

Migration at the End of Empire

How has migration shaped Mediterranean history? What role did conflicting temporalities and the politics of departure play in the age of decolonisation? Using a microhistorical approach, *Migration at the End of Empire* explores these questions through the experiences of over 55,000 Italian subjects in Egypt during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Before 1937, Ottoman-era legal regimes fostered the coupling of nationalism and imperialism among Italians in Egypt, particularly as the fascist government sought to revive the myth of *Mare Nostrum*. With decolonisation, however, Italians began abandoning Egypt *en masse*. By 1960, over 40,000 had deserted Egypt; some as ‘emigrants’, others as ‘repatriates’, and still others as ‘national refugees’. The departed community became an emblem around which political actors in post-colonial Italy and Egypt forged new ties. These anticipated, actual, and remembered departures are at the heart of this book’s ambition to rethink European and Mediterranean periodisation.

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*Time and the Politics of Departure between
Italy and Egypt*

Joseph John Viscomi
Birkbeck, University of London



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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vi
<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
 Introduction: Political Membership and Historical Temporalities in the Mediterranean	 1
1 Extraterritoriality and Migrant Diplomacy in Egypt, 1861–1937	33
2 Isolating Time: Civilian Internment during the Second World War	83
3 Twice without a King: Uncertainty in Postwar Egypt, 1943–1953	131
4 Becoming Refugees, 1954–1960s	176
5 ‘Leave Us Our Memories!’: Nostalgia, Community, and the Politics of Departure	223
Epilogue: Mediterranean Futures	263
<i>Bibliography</i>	277
<i>Index</i>	314

Figures

2.1 Map drawn by Albino Caserta. Source: ANPIE, 28.	page 84
2.2 Easter postcard, 1941. Personal collection, Loredana Farina.	85
2.3 Passaro’s sketch. Personal collection, Ladi Skakal.	85
2.4 Farina’s sculpture, <i>Madonna of the Internees</i> , depicted on a postcard. Personal collection, Giovanni Liciardello.	116
2.5 Caccioppo family visitation permit. Personal collection, Francis Amin.	119
2.6 (a) Collection of Passaro’s sketches and (b) watercolours of the tents. Personal collection, Ladi Skakal.	122
2.7 Le visite più brevi sono le più gradite (Passaro). Personal collection, Ladi Skakal.	123
E.1 The Casa di Riposo in the 1930s.	265
E.2 ‘Alexandria: An Italian Itinerary’.	266
E.3 (a) The entryway to the Casa di Riposo and (b) the bust of Vittorio Emanuele III.	268
E.4 Inside ‘The Time Machine’.	273

Tables

1.1 1936 census data on professional makeup of Italians in Egypt.	<i>page 76</i>
2.1 Administration of arrests and internment of Italians as circulated in 1940 by British authorities.	95

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