

Migrations / North–South movements

Between 1815 and 1920, hundreds of thousands of Europeans migrated to North Africa and the Middle East. By contrast, migration from the Southern Mediterranean to European countries was unusual. Most migrants were poor workers from Mediterranean islands (Sicily, Sardinia, Malta, Corsica, the Balearic Islands and Greece). Some middle-class people also migrated, sometimes for political reasons. Many settled in rural areas, but most European migrants settled in towns such as Izmir, Beirut, Alexandria, Cairo, Tunis, Algiers and Tangier. By and large, European mass migration to Southern Mediterranean countries started before colonialism. For example, when in the early 1880s Tunisia and Egypt fell under respectively French and British control, large European communities were already living there. Algeria was different: there mass European settlement was triggered by French colonisation, which started in 1830; by 1912, 800,000 Europeans had settled there. In colonial situations, Europeans were privileged over the local population, causing conflicts that at times took a racial character.



Working Number: IT1 106

Name: General Giuseppe Garibaldi, hero of the Italian national unification, arriving in Tunis in 1834

Holding Museum: State Library of Modern and Contemporary History

Date: 1861

Materials:

Curator Justification:

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One of the most prominent 19th-century political exiles was the Italian Giuseppe Garibaldi. Sentenced to death in absentia by the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1834 for his participation in a failed insurrection aimed at national unification, he had to flee his country. He first spent about six months in Tunisia, before going to South America, where he lived until 1848.



Working Number: AT 077

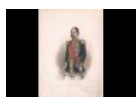
Name: Józef Zachariasz Bem (1795–1850)

Holding Museum: Austrian National Library

Date: Before 1850

Materials:

Curator Justification: J.Z. Bem, also called Murad Pasha (Tarnów, now in Poland, 1794 – Aleppo, Syria, 1850) was a Polish army officer who had fought for the Hungarian revolution against the Habsburg troops in 1848–49. After its collapse, he fled to Turkey, adopted Islam, and eventually became the Ottoman governor of Aleppo, where in 1850 he saved the Christian population from being massacred.



Working Number: AT 073

Name: Omar Pasha (1806–1871)

Holding Museum: Austrian National Library

Date: Mid 19th century

Materials:

Curator Justification: Mihajlo Latas, born in Croatia, served in the Austrian army until a charge of embezzlement forced him to flee to Ottoman Bosnia. He converted to Islam, joined the Ottoman army and had a long and brilliant career. Governor of Lebanon (1842) and of Bucharest (1850), a successful commander in the Crimean

War, he later served as Ottoman governor of Baghdad (1857) and Herzegovina (1861) before becoming minister of war in 1868.



Working Number: RO 022
Name: Photograph of Ion Ghica (sitting)
Holding Museum: National Museum of Romanian History
Date: c. 1850–1860
Materials: -
Curator Justification: Romanian writer and political leader Ion Ghica (1817–97) studied in Paris, becoming a supporter of the Romanian national movement against Ottoman overlordship. A member of the revolutionary committee formed in 1848 in Wallachia, he was appointed official representative to the Ottomans; later the sultan appointed him governor of Samos (1854–58). After the union of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859 he returned to high office in Romania, also serving as prime minister.



Working Number: AT 085
Name: Edmund Count Szechenyi (1839–1922)
Holding Museum: Austrian National Library
Date: c.1880
Materials: -
Curator Justification: Edmund Count Szechenyi – born in Bratislava and educated in London – was a specialist in firefighting. In 1875, the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I dispatched him to Istanbul to help set up a fire brigade. He was to remain in Istanbul until his death in 1922.



Working Number: IT2 073
Name: Egyptian Furniture of the Italian Giuseppe Parvis Living in Cairo [Paris Exhibition, 1878]
Holding Museum: National Central Library
Date: 1878
Materials: -
Curator Justification: During the 19th century, multiple streams of migrants moved from Italy to Egypt. Following failed nationalist insurrections in Italy in 1821 and 1848, several political exiles settled in the country. Afterwards, economic migration became predominant.



Working Number: IT1 052
Name: Construction Site at Shellal
Holding Museum: Italian Geographical Society (SGI)
Date: 1900
Materials: -
Curator Justification: The Italian community in Egypt grew from about 14,500 in 1878 to almost 24,500 in 1897 and to more than 40,000 in 1917.



Working Number: IT1 050

Name: The cutting of granite blocks for the construction of the first dam on the Nile. Many Italian stonecutters participated in the works

Holding Museum: Italian Geographical Society (SGI)

Date: 1900

Materials: -

Curator Justification: According to the Italian diplomat Giulio d'Aspremont, about 2,000 Italian workers were employed in the construction of the Aswan Low Dam (Old Aswan Dam), out of a total labour force of between 10,000 and 12,000.



Working Number: GR 030

Name: The Mansion of Alexandros Lukas Benakis in Alexandria

Holding Museum: Benaki Museum

Date: 1888–1920

Materials: Photograph

Curator Justification: Greek immigrants made up the largest European community in Egypt. The Benakis were one of the most prominent and economically successful families of the Greek diaspora. Their company, founded in 1863, exploited the booming demand for Egyptian cotton at the time of the American Civil War.



Working Number: IT1 125

Name: A map of Tunisia (1:1,600,000) showing Italian agricultural settlements, mines, coral- and sponge-fishing areas and boat lines

Holding Museum: Italian Geographical Society (SGI)

Date: 1906

Materials: -

Curator Justification: This map was published as an annex to a book dedicated to the Italian community in Tunisia. Significantly, it includes not only Tunisia but also the islands from which most of the Italian workers came: Sicily predominantly, but also Sardinia and the small islands of Pantelleria and Lampedusa, closer to Tunisia than to Sicily.



Working Number: TN 064

Name: Little Sicily

Holding Museum: Institut Supérieur d'Histoire Contemporaine de la Tunisie

Date: Early 20th century

Materials: Paper

Curator Justification: This neighbourhood developed near the port of Tunis in the late 19th century, along with the settlement of a booming Italian immigrant population, predominantly from Sicily.



Working Number: IT1 122
Name: Italian and Tunisian miners at work
Holding Museum: Italian Geographical Society (SGI)
Date: First years of the 20th century
Materials: -
Curator Justification: By 1906 there were 5,850 Italian miners working in Tunisia. Many of them came from Sardinia and worked in the phosphates mines. At the time, Europe imported most of its phosphates from Tunisia.



Working Number: TN 021
Name: Colonial farms
Holding Museum: -
Date: 19th century
Materials: -
Curator Justification: French and Italian settlers introduced new kinds of peasant housing in the Tunisian countryside. Such buildings, which were very different from the peasant houses of the local tradition, made the presence of European settlers immediately evident.



Working Number: TN 022
Name: Colonial farms
Holding Museum: -
Date: 19th century
Materials: -
Curator Justification: A colonial farm in Tunisia, modelled according to French rural architecture. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the rural landscape in Tunisia was transformed by the construction of many European-style farmhouses.



Working Number: TN 024
Name: Tunis Cathedral
Holding Museum: -
Date: 19th century
Materials: -
Curator Justification: With the arrival of European migrants, the Christian population in North Africa greatly expanded. The Tunis Catholic community had been served by the Sainte Croix Catholic church since 1837. In the last decade of the 19th century, a new Roman Catholic cathedral dedicated to St Vincent de Paul was erected. Between 1897 and 1913, four further churches were built in Tunis.



Working Number: TN 025
Name: Carthage Cathedral
Holding Museum: -

Date: 19th century

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Carthage in Tunisia had been the seat of an archbishop from the beginning of the Christian era. In 1884, it was re-established as archdiocese, and work on a new cathedral was initiated. The archdiocese comprised all of the parish churches of Tunisia, which by 1912 numbered 50.
