

Mediterranean Influences on Horticultural and Garden Developments in South Australia between 1836 and 1938

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“Ask simple questions, because the answers to complicated questions probably will be too complicated to test, and even worse too fascinating to give up.”

Alfred Crosby, *‘Ecological Imperialism’*
Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 6



Charles Hill, *The Artist and his Family* – c.1860 (Art Gallery of SA collection)
The artist and his family dine *al fresco* under a pergola decked with Sturt's Desert Pea (*Clianthus formosus*).

ABSTRACT

To define the extent of this research, this thesis reviews the first settlement of South Australia in 1836 and concludes with the Depression of 1938 having regard to its landscape development. This enables the documentation of Mediterranean influences from the earliest moments of European settlement in South Australia until the great financial crash that virtually suspended significant landscape commissions until after World War 2 when refugee migration from the Mediterranean region introduced a direct influence on society and culture here.

Braudel's view of history as wave-like is used as an aid to understand the nature of the Mediterranean influence as transposed in South Australia. Extending his simile the waves have perhaps been less influence than the thin line of foam left in their wake. While individual and official enthusiasms for things Mediterranean waxed and waned over that century, the threads of the idea remained and appear now to be drawing together in a developing consciousness woven from past associations and developing events that seem almost inescapable.

It is timely to consider the impact of Mediterranean influences on the development of ideas in South Australia as it clearly influenced this cultural and physical landscape and the body of ideas that determined these patterns, and may in future find a richer expression.

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DISCLAIMER

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Trevor Nottle

Date

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Maps

12th Century Arab map

Early 14th Century map

The Western Mediterranean including the islands and Northern Africa, Fra Mauro, 1458

A mid-15th Century map of the Eastern Mediterranean

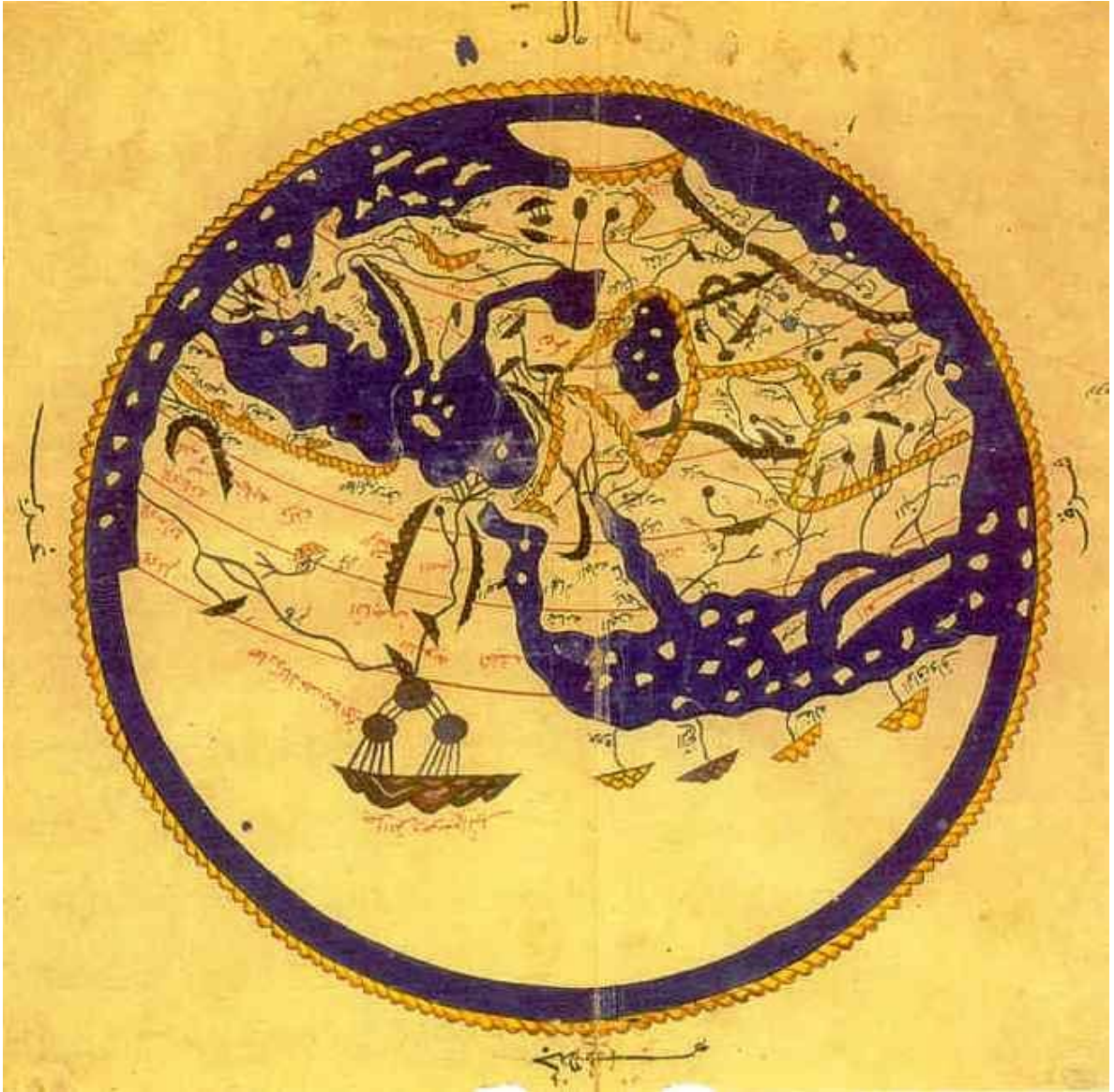
Mare Nostrum – ‘Our Sea’ the Mediterranean shore-line in full

Philips *Commonwealth Atlas* c. 1940

Collins *Australian Clear School Atlas 1940*

Mediterranean climate regions of the world after DiCatri et al 1981

Schematic map of the world by Isodore of Seville, 1472

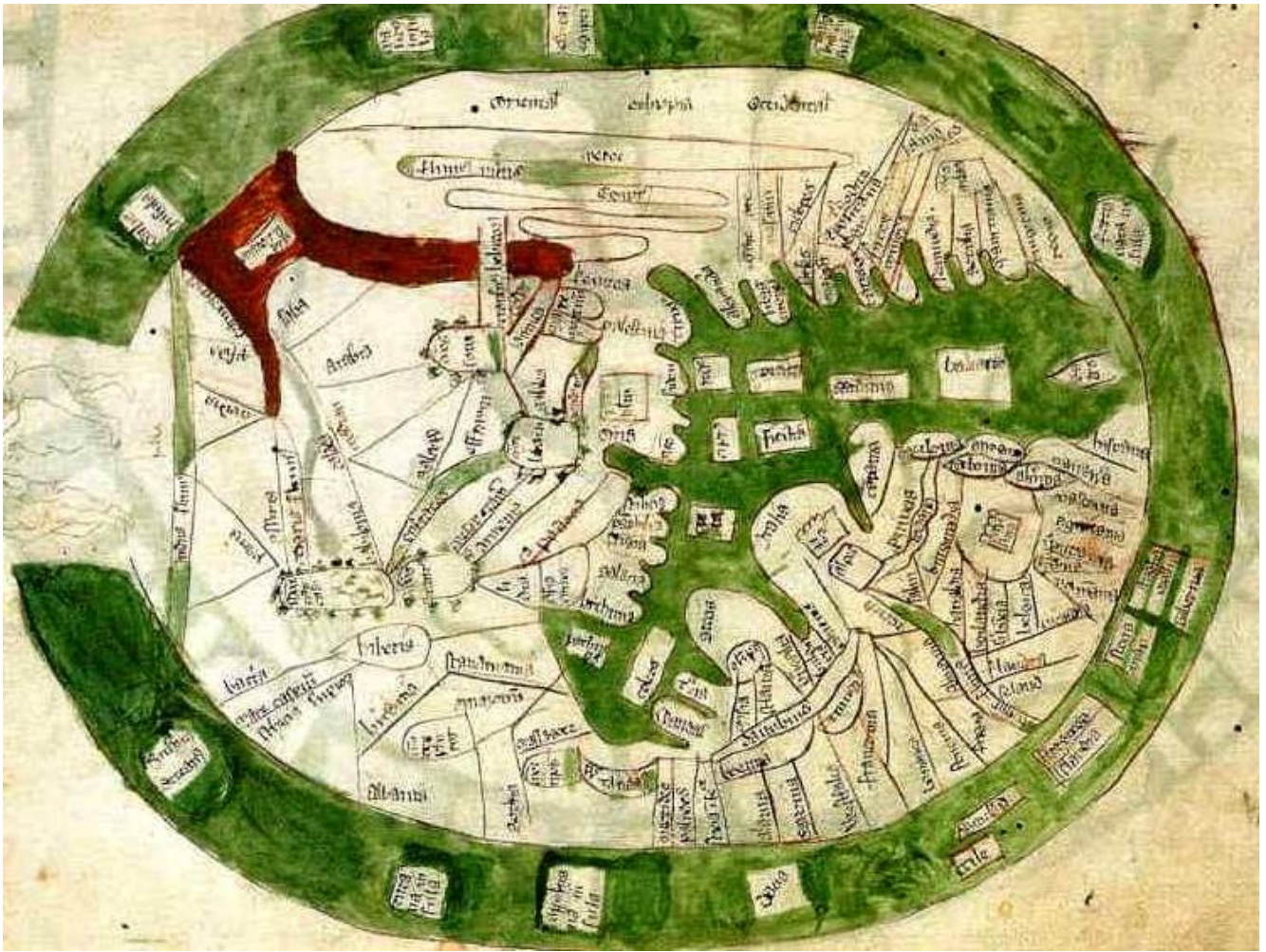


12th Century Arab map of the nameless sea – our sea, the *Mare Nostrum* that was common ground for those who inhabited the lands around its shores since at least the Minoan period.¹

This was the known world when the Moroccan Ibn Battutah (1304 – 1368/69) set out on his travels that were written about in his book *Turfat al-nuzzar fi ghara'ib al-amasar wa aja'ib al-asafar* also known as the *Rihlah* or *The Precious Gift for Lookers into the Marvels of Cities and Wonders of Travel*.²

¹ David Albulafia (ed.) *The Mediterranean in History*, J. Paul Getty Museum, with Thames & Hudson, Los Angeles, 2003, p.6

² For a modern abridged translation see Tim MacIntosh Smith *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, Picador, London, 2002.



Early 14th Century map of the Eastern Mediterranean (rotated so the place names can be read) with the Red Sea at top Left.

The map shows the Levant, a popular destination for pilgrims and merchants of the period. Interestingly the map shows Jerusalem at the centre of the known world, a reflection on the significance given to the three Abrahamic religions at that time – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.³

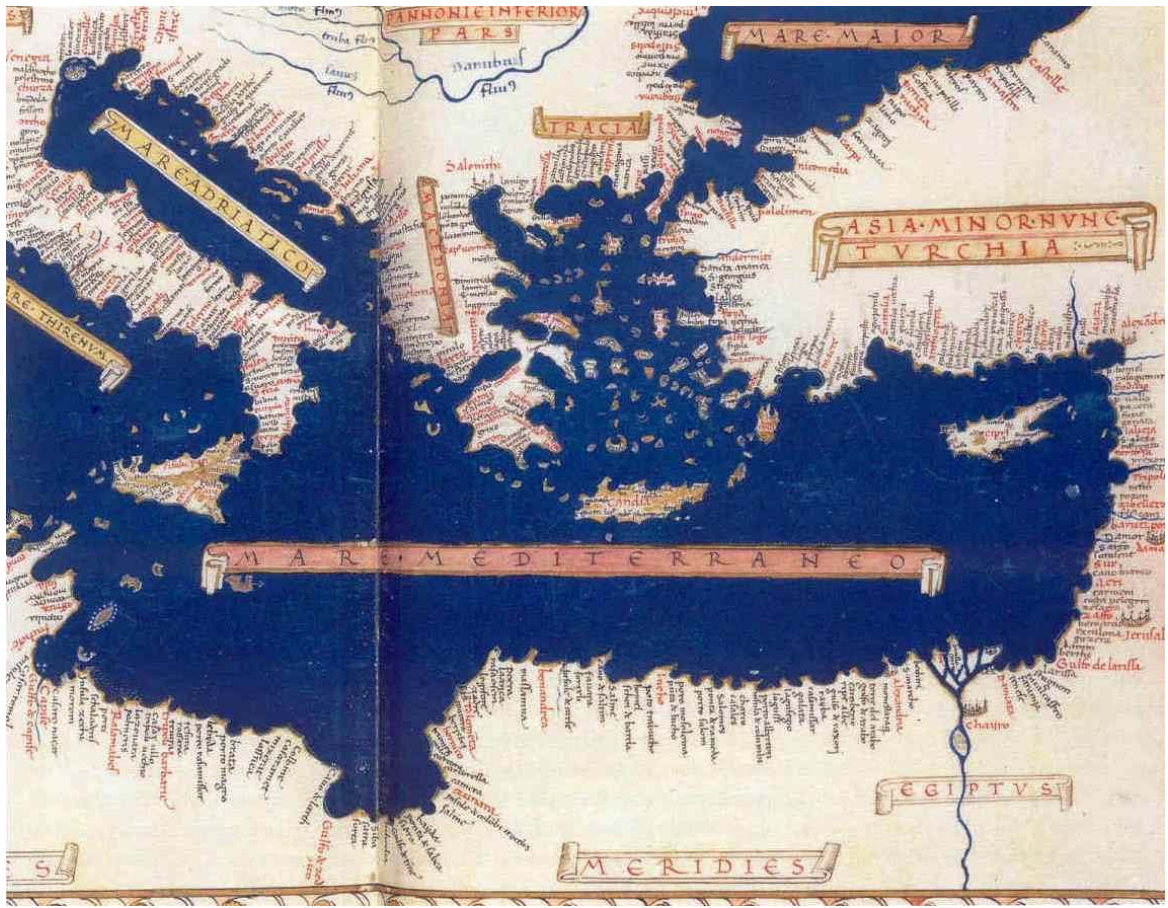
³ Albulafia, *The Mediterranean in History*, p. 6.



The Western Mediterranean (upside down once again) showing the islands and Northern Africa drawn by Fra Mauro in 1458.

The numerous fortified buildings along the North African coast represent the strongholds of the greatly feared Barbary pirates who raided the Southern shores of Europe for the slave trade.⁴

⁴ Albulafia, *The Mediterranean in History*, p. 7.



A mid-15th Century map of the Eastern Mediterranean with great detail of the numerous towns and cities along the coast lines, as well as the densely clustered islands of the Aegean.

The Black Sea, the *Mare Major* - 'Great Sea' that feeds the Mediterranean is depicted as the source and all the lesser seas have been named.⁵

⁵ Albulafia, *The Mediterranean in History*, p.15.

NOTE: This map is included on page 16 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Mare Nostrum – ‘Our Sea’ in Roman times and now known as the Mediterranean Sea, a name that did not come into general use until the late Middle Ages.

Shown here is the full shore-line; the well considered North, West and East, and the less considered South.

NOTE: This map is included on page 17 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Philips *Commonwealth Atlas* c.1940

With a little more displacement north and west this comparative map could have included Turkey and the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, thus establishing a meaningful sense of scale to facilitate discussions about Mediterranean Influences in South Australia; as it stands the reader will have to engage the imagination to make the transposition.

(Courtesy: Richard Aitken)

NOTE: This map is included on page 18 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Collins Australian Clear School Atlas c.1940

The figure depicts in broad brush application the major climatic regions of Australian including the significant areas where the Mediterranean climate type prevails.

(Courtesy: Richard Aitken)

NOTE: This map is included on page 19 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Mediterranean climate regions of the world after DiCasteri et al 1981⁶

⁶ F. DiCasteri, D.W. Goodall, R.L. Specht (eds) *Ecosystems of the World* 11. *Mediterranean Type Shrublands*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1981.



S.T. Gill, '*Prospect House*', the seat of G. B. Graham Esqr, near Adelaide, South Australia - 1850 (Art Gallery of SA collection)

A white Italianate villa on a hill overlooking Adelaide from the heights of the limestone ridge at Prospect, and set in a garden of plants suited to the Mediterranean climate.