



From Port to Port

THE MEDITERRANEAN HISTORY AS A PORTOLANO BOOK

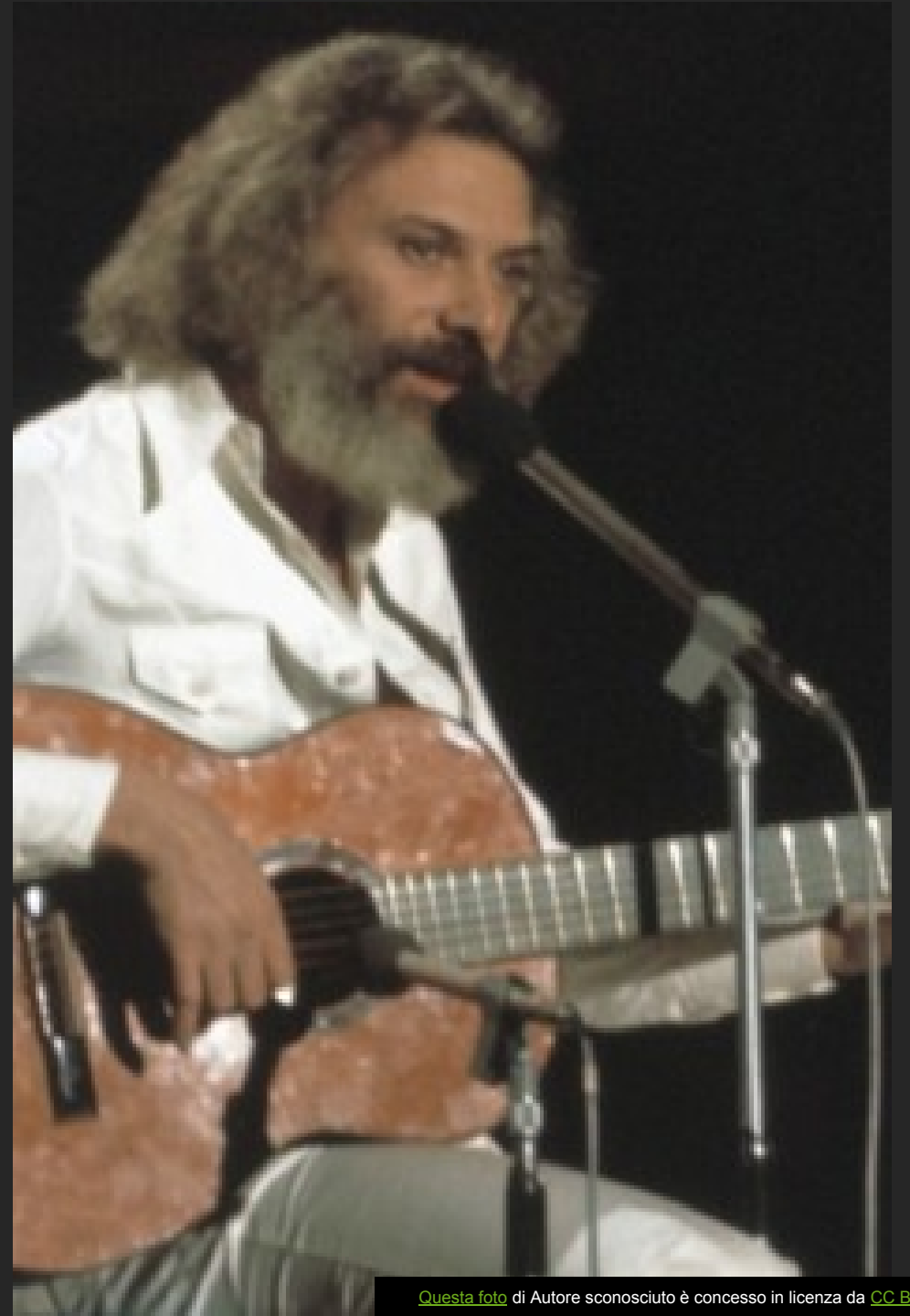


O R I E N T I S

Georges Moustaki

En Méditerranée (1971)

*Dans ce bassin où jouent
des enfants aux yeux noirs,
il y a trois continents
et des siècles d'histoire,
des prophètes des dieux,
le Messie en personne.
Il y a un bel été
qui ne craint pas l'automne,
en Méditerranée.*



Summary of presentation

Mapping the
Mediterranean

Goods and People
across the Sea: a
Mediterranean
History

A little *Portolano*



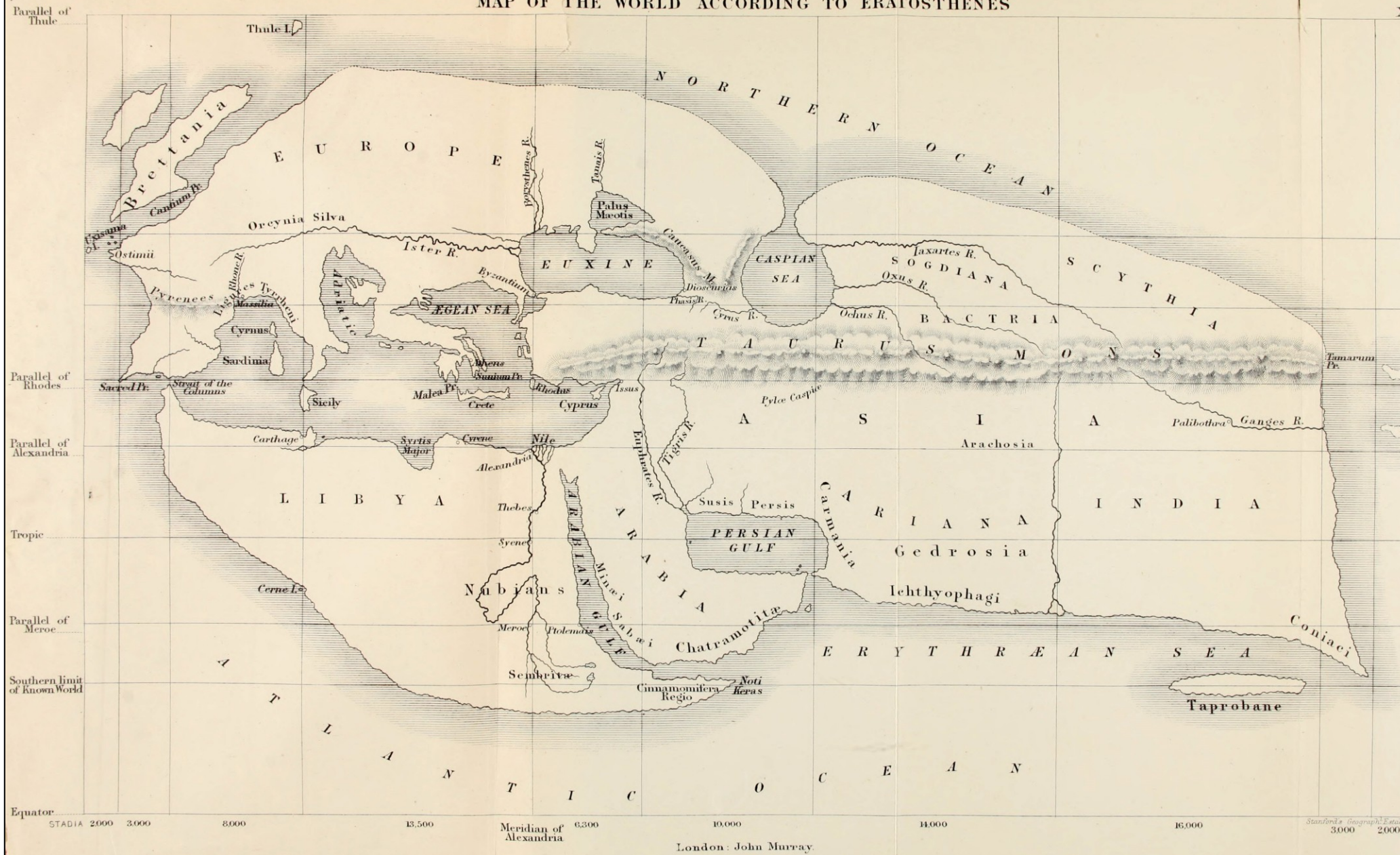
Mapping the Mediterranean

Maps and Mapping Work

“**Two important characteristics** of maps should be noticed. **A map is not the territory it represents**, but, if correct, it **has a similar structure to the territory**, which accounts for its usefulness”. – Alfred Korzybski.

- A **map is always an interpretation** of a territory.
- A map is always:
 - **reduced**
 - **approximated**
 - **symbolic**

MAP OF THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ERATOSTHENES

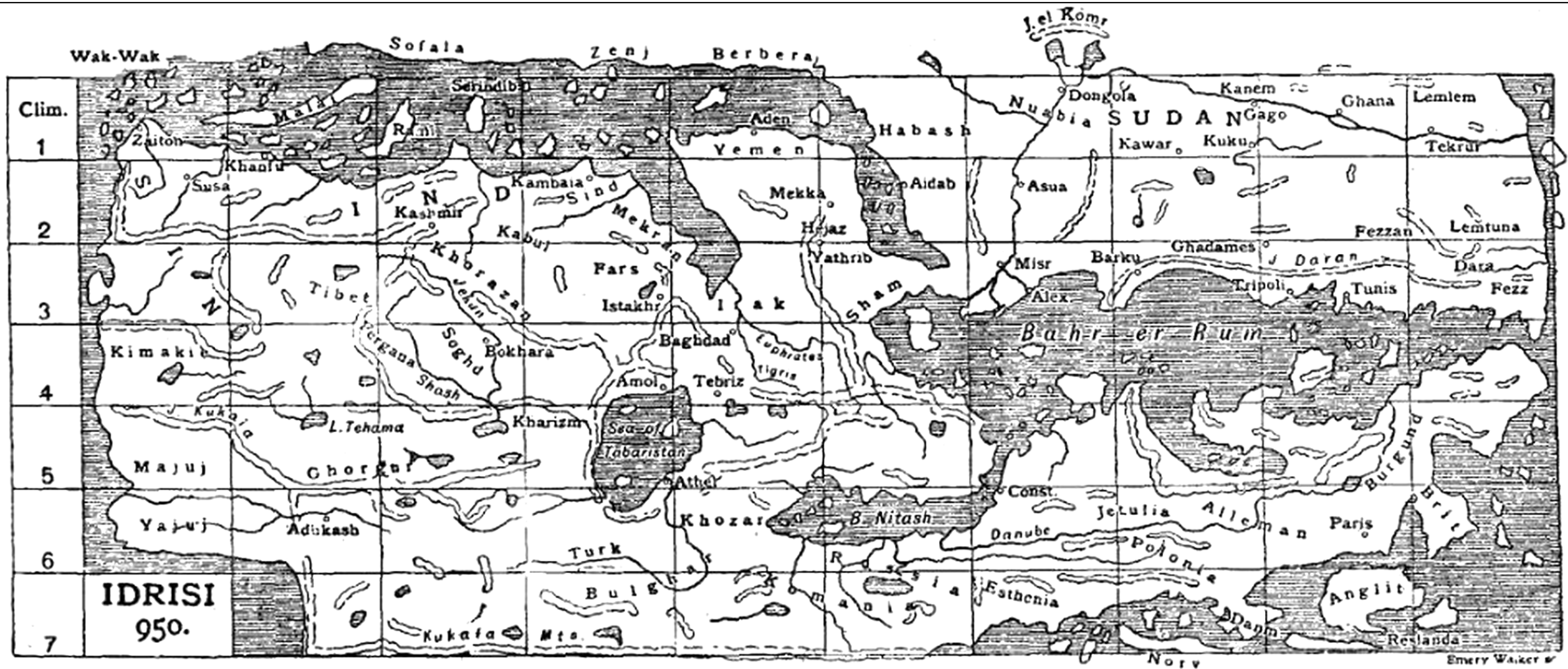


Map of the world according to Eratosthenes (276 BC - 194 DC)

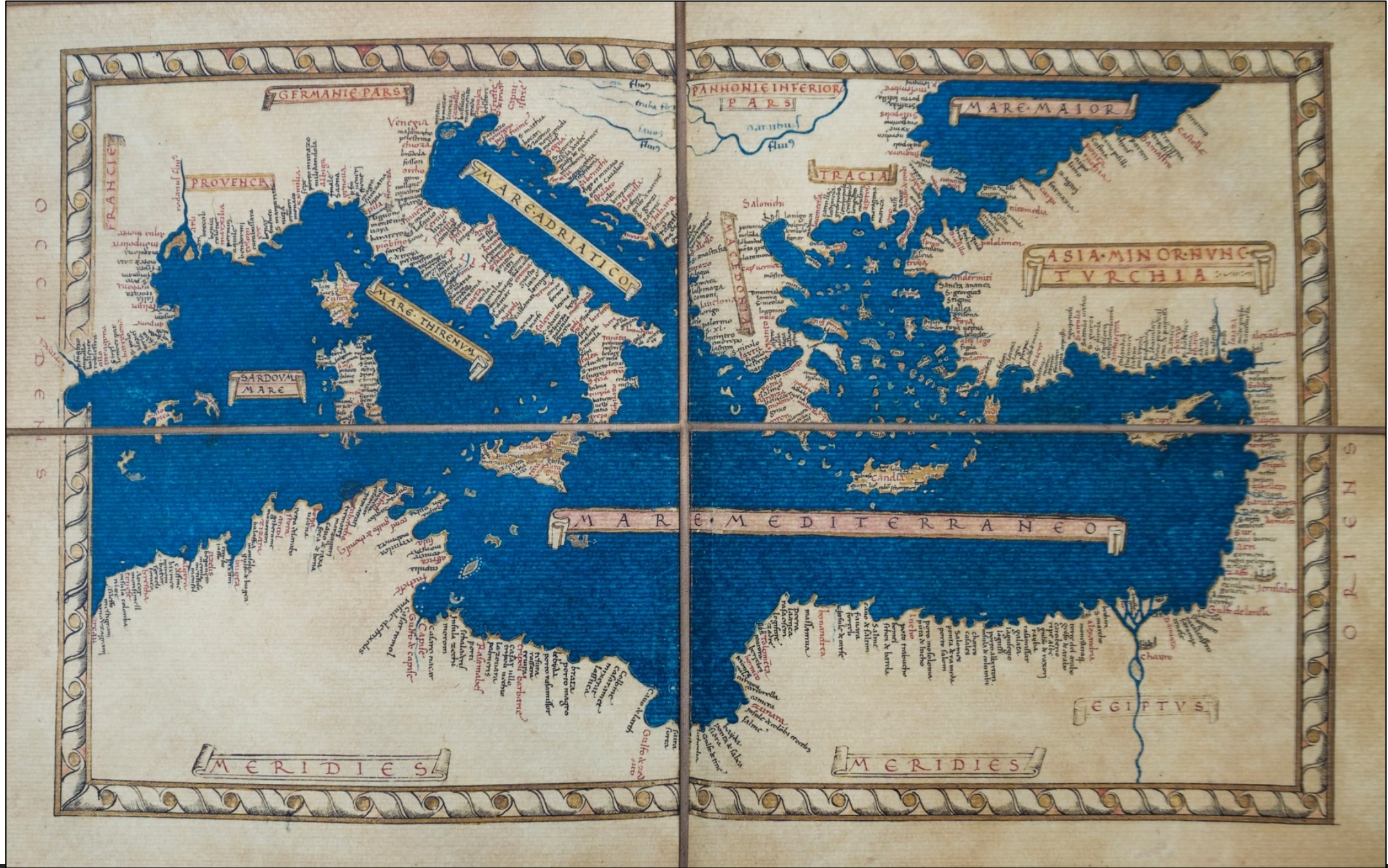
The T-O Diagram

Image-concept of the known world during the Middle Ages.





Map of al-Idrisi (1099-1165)



Map of Enrico Martello (1489)



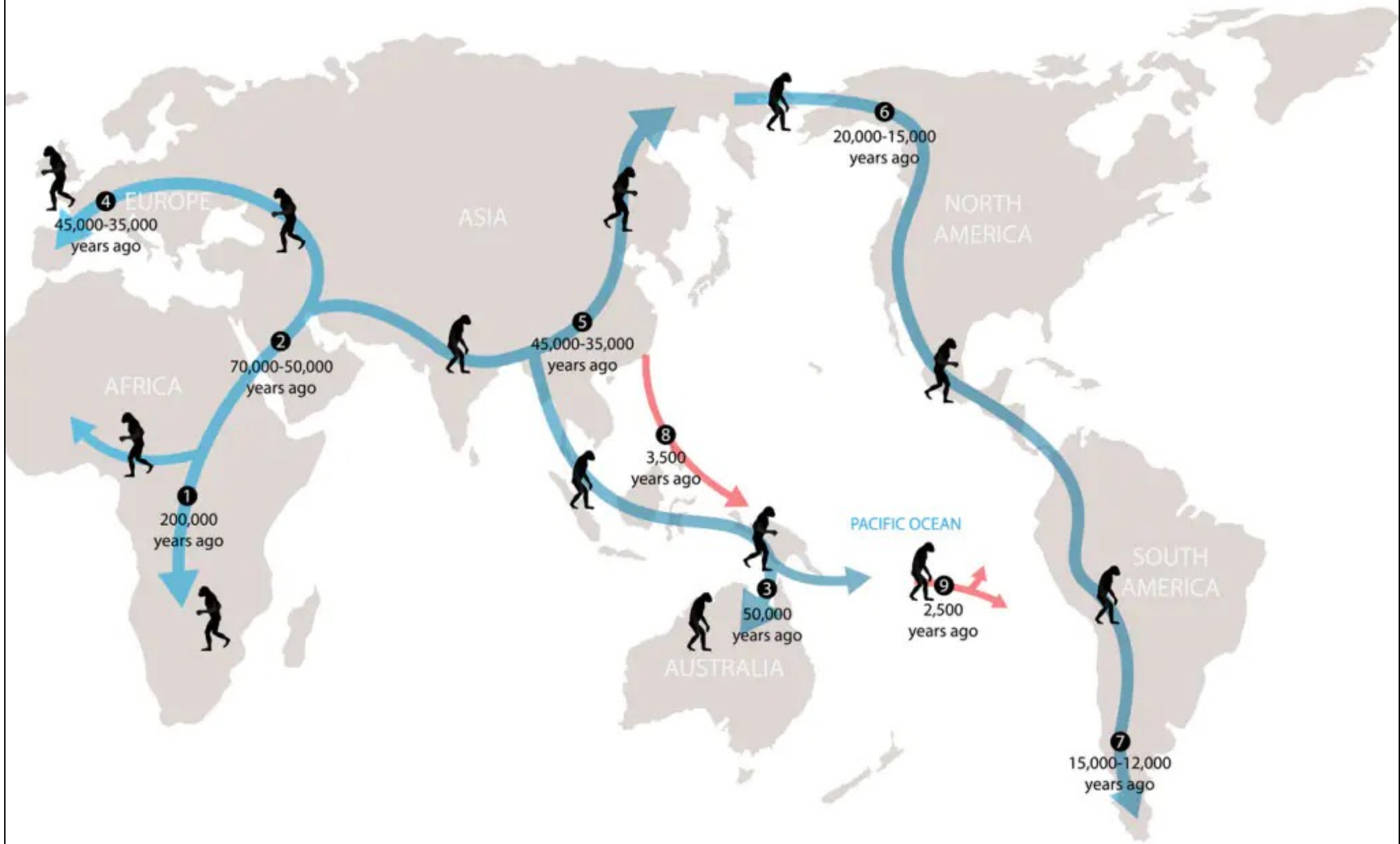
Map of Europe and the Mediterranean from the Catalan Atlas of 1375



Goods and People across the Sea: a Mediterranean History

Migrations in human history

- The **human history** is the **history of human migration**.
- Since the beginning of humanity, **people were moving across the world** for some reasons, in the first place **for existential needs** (e.g., food, shelter, safety, etc.).
- The main migrations across the Mediterranean Sea of the past centuries were:
 - The **Phoenician commercial colonization** (they built a lot of *Emporia*, commercial city);
 - **Great migration of Greek people** to the Southern Italian coasts (Campania, Puglia, Calabria, and Sicilia), the **Magna Graecia**;
 - The **Rome domination** (military, politic, and commercial) of the Mediterranean Sea.
 - The **Germanic people migrations**.
 - The **Islamic people domination** of Eastern and Southern of the Mediterranean basin and of Iberic (the *Al-Andalus*) and Sicily.



Main prehistoric migrations



Phoenicians' trade routes



Greek's trade routes

Magna Graecia

(gr. Μεγάλη Ελλάς *Megálē Hellás* 'Greater Greece') the Greek colonies in Southern Italy (from 8th century BC)



Etruscan cities

Etruscan colonization area and main cities, such as the members of the league: Dodecapolis (Gr. Δωδεκάπολις).





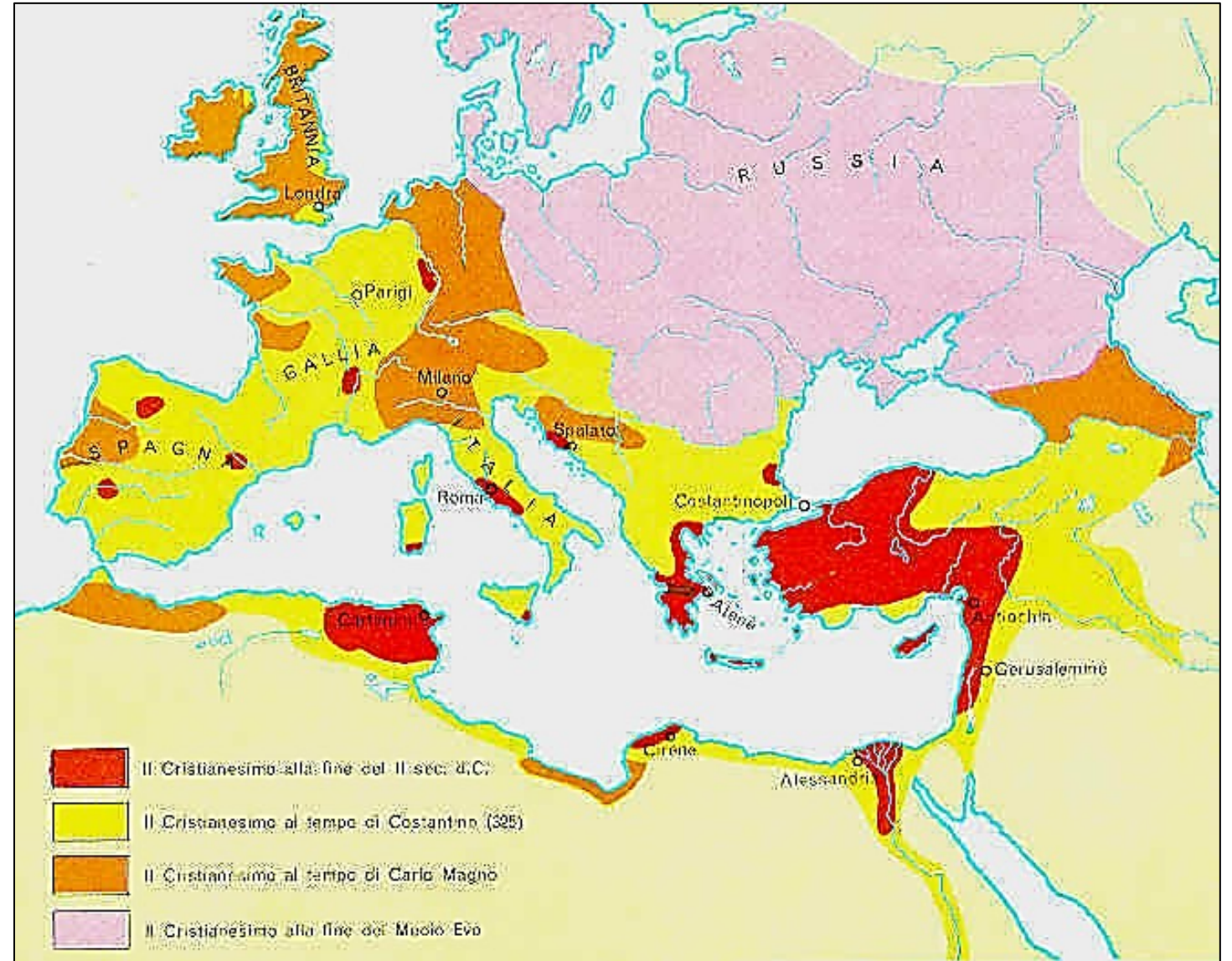
Greek and Etruscan trade routes (8th – 6th BC)



Map of the Roman fleets and major naval bases during the Principate (27 BC – 284 AD)

Christianization

Map of the diffusion of Christianity in Europe





Map of the main Byzantine-Muslim naval operations and battles in the Mediterranean, 7th–11th centuries.

The Maritime Republics

Also called “Merchant Republics”, the Mediterranean thalassocratic city-states in competition during the last centuries of the Middle Ages.



Sabir: a Mediterranean Lingua Franca

- **Sabir** (< *saber* 'to know') was a **Lingua Franca** (a bridge language) used in **Mediterranean basin since 11th century BC**.
- The language was based mostly on **Northern Italy's languages** (mainly **Venetian** and **Genoese**) and secondarily from **Occitano-Romance languages** (**Catalan** and **Occitan**) in the Western Mediterranean area, at first, Lingua Franca later came to have more **Spanish** and **Portuguese** elements, especially on the Barbary Coast (now referred to as the Maghreb). Lingua Franca also borrowed some elements from **Berber**, **Turkish**, **French**, **Greek** and **Arabic**.
- Example:
Se ti sabir
ti respondir,
se non sabir
tazir, tazir. – Molière, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670)

A little *Portolano*



What is a portolan chart?

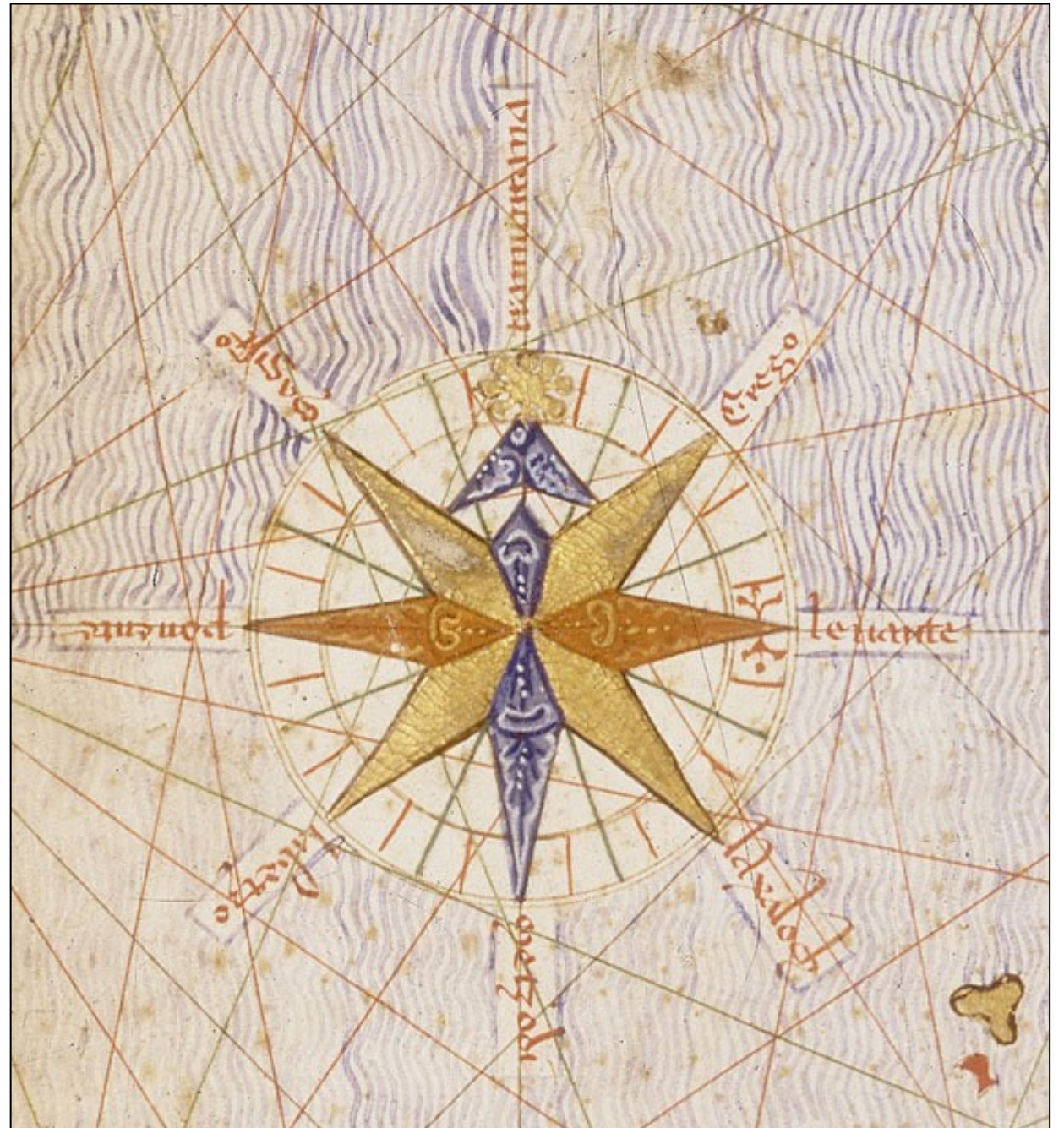
“**portolan chart**, also called harbour-finding chart, compass chart, or rhumb chart, **navigational chart of the European Middle Ages (1300–1500)**”. – *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

- **Portolan chart** (< it. portolano < it. porto (lat. PORTUS) ‘(chart) relative to the ports’) is the **navigation map of Middle Ages**, dedicate to the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas.
- The principal elements of portolan charts are:
 - **Sea coasts and port names;**
 - **Windroses;**
 - **Rhumblines networks.**

Windrose

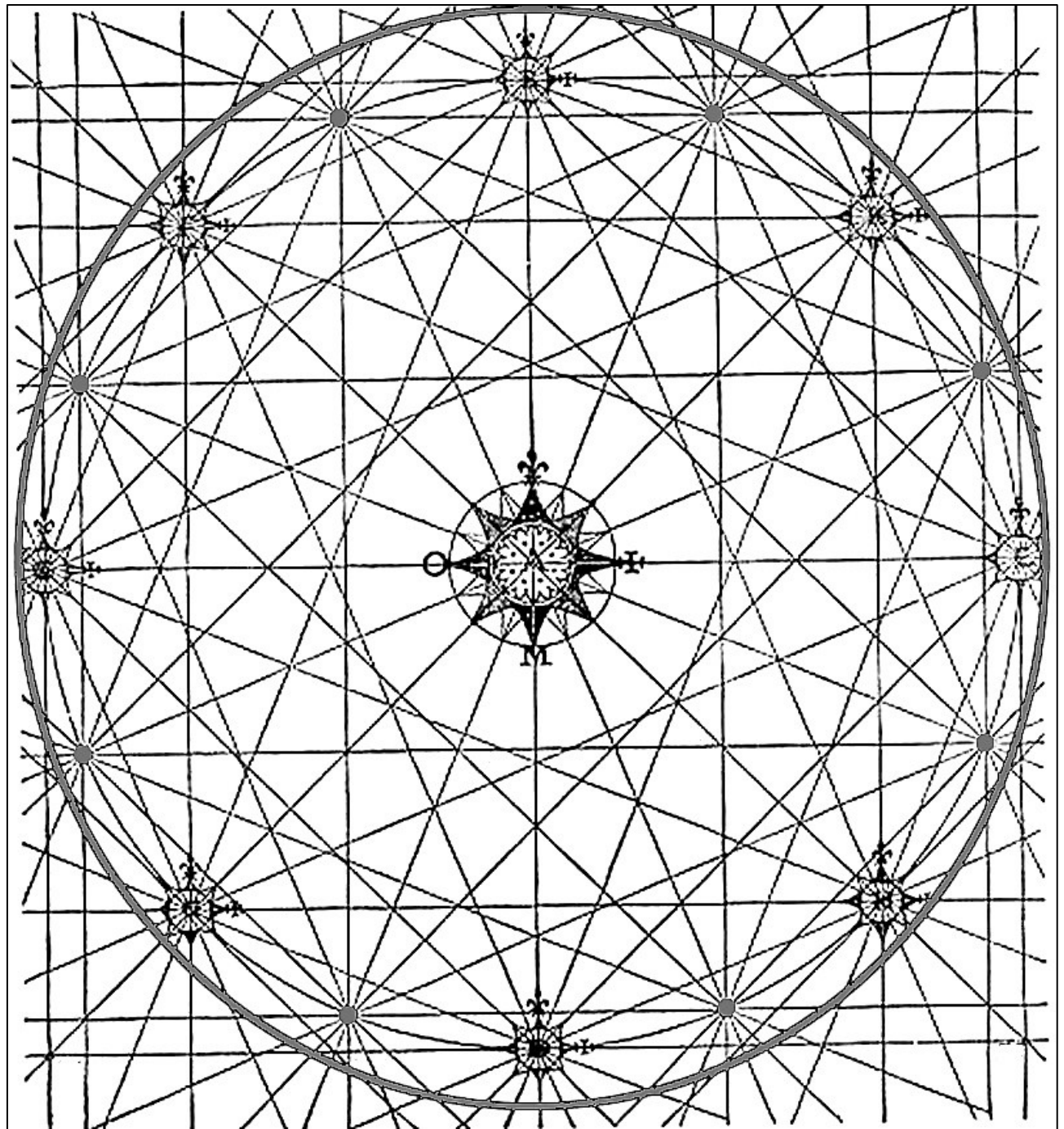
The main winds:

1. (N) Tramontana
2. (NE) Greco (or Bora)
3. (E) Levante
4. (SE) Scirocco
5. (S) Mezzodi (or Ostro)
6. (SW) Libeccio (or Garbino)
7. (W) Ponente
8. (NW) Maestro (or Mistral)



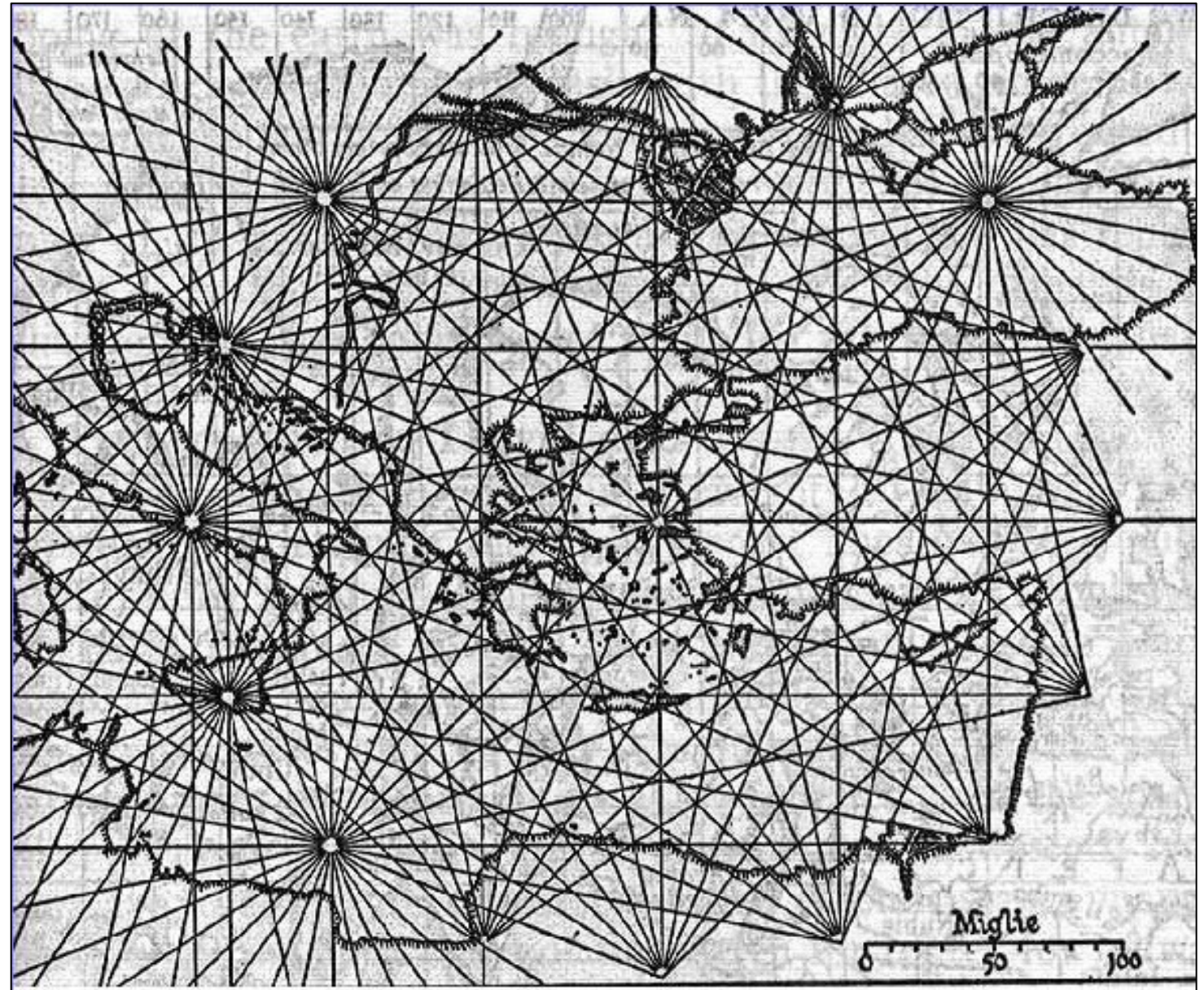
Rhumbline network

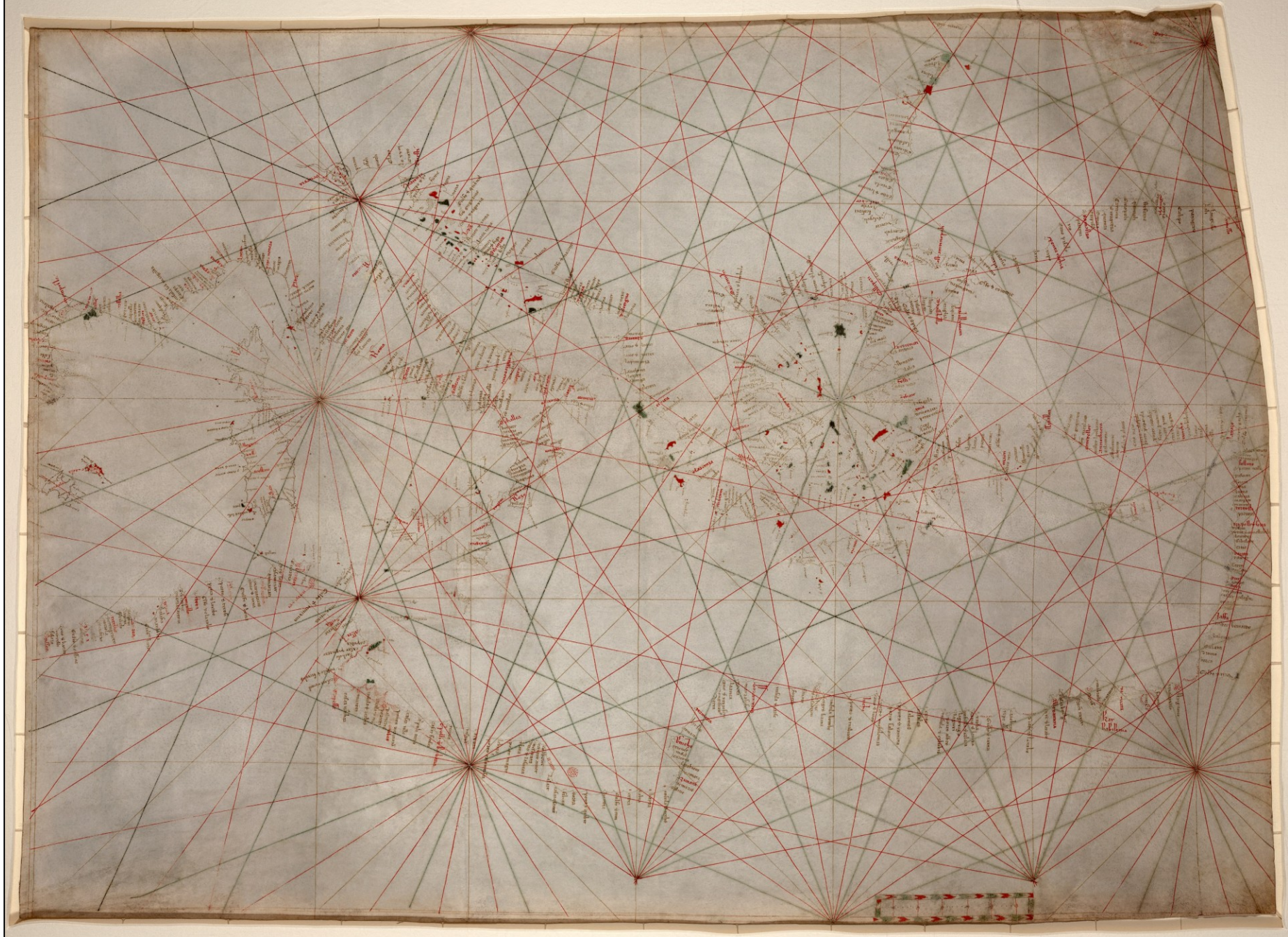
- Or windrose network.
- Starting from a windrose (also called compass rose), the projection lines are drawn.
- These lines are the rhumb lines, the navigation routes.



A portolan chart

Pietro Visconti's portolan chart
(1311)





Portolan chart (14th century BC) – Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.)

Carthage

- Phoenician colony in nowadays Tunis.
- Became one of the commercial capital of the Mediterranean area thanks to his favorable position, in the middle of Mediterranean Sea.
- Its characteristic is the circular port.



Rhodes

- Port of the Aegean sea.
- Its lighthouse was on the top of the monumental *Colossus*, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



Alexandria

- City in Egypt in the Nile Delta and on the Eastern coast of Mediterranean Sea.
- Its lighthouse, the *Pharos*, was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.



Neapolis

- Greek Colony of the Magna Graecia.
- Nowadays city of Naples.



Portus

- The fluvial harbor of the Tiber river, one of the main commercial gate of the Ancient Rome.
- Nowadays is Ostia (RM).



Constantinople

- Capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, then Byzantium, capital of the Byzantine Empire (Prosporon Harbour).
- Ottoman Turkish conquers it in 1453.
- The gate of Bosphorus.
- Now adays Istanbul (Turkey).



Genova

- City in the Nord-West of the Italian Peninsula on the Tyrrhenian Sea.
- Like Venice, Genoa has been one of the commercial capitals of the Middle Ages and Early modern period.



Ports and Mediterranean History

- It's commonly known that the **Mediterranean Sea** was a **bridge between people**.
- The **ports** are the **knots of a network** that connect people from different cultures.
- The **History of the Mediterranean** can be considered an **history of the people moving across the Mediterranean Sea** (e.g., migrations, commences, wars, etc.).
- In addition, the **domination on the Mediterranean Sea** (the so called “thalassocracy”) or part of it has been a **crucial aspect for the European politics**.
- For these reasons, we tried to see the **history of the Mediterranean Sea** through the **history of ports and maritime routes**, as a *Portolano* book.

Thank you!

