Proposal for the 3rd MMHN Conference

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Naples, Sicily and the Levant in the first half of XIX century: an American view

After Napoleon’s fall, the greatest European actors questioned the role of Europe in the Mediterranean, confirming the return of the Inner Sea on the stage of contemporary history. England, France, Austria, Russia and the Ottoman Empire were not the only major powers dealing with Restoration and revolutionary paths, anticipated forms of colonialism and the Oriental Question. Since 1795, there was another element to consider on the Mediterranean theatre, the ‘American factor’, which contributed to speed up the dawn of Barbary powers and, during the first half of XIX century, became of a certain interest, both from the political-historical and the cultural point of view. Thanks to the travel memoirs of those who were on board the US frigates, and of the surveys of simple American travellers visiting at that time the Inner Sea, through routes and itineraries that touched the Italian peninsula and carried them to the Ottoman Levant, we will focus on their presence in that area. The centre of their attention was not only placed on palaces and cathedrals, crowns and diadems, castles and courtiers, princesses and peers, but also on military and commercial powers, on the condition of the Mediterranean people, and on civil society, all which made the difference between one nation or, better, one government, and another.
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