

Dear Project Hercules,

You propose a form of ‘mythological rehabilitation’ of the Pillars of Hercules to provide a frame for a Euro-African infrastructure of connection. But the Hercules myth carries with it an ambivalent spatial legacy that lies deep in European historical consciousness and spatial imagery. You reassert the brute identitarian logic of geopolitics in the florid language of liberal connection.

According to ancient myth the Pillars of Hercules bore the motto *Nec plus ultra* – nothing more beyond. In their ancient meaning the Pillars of Hercules did not act as a point of connection but in fact stood at the limits of the then known world.

In grounding the project on this figure Dieter Lesage is right to talk of a ‘European topology’ – a world of lines and limits, of maps that divide and fix, a fence-world. A world that obeys the logic of Carl Schmitt’s dictum, “in the beginning was the fence”. You restate the fence as first philosophy, and recall *Nec plus ultra* as a grounding limit between Europe and its unknown ‘beyond’. To this you wrongly add Africa.

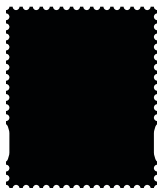
The Pillars of Hercules can be understood not only as a limit but also as a passage between the great legs of Hercules – a passage already joining Africa and Europe. *Nec plus ultra* was in fact not a ban but a warning – one could always choose to go on. Rather than a limit that cuts space, the Straits of

Gibraltar can still be a door that opens space – a constitutive crack that continually shifts but always remains.

Not every gap needs to be filled, not every open space saturated with lines, cut through with fences and bridges – instead a door can be opened in the world tied down with walls. Before the fence or checkpoint – the door.

No lines that are not crossed. No Limits that are not transgressed. No bridges that are not burned. No walls that are not scaled.

Did Leon Battista Alberti not long ago teach us that “it is convenient to place the doors in such a manner, that they may lead to as many parts of the edifice as possible”?



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