers of geography or those passionate about politics; but the geographical situation of the states, that is their political configuration, can change by sensitive [degrees] and [often] in peacetime. Truly, such variations are marginal in the field of geopolitics as this discipline has developed since 1914 and following the first works of R. Kjellén..." The business of geopolitics, as developed by Kjellén and imported into Italy (in this account) by Giuseppe Ricchieri, was with the mutual relations which existed between a territory and the state which occupied this space. However, the author complained about the problems of this established current of geopolitics, arguing instead for a version of geopolitics which was broad and comprehensive in the range of geographical sub-disciplines which it encompassed. It included parts of historical and political geography, and the geographical elements of day to day politics. "This more extensive [scope] will have the effect of allowing the new word, created in Sweden and formalised in Germany, a meaning with which we can define that which is excepted from, and that which is dependent upon, the political programme of a certain people." The exact nature of this definition is obscure, but as the text which followed upon the recent political changes of Europe demonstrated, this version of geopolitics was a loose and amorphous vehicle with which the author could discuss the ongoing transformations of the modern world. These 'geopolitical
variations' were updated in the front of each month's *Le vie del Mondo*, probably by Ugo Ademollo, the editor of the publication. Their ambition was simply to document in a simple and accessible format the changes to the world political scene. Consequently, for the thousands of readers of this magazine, geopolitics had none of the analytical or explanatory power claimed by *Geopolitica*, but was merely a catalogue of changing world affairs.

However, *Geopolitica*’s most persistent and serious opponent was Elio Migliorini, editor of the SGI’s Bollettino from 1928 and a leading figure of the Italian geographical establishment. According to Bonetti, Migliorini and Roletto were enemies, a dispute which stemmed from Roletto winning his position in Bologna (before he moved to Trieste) ahead of the younger Migliorini. Once established in the SGI, Migliorini would persistently harass *Geopolitica* and attempt to marginalise the efforts of the *Triestini*, eventually engineering an ‘official’ state definition of geopolitics at odds with the definition of the *Triestini*.

*Contested ground: defining geopolitics*

To demonstrate his proposition that "to have command of definition is to have control of discourse", David Livingstone recounted how, in 1938-1939 as Europe precipitated towards war, Richard Hartshorne spent his research leave within the walls of the University library in Vienna. His research was supposed to concentrate upon the boundary problems of Europe, but with the encouragement of Derwent Whittlesey, then editor of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Hartshorne instead devoted most of his energies to a monumental boundary-making exercise which would prove an enduring definition of academic geography for the Anglophone practitioners of the subject. At the same time that Hartshorne was buried in the


25Discussion with Eliseo Bonetti, Anna Maria Vinci and Marco Antonsich, Institute of Geography, University of Trieste, 15 May, 1994.

26R. Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography, a critical survey of current thought in the light of the past*, Lancaster, 1939. On the enduring impact of this work in Anglophone geography, which Livingstone still had to address and deconstruct in 1992, see: J. N. Entrekin and S. D. Brunn (eds.) *Reflections on Hartshorne’s The Nature of geography*, Washington, 1989. As I mentioned earlier, Hartshorne's work was also subject to the comment and analysis of Bonetti - further evidence of the Italians' interest in
Vienna archive, some 330 miles down the railway which once connected the Viennese to their main imperial port of Trieste, Roletto and Massi had composed their definition of what an Italian geopolitics should comprise. Yet the Triestini were not to enjoy a monopoly over the term and its meaning. Aside from the broad notion of geopolitics which was adopted by Le vie del Mondo, the more distinct academic tradition of geopolitics was contested by Migliorini.

Migliorini was fortunate to enjoy influential patrons such as Dainelli and Almagià in his early career. It was such connections that helped him to the editorship of the Bollettino and to important commissions like contributions to the Enciclopedia Italiana. When the Treccani institute, which had overseen the production of the enciclopedia, also began work upon the Fascist party's Dictionary of Politics, Migliorini was asked to write several of the entries, including the keynote explanations of 'Geography' and, on the following page, 'Geopolitics'. Intended to be an authoritative voice, which aimed at "...the cultural and spiritual preparation of the new generations of the Littorio," the dictionary was an attempt to define and establish the regime's official view upon all political matters. Consequently, in supposedly totalitarian Italy, these entries carried an official sanction and authority.

In his entry upon 'Geography', Migliorini proved a worthy evangelist for his discipline. He explained its history and its crucial range which lent it a synthesising position amongst the sciences. He concluded with an outline of the two sub-fields of the subject which were gaining increasing importance in contemporary human geography. He first demonstrated the relevance of economic geography and then of political geography, described as the synthesis of geographical science and the state. Migliorini here seemed sympathetic to geopolitics. He named Ratzel as the founder of political geography and introduced the idea of the organic state and its adoption by Kjellén who "...had demonstrated that political geography must be considered as an essentially dynamic geography." The post-war era had seen the currency of this approach rise, he wrote. And as more importance was attributed to human agency the international geographical discourse.
state began to be considered not only in terms of its size but also in terms of its level of geographical development and other human elements which informed the geographical character of the state: "In fact, it is not so much the soil of natural forces which are at the origins [of the state]... ...as how much the soil is transformed by mankind according to his needs, requirements and experiences."33

Reflecting the wider sentiments if Italian geography in the period, and the geopolitical programme spelt out by Roletto and Massi, Migliorini rejected the determinism of German geographical thought and modified this with a strong element of human agency. He also accorded a political geography constituted thus a great deal of importance:

This part of geography, which allows judgement upon the vitality of states, which explains the tendencies in their development and which values the [relative] importance of physical, ethnic, and demographic structures truly constitutes a synthesis of all of the other geographical understandings and therefore merits a wide diffusion in schools and in every day life.34

Migliorini was evidently convinced of the importance of political geography to the analysis of the modern world. He was also aware of its synoptic value and the potential role such understandings could play in Italian society. We might, therefore, expect him to be sympathetic to the aims and objectives of Geopolitica. However, as the succeeding article made plain, Migliorini did not regard geopolitics as a valid part of geography.

In his definition of geopolitics, Migliorini began by stating that the necessity of a geographical grounding in the study of political and social problems had prompted major interest in political geography from economists and political scientists alike.35 So great was this interest that a new discipline had been developed called geopolitics. Migliorini had already delimited geopolitics from political geography. He explained that this new phenomena had its origins in the work of Kjellén and was promoted in Germany by Haushofer. Migliorini also reported that: "...in France a geopolitics with different intentions to those of the Germans has found a wide following. But around its content and its field of study, especially with regard to its relations with political geography, they are far from having a unified approach."36 Migliorini was well aware

33Migliorini, 'Geografia', p. 250.
34Migliorini, 'Geografia', p. 250.
36Migliorini, 'Geopolitica', p. 250.
of the circulation of these ideas around Europe. He continued by rehearsing the various definitions which had emerged from the European geopolitical conversation.

Generally one acknowledges that geopolitics is nothing more than an applied political geography (Maul, Demangeon), oriented especially towards the dynamic parts of political geography. Secondly some study the state not only as [a] living [object], but also as conscious and possessing a spirit, subject to its own laws. Instead others (Passarge, Grabowsky) distinguish neatly between political geography and geopolitics and consider the latter as a branch of political science... 37

Such political scientists, using an understanding of geography to unravel the essence and the life of the state, were -Migliorini claimed- easily distinguishable from political geographers. In addition, those political scientists using geography as one methodology within their own studies were doing political geography a disservice. As he continued:

In reality, political geography must be a crucial element in explaining the history of a people and their general outlines. ...but instead it becomes for them more biased, a pseudoscientific justification for nationalist claims and desires when they want to explain the [historical development] of a certain period. 38

He emphasised his points with two quotations he had selected: one from Haushofer and the other from a commission of scholars established by Zeitschrift für Geopolitik to define their discipline. Both seemed to suggest that geopolitics was merely a geographical tool for the study of political phenomena - precisely what Migliorini objected to. The work of Ancel was similarly cited, and condemned implicitly, as subject to political influence. Instead, Migliorini concluded his entry by stating that geopolitics would be well advised to remain connected to political geography where

...geopolitics has its own scientific content which allows it a role in geographical science; instead it could also be far away from this [status] as has often happened in Haushofer's school which is more or less part of political science and a counterbalance, therefore, to political geography. 39

Migliorini then, had inscribed his own interpretation of geopolitics into the authoritative pages of the national Dictionary of Politics. His version contrasted a 'good' and scientific political geography which was central to the analysis of the state with a politicised, subjective geopolitics which was a tool for the nationalist and

37Migliorini, 'Geopolitica', p. 250.
38Migliorini, 'Geopolitica', p. 250.
39Migliorini, 'Geopolitica', p. 250.
biased interpretations of political scientists. A neat dichotomy was established with Haushofer, his school and Ancel lumped together in the 'unscientific' group. The European tradition within which the Triestene geopoliticians had consciously positioned themselves was condemned as 'pseudoscientific'.

For some time Geopolitica had been monitoring and attempting to police the term 'geopolitics'; to prevent in newspapers and other publications "...the use and abuse of the term which is often given with arbitrary interpretations and is often erroneous." The geopoliticians often reported with pleasure the adoption of the term by another writer or journal. However, any perceived misuse of the term drew the censure of Geopolitica. Of course, the attempt to control the term was an endless task. Migliorini's broadside only made matters more difficult. However, towards the end of 1941, the definition of 'geopolitics' would become the subject of still wider debate.

In October 1941's issue of Geopolitica a brief comment, with an injured tone, asked rhetorically whether or not Geopolitica had been fulfilling the tasks allocated to geography by the regime. A little later in the same issue was a further editorial note which claimed that geopolitics had caught the imagination of Italian students, and: "We are perfectly convinced that the final end of geography must be geopolitics, the supreme synthesis and endpoint of all the numerous sectors of geography." These unprompted plaudits for Geopolitica suggest that the geopoliticians had received notice that at the forthcoming national conference of geopolitics run by the Gruppi Università Fascista (University Fascist groups) in Rome, a definition of geopolitics' was to be debated.

The Gruppi Università Fascista had organised a conference for geoeconomic and geopolitical studies and, according to the report which Migliorini wrote for the

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40 In the bibliography which followed the entry, Migliorini discussed the work of Kjellén and the Haushofer circle in depth. The French geopoliticians were also listed at length and mention was made of I. Bowman. Only one brief line reported that Italy had its own geopolitical journal edited by Roletto and Massi: Migliorini, 'Geopolitica', pp. 250-251.
41 'Note', Geopolitica, 2, 10 (1940), p. 450.
43 Compare: 'Distrazioni', Geopolitica, 2, 6-7 (1940), p. 260, or: 'Note', Geopolitica, 2, 2 (1940), p. 87.
45 La Redazione, 'Note', Geopolitica, 3, 10 (1941), p. 457.
46 The Gruppi Università Fascista (University Fascist groups) were the national student Fascist organisation. The Milanese branch had been involved with the same circles as the ICF, the School of Mystical Fascism and other such bodies.
Bollettino, the Committee for Geography of the National Research Council seized the opportunity.47

Aware of the diffusion and the favour which had been directed in these last few years towards publications which treat political questions with fundamentally geographical [analysis]. ...it called a meeting of Italian scholars of geopolitics with the scope, amongst others, of giving a definition to this discipline.48

Presided over by Amadeo Giannini, a Patron of Geopolitica and chair of the geography committee of the CNR, the conference on 16 November 1941 was also attended by Migliorini, Roletto, Toschi, Toniolo and several other geographers.49 The definition which the meeting eventually issued was as follows:

Geopolitics is the doctrine which studies the political phenomena in their spatial distribution, in their environmental causes and relations, and considered also in their development. Geopolitics can be identified therefore with political geography50

As far as the state's official geographical council was concerned therefore, 'geopolitics' was not the additional layer of analysis above and beyond orthodox political geography as the Triestini had claimed it to be. Neither did it claim to analyse the dynamic elements of the world order. Geopolitics, as defined above, equated to the orthodox political geography which Geopolitica had sought to transcend. It was a very significant defeat for Geopolitica.

Migliorini was pleased. His scepticism towards geopolitics and his insistence that political geography was quite sufficient to analyse the modern world had been vindicated. In his report for the Bollettino, he reported upon this 'very controversial' issue and, perhaps in order to gloat at his victory over Roletto, reproduced verbatim his earlier tract from the Dictionary of Politics.51 Roletto and Massi were less happy. Their first response appeared the month afterwards:

We know about the conference of geographers at Rome to define geopolitics... [which issued]...a definition which was rather dull and traditional, and a long way, in the final analysis, from the introductory statement posted by our director [Roletto]. However, the definition is

50E. M, 'Geografia politica", p. 165.
51E. M, 'Geografia politica", pp. 165-166.
susceptible to comments and revisions. We consider such definitions the first stage for reaching a solid and contemporary definition better suited to the tendencies and needs of modern geopolitics, that is, of a geopolitics put right.

One can still demonstrate that Italian geography suffers from the disease of the commonplace and the convenience of traditionalism at odds with the needs of the time. We now begin the battle of ideas, conducted, naturally, in an impersonal spirit, to the purpose of giving air and oxygen to Italian geography.52

In a further brief comment, the editors promised to return to the argument in December's issue.53 They were clearly annoyed at a decision which flew in the face of all they had proposed and written over the previous three years. It was further evidence of the need to continue the struggle to modernise Italian geography and make it responsive to the dynamic world they inhabited. They also wanted to contest the definition. The first riposte in this process came from Umberto Toschi as the lead article of the December Geopolitica.54 Toschi reported that it was Roletto, not the CNR, who had been responsible for initiating the meeting. Firstly, the editors of Geopolitica wanted to "...clearly affirm that geopolitics is a geographical doctrine and a geography."55 They then proceeded to develop other arguments. Geopolitica, they claimed, had always taken account of spatial phenomena and had always grounded itself in physical and general geographical information. Moreover, it was Geopolitica, unlike more traditional forms of geography, which when analysing a given topic, would embed these basic facts into the wider complexities of the topic's particular origins and development.56 "...geopolitica is, today, nothing other than a geography and, precisely, a political geography, understood naturally as a higher form [of political geography] and not in the traditional sense."57 Toschi then picked a few holes in the definition: asking amongst other things, how it proposed to deal with political phenomena at all spatial scales beyond that of the state and how it would propose laws and draw conclusions and predictions from its analysis.58 A few pages later the geopoliticians promised to develop a new definition and new arrangements for Italian geopolitics "...in an Italy which is making much talk about geopolitics."59

Unfortunately for the Triestene geopoliticians, those speaking about geopolitics to the

52'Precizzione', Geopolitica, 3, 11 (1941), p. 537.
55Toschi, 'Precisazione sulla Geopolitica', p. 567, emphasis in original.
56Toschi, 'Precisazione sulla Geopolitica', p. 567.
57Toschi, 'Precisazione sulla Geopolitica', p. 567, emphasis in original.
58Toschi, 'Precisazione sulla Geopolitica', pp. 567-568.
largest audiences, and those speaking from the most authoritative tomes didn't agree with the geopoliticians of Geopolitica.

Geopolitica was a significant enough term to warrant a debate upon its correct definition and, at least one commentator later referred to the 'famous' definition of the 1941 conference.\(^{60}\) The debate over the definition handed down by the CNR conference rumbled on in Geopolitica.\(^{61}\) The Triestini were especially sensitive to the press coverage of the conference.\(^{62}\) They also continued their spat with Migliorini.\(^{63}\) However, it became increasingly clear that the Triestini lacked any kind of influence over the term. Ricardo Carbonelli had commented in mid 1939 in the Rassegna Sociale dell'Africa Italiana that Geopolitica was characterised by a degree of confusion and needed to establish its own identity.\(^{64}\) Four years later, in the aftermath of the 1941 definition of geopolitics, the journal was fast becoming marginalised within Italy.\(^{65}\)

One final example of the contestations of geopolitical ideas is the way in which the concept of spazio vitale -living space- escaped geopolitics and entered a number of other discourses.\(^{66}\) The term became associated with several different meanings in Italy and Geopolitica was well aware of this.\(^{67}\) Geopolitica again attempted to police the term and once more their efforts would prove fruitless - various of its writers

\(^{60}\)G. Calza, 'Nota e rilievi', Corriere Adriatico, 21 June 1942, cited in: 'Cronache', Geopolitica, 4, 7 (1942), pp. 344-345, esp. p. 344. This definition, as I mentioned in chapter one, also began to circulate in the European geopolitical debate.


\(^{62}\)'Cronache', Geopolitica, 4, 2 (1942), pp. 91-92., the Triestini were responding to the commentary of G. Napolitano in the Giornale d' Italia (4 January 1942). Whilst Napolitano had written in this large-circulation newspaper, the Triestini had to respond in a journal available by this time only on subscription. 'Cronache', Geopolitica, 4, 7 (1942), pp. 344-345.

\(^{63}\)They responded angrily to what they saw as the inaccuracies of Migliorini's report in the Bollettino: n. d. r., 'Sulla definizione di Geopolitica', Geopolitica, 4, 6 (1942), p. 247; see also: 'Cronache', Geopolitica, 4, 7 (1942), pp. 344-345.

\(^{64}\)R. C., 'Geopolitica', Rassegna Sociale dell'Africa Italiana, 2, 6 (1939), p. 758.

\(^{65}\)For example, when writing for a national and international audience, Toniolo makes little mention of geopolitics within the otherwise wide-ranging discussion of Italian geography and its possible new initiatives for a national and international audience: A. R. Toniolo, 'Crisi della Geografia?', Scienta, 73, 2-4 (1943), pp. 51-56. Equally, reporting on geography from his Vatican sanctuary and under the pseudonym of Bernardino Varenio, Almagià paid little attention to Geopolitica especially: B. Varenio, Rassegna geografica. Gli studi geografici in Italia nel 1941, Storia e politica internazionale, 4, 1 (1942), pp. 119-123.

\(^{66}\)Migliorini, 'La guerra e il vocabolario', pp. 3-4; The term also escaped Geopolitik and entered wider popular discourses in Germany, although historians nevertheless still attribute Hitler's use of the phrase exclusively to Haushofer's influence: R. S. Wistrich, Who's who in Nazi Germany, London, 1995, pp. 100-101.

\(^{67}\)Bottai developed briefly a cultural motion of spazio vitale to legitimate Italian ambitions in the Balkans: G. Bottai, 'Cultura e spazio vitale', Primato, 15 May (1941), reference in: De Grand, Bottai, p. 275; J. Mazzei, 'Il problema degli "spazi vitali"', Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionale, 8, 3 (1941), pp. 319-348.
complained about the dilution of a concept "...which was in its origins exquisitely geopolitical-political and was given to these [disciplines] by Ratzel in one of his more noted books."

The main culprits, they decided, were economists who had adopted the concept and interpreted it in solely economic terms. And although not without some debate, a literature became established which dealt with *spazio vitale* with little or no mention of geography or geopolitics. The confusion which surrounded the term prompted the GUF to organise another conference in order to define the concept. The *Triestini* didn't attend the conference in Turin, but they did complain about the resultant definition which decided that *spazio vitale* was exclusively economic in character. The geopolitical element of the term was ignored and, as with the term 'geopolitics', a fundamental geopolitical concept had found itself associated with a semi-official definition which had little to do with the way the Triestini had imagined the concept.

This was unfortunate for *Geopolitica*. Having lost control of the meaning of geopolitics, another concept such as *spazio vitale* might have lent the journal a new sense of identity. The living space notion would have been a suitable replacement. In 1940 Massi provided a concise definition of *spazio vitale* which reads as an accurate synopsis of all of *Geopolitica*’s main concerns:

> The concept of *spazio vitale* assumes the necessity of demographic expansionism and agricultural colonisation and of the redistribution of essential raw materials from territories politically or militarily controlled, from the control of obligatory communication routes, it is a concept which is exquisitely geopolitical and which has left its impression upon the Mussolinian Mediterranean policy.

However, perhaps because of the heterogeneity of what *spazio vitale* could mean, and was beginning to mean given its frequent adoption by other disciplines, the geopoliticians often steered clear of labelling their own analysis with this term,

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despite its apparent applicability.73 In yet one more respect, Geopolitica found itself a contested and marginalised discourse.

Within Italy, arguments and conferences perhaps allowed Geopolitica something of a profile within academia and perhaps also a mild degree of notoriety. However, the movement was also marginalised by mainstream geographical discourses. When a delegation of Italian geographers was despatched to the 1938 International Geographical Union Conference in Amsterdam, the geopoliticians were not included in the party, even though, as Bowman noted, the Italian delegation had clearly been instructed to adopt a particularly political stance.74 More surprisingly, the delegation for the March 1942 Würzburg conference -a geographical conference for the fascist and Axis-aligned states of Europe- omitted the geopoliticians too.75 Biasutti, Dainelli, Migliorini and Toniolo all made the trip amongst others, but neither Roletto nor Massi were selected - much to their annoyance.76 At a more personal level, Migliorini's Bollettino failed to mention the launch of Geopolitica and refused to list the journal in its 'publications received' section.

The Triestini had contributed to this themselves. Throughout the 1930s their publications had been directed towards the journals and monographs of non-geographical organisations like the ICF or the Institute of Fascist businessmen. Although a major figure within Italian geography when he went to Trieste, throughout the 1930s Roletto failed to published anything substantial in the SGI Bollettino or the Rivista Geografica Italiana. Neither Massi nor other leading geopoliticians like Bonetti or D'Agostino-Orsini wrote for these journals either.77 Their failure to participate in mainstream academic geography is peculiar given that Geopolitica remained totally convinced that geography, as well as geopolitics, was essential to the modern state. A constant stream of articles and commentaries concerning the place and role of the discipline in the country demonstrated this commitment.78 Yet the geopoliticians made few attempts to evangelise to their colleagues within geography.

73 Vinci, "Geopolitica" e Balcani", p. 120.
74 Smith, 'Isaiah Bowman', p. 74.
77 In one sense, by establishing so many new journals and pamphlet series their time would have been fully occupied filling these outlets. Certainly, despite the prolific writing of some of these individuals, finding sufficient copy to fill one journal issue every month would have been an onerous task.
78 I have no space to analyse these here, for examples: 'Valorizzare gli studi geografici', Geopolitica, 2, 3 (1940), pp. 95-96; G. Jaja and P. D'Agostino-Orsini, 'Disscussione e proposte', Geopolitica, 2, 5
To an extent this was because there was no need for the Triestini to convince other Italian geographers of the importance of their discipline to the state; practically the entire professional body had argued this same line throughout the inter-war years. The groups which did need to be convinced of the usefulness of geopolitics and geography were the politicians and their immediate hinterland of bureaucrats, party officials and the government educationalists who administered authority in the dictatorship. In the final years of Fascist Italy many such groups promoted their own journals, conferences and study centres. Consequently, the geopoliticians took their message to these constituencies rather than to their fellow geographers. As Geopolitica's notes for prospective contributors stressed in January 1939, "Our review hasn't only a scientific programme, but also a duty to be polemical." Its agenda was to introduce and promote geopolitics and geography with the regime and its minions.

The constituency

When the geopoliticians did find time to write for other publications, they directed their attention towards the magazines, newspapers and journals of the quangos, institutes and interest groups of Fascism rather than to geographical journals. In mid August 1940 Ernesto Massi managed to publish an article proclaiming 'The time for geopolitics' in Critica Fascista, Bottai's flagship journal. In this highly influential publication -required reading for the critical and intellectual currents within Fascism-Massi introduced the European circulation of the term geopolitics, self-consciously situated (his version of) Italian geopolitics within this conversation and outlined what geopolitics could do for the state. As he declared "Geopolitics wants to be the political doctrine of Authoritarian states", he left few in doubt that geopolitics wanted to be of utility to the state. Similarly, Roletto regularly proposed the case for geopolitics to the Fascist Business community; he even took his case over the 1941 definition of geopolitics to this new constituency. Roletto had also explained Italy's need for its own geopolitical analysis to the readership of Politica Sociale, a political

79'Note', Geopolitica, 1, 1 (1939), p. 68.
80Massi, 'L'ora della geopolitica'.
82G. Roletto, 'La geoeconomica al servizio dell'espansione commerciale', Commercio, (1940), 1, pp. 17-18; G. Roletto, 'Funzione geopolitica di Roma', Commercio, (1940), 5-6, pp. 8-10; Roletto, 'Significato della Geopolitica'.

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monthly, whilst D’Agostino-Orsini frequently wrote in this same journal about geopolitical themes.83

Aside from these journals and their readerships, the geopoliticians also promoted their discipline in various of the organisations of Fascism. They continued their long standing involvement with the ICF and frequently supported the GUF student movement.84 One institution with which they had close links was the School of Mystical Fascism in Milan, established in 1930 as a branch of the GUF and intended to educate and indoctrinate Fascist values into the young.85 Its adherents were usually younger ideologues who rejected any notions of the rationality of Fascism, preferring instead a cult of the Duce and of Romanità.86 The school became important enough to merit state funding from the PNF and the Ministry of Popular Culture and amongst its 169 members, Ernesto Massi was a prominent figure: contributing lectures to its seminar series, attending conferences and serving on the editorial board and writing for the school’s journal: Dottrina Fascista.87 The influence of geopolitical thinking was very evident in a number of articles.88 Massi himself had made his familiar call for an Italian geopolitics in 1938.89 And in late 1940 a special issue was printed which boasted geopolitical articles from Massi, Roletto, and Sertoli Salis and three foreigners: Stefano Csáky of Hungary, Horia Cosmovici from Romania and Kurt Vowinkel, a frequent contributor to, and publisher of, Zeitschrift für Geopolitik.90 If Massi was trying to emulate Haushofer’s ‘international’ edition of Zeitschrift für Geopolitik (of mid 1939), he had succeeded. Whatever his motives, it seems that in


85Cannistraro, Historical Dictionary, pp. 341-342; Marchesini, La scuola dei Gerarchi.


87Marchesini, La scuola dei Gerarchi, pp. 159, 170 and 178; Massi was joined by Bottai, R. Sertoli Salis and L. F. de Magistris in contributing to this journal.


one of the most fanatical branches of Fascism, Massi wielded some quite appreciable influence. He organised special issues of their journal and geopolitical themes had been adopted by other members of the organisation.

It was precisely at organisations with substantial Fascist sympathies such as the Scuola di Mistica Fascista, the Confederazione Commercianti Fascista and the ICF that Geopolitica was targeted and where it was taken relatively seriously. If, as I believe, the Triestini aimed their efforts at these political groups, then they could count themselves partially successful in their strategy. For those individuals already committed to Italian colonialism, commercial expansion or to Fascism itself, a geopolitical vision which argued upon reputedly scientific grounds for precisely these eventualities would have proved popular indeed. Geopolitica provided a sympathetic forum for such groups and organisations which may well have given credence to the journal’s claims to expertise and an authoritative geopolitical perspective, to an ability to understand and explain the world. If this was the case, pro-Fascist Geopolitica's representations of 'reality' may have served to reinforce the Fascist sentiments within these organisations. More probably, Geopolitica's legitimation of Italian imperialism functioned as useful intellectual justification in wider Fascist culture. Whilst Roletto and Massi presented Geopolitica as possessing a distinct way in which to understand and explain the world based upon the wide-ranging vision of geopolitical survey, their portrayal of the world might have earned unwarranted credibility as a form of 'scientific analysis'.

However, beyond these circles, few individuals in the wider realms of professional geography, the CNR, or the CTI cared for Geopolitica and Triestene geopolitics. And whilst geopolitical ideas did circulate around Italy, these sometimes paid little heed to the self-proclaimed geopolitical experts from Trieste and were often quite oblivious to Geopolitica. On the whole, Geopolitica was marginalised by Italy's geographical establishment. It saw its key terms and concepts used in different discourses in ways contradictory to Geopolitica's own interpretation. And in contrast to those publications pedalling different version of geopolitics, Geopolitica had a limited circulation. Le vie del Mondo distributed its own version of geopolitics in almost half a million copies monthly to all parts of Italy and the empire - this was an influential geopolitical vision of the world.

91 Other organisations with connections to Geopolitica include the Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista and the Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale. Reduced subscriptions were available to members of the GUF or, jointly, with Critica Fascista.
92 Although see: 'Cronache', Geopolitica, 4, 7 (1942), pp. 344-345.
Today, copies of Geopolitica are rare and unread. Even in its own time it was marginalised and ignored. Bottai doesn't mention Geopolitica in his melodramatic memoirs; neither did the editors of his diaries include any reference to the journal that they may have found in his manuscripts. Traditional historians have devoted little time or attention to reassessing the geopolitical and geographical experiences of European Fascism. The same cannot be said of geography's own historians for whom inter-war European geopolitics left a long-lasting aftermath as an embarrassing and shameful episode. These sentiments informed all attempts, when they were eventually made, to write the histories of geopolitics. The legacies of geopolitics and the ways in which they are remembered will be addressed in part two of this final chapter.

Pt II: Continuing geopolitics - remembrance and renaissance

In the first two chapters my aim was to demonstrate two broad points: that Italian geographical practices, discourses and knowledges were inevitably politicised, and secondly, that our histories of inter-war geopolitics are partial and, at worst, a little misleading. I alleged that most of our histories are informed by the myths surrounding German Geopolitik which were created as a response to geopolitics in wartime America. I also suggested that our histories are somewhat partial and that they had neglected the wider debate which accompanied geopolitical ideas and theories as they circulated around inter-war Europe. A critical approach to the histories of geography was advocated in the hope that this might allow us to move beyond the hermetic 'textbook chronicles' of traditional histories of the discipline and to situate geography amidst the social, political and cultural contexts whence it came. To this end, chapter two discussed the politicisation of Italian geography from 1870 to 1945. The subsequent history of political contingency, and the ways in which various geographical practices were inevitably implicated in the state's business of governing suggests that Geopolitica was not an isolated aberration or one 'political' incident in an otherwise objective and scientific story of Italian geographical science. Rather, Geopolitica was a more explicit example of the inescapable politicisation of the discipline and an example which itself, to a degree, acknowledged the social and political power of geographical knowledge and tried to exploit this potential to support its own and the state's imperial agenda.

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93 Bottai, Vent'anni e un giorno.
By way of conclusion I want to examine what happened both to the geopoliticians of Fascist Italy after the war, and to the memory of their journal *Geopolitica*. My own agenda is to suggest that the history of geopolitics remains important—too important to neglect—precisely because geopolitical ideas, theories, and representations remain important themselves. We know that the disengagement from geopolitics in Anglo-American geography after the war, however well intended, served only to hand this discourse and its spurious ‘scientific’ authority, over to the security intellectuals, the policy makers, strategists and statesmen who ran the United State’s Cold war. Consequently, whilst geographers couldn’t talk about geopolitics, geopolitical ideas such as Containment theory and Domino theory were mobilised to legitimate military interventions all over the world. The efforts of the Critical geopolitics movement are currently directed at undermining the spatial assumptions and representations of the world which underpin, for example, American hegemony. This is important work. My contribution is an attempt to contribute something of a more nuanced and European perspective to the history of these ideas. My belief is that a greater understanding of the various changing, negotiated and contingent forms of geopolitics will help us to identify and, perhaps, police these terms ourselves in an era when geopolitics, in a whole number of ways, are back on the international agenda.

*Forgetting geopolitics?*

In the Anglophone world the coming of the Cold war signalled the closure of discussion about geopolitics. The suicide of the Haushofers and the closure of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* seemed to have concluded the nasty, messy story of geopolitics and understandably, in a discipline struggling for its identity and future, the reputed associations between political geography and Nazism were hushed-up. However, whilst American geographers dared not discuss geopolitics as anything other than a ‘perversion’, in Germany the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* re-commenced publication in 1951, only six years after it had closed and with the same publisher and cover design as in 1945. The supposedly disgraced academic geopolitical tradition continued. Similarly, in Franco’s Spain—established in part thanks to the military aid of the Axis powers during the 1930s—geopolitics survived the war. Jaime Vicens-Vives would publish a further *Geopolitical* monograph in 1950 and within its pages would claim that the German war effort would have been more successful had Hitler


95 The journal was published By Vowinkel Verlag (Heidelberg) between 1951 and 1968
taken more notice of Geopolitik. Moreover, he again used geopolitics as a mode of reasoning and as a way of understanding the inter-relations and interactions of the world system. For Vicens-Vives, then, Geopolitik was a missed opportunity and he paid little attention to the notion that he should shun this manner of thinking. In South America, geopolitics not only failed to dissolve along the American model, but acquired a vigorous new lease of life.

As geopolitics fell into dark disrepute in the Anglophone world, the Triestene geopoliticians followed their own paths from 1943 onwards. Yet despite their efforts on behalf of the Fascist regime in wartime and in peacetime, none of the Italian geopoliticians experienced anything like the fate of the Haushofers or Ancel. Neither would they suffer death or exile as did critics of geopolitics such as Gramsci, Bloch, Demangeon, or Wittfogel. Indeed, all three main protagonists of Geopolitica carried on to successful post-Fascist careers, and Massi, despite his continued facism, now enjoys honourable retirement as one of the maestri of Italian Geography and Emeritus President of the SGI.

**The geopoliticians in Trieste**

Based in Trieste and Pavia, in the last years of the war Roletto and Massi would have been a citizen of the short-lived Sâlo Republic, a puppet state constituted of the regions of Northern Italy controlled by German forces after the Italian armistice in 1943. Benito Mussolini, sprung from his Monte Grasso mountain-top prison by a daring German paratrooper raid in September 1943, took nominal control of the Republic. Yet its inevitable political alignment with its German masters meant that the associated horrors visited upon its Jewish population and upon the ethnic Slavs of Trieste shattered horribly Italy’s record as the only European nation occupied by, or allied to Nazi Germany not to surrender its Jewish minority to the obscenity of the Holocaust. The Sâlo Republic was also responsible for the deaths of the former

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100 Deakin, *The Last days of Mussolini*, pp. 15-35.
101 The history of Italy’s Jewry under the Axis is in turn remarkable and tragic. As Jonathan Steinberg’s excellent history relates, not one Italian Jew was handed over to the German forces until the German occupation of northern Italy, despite the orders demanding this from the German high-command and from senior Fascists. Through a combination of civility and resistance to the Germans,
Fascists who had ‘deserted’ the Fascist cause and voted against Mussolini at the last meeting of the Fascist Grand Council on July 23. De Bono, one of the leaders of the March on Rome and even Ciano, Mussolini’s son-in-law, were tried, convicted and shot in the new capital city of Verona. Bottai was found guilty of treason in absentia and condemned to death, although at the time his immediate concerns were in North Africa where, as an anonymous recruit to the French Foreign Legion after his flight from Rome, he fought against the Axis powers he had formerly commanded. The Salò Republic was a brief-lived and brutal experiment which veered back towards the more ‘left-wing’ corporatist visions or late 1920s Fascism. Its main legacy was the chaos which characterised its reign and the aftermath of the war.

In Trieste a struggle developed over this disputed territory between the Italian Fascists, the German Nazi’s, the Communist-inspired Slavic Partisans of Tito and, eventually, allied forces. It was a bloody and tragic episode too. The only German Death camp in Italy was created to the South of the city in an old rice-husking plant called Risiera di San Sabba. There the Nazi’s murdered thousands of Jews, Slavs, Italians resistance fighters and others considered enemies of the faltering and ever more vicious German war effort. The streets and Piazzas of Trieste, once more a contested city, also witnessed arbitrary executions as the American army neared Trieste.

Claudio Schifferer, the Triestene historian who had written several articles for Geopolitica and was a member of the editorial board, played a central role in what followed as the city was eventually liberated by the Americans and Tito’s partisans and a struggle ensued between these ideologically opposed groups for the control of this strategic port. Schifferer was the American’s key advisor in the negotiations over ethnicity and population which determined the territorial dissection of Trieste between the American and Yugoslavian forces. It was his expertise as an authority on ethnicity which lent his contributions such gravity. Despite the opposition of local groups, Schifferer’s advocacy and his division of Trieste was written into the post-war
settlement by which the city and its immediate hinterland were categorised as a 'free city'. And within three years of the end of the war, this outpost of the 'western allies - secured with an ex-geopolitician's academic authority- would become one pole of the 'Iron Curtain' which Churchill saw falling across Europe in 1947 and which would shape the geopolitical imaginations of East and West for the next forty years.

Giorgio Roletto continued as chair of Geography at Trieste throughout much of this period until his death in 1967. It has been suggested that his loyalty to the city and a commitment to analysing its problems (the reason for his initial appointment) convinced him to stay despite offers to move elsewhere. His research continued to discuss the ongoing problems of Trieste, but, in this frontier city between east and west, also reflected the politics of the period and concentrated upon international themes pertinent to the Cold war era. He wrote nothing to my knowledge about his period as a geopolitician, although others would highlight the positive aspects of his former editorial role. However, Roletto certainly wasn’t forced to shy away from the term like his American contemporaries. In the academic year 1943-1944 he continued to teach geopolitics to his students with the assistance of Bonetti. In 1951 he used the phrase geopolitics quite uncritically and without comment or caveat in his regional geography of the Soviet Union. Here, the economic potential and geographical ‘realities’ of the Soviet Union were analysed and explained; and although the term ‘geopolitics’ was used sparingly (mainly describing the international linkages of the Union and its component nationalities), it was nevertheless included unapologetically. Perhaps this was pique or resistance on Roletto’s part, or perhaps he still considered ‘geopolitics’ to have a valid explanatory potential. Nevertheless, only four years after Haushofer’s suicide, his direct contemporary was again using ‘geopolitics’ to describe and explain the political geography of the Soviet Union, by then the implacable enemy of ‘The West’ and the territory of which existed literally upon Trieste’s doorstep.

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108Valussi, 'Giorgio Roletto'.
110Valussi, 'Giorgio Roletto'.
112Roletto, La costruzione economica Sovietica, esp. pp. 33-43, chapter entitled: 'L'ambiente come fattore geopolitico', [the environment as a geopolitical factor].

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When Roleto retired, Eliseo Bonetti took the chair at Trieste and can still be found in the department on a regular basis. He is reluctant to talk about Geopolitica and is happier dwelling on his not inconsiderable achievements. It was Bonetti who first introduced the ideas of Hartshorne into Italy (in the pages of Geopolitica).\textsuperscript{113} Perhaps more significantly, it was Bonetti who in the 1960s read Christaller's Die Central Ordnung in the original, un-abridged German and in the light of contemporary Anglo-Saxon initiatives, introduced quantitative geography into Italy with a study of the Veneto-Friulian plain.\textsuperscript{114} Once again, the Trieste department -which Bonetti maintained as one of Italy's strongest- acted as a gateway through which ideas entered the Italian discipline. Yet Bonetti also applied his geography to the political questions surrounding his city in 1950 when, with Schiffrer, he distinguished inland 'Slavic; settlement types from coastal 'Italian' towns.\textsuperscript{115} And this at a time when the status of Trieste was still contested between the Italians and Yugoslavia. As Schiffrer, Roleto and Bonetti demonstrate, the links between politics and geographical scholarship continued in Trieste. The term 'geopolitics' was used in books and lessons whilst studies which could have been included in Geopolitica were still undertaken, lacking only the rhetoric of Fascism. Despite the closure of Geopolitica, the geography of these geopoliticians remained a political resource. However, it was Ernesto Massi who remained the most politicised of the former geopoliticians.

\textit{Ernesto Massi: politics and geography}

Ernesto Massi, the most committed geopolitician of them all, never returned to his native Trieste to work. His career continued in Lombardy and later in Rome and, in stark contrast to the fate of his friend Haushofer, would reward him well regardless of the extraordinarily contentious and extremist politics which he continued to develop and promote. Written details of Massi's career are vague and his personal recollections are hazy, however, he returned to Lombardy after his wartime service and continued working at the universities of Pavia and the Università Cattolica in Milan. In the 1950s he secured a post at the State University of Milan where he remained until appointed to a chair at the University of Rome in 1969. During these years his academic work was could be generally labelled as economic and industrial geography with particular interests in the Steel industry, the European Economic Community (from 1963), and Italian prospects in these areas. On his move to Rome

\textsuperscript{113}Bonetti, 'Ancor. sull. stori. della geografia'.
\textsuperscript{114}E. Bonetti, \textit{La teoria delle localitii centrali}, Istituto di Geografia economica della Università di Trieste, no. 6, 1964.
\textsuperscript{115}E. Bonetti and C. Schiffrer, 'Popolamento urbano e popolamento rurale in Istria', \textit{Rivista Geografica Italiana}, 57, 3 (1950), pp. 128-144.
Massi became a member of the council of the SGI and in 1977, after the sudden death of the incumbent, became president of the Italy’s premier geographical organisation and symbol of the geographical establishment with which he had been in conflict throughout his time as a geopolitician. Thus, as President of the Società Geografica Italiana, editor of the society’s Bollettino and Professor at the University of Rome, Ernesto Massi enjoyed some of the greatest rewards Italian geography could offer. He stepped down as SGI president in the late 1980s and now lives in comfortable retirement in Via Ettore Pais, Rome. When he speaks in public, the geography lecturers and students of Rome turn out en masse to hear him.\footnote{116}

Many stories circulate about Massi, and I am aware that I will be conflating them still more here, but one believable claim is that he received his chair in Rome some ten years later than he ought to have done (given his academic standing) on account of his personal politics.\footnote{117} Ernesto Massi, perhaps the most extreme and committed Fascist amongst Italy’s inter-war geographical community, continued his fascism throughout and beyond the Second World War. When a group of extremist and unapologetic former Italian Fascists founded the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), the reborn Fascist party on December 26, 1946, Ernesto Massi was one of their leaders.\footnote{118} And in drawing on the more ‘left-wing’, ‘revolutionary’ and ‘socialising’ Fascism of the Salò Republic, a direct continuity from Mussolini’s final regime was established.\footnote{119}

In the general reaction against the regime, as most Italians drew a discreet veil over their Fascist pasts and as the American CIA became involved in Italy, re-establishing the Sicilian Mafia and destabilising left-wing political cadres lest Italians elected a communist government, Massi insisted upon continuing the fascist cause.

\footnote{116}{As happened at the March 1993 conference in the SGI: ‘Dalla geografia politica alla geopolitica’, 30-31 March.} \footnote{117}{Interview with G. Battisti, University of Trieste, Trieste, 28 May 1992.} \footnote{118}{On the Movimento Sociale Italiano, one of whose abiding aims was the return of the entire Trieste region to Italy after World War II, see M. Caciagli, ‘The Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale and Neo-Fascism in Italy’, West European Politics 11, 2 (1988), pp. 19-33; R. Chiarni and O. Corsini, Da Salò a Piazza della Loggia, Milan, 1983; and Franco Ferraresi (ed), La destra radicale, Milan, 1984.} \footnote{119}{The MSI (from 1972 the MSI-Destra Nazionale and from 1993 the Alleanza Nazionale) took its name from the Salò Republic which was also known as the Italian Social Republic. The party still takes some of its leads from Fascist ideologues such as Rocco, Gentile and Ugo Spirito. The party has enjoyed a considerable degree of electoral support in Italy throughout the post-war years. For much of the 1945-1989 period of political stasis, it was the fourth largest Italian party; and although its support was officially rejected by the Christian Democrats, in practice the neo-Fascists colluded with the CD to maintain centre-right hegemony from the end of the war until 1960. From 1960 until 1989 the MSI was marginalised but with the ongoing collapse of the First Italian Republic (from 1989) it has regained political influence as part of Berlusconi’s centre-right alliance. Such a history should not disguise the violence and intimidation prompted by the MSI throughout this period. On the history and electoral successes of the MSI, see M. Caciagli, The Movimento Sociale Italiano-Destra Nazionale.}
His Fascism was totally unapologetic. In mid 1951 he would leave the MSI because its politics were too liberal. Alongside recalcitrant ex-Nazis and individuals such as Oswald Mosley, Massi was an architect of Eurofascism and the European Social Movement's 'Malmö Manifesto' of May 1951 which affirmed extremist beliefs in a 'strong', Fascist-led European empire organised on corporate lines which might resist both American and Soviet pressure to east and west. With its calls for the "...spiritual regeneration of man, society and the state...", Massi was committing himself to a revivified form of fascism. Ernesto Massi admitted to me that his politics had caused him problems in the past in terms of his career and with the student body. However, it seems that his politics have scarcely softened over the years and despite such extremism, he managed to reach the highest echelons of Italian geography.

However, there is little doubt that Massi's personal politics and his academic position coincided quite spectacularly at the twenty fourth Italian Geographical Congress held in Turin in May 1985. Giuseppe Dematteis of the Politecnico di Torino organised a conference session upon geopolitics and their legacy, inviting Massi, Franco Farinelli and Claude Raffestin to speak to this theme. Whilst the latter two academics provided critiques of geopolitics both within the academy and without, Massi used the opportunity to deliver an apologia and justification for Geopolitica. He positioned the Triestene journal in a long-standing tradition of linkages and relations between politics and geography that stretched from classical times to the Cold war era in which he spoke.

As Massi told the story, Geopolitica was just another manifestation of this long relationship between politics and geography. But rather than admit that his geopolitics had been an especially politicised discourse, his concern was to normalise...

121 The 'Malmö Manifesto' was the statement of the 'European Social Movement', or the 'Malmö International' to which sixteen national movements expressed allegiance to these founding principals of 'Eurofascism'. See R. Griffin (ed) Fascism, Oxford, 1995, p. 342; A. Del Boca and M. Giovana, Fascism Today, pp. 134-139, esp. pp. 136-138. In 1962 Massi maintained his position as one of the six executive directors of the 'European Social Movement': A. Del Boca and M. Giovana, Fascism Today, p. 454n.
122 Griffin (ed) Fascism, p. 342.
123 Interview with Ernesto Massi, Rome, 1 June, 1994.
124 There appears to have been a rapprochement between Massi and the MSI, recently as part of Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia alliance, providing Europe with its first democratically-elected parliamentarians since the war. Massi is said to be a senior statesman of the party and still consulted by the leadership for his opinions.
**Geopolitica**'s political stance, and to thereby invalidate criticism of the way in which he placed his geography at the service of the Fascist state. So from the Classical writings of Strabo, Pliny and Herodote to the writings of Spykman and Lacoste’s Herodote ‘school’ even through to the words of Kissinger and the prototype ‘Pan-regions’ imagined in Orwell’s 1984, all of geography was presented as being political and politicised. Amidst all of this, it was implied, Geopolitica (the topic Massi was asked to speak on) merited little special attention - summing just over three pages of the forty-five written. When he did mention Geopolitica, Massi emphasised that his journal was never deterministic like Haushofer’s and it never had the influence over policy-formation that Geopolitik enjoyed. And whilst Massi is justified in highlighting these differences between German and Italian geopolitics - variations which Roletto and he stressed originally in the 1930s - there remains the suspicion that Massi was again providing an apologia for his actions by comparison the ‘far worse’ case of Nazi Germany. When Dematteis refused to publish Massi’s account in the conference proceedings, Massi instead used his editorial prerogative to place his version of history - stretching to some forty-five pages- as the first article in the next volume of the SGI’s Bollettino - one of Italy’s two foremost geographical journals.

**Remembering geopolitics**

I talked about the various ways in which geopolitics are remembered in chapter one. In 1986 the furore around Massi’s article demonstrated that the memories of geopolitics were still controversial and that Geopolitica especially, given its connections to Geopolitik, remained a taboo subject. At three pages, Massi’s contribution was the first and most sustained commentary on inter-war geopolitics to emerge from Italian geography since Geopolitica closed. Previous to his intervention, geographers marked their reluctance to address geopolitics with two strategies. They either ignored it (as in the Anglophone world) or compared Italian geopolitics favourably with German Geopolitik.

In the immediate post-war years, practically no mention was made of geopolitics. And in the intervening period historians of geography were often reluctant to address

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130 Letter from Prof. G. Dematteis, 14 December, 1990.
the Fascist era itself, never mind touch upon the notoriety of geopolitics. For example, in two almost encyclopaedic surveys of the history, development and orientation of political geography, Mario Ortolani, who contributed a number of articles and review to Geopolitica himself, neglected to mention the Italian journal even though he wrote at length about the political geography of several other nations. By the 1980s, historians of the discipline started to publish tentative and brief surveys of Italian geopolitics, often amounting to little more than a page and enclosed within wider accounts of political geography or of geography itself. They mention Roletto and Massi's Triestene origins and quickly recount how these German speakers discovered Geopolitik, but then adapted and developed a softer Italian version of the phenomenon. The author usually points out almost immediately that the Italian strain of geopolitics was not as racist as the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik nor was it based upon environmental determinism as was its German contemporary. In other words, Geopolitica was not as bad as the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik. Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that Geopolitica served a less obscene regime than did Geopolitik; we might also remember Pozzi's attempts to prove the 'Aryanisation' of Italy, and Massi's ongoing attempts to forge links with the Nazi's. But as Macgregor Knox comments, this strategy of comparing Fascism with Nazism is a frequent escape route for uncomfortable facts and memories of Italian Fascism. Massi's comparison between his own journal and the Zeitschrift für Geopolitik therefore played upon an established way of mitigating Fascism.

This frequent comparison with Geopolitik is also instructive in a number of ways and is further evidence that the entire inter-war geopolitical experience is viewed largely through the lens of Geopolitik. This was the case in the English-speaking world as I have shown. Yet Haushofer's movement is always the first point of reference for other attempts to write and explain histories of inter-war European geopolitics. This is implicit in recent analyses of Italian and Spanish geopolitics written for Anglophone audiences. For example, Bosque-Maurel, Bosque-Sendra and Garcia-
Ballesteros analyse Spanish geopolitics under Franco in terms of its similarities and difference to German Geopolitik.\textsuperscript{136} They concluded that in Spain "...'fascist' geopolitics did not take hold" although they completely fail to mention the ongoing efforts of Vicens Vives.\textsuperscript{137} Likewise, Lucio Gambi, characterised in Italy by his 'anticonformism', nevertheless discusses Geopolitica primarily with regard to 'living space' when writing for an English language audience. This term, associated indelibly with Lebensraum and Geopolitik in Anglophone minds, was, as a concept, contested and amorphous within Geopolitica.\textsuperscript{138} Nevertheless, it was in terms of living space and in an apologetic and pejorative tone that Gambi represented Geopolitica to the Anglo-American geographical world, much to the annoyance of one Italian reviewer.\textsuperscript{139} The German experience is still the benchmark for historians of geopolitics. Critical and sensitive studies of the geopolitical experiences of different nations can only help us to move towards a more nuanced appreciation of geopolitical ideas.

\textit{A geopolitical Renaissance}

There is one final rationale for the studying the history of geopolitics. If, as seems sensible, we accept that geopolitics can take different forms in different places and times, then we should also be attentive to the growth of geopolitics in our contemporary world. In the academy, the word geopolitics has been given a multiplicity of different meanings in only the decade or so since it was rehabilitated into Anglophone geography.\textsuperscript{140} Equally, 'critical geopolitics' has proved one of the most interesting developments of recent years in human geography.\textsuperscript{141} Less edifying are other used of the term geopolitics now that it is once more in fashion. Since 1989 the International Boundaries Research Unit has grown out of the Geography Department at the University of Durham. To the "...frequent requests for information and advice from governments, corporations, law firms and scholars from around the world [they] offer authoritative and impartial advice and [they] welcome inquiries

\textsuperscript{138}Gambi, 'Geography and imperialism', pp. 86-91; on Gambi, see Cori, 'Italy', pp. 49-52.
\textsuperscript{141}See the papers in the special issue of: \textit{Environment and planning D: Society and Space}, 12 (1994).
from potential clients."142 Their stated aim is the peaceful resolution of boundary problems, but by their own admission, their expertise, insight and analytical skills have been hired to a list of governments, multinational corporations, international law firms and oil and gas companies.143 At the prices charged for their 'Maritime Briefings' and their 'Boundary and Territory Briefings', the "authority of expert insight" they claim is only available to the wealthy.144

In 1990 a twenty-year tradition of similar consultancy work at the Geography Department of the London School of African and Oriental Studies led to the formation of the Geopolitics Research Centre funded by SOAS and two international law firms.145 With the collapse of the Cold war world order, "...the problems of international boundaries, nationalism, ethnicity and religion [became] only too apparent" and the GRC was launched with a self-proclaimed remit to investigate these phenomena. However, "The Geopolitics centre has also been called upon by overseas governments and corporate institutions to advise upon specific territorial concerns, a development which augers well for our future."146 Elsewhere, the GRC printed a list of government clients who had "...vested interest in prevailing territorial problems" but the GRC had nevertheless been prepared to help.147 In modern British academic geography, geopolitical expertise is on sale openly to the parties in international disputes. And perturbing though this is, it is nevertheless a relatively small community of security intellectuals and international relations experts who deal in these matters. However, in post Cold war Italy a new geopolitical journal has been launched which claims to "understand the world like it is".148 It has found a huge popular audience and a particular resonance for this insight in contemporary Italy.

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142IBRU leaflet: 'consultancy services', sent to me, September 1995.
143IBRU leaflet: 'consultancy services', sent to me, September 1995.
144IBRU leaflet: 'Three new information services', January 1993, their expertise costs £180 per annum.
146Geopolitics and international boundaries research centre, 'Introduction', p. 1.
147Geopolitics and international boundaries research centre, 'The future', General Brochure, London, 1992, pp. 12-13, esp. p. 13. A December 1992 'News update' leaflet from the GRC talked about other contract work for an unnamed Middle Eastern government. After this leaflet, and despite many letters, the GRC has failed to respond to my requests for their literature.
148'Per capire il mondo com'è': the advertising slogan with which Limes was launched in March 1993:
Until 1993, most Italians understood the word *Limes* to refer to the ancient frontiers of imperial Rome. Since 1993 however, the term has become more closely associated with a quarterly publication whose self-appointed task it is to relaunch geopolitical thinking in Italy. Subtitled 'Una rivista Italiana di Geopolitica', *Limes* is a popular journal akin to something like *Foreign Affairs* and as with its American equivalent, it sees itself as providing an accurate insight into the 'reality' of global affairs. Its editors are Lucio Caracciolo, an Italian journalist and Michel Korinman, the French historian of geopolitics and member of the *Hérodote* circle. Their intention, in the light of the new world order and the increasing destability in the Balkans and eastern Europe, was to provide a forum for Italians to debate and develop an appropriate Italian foreign policy. In their first editorial they claimed this was Italy's new responsibility. And to develop a new policy, Italians first needed to understand the

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151 Yves Lacoste is an honorary 'councillor to the editors'.

world as it really was - replete with elements such as nationalism, ethnicity, frontiers and space which were not encompassed by orthodox international relations methodologies. Consequently, a geopolitical approach and geopolitical reasoning' were required.

The editorial spelt out their understanding of geopolitics: "More than a science, geopolitics is knowledge in Foucault's sense, or better still, a kind of reasoning". It would be sensitive to scale and locality, would give voice to all sides of a debate and clarify the situations with the aid of cartography. Although debating possible Italian Foreign policy, *Limes* claimed a detached and informed perspective, based upon 'concrete reasoning' which allowed it a insight into foreign policy problems. It was this vision and reasoning which *Limes* claimed to be geopolitical. And although it denied it would have any continuity from Friedrich Ratzel and nineteenth century geopolitics, the journal nevertheless revealed itself to be aware of a tradition surrounding the term which they were appropriating in an attempt to reintroduce the geographical into international relations.

The first issue dealt with the Balkan crisis, then gathering momentum. Amongst others it published the writings of Croatian President Tudman and Bosnian President Izetbegovic as it rehearsed various national and ethnic perspectives on the crisis. One whole section was devoted to Italian interests in the region with the futures of Trieste and Istria debated. The first opinion in this section was voiced by Bruno Bottai, Permanent Secretary at the Italian Foreign Ministry and son of Giuseppe, promoter of an earlier geopolitical journal. From his office in Rome, Bottai had agreed to partially fund the Venice conference which launched the journal, to sit on its 'scientific council', and to open proceedings. The conference was closed by the then Foreign Minister, Emilio Colombo. A May conference in Rome attracted the recently-resigned Prime Minister Giulio Amato away from the ongoing political crisis. Few geographers were involved in the project but aside from its influential friends in the government, numerous 'security intellectuals' had connections with *Limes*.

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156 *Limes*, 1, 1-2 (1993), pp. 143-225
158 The rest of the conference costs (Venice, 24-25 March 1993) were met by the Chambers of commerce in Trieste and Venice.
At first sight *Limes* would seem to provide a very neat and elegant conclusion to my thesis: being a 1990s journal launched as an attempt to understand and explain the flux and instability of the modern world; one which attempts to explain this 'reality' through recourse to a geopolitical vision that includes important elements which orthodox science neglects; and one which proposed a new way of thinking about the world and expressed this vision in maps. Finally, as a discourse which sometimes claims an objective perspective but elsewhere promotes Italian foreign policy and above all, a journal with ministerial support from a man called Bottai. This would all prove an interesting historical irony were it not for the astonishing and unexpected circulation figures which *Limes* boasts. The first issue had a print-run of 14,000 copies which was increased to 24,000 for the second edition in June 1993. These sold out almost immediately.\(^{159}\) *Limes* now sells around 30,000 copies every quarter at a £10 cover price; plans for German and French editions are at advanced stages and an English-language newsletter will follow. Unlike *Geopolitica*, *Limes* has certainly found a vibrant constituency which appears to be growing.

At a conference in the SGI's seventeenth century Villa Celimontana, on 30 and 31 March 1993, Italian geographers debated the theme: From political geography to geopolitics. Ernesto Massi chaired one of the sessions and talked at length about his time as a geographer in Fascist Italy. The day concluded with a round table to discuss 'The return of Geopolitics' in Massi's presence, Bruno Bottai, Lucio Caracciolo, an Army General and the President of the SGI debated the rebirth of Italian geopolitics. A consensus emerged: that these difficult and complex ideas should be used prudently and with caution, and, as Bottai concluded, geopolitics were not so much a 'science' as a method for analysing problems.\(^{160}\) However, in 1993 geopolitics were quite clearly taken seriously by leading journalists, politicians, geographers and military men. And with thirty thousand or more Italians regularly developing an Italian geopolitical imagination through the pages of *Limes*, geopolitics clearly now enjoy a greater impact than they ever did in the inter-war years - another good reason to understand the whole phenomenon of geopolitics as best we can.

\(^{159}\) Interview with L. Caracciolo, Rome, 2 June 1994. I am also grateful to Lucio Caracciolo for other interviews he granted me in 1993.

Conclusion

My intention has been to situate the Italian geopolitical movement of the inter-war period in the wider contexts of Fascist Italy and amidst the ongoing tradition of geopolitical thought which has flowed throughout this century. I have attempted to position Geopolitica and the geopolitical thought of Roletto, Massi and their circle amidst the particular cultures of Trieste where they moulded an Italian current of geopolitics from the wider geopolitical conversation which circulated 1930s Europe. I also wanted to outline their positions within Italian professional geography - itself highly politicised and working closely with the Fascist state- and also their various connections to Fascist cultures, organisations, and to the regime itself.

I hope that I have demonstrated the manner in which the Triestene geopoliticians promoted their distinct version of geopolitics and their new perspective within Italy’s colonial and geographical lobbies, and within the Fascist regime itself. In response, the regime supported the Triestini through the person of Education Minister Giuseppe Bottai, who had already promoted the development of the Italian geographical imagination through his support for academic geography. Bottai provided funds and support for Geopolitica - the most sustained attempt to develop a geopolitical imagination outside Germany. For Bottai, Geopolitica was to provide a political conscience for geography. For the geopoliticians, their journal provided a geopolitical perspective grounded in geography but which also transcended this discipline to constitute a synoptic, encompassing vision by which the modern world might be fully understood.

I traced the articulation of this geopolitical imagination through the geopolitical cartography of the journal, and through its representations of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Balkans. Geopolitica provided an ethnocentric impression of the world in which Italy was a great imperial power with the right to an equal share of colonial territory, resources and prestige. However, the geopolitical imagination was also contingent upon Italy’s domestic and external politics. Its accounts of Africa and the Balkans reflected Italy’s fluctuating fortunes in these war zones. At home, Geopolitica fell foul of internal politics and rivalries within the geographical academy, whilst increasingly its key terms and even the meaning of ‘geopolitics’ itself escaped the control of the journal.

Yet although Geopolitica itself is now only of historical interest, geopolitics -as a way of envisioning and understanding the world- is flourishing once more. Although I
have demonstrated that the history of geopolitics is nuanced, ambiguous and -more often than not- far removed from any real political influence, the emergence of *Limes* should remind geographers that the term 'geopolitics' today enjoys a popular currency and remains able to command impressive resources. And whatever we might think of the contested, problematical, and sometimes notorious concepts that go under this amorphous banner, there are compelling reasons, and not a little collective responsibility, to keep a weather-eye upon the histories and the various revivals of geopolitics.
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