Notes on Texts and Translations

A volume focused on a city with its own regional vocabulary necessarily requires a careful attention to word choice and translation. In our discussions and analysis of the social, historical, and political dynamics present in Marseille, we have made several decisions regarding spellings and terminology. Most notably, we remain faithful to the local spelling and terminology for geographic spaces and sites: from Marseille itself (rather than “Marseilles,” as often seen in English) to its neighborhoods (such the Vieux Port and la Belle de Mai) and streets (including la Canébrière), we have chosen to avoid translation in order to avoid confusion and to emphasize the Marseillais context of the locations. Some locations do require further explanation, however, such as in the case of Marseille’s famous quartiers nord (northern neighborhoods). We have chosen to keep this term out of respect for this area’s distinctive trajectory. The quartiers nord of Marseille share features with the banlieues of other major French cities. They are home to large blocks of subsidized housing (often called HLMs, or habitations à loyer modéré) and have significant populations from immigrant backgrounds. They are also frequently evoked in discussions about crime, violence, and religion, both in Marseille and in France more generally. But the quartiers nord are located not on the periphery but within the city limits of Marseille, and their history has been especially strongly impacted by the postcolonial arrival of repatriates, migrants, and immigrants, as discussed in the chapters that follow. Within the quartiers nord, we also prefer to keep the French term cité, which designates small residential ensembles of often just a few housing blocks.

Beyond actual geographic markers, there are also several regional references frequently applied in Marseille. The city is often referred to as la ville phocéenne, or the Phocaean City, in reference to its founding myth involving settlers from the Greek city Phocaea (modern-day Foça in Turkey). During the French Empire it was also referred to as La Porte de l’Orient, or Gateway to the East, in reference to the many ships that connected Marseille (and France more generally) to French overseas territories. The Euroméditerranée construction project is another frequent reference in Marseille. “Euromed” is a vast development zone stretching several miles north of the Vieux Port. Finally, governance matters often
pass through the Métropole Aix-Marseille. Created in January 2016, the Métropole is an intercommunal structure, focused mainly on the cities of Marseille and Aix-en-Provence. Its jurisdiction over policies regarding Marseille overlaps and at times conflicts with that of the Marseille municipality, especially when the political orientations of the mayor and the Métropole president are opposed. Today’s mayor of Marseille is Socialist Benoît Payan. The current president of the Métropole is Martine Vassal (Les Républicains party), who was supported by former mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin in her unsuccessful bid to become mayor of Marseille in the 2020 election.

In a volume that contains so many chapters originally written in French, there are also terms that do not translate easily into English. Such is the case with *populaire*, understood as related to or emanating from *le peuple* as a social milieu rather than that which is widely consumed or appreciated. In our essays translated from French, we use the term “working-class” in reference to neighborhoods of Marseille. This term has the advantage of emphasizing a distinction of social class that is not as commonly associated with “popular” in English. To be clear, this is not a translation of the French *classe ouvrière*. All references to “working-class” in chapters originally written in French are translations of *populaire*.

Finally, we have included translations for all quotations from source material into English. Unless otherwise indicated, these translations were completed by the author, editors, or translators.