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# EIN MEER UND SEINE HEILIGEN

Hagiographie im mittelalterlichen Mediterraneum

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## Mary, Star of the Multi-Confessional Mediterranean: Ships, Shrines and Sailors

“What does Mary have to do with the sea, since she never, I believe, sailed it?” quipped Desiderius Erasmus in his satirical work of 1523, *Naufragium*. This jab punctuates the humanist’s depiction of the shipwreck of his title; he conjures a scene of panic as the vessel founders in storm driven waves and “the sailors, singing the *Salve Regina*, implor[e] the Virgin mother, calling her star of the sea, queen of heaven (...) and port of safety.”<sup>1</sup>

To prove his point that mariners’ confidence in Mary is baseless superstition, Erasmus sweeps the sailors overboard. Yet in dismissing Mary’s association with the sea, the humanist was battling the tide of the dominant Christian European maritime culture of his day. Just a decade after the publication of *Naufragium*, Alejo Fernández, one of Seville’s leading artists, wielded his brushes to capture her fame as a quintessential protector of seafarers. In his painting known as the “Virgin of the Navigators” or the “Virgin of the Seafarers”, Mary stands on a cloud, holding her cloak open over the ships assembling on the sea below her. This image proclaims her the patron of Spanish enterprises in the Atlantic, for these vessels are carracks and caravels of the sort that departed Seville to cross the ocean.<sup>2</sup>

It was not the waters of the early modern Atlantic that shaped Mary into the star of the sea honored by Fernández and mocked by Erasmus. She had acquired her reputation as the guardian of mariners centuries earlier in those regions of high medieval Latin Christendom dominated by the rhythms of the sea. Prominent among them was the Mediterranean. The dramatic expansion of Latin maritime activity there precipitated by crusade and commerce coincided with the widespread burgeoning of Marian devotion among Christian Europeans. As Mary evolved into a popular wonder worker, famed among Latin Christians for her powers in all spheres of life, she also won renown as a specialist in certain arenas. It is no wonder that the sea was one of them; in the high middle ages, Europeans manifested newly maritime energies, first in southern and then in more northern waters.

Many factors converged to make Mary into one of, if not the pre-eminent maritime saint of the high medieval Mediterranean. Some were particular to

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<sup>1</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Colloquia familiaria*, Amsterdam 1621, p. 166. On Erasmus and Mary in general, see Bridget HEAL, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500–1648*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 47-52.

<sup>2</sup> On the image and its interpretation, see Carla RAHN PHILLIPS, *Visualizing Imperium: The Virgin of the Seafarers and Spain’s Self-Image in the Early Sixteenth Century*, in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (2005), pp. 815-856; Amy G. REMENSNYDER, *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds*, Oxford 2014, pp. 216-218, 222.

this sea while others were symptomatic of more general European trends. Influential in this development were clerical and monastic thought, but perhaps more instrumental were seafarers' needs, sailors' culture, and the material conditions of navigation in those waters. Latin Christians seem to have elaborated this role for Mary rather than borrowing it from Byzantine traditions as they did many other aspects of their devotion to her. In any case, at coastal and island shrines scattered across the high medieval Mediterranean, they willingly shared the maritime Mary with their Greek brethren. By the later middle ages, even non-Christian seafarers such as Muslims and Jews knew of her reputation as the star of the Mediterranean and at times perhaps shared the belief in her powers over the sea.

### I. Ships and Stars

What, then, did Mary have to do with the sea? Anyone looking around a busy harbor in the Latin-dominated areas of the Mediterranean in the 15<sup>th</sup> century would have found an easy answer to Erasmus's question: many of the ships anchored there would have been named after her. Some would even have announced her as their namesake in bright images painted on their prows, such as those Marian likenesses that adorned the ships of several 15<sup>th</sup>-century rulers of Aragon.<sup>3</sup> Ship naming patterns indeed suggest that Mary may have been embraced as a maritime saint in the Mediterranean earlier than elsewhere in the medieval West. Up until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, most European Christian-owned ships sported secular names; they were domesticated with terms of endearment, or dubbed for swift or fierce animals. But in that century, a slow Christianization of names set in as mariners sought to armor their ships with divine protection. At first, they baptized their ships after God or various saints, but by 1300, Mary gained in popularity, her name often edging out or paired with those of other celestial guardians. Although this trend occurred in both the

<sup>3</sup> Francesca ESPAÑOL BERTRAN, El salterio y libro de horas de Alfonso el Magnánimo y el cardenal Joan de Casanova (British Library, Ms. Add. 28962), in: *Locus Amoenus* 6 (2002–2003), pp. 91–114, here pp. 109f. (note 119); EADEM, Le voyage d'outremer et sa dimension spirituelle: les sanctuaires maritimes de la côte catalane, in: *The Holy Portolano: The Sacred Geography of Navigation in the Middle Ages*, ed. Michele BACCI / Martin ROHDE, Berlin 2014, pp. 257–282, here p. 261. It has been stated (though with no evidence provided) that the practice of painting images of Mary onto ships was widespread by the 14<sup>th</sup> century: Vincent J. PATARINO, The Religious Shipboard Culture of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Sailors, in: *The Social History of English Seamen, 1458–1649*, ed. Cheryl A. FURY, Woodbridge 2012, pp. 141–192, here p. 153. On the religious importance of the prow as an embodiment of a ship's identity, see Christer WESTERDAHL, The Ritual Landscape at Sea, in: *Maritime Archäologie Heute*, ed. Carl Olof CEDERLUND / Kersten KRÜGER, Rostock 2002, pp. 51–72, here p. 60.

Mediterranean and the Atlantic, the southern sea preceded its northern cousin and probably was the innovator.<sup>4</sup>

Mary's prominence as ships' namesake in the high middle ages requires some explanation, for although it exemplifies one pattern, it runs counter to another; as mariners turned toward Christian names for their vessels, they increasingly turned away from the preference for female names that had characterized earlier centuries.<sup>5</sup> That Mary, despite her gender, emerged triumphant from the twinned processes of the Christianization and the masculinization of ship names suggests that behind the fleets of vessels christened for her in the high middle ages lies more than simply the general Marianization of Latin Christianity in this era.<sup>6</sup> Seafarers must have had compelling reasons to choose her – exalted, but nonetheless a woman – as the namesake for so many of the ships that spread Latin maritime presence throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>7</sup>

Part of the answer lies in the reputation Mary was gaining for her ability to allay one of the primary emotions aroused by the sea and voyages on its waters: fear. Medieval people who ventured onto the sea were, as Michel Mollat has written, acutely aware of its immensity and the fragility of their ship – and thus the constant possibility of death.<sup>8</sup> One 14<sup>th</sup>-century pilgrim narrative, for example, devotes four of its first ten chapters to the manifold perils of the Mediterranean: its treacherous winds, its wild storms, and its voracious fishes.<sup>9</sup> The sea was a space of danger, where one needed the help of God and the

<sup>4</sup> For the information on ship names in this paragraph, I draw on Geneviève BRESCH / Henri BRESCH, *Les saints protecteurs des bateaux, 1200–1460*, in: *Ethnologie française, n.s.* 9 (1979), pp. 161-178; Henri BRESCH, *La piété des gens de mer en Méditerranée occidentale aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge*, in: *Le genti del mare Mediterraneo*, ed. Rosalba RAGOSTA, vol. 1, Naples 1981, pp. 427-443, here pp. 430 (figure 1), 433, 438; Núria COLL I JULIA, *Noms de galeres catalans del segle XV*, in: *Butlletí de la Societat d'Onomàstica* 23 (1988), pp. 35-40, here pp. 35, 37; Arcadi GARCÍA SANZ / Núria COLL I JULIA, *Galeres mercants catalanes dels segles XIV i XV*, Barcelona 1994, pp. 202f.; André VAUCHEZ, *L'homme au péril de la mer dans les miracles médiévaux*, in: *L'homme face aux calamités naturelles dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2006, pp. 183-196, here pp. 194f.

<sup>5</sup> On the earlier preference for female names, see BRESCH / BRESCH, *Les saints protecteurs* (as n. 4), p. 166; BRESCH, *La piété des gens de mer* (as n. 4), p. 429. On the masculinization of the name stock, see BRESCH, *La piété des gens de mer* (as n. 4), p. 437.

<sup>6</sup> On the Marianization of high medieval Christianity, see Miri RUBIN, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary*, New Haven 2009, pp. 121-378.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the ships named for Mary participate in what has been proposed as a general pattern in maritime culture; “there is (...) a gender taxonomy strictly separating women or female animals, or even concepts with names that are grammatically feminine, from the sea,” but breaking this taboo can “create the strongest magic possible”, argues WESTERDAHL, *The Ritual Landscape* (as n. 3), p. 217.

<sup>8</sup> Michel MOLLAT, *Les attitudes des gens de mer devant le danger et devant la mort*, in: *Ethnologie française, n.s.* 9 (1979), pp. 191-200, here p. 191.

<sup>9</sup> Ludolph von Suchem, *De itinere terrae sanctae liber*, ed. Ferdinand DEYCKS, Stuttgart 1851, pp. 9-14.

saints to survive.<sup>10</sup> “If you want to learn to pray, learn to sail” – this proverb current in Spanish circles by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century surely had a long history.<sup>11</sup>

To protect their ships and themselves in this hazardous realm, Christians might naturally turn to the saint renowned in the high middle ages as an un-failing source of mercy, comfort, hope and aid: Mary. A 15<sup>th</sup>-century biographer of a Castilian aristocrat put it well; the Virgin always “help[s] people in grief and distress at the time of their great need”.<sup>12</sup> These words frame an anecdote in which this count benefited from her support at sea during a dangerous moment in his career of harrying corsairs in the Mediterranean.

To be sure, there was nothing intrinsically maritime about Mary’s infinite willingness to assist her devotees. “Our Lady is powerful in battles, in dangers at sea and on land”, generalized the Catalan polymath Ramon Llull in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> But other aspects of Mary’s identity as it developed in high medieval Latin Christendom gave her an advantage in maritime matters over many saints and made her a logical choice as ships’ namesake.

The fleet of verbal imagery that monastics and clerics summoned as they thought, wrote, and preached about her suggested, for example, why she was well suited to loan her name to ships. Christian exegetes proclaimed that Mary in fact *was* a ship, safely ferrying the faithful through the storms of this life toward heaven, as a 12<sup>th</sup>-century monk in Catalonia wrote.<sup>14</sup> By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, this allegory was popular among Christian writers, including those living in busy port towns.<sup>15</sup> In Europe, the nautical Marian metaphor reaches back at least to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when the great Byzantine hymn of praise to Mary, the Akathistos, was translated into Latin.<sup>16</sup> This hymn, whose Greek versions date

<sup>10</sup> Patrick GAUTIER DALCHÉ, *Éléments religieux dans les représentations textuelles et figurées de la Méditerranée*, in: *The Holy Portolano* (as n. 3), pp. 17-31, here pp. 17f.; PATARINO, *The Religious Shipboard Culture* (as n. 3), pp. 164-166; VAUCHEZ, *L’homme au péril* (as n. 4).

<sup>11</sup> Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, vol. 5, ed. Juan PÉREZ DE TUDELA, Madrid 1959, p. 308.

<sup>12</sup> Gutierre Díaz de Games, *El Victorial*, ed. Rafael BELTRÁN, Salamanca 1997, ch. 62, p. 488. On Mary’s increasing reputation in the high middle ages for maternal aid, see Donna Spivey ELLINGTON, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Washington D.C. 2001, pp. 102-141; Rachel FULTON, *From Passion to Judgment: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200*, New York 2002, pp. 204-243; RUBIN, *Mother of God* (as n. 5).

<sup>13</sup> Ramon Llull, *Libre de Sancta Maria*, in: *Obres Essencials: Ramon Llull*, vol. 1, ed. Miquel BATLLORI [et al.], Barcelona 1957, pp. 1145-1242, here ch. 16, p. 1200.

<sup>14</sup> *Advocaciones de la Virgen en un códice del siglo XII*, ed. Atanasio SINUÉS RUÍZ, in: *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia: Revista de ciencias histórico-eclésiásticas* 21 (1948), pp. 1-34, here pp. 26f.

<sup>15</sup> Rachel FULTON BROWN, *Mary and the Merchants* (conference paper presented at the Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting, February 2016). For a 15<sup>th</sup>-century example of the Marian nautical metaphor, see Beth KREITZER, *Reforming Mary: Changing Images of the Virgin Mary in Lutheran Sermons of the Sixteenth-Century*, Oxford 2004, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Michel HUGLO, *L’ancienne version latine de l’Hymnos Acathiste*, in: *Muséon* 64 (1951), pp. 27-61; Gilles Gérard MEERSSEMAN, *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, 2 vols., Fribourg 1958–1960.

from considerably earlier, sung of Mary as a “ship for those who wish to be saved”.<sup>17</sup> Such imagery was encouraged by Mary’s early conflation with the allegorical embodiment of the church, *Ecclesia*; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Tertullian proclaimed the Church to be a ship, a trope that would have a long future.<sup>18</sup>

The ships named for Mary made tangible these metaphors that linked the mother of God, the church, and the vessels that plied the sea. Whether Christian ship owners were thinking of words they had heard in a sermon or the liturgy when they baptized their vessel in Mary’s honor, they were expressing the hope that the craft would prove as trustworthy in navigating the physical sea as its namesake was in negotiating more spiritual waters. They were also acquiring for their ship the protection of a saint whose very name – in Latin and its linguistic offspring – announced her intimate and special association with the sea.

Medieval Latin authors delighted in the fact that in this language, “maria” was the name of both Jesus’s mother and the seas. Some used this coincidence as an avenue for Marian allegory; “the mother of God is rightly called Mary (‘Maria’) (...) because just as the seas (‘maria’) abound in many kinds of fish, so the most excellent queen of heaven abounds in (...) all divine virtues”, wrote a 12<sup>th</sup>-century monk in Catalonia.<sup>19</sup> Other writers interpreted Mary’s name in ways that, intentionally or not, underscored her identification with the sea itself. Such was the case with a Marian metaphor that was launched by Jerome in late antiquity and then sailed down through the middle ages.

In explaining Mary’s name, Jerome called her “stilla maris,” a drop of the sea, an image that scribal error rendered even more poetic by the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century. “Stella maris” – the star of the sea – was how early medieval churchmen such as Bede and Paschasius Radbertus wrote of Mary, a title she retains in the modern Catholic world. These authors shaped the trope around Christ, characterizing the Marian star as a maternal reflection of the brightness of her son, the “light of the world”. But gradually the emphasis shifted. By the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, the hymn “Ave maris stella” declared Mary a beacon of hope. Beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, European authors lyrically described how the Marian “stella maris” guided the faithful through the storms of life as unerringly as the physical “stella maris” – the pole star – oriented sailors at sea.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In the Latin text, “navis volentium salvari” (HUGLO, *L’ancienne version* [as n. 16], p. 41; MEERSSEMAN, *Der Hymnos Akathistos* [as n. 16], vol. 1, p. 120). On the metaphor in the Greek text, see Leena Mari PELTOMAA, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, Leiden 2001, pp. 15, 187f.

<sup>18</sup> Kurt GOLDAMMER, *Navis Ecclesiae, eine unbekannte altchristliche Darstellung der Schiffsallegorie*, in: *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche* 40 (1941), pp. 76-86 (pp. 79f. on Tertullian); Martin KEMP, *Navis Ecclesiae: An Ambrosian Metaphor in Leonardo’s Allegory of the Nautical Wolf and Imperious Eagle*, in: *Bibliothèque d’humanisme et Renaissance* 43 (1981), pp. 257-268.

<sup>19</sup> *Advocaciones de la Virgen* (as n. 14), p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> For the development of the “stilla/stella maris” trope into a widely used Marian epithet, and for examples of its use by medieval authors, see *Advocaciones de la Virgen* (as n. 14), p. 34;

Writers such as Fulbert of Chartres and Bernard of Clairvaux intended their celebrations of Mary as “*stella maris*” as allegory. But in the era of Latin maritime expansion, it was perhaps natural that Europeans would convert the metaphor into reality as they sought to tame the physical waters upon which they sailed. When Christians contemplated the luminous star that ornamented Mary’s cloak in many 14<sup>th</sup>- and 15<sup>th</sup>-century Italian devotional portraits of her, they recognized it as a sign of her ability to steer the faithful through both spiritual *and* physical seas.<sup>21</sup> As “*stella maris*”, Mary became the mistress of the sea for Latin Christians, ascribed dominion over this unruly element and the winds that roiled it. Other renowned maritime saints such as Nicholas shared in these abilities, but Mary could trump them, given her proximity to Christ. “Great power to command the sea and all the winds has the mother of he who made the four elements”, proclaims the *Cantigas de Santa María*, an important late 13<sup>th</sup>-century collection of Mary’s miracles from Castile.<sup>22</sup>

“In difficulty, we should call on the Virgin, star of the sea”, the *Cantigas* declares in its account of how she ushered a storm-damaged ship safely to port in the Mediterranean.<sup>23</sup> This is but one of the Marian maritime miracles celebrated in this compilation, many of them located in the Mediterranean.<sup>24</sup> In honoring Mary as a wonder worker on the sea, the *Cantigas* is representative of its genre. Story after story in the Marian miracle collections popular in Europe by the early 12<sup>th</sup> century depict her rescuing drowning devotees, sending breezes to becalmed ships, preventing shipwreck by soothing angry winds and

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Otto BARDENHEWER, *Der Name Maria: Geschichte der Deutung desselben*, in: *Biblische Studien* 1 (1896), pp. 1-160, here pp. 50-75, 80-95; Mary CLAYTON, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 249-251 (whose description of the trope’s changing emphasis I follow here); RUBIN, *Mother of God* (as n. 5), pp. 178f. On the “*Ave maris stella*” hymn, see Heinrich LAUSBERG, *Der Hymnus “Ave Maris Stella”*, Opladen 1976.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Lippo Memmi, “*Madonna and Child with Donor*”, 1325/1330 (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/art-object-page.13.html> [July 20, 2016]); Filippo Lippi, “*Madonna and Child*”, ca. 1446-1447 (The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore Maryland; <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/22808/madonna-and-child-19/> [July 20, 2016]); Matteo di Giovanni di Bartolo, “*Madonna and Child with Saints Francis and Catherine of Siena*”, ca. 1476-1480 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/458992> [July 20, 2016]).

<sup>22</sup> Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter METTMANN, 3 vols., Madrid 1986-89, here vol. 1, No. 33, pp. 14-142 (refrain). Cf. No. 172, (1: p. 193), Nos. 178-180 (2: pp. 223-235).

<sup>23</sup> Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María* (as n. 22), vol. 2, No. 112, pp. 39f.

<sup>24</sup> Mediterranean maritime miracles: *Ibid.*, No. 33 (1: pp. 142-150), No. 95 (1: pp. 292-294), No. 112 (2: pp. 39f.), No. 172 (2: pp. 178f.), No. 193 (2: pp. 223-225), No. 236 (2: pp. 316f.), No. 271 (3: pp. 34-36), No. 287 (3: pp. 69f.), No. 339 (3: pp. 184-186), No. 371 (3: pp. 256f.), No. 383 (3: pp. 279-281), No. 379 (3: pp. 270-272); for maritime miracles elsewhere or of unspecified location: No. 35 (1: pp. 144-149), No. 36 (1: pp. 149f.), No. 86 (1: pp. 271f.), No. 313 (3: pp. 124-127).

waves, and performing other miracles at sea.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes she even appears right on the prow or mast of the ship as she works these wonders.<sup>26</sup>

This profusion of Marian maritime miracles appears to have been a development indigenous to high medieval Latin Christianity, rather than something Europeans adapted from Byzantine tradition as their interactions with Greeks in the Mediterranean intensified. Byzantine Christianity probably had little to teach Europeans about Mary's relationship to the sea. In eastern Christendom, devotion to Mary flourished centuries before it did in Europe, but in early and middle Byzantium, she does not seem to have been famed as a particularly maritime saint.<sup>27</sup>

To be sure, the *Akathistos* called Mary a ship, but the Greek original of this early Byzantine hymn did not announce her as "star of the sea", a term that Latin translators introduced into the versions that would circulate in Europe.<sup>28</sup> Nor did her name elicit from erudite Byzantine writers reveries about the sea, for Greek lacks the felicitous linguistic meeting of the two terms that exists in Latin. And whether the nautical Marian imagery of the *Akathistos* was actualized in Greek ship names of the early period is hard to know, for it is not clear if Byzantine vessels even bore specific names much before the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup>

Although Byzantine Christians associated Mary with water, they thought of the sweet waters of streams and springs rather than the salty ones of the sea.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> VAUCHEZ, L'homme au peril (as n. 4), p. 194.

<sup>26</sup> For examples: Alonso de Espinosa, *Del origen y Milagros de la santísima Imagen de Nuestra Señora de Candelaria que pareció en la isla de Tenerife, con la descripción desta Isla*, Seville 1594, ch. 4.15, fol. 138r; *Itinéraire d'Anselme Adorno en Terre Sainte*, ed. Georgette de GROER / Jacques HEERS, Paris 1978, p. 390; Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María* (as n. 22), vol. 1, No. 36, pp. 149f.

<sup>27</sup> Personal communication and correspondence with Annemarie Weyl Carr, Mary B. Cunningham, and Stephanos Efthymiadis.

<sup>28</sup> The interpolation occurs in section 9 (I) of the hymn; HUGLO, L'ancienne version (as n. 16), p. 38. Interestingly, Meersseman corrects the Latin "maris stella" of his manuscripts to accord with the Greek original; see his *Der Hymnos Akathistos* (as n. 16), vol. 1, p. 112 (and his notes for line 89).

<sup>29</sup> For different opinions on the chronology of ship naming practices in Byzantium, see Georgios MAKRIS, Ships, in: *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki LAIOU, Dumbarton Oaks 2002, pp. 91-100, here p. 94; Hassan S. KHALILIEH, *Admiralty and Maritime Laws in the Mediterranean Sea (ca. 800-1050): The Kitāb Akriyat al-Sufun vis-à-vis the Nomos Rhodion Nautikos*, Leiden 2006, pp. 42f. The slim evidence for specific names seems to come only from the register of 1360-1361 composed by a Genoese notary in the Black Sea, Antonio di Ponzò, which lists 17 ships owned or partially owned by Greeks (Georgios MAKRIS, *Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Schifffahrt*, Genoa 1988, pp. 154, 261-263 [at least one of these vessels was named after Mary: *Ibid.*, p. 302]).

<sup>30</sup> Several famous Byzantine Marian shrines were associated with springs: see Annemarie WEYL CARR, Icons and the Object of Pilgrimage in Middle Byzantine Constantinople, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), pp. 75-92, here pp. 81, 85f.; Rhodoniki ETZEOGLOU, The Cult of the Virgin Zoodichos Pege at Mistra, in: *Images of the Mother of God: Representations of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria VASSILAKI, Aldershot 2005, pp. 239-249; *Anonymous Miracles of the Pege*, in: *Miracle Tales from Byzantium*, ed. Scott FITZGERALD



True, they knew she could command the waves in defense of Constantinople; ever since the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century, she was renowned for the miracles with which she had defeated enemy fleets attacking the imperial city.<sup>31</sup> Some middle Byzantine texts even claimed that the emperor Heraclius had affixed an icon of her to the mast of his ship.<sup>32</sup> But these naval miracles, inherited by the high medieval European collections of her wonders, were manifestations of Mary's highly developed role in Byzantine warfare and imperial politics, not evidence of particularly maritime devotion to her.<sup>33</sup> There seems to be little trace in early and middle Byzantine sources of the specifically maritime Marian thaumaturgy so pronounced in texts from high medieval Europe, although one author did include saving sailors in a general list of Mary's powers.<sup>34</sup> If the wealth of early and middle Byzantine Marian devotional literature emphasized her connection to the sea in other ways, scholars have yet to remark on it.<sup>35</sup>

Why Mary, a figure so central to eastern Christianity, appears not to have been strongly linked to the sea in the period of Byzantium's greatest maritime power is a question for Byzantinists to pursue. What can be said here is that

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JOHNSON / Alice-Mary TALBOT, Cambridge 2012, pp. 204-297. Mary B. Cunningham is working on Mary's general association with sources of fresh water in Byzantine Christianity; she presented this research in her paper "The Virgin Mary and the Natural World: Byzantine Conceptions of Sacrament and Creation" at a conference at Brown University in March 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Norman H. BAYNES, The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople, in: *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949), pp. 156-177; Averil CAMERON, The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol, in: *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 29 (1978), pp. 79-108; Bissera PENTCHEVA, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park 2006, pp. 37-59.

<sup>32</sup> PENTSCHEVA, *Icons and Power* (as n. 31), p. 46.

<sup>33</sup> On Mary, imperial politics, and warfare in Byzantium, see *Ibid.*, especially pp. 61-103.

<sup>34</sup> Personal communication and correspondence with Annemarie Weyl Carr, Mary B. Cunningham, and Stephanos Efthymiadis. Some caution is required, for many Byzantine Marian miracle collections remain unpublished (Jane BAUN, *Apocalyptic Panagia: Some Byways of Marian Revelation in Byzantium*, in: *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images*, ed. Leslie BRUBAKER / Mary B. CUNNINGHAM, Aldershot 2011, pp. 199-218, here p. 205 [and p. 215 for the list that includes Mary's abilities save sailors]).

<sup>35</sup> Little more than the Marian ship metaphor used in the Akthistos has been yielded by my thorough search through recent important work on Mary in Byzantium, including: Vasiliki LIMBERIS, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople*, London 1994; WEYL CARR, *Icons and the Object of Pilgrimage* (as n. 30); the articles in VASSILAKI, *Images of the Mother of God* (as n. 30); PENTCHEVA, *Icons and Power* (as n. 31); the articles in BRUBAKER / CUNNINGHAM, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium* (as n. 34). In a monastery on the tiny island of Strophades, there was a 13<sup>th</sup>-century icon bearing the title of Thalassomachousa ("Battling the Sea"). But it is not clear when this title emerged nor is it known when the monks began their custom of pouring oil from the lamp hanging in front of the icon into the sea to calm storms; both title and tradition may well postdate the medieval period. On this icon and the tradition, see VASSILAKI, *Images of the Mother of God* (as n. 30), No. 77, pp. 472f. (none of the hundreds of other Marian images in this book appears to have had any important connection with the sea); Nano CHATZIDAKIS, *The Character of the Painting of Icons from the Latin-Held Areas of Mainland Greece and the Islands*, in: *Byzantine Art in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade: The Fourth Crusade and Its Consequences*, ed. Panayotis L. VOCOTOPoulos, Athens 2007, pp. 133-142, here pp. 134f.

any reputation she enjoyed as a maritime saint among Greeks seems to have emerged only *after* Latin Christians spread into the eastern Mediterranean – and the evidence for it comes largely from European authors, at least until the Ottoman period.<sup>36</sup> An anecdote related by the English monk William of Malmesbury in his early 12<sup>th</sup>-century “*Miracula sanctae Mariae Virginis*” suggests that Europeans indeed saw themselves as the heralds of the maritime Mary in the eastern Mediterranean. He probably heard the story from its protagonist, Guimund, a chaplain of King Henry I of England.

The chaplain, wrote William, was sailing with a companion to Jerusalem when the winds failed off the coast not far from Jaffa. Some people on board implored Saint Nicholas for aid, and some turned to “other saints”. Then Guimund, who, according to William, fancied himself a wit, joked:

“Why call on these Greek saints, who are two a penny in this part of the world? They would help their own Greeklings; they take no notice of us Latins. Come on, let us all invoke Saint Mary instead, who for love of her Son is no acceptor of persons. She aids all Christians (...).”

After passengers and crew passed around a container to collect alms for the poor in Mary’s name, the sails swelled with wind and they were under way.<sup>37</sup> Here Guimund both declares that the maritime Mary transcends the religious partisanship in which Greek maritime saints indulged and manifests his own allegiances by implying that it is Latins, not Greeks, who recognize this quality in her.

Perhaps Europeans inspired veneration of the maritime Mary in their Greek seafaring brethren. If so, this is an instance of how the arrival of the Latins in the eastern Mediterranean influenced Marian devotion there. As Annemarie Weyl Carr has pointed out,

“the convergence of Christianities in the Crusading era affected Mary’s role as an object of pilgrimage”, for “the western patterns of religious tourism played a role in shaping the habits of pilgrim devotion that sustained the icon cults of late medieval Byzantium”.<sup>38</sup>

Hence, by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Greek and Latin seafarers mingled at Marian maritime shrines like that of Our Lady of the Cave in the busy harbor of Famagu-

<sup>36</sup> A Greek envoy to the council of Ferrara/Florence in 1439 wrote of calling on Mary (and Nicholas) during a storm at sea and at least one of the 17 Greek-owned ships listed in a Latin notarial register of 1360–1361 from the Black Sea was named for Mary (MAKRIS, *Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Schifffahrt* [as n. 29], p. 150). There are some painted Greek maritime ex-votos from the post-Byzantine period showing Mary with ships or performing maritime miracles (Agapi KARAKATSANIS, *Marine Subjects in Post-Byzantine Art and Engraving*, in: *The Greek Merchant Marine [1453–1850]*, ed. Stelios A. PAPADOPOULOS, Athens 1972, pp. 229–266, here p. 231 and figures 164, 165 [I thank Annemarie Weyl Carr for this reference]).

<sup>37</sup> William of Malmesbury, *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, ed. Rodney M. THOMSON / Michael WINTERBOTTOM, Woodbridge 2015, p. 52. (I quote their translation)

<sup>38</sup> Annemarie WEYL CARR, *Thoughts on Mary, East and West*, in: *Images of the Mother of God* (as n. 30), pp. 277–292, here pp. 283f.

sta on Lusignan Cyprus.<sup>39</sup> “Everyone coming from the sea goes there immediately”, commented one Italian pilgrim in his early 14<sup>th</sup>-century description of his own visit to this cave church whose wall decorations and furnishings offered evidence of the complex entanglement of western and eastern Christianities on Cyprus.<sup>40</sup> After disembarking, he and all his ship mates – “merchants, pilgrims, sailors and mariners” alike – pressed into the shrine’s narrow space to thank this Madonna who had “freed us from so many dangers when we were at sea”.<sup>41</sup>

At Famagusta, seafarers probably directed their prayers to an image of Mary, perhaps an icon. In any case, in the high and late medieval Aegean, some Byzantine Marian icons became the object of mariners’ devotion, including the image of Our Lady of Kassiopi in a chapel on an isolated bay on Corfu and that of Our Lady of Philermos on Rhodes.<sup>42</sup> These icons and shrines were probably Greek in origin and predated the arrival of the Latins with their more maritime orientation. An account by a French pilgrim who came to Rhodes in 1396 en route to Jerusalem suggests how Latins may have insinuated themselves into and changed these pre-extant forms of Marian devotion. Writing some ninety years after the establishment of Hospitaller and thus Latin lordship over the island, this man observed that the “small, beautiful church” housing the wonderworking icon of Philermos was tended by two Greek hermits. But, he hastened to add, “all the island’s inhabitants, the friars of Rhodes [i.e. the Hospitallers] as well as the Greeks and the other merchants” held her in reverence.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Nicola de Martoni, *Liber peregrinationis ad loca sancta*, in: *Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni, notaire italien (1394–1395)*, ed. Louis LE GRAND, in: *Revue de l’Orient Latin* 3 (1895), pp. 566–669, here p. 631.

<sup>40</sup> On the shrine, its decoration and its use, see Michele BACCI, Portolano sacro: Santuari e immagini sacre lungo le rotte di navigazione del Mediterraneo tra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna, in: *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Erik THUNØ / Gerhard WOLF, Rome 2004, pp. 223–248, here pp. 230f.; IDEM, “Mixed” Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period, in: *Archeologica Abrahamica: Studies in Archaeology and Artistic Tradition of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Leonid A. BELJAEV, Moscow 2009, pp. 433–444, here pp. 441f.

<sup>41</sup> Jacopo da Verona, *Liber peregrinationis*, ed. Ugo MONNERET DE VILLARD, Rome 1950, p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> On Kassiopi, see the discussion and extensive bibliography in BACCI, Portolano sacro (as n. 40), pp. 233–236.

<sup>43</sup> *Le saint voyage de Jhërusalem du seigneur d’Anglure*, ed. François BONNARDOT / Auguste LOGNON, Paris 1878, p. 93 (for the identity of the hermits as Greek, see p. 93, note 2). For other medieval descriptions of the shrine, see *Le voyage de la Sainte Cyté de Hierusalem avec la description des lieux, portz, villes, citez et aultres passaiges fait l’an 1480*, ed. Charles SCHEFER, Paris 1882, pp. 110f.; Nompars de Caumont, *Voyatze d’outremer en Jherusalem*, ed. Peter S. NOBLE, Oxford 1975, p. 51. For an argument that this was a Greek cult gradually “taken over” by the Hospitallers, see Mario BUHAGIAR, The Miraculous Image of the Madonna of Philermos and its Uniqueness to the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta, in: IDEM, *Essays on the Knights and Art and Architecture in Malta 1500–1798*, Malta 2009, pp. 1–17, here pp. 13f.

Ruthy Gertwagen has suggested that Marian maritime shrines originated in the western reaches of Mediterranean in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and gradually spread eastward as part of Catalano-Aragonese expansion.<sup>44</sup> To prove this argument would require extensive research into the foundation of each individual church or chapel and sustained attention to the nature of the veneration offered to Mary there. But as a working hypothesis, it makes sense, given the apparently western origins of the maritime Mary herself. These shrines have much else to reveal about her connection to the Mediterranean and her importance as a saint of that sea.

## II. Shrines and Sailors

The churches in the eastern Mediterranean like Famagusta, Philermos and Kassiope that attracted both Greeks and Latins were but a few of the maritime shrines of that sea where high medieval mariners stopped to pay their respects to Mary. Of the one hundred and thirty Mediterranean shrines important to Christian seafarers listed in the “sancte parole”, a late medieval Italian sailors’ prayer, approximately one-third were dedicated to her, a far greater percentage than that enjoyed by any other holy figure, including Christ himself.<sup>45</sup> Nor is this list exhaustive; it does not include some small Marian chapels on isolated islands or coasts that were the site of sailors’ cults.

*Santa Maria del Mar* (Barcelona), *Santa Maria del Mar* (Almería), *Notre-Dame de Vauvert* (Languedoc), *L’Annunziata* (Trapani), *Santa Maria della Scala* (Messina), *Santa Maria dei Martiri di Molfetta* (Apulia), *Santa Maria di Bonaria* (Cagliari, Sardinia), *Sainte-Marie de Pitié* (Peloponnese), *Our Lady of Sapienza* (Peloponnese) – these and many other places form the long litany of Mary’s maritime shrines in the high and late medieval Mediterranean.<sup>46</sup> They ranged in stature from large wealthy urban institutions such as Barcelona’s *Santa Maria del Mar*<sup>47</sup> or Trapani’s *Annunziata*<sup>48</sup> to churches standing sentinel alone on the shore like *Santa Maria dei Martiri di Molfetta*<sup>49</sup> or chapels on isolated islands in the Aegean tended by hermits.<sup>50</sup> All shared, however,

<sup>44</sup> Ruthy GERTWAGEN, *The Emergence of the Cult of the Virgin Mary as the Patron Saint of Seafarers*, in: *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 16 (2006), pp. 149-161.

<sup>45</sup> On the prayer, see BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40) (and pp. 242-248 for the list; also in IDEM, *Holy Portolano* [as n. 3], pp. 349-353).

<sup>46</sup> Most of these shrines are discussed in detail elsewhere in this essay; see the references in the relevant sections.

<sup>47</sup> Silvia Orvietani BUSCH, *Medieval Mediterranean Ports, 1100–1235*, Leiden 2001, pp. 122f., 140-142; GERTWAGEN, *The Emergence of the Cult* (as n. 44), pp. 151f.

<sup>48</sup> Gabriele MONACO, *La Madonna di Trapani: storia, culto, folklore*, Naples 1981.

<sup>49</sup> *Itinéraire d’Anselme Adorno* (as n. 26), p. 390; BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), pp. 236-238.

<sup>50</sup> For examples of Marian chapels on small Aegean islands, see *Le saint voyage de Jérusalem du seigneur d’Anglure* (as n. 43), p. 91; *Nompar de Caumont, Voyage* (as n. 43), p. 55.

in two characteristics that gave them their maritime quality: the identity of their devotees and the nature of their location.

First, although landfolk might be found venerating Mary at some of these shrines, these places also (or even predominantly) attracted seafarers, especially sailors, who came to petition her protection for their voyage or to thank her for a miracle at sea. When in 1269 James I of Aragon's crusading fleet hit a storm off southern France, for example, the king implored Mary for aid, vowing to make a pilgrimage to her. He even beseeched her to let them land close to one of her churches so he could fulfill his promise, which he did at *Notre-Dame de Vauvert* in the Camargue.<sup>51</sup> Vauvert's placement near the sea suggests the second characteristic of Mary's maritime shrines: they were located on or close to the coast, on a tiny island, or were visible in some way from the water. Some Madonnas who presided over rather land-locked shrines did perform miracles at sea and figured prominently in sailors' piety, but those churches and chapels that could be seen from a ship had an added layer of maritime meaning.<sup>52</sup>

The custom of ships saluting coastal shrines suggests these buildings' special significance to sailors.<sup>53</sup> A 14<sup>th</sup>-century German pilgrim declared that any ship that passed by Trapani and did not either "salute" or "visit" the port's Marian image revered by seafarers would not get home without running into a storm.<sup>54</sup> Two centuries later, a French author described the practice in a more eastern part of the Mediterranean:

"In passing by [the chapel of Our Lady of Kassiopi], our sailors saluted it three times. Taking their hats in their hands and waving them, they gave a great shout."<sup>55</sup>

Sailors engaged in this shipboard rite both to win the protection of the shrine's holy patron for their voyage, as the Trapani evidence indicates, and to express joy and relief. Sighting the shrine was like meeting an ally (according to the 16<sup>th</sup>-century French writer, such salutations were also used as greetings be-

<sup>51</sup> James I, *Llibre dels feits*, ed. Ferrán SOLDEVILA (Les Quatre Grans Cròniques 1), rev. Jordi BRUGUERA / Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL, Barcelona 2007, chs. 489-490, pp. 476-478. On Vauvert as a maritime shrine, see ESPAÑOL BERTRAN, *Le voyage d'outremer* (as n. 3), pp. 275-277.

<sup>52</sup> A 14<sup>th</sup>-century Italian pilgrim implies the special importance of shrines visible from sea: Jacopo da Verona, *Liber peregrinationis* (as n. 41), pp. 16, 20. Landlocked shrines whose Madonnas were famed for their maritime miracles include Montserrat and Guadalupe (ESPAÑOL BERTRAN, *Le voyage d'outremer* [as n. 3], pp. 265-271). The very inland Virgin of Rocamadour also performed maritime miracles: *Les miracles de Notre Dame de Rocamadour au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Edmond ALBE / Jean ROCACHER, Toulouse 1996, cap. 1.27, p. 136, cap. 1.31, p. 138, cap. 2.1, pp. 178-180, cap. 2.37, p. 230, cap. 3.1, pp. 246-249.

<sup>53</sup> BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), p. 224.

<sup>54</sup> Ludolph von Suchem, *De itinere terrae sanctae* (as n. 9), cap. 14, p. 19. Gertwagen misidentifies the church of Ludolph's description as Catania (GERTWAGEN, *The Emergence of the Cult* [as n. 44], p. 153).

<sup>55</sup> Carlier de Pinon, *Voyage en Orient*, ed. Edgar BLOCHET, Paris 1920, p. 304.

tween “two friendly ships”), because its outlines against the horizon helped sailors to plot their position.<sup>56</sup>

Due to the limits of maritime navigational technology and the fear of the sea, medieval ships hugged the shore whenever possible.<sup>57</sup> Being unexpectedly out of sight of land made sailors anxious, because they oriented themselves by the natural and human-made features of the coastline. The importance of seeing land in order to determine one’s position even shaped Christian shipboard religious practice, lending it what Michele Bacci has aptly described as a “locative” quality.<sup>58</sup> When in trouble at sea, mariners would beseech the holy patron of the shrine visible on horizon; if no land were in sight, they would implore the saint whose shrine was located in what they hoped would be their next port of call.<sup>59</sup> Hence when in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, contrary winds blew a Catalan ship en route to Sardinia off course and then abandoned it becalmed in the dangerous waters of the Barbary Coast, the sailors and passengers appealed for aid to the famous maritime Madonna whose shrine graced the harbor town that they were trying to reach, Our Lady of Bonaria at Cagliari.<sup>60</sup>

This locative piety of seafarers could intersect with navigational needs, as is clear from the “sancte parole”. Late medieval Italian sailors had recourse to this prayer when they found themselves in the anxiety-provoking situation of being out of sight of land. This prayer opens with some saints’ names, but its “holy words” really consist of a list of one hundred and thirty maritime shrines, a topographic litany which mariners would recite in the hopes that one of these sacred places would appear on the horizon and thus indicate their location.<sup>61</sup>

Many Mediterranean coastal shrines in fact owed their origins to sailors’ navigational requirements. These shrines were often located on sites that seen from land were unremarkable, inhospitable, or even inaccessible: bays, promontories, or small islands. Viewed from the sea, they looked quite different, offering mariners’ critical points of orientation or welcome refuges in which to anchor a ship.<sup>62</sup> The chapel of *Our Lady of Kassiopi* in Corfu, for example, occupied an eerie spot in the ruins of a town where a giant serpent was ru-

<sup>56</sup> The French author’s evidence: Ibid., p. 304. Salutation and navigation: BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), p. 224.

<sup>57</sup> BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), p. 223; GAUTIER DALCHÉ, *Éléments religieux* (as n. 10), p. 29.

<sup>58</sup> Michel BACCI, *On the Holy Topography of Sailors: An Introduction*, in: *The Holy Portolano* (as n. 3), pp. 7-16, here p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), p. 225-226; IDEM, *On the Holy Topography* (as n. 58), pp. 15f.

<sup>60</sup> Nompars de Caumont, *Voyage* (as n. 43), pp. 72-74.

<sup>61</sup> BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), pp. 227-229.

<sup>62</sup> Peregrine HORDEN / Nicholas PURCELL, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford 2000, pp. 440-442; BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), pp. 225f., 229f., 240; BACCI, *On the Holy Topography* (as n. 58), pp. 7f., 11f.; GAUTIER DALCHÉ, *Éléments religieux* (as n. 10), pp. 19-21.

mored to prowl, but the shrine was much frequented by European ships, for the three main sea routes to the eastern Mediterranean converged at this headland.<sup>63</sup> Well to the south in the Peloponnese, the Marian shrine on the tiny island of Sapienza marked a place equally important to men at a ship's helm; a light was kept burning there to warn them of rocks that had wrecked many vessels.<sup>64</sup>

All coastal shrines, not just Marian ones, possessed practical, navigational significance for sailors. But because, as the "sancte parole" suggests, the Mediterranean's coastline appears to have boasted more churches and chapels dedicated to Mary than to any other single holy figure, Christian mariners in that sea were in some senses literally steering by her, or rather by her numerous local iterations venerated at these shrines. The portolan books and charts that high medieval and early modern mariners consulted as they plotted their course could reinforce Mary's importance to navigational practice; invoking her guiding presence at sea, some of the detailed manuals for sailing the Mediterranean opened with the words "Ave Maria", while her image embellished some portolan maps.<sup>65</sup> Combining her identities as star of the sea and rose of roses, Mary might even sit at the heart of the compass rose, the elegant diagram mapmakers used to show the many directions of the winds.<sup>66</sup>

Images of other saints too adorned the portolans. But Mary's name headed the list of those holy figures invoked in the litanies that sailors such as those in 14<sup>th</sup>-century Barcelona chanted just before their ship embarked from its home port.<sup>67</sup> Those mariners who instead used the "sancte parole" as their liturgy of departure also would have been reminded of her importance to seafarers as they recited the names of her maritime shrines that so dominate that prayer.<sup>68</sup> There is in fact reason to believe that Mary was integral to Christian shipboard religious culture in ways that few other saints could be.<sup>69</sup> The miracle stories

<sup>63</sup> Site and serpent: Le saint voyage de Jhérusalem du seigneur d'Anglure (as n. 43), p. 7; Le voyage de la Sainte Cyté (as n. 43), pp. 44f. Location on three routes: Ruthy GERTWAGEN, Harbours and Facilities along the Eastern Mediterranean Sea Lanes to Outremer, in: *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of Crusades*, ed. John H. PRYOR, Aldershot 2006, pp. 105-116.

<sup>64</sup> Nompars de Caumont, Voyatges (as n. 43), p. 55.

<sup>65</sup> Patrick GAUTIER-DALCHÉ, Cartes marines, représentation du littoral et perception de l'espace au Moyen Âge: Un état de la question, in: *Castrum 7: Zones côtières littorales dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge: Défense, peuplement, mise en valeur*, ed. Jean-Marie MARTIN, Madrid 2001, pp. 9-33, here p. 29; IDEM, Éléments religieux (as n. 10), pp. 18, 24-25.

<sup>66</sup> John V. FLEMING, The "Mystical Signature" of Christopher Columbus, in: *Iconography at the Crossroads*, ed. Brendan CASSIDY, Princeton 1993, pp. 197-214, here p. 210 and figure 6; Luisa MARTÍN MERÁS, La carta de Juan de la Cosa: interpretación e historia, in: *Monte Buçeiro* 4 (2000), pp. 71-85, here pp. 74f.

<sup>67</sup> SANZ / COLL I JULIA, Galeres mercants catalanes (as n. 4), p. 203.

<sup>68</sup> According to the Genoese version of this prayer, it was recited as the ship weighed anchor (BACCI, On the Holy Topography [as n. 58], p. 14).

<sup>69</sup> For discussion of medieval Christian shipboard piety in general, see WESTERDAHL, Ritual Landscape at Sea (as n. 3); Robert W. H. MILLER, *One Firm Anchor: The Church and the Merchant Seafarer, an Introductory History*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 49-57, 72-98; Michel

that depicted her as actually appearing on ships captured a certain maritime reality.

Some evidence suggests, for example, that although high medieval ships were so cramped for space that they often sailed without a copy of the Gospels on board, they might make room for a devotional image of Mary, whether two- or three-dimensional.<sup>70</sup> Ships usually offered little storage space for passengers and crew, which was one of the reasons that full mass was rarely celebrated on board – there was simply nowhere to stow the necessary vestments and liturgical paraphernalia.<sup>71</sup> It has been estimated that on late medieval Catalan ships, each crew member had less than 0.787 square meters of room, although the captain and the passengers would have enjoyed a bit more.<sup>72</sup> Choosing to devote some of the ship's scant space to an image of Mary was a sign of her significance to those on board. It was also spiritually prudent, given the dangers that haunted seafarers. Already by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the increasingly ubiquitous statues and paintings of her that would soon outnumber all other sacred images in western Europe were acquiring reputations as wonder workers, whether or not they contained relics.<sup>73</sup>

Accounts by late medieval sailors and passengers sometimes mention the presence of Marian images on ships.<sup>74</sup> Other evidence is less direct. It includes the popular late medieval and early modern European legends about miracle-working Marian images washed up on the seashore that become objects of veneration. The earliest of these tales comes perhaps from the northern French town of Boulogne-sur-Mer, but by at least the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, such stories circulated about the origins of the cult images of some famous Mediterranean maritime Madonnas, including Santa María del Mar of Almería, Nostra Signora di Bonaria of Cagliari, and L'Annunziata of Trapani.<sup>75</sup> These were Europe-

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BALARD, *Le pèlerinage maritime en Méditerranée (XIVe–XVe s.)*, in: *The Holy Portolano* (as n. 3), pp. 33–50.

<sup>70</sup> Lack of Gospels on ships: MILLER, *One Firm Anchor* (as n. 69), p. 92.

<sup>71</sup> MILLER, *One Firm Anchor* (as n. 69), pp. 92–96; PATARINO, *Religious Shipboard Culture* (as n. 3), pp. 141–192, here pp. 153f.

<sup>72</sup> SANZ / COLL I JULIA, *Galeres mercants catalanes* (as n. 4), p. 201. In general on cramped conditions on ships, see Michel MOLLAT, *Europe and the Sea*, Cambridge 1993, p. 157.

<sup>73</sup> Jean-Marie SANSTERRE, *Sacralité et pouvoir thaumaturgique des statues mariales (Xe–première moitié du XIIIe siècle)*, in: *Revue Mabillon*, n.s. 22 (2011), pp. 53–77.

<sup>74</sup> Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, vol. 1, ed. Conrad HASSLER, Stuttgart 1843, pp. 128, 131; PATARINO, *Religious Shipboard Culture* (as n. 3), p. 153 (an account by an English sailor of 1453).

<sup>75</sup> The earliest textual description of Boulogne-sur-Mer's legend probably dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century: Daniel HAIGNÈRE, *Étude sur la légende de Notre-Dame de Boulogne*, Boulogne-sur-Mer 1863, pp. 9f., 39–53. Pilgrimage badges from the shrine in that era also depict the legend (Brian SPENCER, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* [Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 7], London 1998, pp. 216–218 [also figures 234a and b]). For the Almería legend, see: Gabriel PASQUAL Y ORBANEJA, *Vida de San Indalecio y Almería ilustrada en su antigüedad, origen, y grandeza*, Almería 1699, pp. 148–151; REMENSNYDER, *La Conquistadora* (as n. 2), pp. 130f. For the Bonaria legend, see: Felipe de Guimeran, *Breve historia de la Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced de Redención de cautivos Christianos*, Valencia 1591,



an-made Marian images, but in the same period, some Byzantine Marian icons that had gained a place in seafarers' affections farther east in the Mediterranean joined their western sisters in acquiring miraculous maritime backstories, though with a different emphasis.<sup>76</sup> These legends about images of Mary that are gifts from the sea merit sustained study in their own right, revealing perhaps a deepening and changing connection between her and this natural element.<sup>77</sup> In any case, the European stories suggest, sometimes in so many words, that late medieval ships carried images of Mary.

The legends from Trapani and Cagliari, for example, describe shipwrecks as the source of the wonderworking Madonnas that float safely to shore, while the story from Almería hints at the same by detailing the damage saltwater had inflicted on the image that arrived on that coast in 1502.<sup>78</sup> Pondering the origins of a famous maritime Madonna on Tenerife in the Canary Islands, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century author raises the possibility that "the sea brought [the image], some ship having been lost that was carrying it". He then dismisses the idea, reasoning that the statue showed none of the wear and tear that time in the waves

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pp. 61-63; Maria Giuseppina MELONI, *Il santuario della Madonna di Bonaria: Origini e diffusione di un culto*, Rome 2011, pp. 36-38. An early version of the Trapani legend appears in Leonardo Orlandini (d. 1618), *Trapani succintamente descritto*. I have been unable to consult the original of this text (or to find its publication information), but I have used a transcription made by Gino Lipari ([http://www.trapaniin vittissima.it/files/trapani\\_succinta\\_orlandini.pdf](http://www.trapaniin vittissima.it/files/trapani_succinta_orlandini.pdf), [accessed July 2016]). By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, legends also presented Our Lady of Montenero (Livorno) as an image from the sea; Isabella GAGLIARDI, "Ave maris stella": il santuario mariano di Montenero presso Livorno, in: *Dio, il mare e gli uomini* (Quaderni di Storia Religiosa 15), Verona 2008, pp. 185-214, here pp. 195-199.

<sup>76</sup> The Greek stories, which all seem to postdate the Byzantine period, endow the Marian icon in question with a distinguished and venerable pedigree by depicting it as a refugee from iconoclasm that navigates the sea alone from Constantinople to the church where it becomes venerated. Examples include the Portaitissa icon on Mount Athos (Kriton CHRYSOCHOIDIS, *The Portaitissa Icon at Iveron Monastery and the Cult of the Virgin Mary on Mount Athos*, in: *Images of the Mother of God* [as n. 30], pp. 133-144, here pp. 133-141) and the icon of Our Lady of Philermos (Anthony Luttrell, *The Rhodian Background of the Order of Saint John on Malta*, in: *The Order's Early Legacy in Malta: The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta*, ed. John AZZOPARDI, Valletta 1989, pp. 3-14, here p. 13). These legends were inspired by the 11<sup>th</sup>-century legend of the icon of Maria Romaia (Annemarie Weyl Carr, private conversation), on which see Ernst von DOBSCHÜTZ, *Maria Romaia: Zwei unbekannte Texte*, in: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 12 (1903), pp. 173-214. Yet there is a key difference: Maria Romaia flees iconoclasm and arrives via the Tiber in Rome and then returns to Constantinople when it is safe to do so; in the post-Byzantine legends about Philermos and Portaitissa, the icons do not return to Constantinople, any more than did those Greek refugees who left that city permanently in the wake of the Ottoman conquest. Perhaps these stories emerge from and reflect the trauma of post-Byzantine Greek diaspora.

<sup>77</sup> For some very brief comments on these legends, see BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), pp. 240f. For analysis that places one of these legends in its local context, see GAGLIARDI, "Ave maris stella" (as n. 75), pp. 195-199.

<sup>78</sup> Almería: Gabriel Pasqual y Orbaneja, *Vida de San Indalecio* (as n. 75), p. 150; Cagliari: Felipe de Guimeran, *Breve historia* (as n. 75), pp. 61-63; Trapani: Leonardo Orlandini, *Trapani succintamente descritto* (as n. 75).

would have caused – but he willingly admits that “we have seen the sea bring other [such images]” from shipwrecks.<sup>79</sup> Erasmus himself depicts a wooden statue of Mary bobbing among the debris of the “naufragium” in his satire.<sup>80</sup>

Whether or not a ship had an image of Mary on board, passengers and crew conjured her sheltering presence every day, because regular collective devotions at sea involved invocations of her in prayer and hymn, an honor not enjoyed by other maritime saints. The German pilgrim Felix Fabri captured her exceptional importance to the daily religious routine of Mediterranean sailors in his description of worship on the Venetian ship that took him to the Holy Land in the 1480s. At midday, wrote Fabri, a priest celebrated a dry mass, a ritual common on pilgrim ships.<sup>81</sup> But twice a day sailors engaged in their own ceremonies that summoned Mary as an antidote to the fears engendered by the sea – and these were lay rites, conducted not by a priest but by a servant of the ship’s captain. At sunrise, this man would hold up an image of the Madonna in front of the assembled, silent crew. They would then kneel and recite the Ave Maria, after which he would put away the image and they would return to their work. At sunset, all would gather again, this time to kneel and sing the Marian hymn of “Salve Regina”. Wishing everyone a good night, the captain’s servant would elevate the Marian image as a sign for the recitation of the Ave Maria, a prayer the crew repeated three times.<sup>82</sup> With these rituals, sailors made their days begin and end with the invocation of Mary as protection against sea and its perils.

By at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it was a widespread shipboard custom among European Christian sailors to do exactly as Fabri described: to assemble every evening and sing the “Salve Regina”, a practice Christopher Columbus’s crew took with them across the Atlantic.<sup>83</sup> Chanting this hymn as dark descended, mariners exhorted Mary to safeguard them in body *and* in soul from the dangers of the nighttime sea. The sea was a place of spiritual as well as physical menace. To embark on its waves was to exit the space of the Christian church; it has been said that the medieval “seafarer went where the church did not”,

<sup>79</sup> Alonso de Espinosa, *Del origen y Milagros* (as n. 26), ch. 2.4, fols. 36r-v. In 1663, a Jesuit author argued that the statue of Candelaria had been the masthead of a wrecked ship (Gabriel ESCRIBANO COBO / Alfredo MEDEROS MARTÍN, *El límite occidental del menceyato de Güímar (Tenerife) y el lugar de la aparición de la Virgen de Candelaria, sincretismo de la diosa lunar Juno Caelestis*, in: *Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos* 60 (2014), pp. 515-574, here p. 557).

<sup>80</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Colloquia familiaria* (as n. 1), p. 169.

<sup>81</sup> On the practice of dry mass, see PATARINO, *Religious Shipboard Culture* (as n. 3), pp. 153f.

<sup>82</sup> Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium* (as n. 74), vol. 1, pp. 128, 131.

<sup>83</sup> 14<sup>th</sup>-century example: Jacopo da Verona, *Liber peregrinationis* (as n. 41). Columbus’s sailors: Christopher Columbus, *Diario del Primer Viaje (1492)*, in: *Cristóbal Colón: Textos y documentos completos*, ed. Juan GIL / Consuelo VARELA, Madrid 2003, pp. 95-218, here p. 109. Other 15<sup>th</sup>-century evidence: PATARINO, *Religious Shipboard Culture* (as n. 3), p. 153; BALARD, *Le peregrinagium maritimum* (as n. 69), p. 36. In general on the practice, see MOLLAT, *Les attitudes* (as n. 8), p. 194; MILLER, *One Firm Anchor* (as n. 69), pp. 59f.

for the sea was “extra-diocesan”.<sup>84</sup> This rendered the fear of dying at sea particularly acute – Christian burial was difficult if impossible there, putting one’s soul in jeopardy.<sup>85</sup> By singing the “Salve Regina” at nightfall, that plangent hymn imploring Mary’s mercy, sailors readied themselves for the possibility of dying in the dark; they girded their soul with the protection of the most powerful of all saintly intercessors.

Given Mary’s importance to daily collective shipboard religious ritual, it is no wonder that she was typically first among the saints that sailors and passengers thought of when the seas turned contrary.<sup>86</sup> Numerous high medieval chronicles and pilgrimage narratives brought to life the stories of her maritime wonders from the Marian miracle collections. When becalmed in port or in dangerous waters, seafarers often really did implore Mary for favorable winds, and during storms, they did beseech her to quiet the waves and save the ship.<sup>87</sup> These invocations could sound out as simple, spontaneous cries of distress: “Saint Mary, help us!” shouted the captain and merchants aboard a 14<sup>th</sup>-century Italian ship when powerful gusts of wind threatened to drive their vessel against the shore.<sup>88</sup> Seafarers could also voice their pleas for her aid by singing the “Salve Regina”, that hymn whose collective recitation every evening prepared the ship and souls in it for the rigors of the night.

Felix Fabri, for example, described how when unfavorable winds left his ship languishing in port in the Peloponnese, at first the sailors directed their prayers to Saint Nicholas, because it was his feast day. When the winds failed to shift, they did not lose hope, for the feast days of the “other two patrons of the sea, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Lucy” were approaching. On Mary’s day, the crew and passengers disembarked and prayed to her at a chapel on the coast. Each did so in his or her own manner – some prostrate, some kneeling, others circumambulating the building, while yet others performed their devotions on the shore facing the sea – but all joined together in singing the “Salve Regina”. Naturally, after this display of Marian piety, the wind began to blow from the right quarter.<sup>89</sup>

In this story featuring hierarchies of maritime saints and the importance of coastal chapels as settings for seafarers’ piety, the “Salve Regina” does not act alone. But Nompars de Caumont, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century French aristocrat, insisted on this hymn’s particular maritime efficacy. He recounts that when the Catalan

<sup>84</sup> MILLER, *One Firm Anchor* (as n. 69), p. 96.

<sup>85</sup> BACCI, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), p. 224.

<sup>86</sup> Balard and Español Bertran both note Mary as first in the rank of saints invoked in maritime emergencies, though they do not connect this with her importance in daily shipboard religious ritual (BALARD, *Le peregrinagium maritimum* [as n. 69], p. 48; ESPAÑOL BERTRAN, *Le voyage d’outremer* [as n. 3], p. 280).

<sup>87</sup> For a few examples, see Nompars de Caumont, *Voyatge* (as n. 43), pp. 26, 57-59; James I, *Llibre dels feïts* (as n. 51), chs. 489-90, pp. 476-478.

<sup>88</sup> Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d’Oltremare*, vol. 1, ed. Alberto BACCHI DELLA LEGA, Bologna 1881, p. 10; BALARD, *Le peregrinagium maritimum* (as n. 69), pp. 37, 48.

<sup>89</sup> Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium* (as n. 74), vol. 3, pp. 327f.

ship on which he was travelling was becalmed off the coast of North Africa, everyone on board vowed to make offerings to Mary, in particular to the Madonna of Bonaria, since Sardinia was their immediate destination. Then all knelt and began to intone the “Salve Regina” but, to Nompar’s dismay, they stopped without finishing it. When the next day dawned with no wind, some of his worried shipmates consulted him. Nompar diagnosed the problem as the omitted portion of the hymn and predicted that they “would not be able to leave this place until the Salve Regina was completed”. He urged that they sing it again, this time all the way through. Some agreed that this was a good idea, but others just laughed. Two days later, however, with the ship as still as ever in the water, the scoffers admitted their error. Kneeling, they sang the whole “Salve Regina” – and the next morning they awoke to a fresh breeze.<sup>90</sup>

Nompar’s story suggests both the special maritime power attributed to this Marian hymn and a certain skepticism about it. It has indeed been suggested that “storm engendered piety was rapidly forgotten” when the winds abated.<sup>91</sup> A 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish author compiling the miracles of the maritime Madonna of Candelaria on Tenerife expressed his frustration at what he characterized as mariners’ conveniently short memories:

“because the majority of these miracles were done on behalf of sailors, men who once storm and need are over do not remember anymore (...), they have fallen into oblivion.”<sup>92</sup>

But the nautical ropes and cables he saw arrayed on the walls of Candelaria’s church, like the abundant ex-votos left by seafarers at other maritime Marian shrines, demonstrate that vows made at sea were not always ignored.<sup>93</sup> Even Nompar de Caumont’s shipmates, despite their brief show of skepticism, contributed to a collective candle of thanksgiving offered to Our Lady of Bonaria upon their arrival in Sardinia; it was a handsome object, declared Nompar, weighing some “twenty-eight pounds” and bearing his own coat of arms.<sup>94</sup> Some churches boasted very rich collections indeed of ex-votos proving their Madonna’s maritime powers.<sup>95</sup> Other maritime shrines were themselves ex-votos, for they owed their existence to promises made to Mary at sea.<sup>96</sup> By the

<sup>90</sup> Nompar de Caumont, *Voyatge* (as n. 43), pp. 72f. For examples of the Salve sung on board to calm a storm, see Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María* (as n. 22), vol. 3, No. 313, p. 126; ESPAÑOL BERTRAN, *Le voyage d’outremer* (as n. 3), pp. 278f.

<sup>91</sup> MILLER, *One Firm Anchor* (as n. 69), p. 84.

<sup>92</sup> Alonso de Espinosa, *Del origen y Milagros* (as n. 26), fol. 120r.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 4.15, fols. 137v-138r.

<sup>94</sup> Nompar de Caumont, *Voyatge* (as n. 43), p. 74.

<sup>95</sup> The Madonna di Bonaria of Cagliari (Sardinia), for example, had an extensive collection of maritime ex-votos (MELONI, *Il santuario della Madonna di Bonaria* [as n. 75], pp. 44-45, 68-73, 112-130, also figures 12-15).

<sup>96</sup> For an example of a coastal Marian shrine founded to fulfill a vow made at sea, see Nompar de Caumont, *Voyatge* (as n. 43), p. 5. On the practice in general, see Bacci, *Portolano sacro* (as n. 40), p. 226.

16<sup>th</sup> century, the Marian shrine where Nomparr de Caumont had proudly placed his candle even possessed an offering that sailors believed actively channeled her gifts as star of the sea. It was a small boat carved from ivory, about a hand and a half wide, which was suspended in front of the statue of the Madonna di Bonaria. Any mariner preparing to depart from the harbor below her church made sure first to visit the shrine and check where the little boat was pointing; it infallibly indicated the direction of the winds.<sup>97</sup> Sailors' culture had transformed this ex-voto into a potent and useful maritime object.

At some of Mary's shrines, seafarers in fact not just left behind offerings to her but also acquired special talismans to take on board that manifested her mastery over the waves. Devotees who visited Candelaria's beachside chapel on Tenerife, for example, received small candles fashioned from the ambergris that littered this shore; these objects were known to be efficacious in various crises, including storms at sea, when they would be cast into the angry waters.<sup>98</sup> One tempest-tossed sailor, determined not to lose his "candelita", tied it to a rope along with "other relics of Our Lady's clothing" and dragged the line "with devotion" through the foaming sea.<sup>99</sup> Mariners engaged in similar practices with their keepsakes from an even more renowned Marian shrine, Saydanāyā near Damascus. Pilgrims to this church that belonged to the Holy Land circuit took home with them tiny vials of the oil exuded by the shrine's celebrated "incarnated" icon of Mary.<sup>100</sup> Known in general for its miraculous powers, this liquid relic was famed among high medieval Mediterranean sail-

<sup>97</sup> Felipe de Guimeran, *Breve historia* (as n. 75), pp. 64f. MELONI, *Il santuario della Madonna di Bonaria* [as n. 75], figure 5.

<sup>98</sup> Alonso de Espinosa, *Del origen y Milagros* (as n. 26), ch. 2.10, fol. 49v. On the ambergris, see COBO / MARTÍN, *El límite occidental del menceyato de Güímar (Tenerife)* (as n. 79), p. 545.

<sup>99</sup> Alonso de Espinosa, *Del origen y Milagros* (as n. 26), ch. 4.34, fol. 162r.

<sup>100</sup> The medieval texts relating to this shrine and its miraculous icon have been edited in: *La légende de Saïdnaia*, ed. Paul PEETERS, in: *Analecta Bollandiana* 25 (1906), pp. 137-157; *Il libro etiopico dei miracoli di Maria e le sue fonti nelle letterature del medio evo latino*, ed. Enrico CERULLI, Rome 1943, pp. 231-289; *Les premières versions occidentales de la légende de Saïdnaia*, ed. Paul DEVOS, in: *Analecta Bollandiana* 65 (1947), pp. 245-278. For discussion of the shrine and the legends about the icon, see: Daniel BARAZ, *The Incarnated Icon of Saidnaya Goes West: A Re-examination in Light of New Manuscript Evidence*, in: *Le Muséon* 108 (1995), pp. 181-191, here 188-191; Bernard HAMILTON, *Our Lady of Saidnaya: An Orthodox Shrine Revered by Muslims and Knights Templar at the Time of the Crusades*, in: *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, ed. Robert N. SWANSON, Woodbridge 2000, pp. 207-215; Benjamin Z. KEDAR, *Convergences of Oriental Christian, Muslim, and Frankish Worshippers: the Case of Saydnaya and the Knights Templar*, in: *The Crusades and Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt HUNYADI / József LASZLOVSKY, Budapest 2001, pp. 89-100; John V. TOLAN, "Veneratio Sarracenum:" Shared Devotion among Muslims and Christians, according to Burchard of Strasbourg, Envoy from Frederic Barbarossa to Saladin (c. 1175), in: IDEM, *Sons of Ishmael: Muslims through European Eyes in the Middle Ages*, Gainesville 2008, pp. 101-112 (Art. 7).

ors as an antidote to bad weather.<sup>101</sup> A 14<sup>th</sup>-century German pilgrim witnessed how a container of this oil hung from the ship's stern quelled even the fiercest of storms.<sup>102</sup> Niccolò Poggibonsi, an Italian who went to Saydanāyā in the same century, procured some of the oil and found that it lived up to its reputation as "good for every kind of sickness and in the vicissitudes of the sea".<sup>103</sup> He recalled how during one particularly violent tempest off the Peloponnese, everyone on his ship first prayed to God and the specific saint they preferred and then "we took out many saints' relics and the oil of Saint Mary, and tearfully recit[ed] the litanies of Mary".<sup>104</sup>

Mary's presence in quotidian and emergency shipboard devotional practices suggests one of the conduits by which her efficacy as a maritime saint might have been transmitted to eastern Christianity: via onboard interactions. The sailors who participated in the ritual of desperation on Poggibonsi's ship which placed Mary at the head of an armada of saints probably included Greek as well as Latin Christians. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Venetian ships, of which Poggibonsi's was one, were typically manned by mixed crews drawn in large part from the areas of the eastern Mediterranean areas subject to La Serenissima.<sup>105</sup> While they went about their work, these men would have been exposed to their Latin shipmates' invocations of Mary, as would any Greek passengers; they might thus have become convinced of her importance to survival at sea. The solidarities that prevailed among crews of medieval vessels would also have encouraged Greek sailors employed on Latin ships to embrace the maritime Mary. Sailors had to know they could rely on each other in order to collaborate in the dangerous tasks required to run the ship and this necessity typically engendered a collective, communal spirit among crews.<sup>106</sup>

It is possible that some of the other people who contributed to religious diversity aboard Christian ships in the high medieval Mediterranean also learned from their Latin shipmates of Mary's identity as star of the sea: Jews and Muslims. Members of the other two monotheistic faiths could travel on Christian ships as passengers, as Ibn Jubayr famously did when he embarked on pilgrimage to Mecca from his Iberian homeland in 1183; on some of the vessels

<sup>101</sup> See the statement by the 14th-century pilgrim Lionardo Frescobaldi (Lionardo Frescobaldi; *Nel nome di Dio facemmo vela: Viaggio in Oriente di un pellegrino medievale*, ed. Gabriele BARTOLINI / Franco CARDINI, Bari/Rome 1991, p. 180).

<sup>102</sup> Ludolph von Suchem, *De itinere* (as n. 9), cap. 44, p. 101.

<sup>103</sup> Niccolò da Poggibonsi, *Libro d'Oltramare* (as n. 88), vol. 2, ch. 154, pp. 20f.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, ch. 4, pp. 16f.

<sup>105</sup> Bernard DOUMERC, *Cosmopolitanism on Board Venetian Ships (Fourteenth–Fifteenth Centuries)*, in: *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), pp. 78-95.

<sup>106</sup> On solidarity among crews of ships, see among others MOLLAT, *Europe and the Sea* (as n. 72), pp. 76f., 166-169; SANZ / COLL I JULIA, *Galeres mercants catalanes* (as n. 4), pp. 201f.; Kathryn L. REYERSON, *Cross-Cultural Encounters on the High Seas (Tenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, in: *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), pp. 1-3, here p. 2; Enrica SALVATORI, *Corsairs' Crews and Cross-Cultural Interactions: The Case of the Pisan Trapellicinus in the Twelfth Century*, in: *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), pp. 32-55, pp. 46f.; PATARINO, *Religious Shipboard Culture* (as n. 3), p. 165.

on which he took passage, he and his fellow Muslim pilgrims crowded in next to Christians bound for Jerusalem.<sup>107</sup> A few centuries later, Jewish physicians and Muslim merchants arrived at the Hospitaller stronghold of Rhodes via Christian ships.<sup>108</sup> This cosmopolitanism extended to crews. On Latin Christian ships all across the high and late medieval Mediterranean, Muslim sailors labored alongside Christian ones – and were embraced in the communal solidarities of shipboard life.<sup>109</sup> Mediterranean crews elaborated “a shared maritime ethos that transcended ethnicity, religion and politics”, as Kathryn Reyerson has said.<sup>110</sup>

Given the tight space on medieval ships, crews and passengers could not help but notice each other’s regular collective religious rites – and the type of help from on high people of other confessions sought when the seas turned dangerous. Ibn Jubayr remembered how when a storm stranded his ship off Messina, leaving it at the mercy of the wind and waves, “the Christians gave themselves over to grief and the Muslims submitted themselves to the decree of their Lord”. He heard the Christians utter “cries and shrieks”, some of which surely were pleas for help from God and the saints.<sup>111</sup> During an equally fierce tempest elsewhere in the Mediterranean, an Italian pilgrim of the 14<sup>th</sup> century watched as the Greek captain and crew of the foundering vessel on which he was traveling prepared their souls for death:

“taking bread, according to their Greek custom, they blessed it and, following their own custom, gave it to each other as communion (‘se communicaverunt’).<sup>112</sup>”

Such scenes must have played themselves out on ships all across the high medieval Mediterranean as Muslims, Jews, and Christians of different religious allegiances navigated this sea together. Non-Christians on board would thus have had ample opportunity to observe how in situations of crisis, their Christian shipmates often cried out to Mary. They would also have heard her name pronounced in sailors’ daily devotions and, on some ships, seen her image held aloft during evening prayers.

There is indeed evidence hinting that by the later middle ages, Jews and Muslims in the Mediterranean knew of Mary’s renown among Christians as “star of the sea”. Some Jews openly manifested awareness of her status as a premiere maritime saint, if only to mock this Christian belief, as Sephardic

<sup>107</sup> Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, ed. Roland BROADHURST, London 1952, pp. 26, 325, 361f.

<sup>108</sup> Theresa M. VANN, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Mariners in the Port of Rhodes, 1453–1480, in: *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), pp. 158–173.

<sup>109</sup> Lawrence V. MOTT, Serving in the Fleet: Crews and Recruitment Issues in the Catalan-Aragonese Fleets During the War of Sicilian Vespers (1282–1302), in: *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), pp. 56–77; SALVATORI, Corsairs’ Crews (as n. 106).

<sup>110</sup> REYERSON, Cross-Cultural Encounters (as n. 106), p. 2.

<sup>111</sup> Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr* (as n. 107), pp. 336f.

<sup>112</sup> Nicola de Martoni, *Liber peregrinationis* (as n. 39), p. 664.

Jews did in a ballad circulating among them after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in the 1490s. This song, whose origins probably predated their diaspora, exists in different versions, but the gist is the same.<sup>113</sup> The ballad opens with a scene of a ship plunging through a storm and its captain beseeching Mary for aid. In some versions he addresses her as “la Maria” or “my Lady”<sup>114</sup>, but more frequently he uses epithets for her that signal to the song’s Jewish audience that both he and she represent religious error; “idol, my idol”, the captain might call Mary, or even “stinky one, oh my stinky one”.<sup>115</sup> The captain compounds his Mariolatry by promising he will “cover her with gold” if she will quell the waves.<sup>116</sup> But his blasphemous prayer only causes the storm to rage more fiercely. Then the sailors cry out: “Away with you Mary, you whore (‘puta Maria’), you are false and lying”.<sup>117</sup> They pray instead to God, who is, they say, “great” and “merciful”. Naturally, these uncompromising monotheists, stand-ins for the Jews, are saved while the Mariolatrous captain drowns.

A form of anti-hagiography, this Sephardic ballad shows how deeply the widespread Christian stories about Mary’s maritime powers had seeped into Jewish consciousness. It also suggests a special effort on these Jews’ part to rebut these tales. In exile, the Sephardis sang many ballads drawn from Christian tradition, usually not bothering to sharpen them into attacks on Christianity or even to strip them of their Christian elements; this song about Mary, the sailors and the sea is an exception.<sup>118</sup> It transforms the Christian versions of the ballad into a morality play in which Judaism triumphs over Christianity and the Jewish God over Mary: reliance on Mary at sea leads to death, but faith in God leads to life.

In manipulating Mary’s reputation as star of the sea to make its mocking argument against her and the religion she represented, the ballad may have been intended not just to elevate Judaism above Christianity but also to discourage any Jew who might be inclined to join Christians in invoking her when faced with maritime perils. A story related by a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Flemish pilgrim named Anselm Adorno raises the possibility that Jewish passengers could indeed turn to Mary when confronted with chaos at sea. Anselm heard this tale from a priest at the church of *Santa Maria dei Martiri di Molfetta* on its lonely stretch of the Apulian coast, learning from him of an event that was

<sup>113</sup> For different versions of the ballad and analysis of its emergence and dating, see Diego CATALÁN, *Por campos del Romancero: Estudios sobre la tradición oral moderna*, Madrid 1970, pp. 270-280; Manuel da COSTA FONTES, *El Idólatra de María: An Anti-Christian Jewish Ballad*, in: *Romance Philology* 48 (1995), pp. 255-264.

<sup>114</sup> See the versions in CATALÁN, *Por campos* (as n. 113), pp. 272f.

<sup>115</sup> *Idol*: Ibid., p. 271; “Stinky one” (“fedionda”): Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>116</sup> See the versions in Ibid., pp. 271-273.

<sup>117</sup> See the versions in Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>118</sup> Samuel G. ARMISTEAD / Joseph H. SULLIVAN, *Christian Elements and De-Christianization in the Sephardic Romancero*, in: *Collected Studies in Honour of Américo Castro’s Eightieth Year*, ed. Marcel P. HORNICK, Oxford 1965, pp. 21-38, here p. 27.



considered to be among this Madonna's many maritime miracles. The priest told Anselm how when a ship on which he was traveling was besieged by bad weather, the captain vowed to give Santa Maria dei Martiri half the cargo if only she would aid them. As he made his pledge, Mary appeared on the prow. There, she was seen by a Jew on board who was "stained with leprosy". He "immediately" began to entreat her, promising to convert to Christianity if only she would "free him from illness and from the danger of the sea". Naturally, Mary saved him, body and soul, along with the ship. The Jew was baptized in Corfu, the priest assured Anselm.<sup>119</sup>

It would be easy to dismiss this story as yet another late medieval, Christian anti-Semitic fantasy. Indeed, in describing the Jew as a leper, the tale deploys a weapon from the arsenal of vitriolic rhetoric that Christians used to attack members of the monotheistic faith that preceded their own.<sup>120</sup> Yet for two reasons, it would be rash to discount completely the possibility that at the core of this tale was some real event involving a Jewish passenger who participated in the Christians' invocations of Mary when disaster overtook them all at sea. First, the priest who was Anselm's informant claimed personal knowledge of the episode, stating that he was on board the ship when it happened. Second, as much as Jews in high medieval Europe could deride the Marian devotion that saturated the Christian-dominated world in which they lived, they could not help but be influenced by it.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps in moments of desperation, some Jews believed that this woman to whom their Christian neighbors attributed such powers might come to their aid. Jews were among the people cured from illness by the miraculous oil collected from Saydanāyā's Marian icon, declared one Christian visitor to this church.<sup>122</sup> According to another Christian author, Jewish women invoked Mary during the agony of labor (and then ritually exorcised her presence from their home after the child was safely delivered).<sup>123</sup> Seen against this backdrop, the story that Anselm heard from the priest at *Santa Maria dei Martiri* is not so implausible. Or it may conceal a

<sup>119</sup> Itinéraire d'Anselme Adorno (as n. 26), p. 390.

<sup>120</sup> On the Christian association of Jews with leprosy, see Irven M. RESNICK, *Marks of Distinction: Christian Perceptions of Jews in the High Middle Ages*, Washington D.C. 2012, pp. 93-143.

<sup>121</sup> Evelyn M. COHEN, The Teacher, the Father, and the Virgin Mary in the Leipzig Mahzor, in: *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Division D*, vol. 2: *Art, Folklore and Music*, ed. David ASSAF, Jerusalem 1990, pp. 71-76; Ivan G. MARCUS, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe*, New Haven 1996, pp. 88-94, 102; Arthur GREEN, Shekinah, the Virgin Mary, and the Song of Songs: Reflections of a Kabbalistic Symbol in Its Historical Context, in: *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 26 (2002), pp. 1-52; Peter SCHÄFER, *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah*, Princeton 2002, pp. 118-134, 217-243.

<sup>122</sup> Burchard of Strasbourg's account in Arnold of Lübeck, *Arnoldi abbatis Lubecensis Chronica*, ed. Georg Heinrich PERTZ [et al.] (MGH, Scriptores 21), Hannover 1869, pp. 100-250, here pp. 239f.

<sup>123</sup> Elisheva BAUMGARTEN, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe*, Princeton 2004, pp. 114f.

different sort of reality: the Christian crew may have believed the storm was precipitated by the presence of an unbeliever on board and pressured this Jew into uttering prayers to Mary and promising to convert.

Members of the other monotheistic faith who could sail on Christian ships in Mediterranean as passengers or crew – Muslims – had fewer barriers than Jews did to faith in Mary’s maritime powers, because the Qur’an enjoined upon them veneration of her as the virgin mother of a prophet.<sup>124</sup> Given the strong trans-confessional solidarities among crews, Muslim sailors working on European ships indeed might have been inclined to participate in their Christian colleagues’ prayers to this woman honored in Islam.

To be sure, some high medieval Christian miracle stories depict Mary flexing her muscles as “star of the sea” against the followers of Islam. In the *Cantigas de Santa María*, for example, she musters her control of the winds to immobilize a North African ship that had kidnapped a Christian hermit and she also sends breezes to rescue a Portuguese ship becalmed in Morocco and assailed by Muslims.<sup>125</sup> Mary, according to some stories in her guise as Our Lady of Philermos, helped rout the Turkish fleet that besieged Rhodes in 1480, presaging her later intervention in the naval battle of Lepanto, where, a Spanish soldier would remember, “God and his glorious mother (...) fought for us” against the Ottoman fleet.<sup>126</sup> Tales of specific maritime Madonnas who intervened on behalf of individual Christian ships under attack by Barbary corsairs and pirates multiplied in the late medieval and early modern periods as those sorts of depredations intensified.<sup>127</sup> In 1520, one of these Virgins, Santa María del Mar, even assumed official naval duties when she became the patron saint of the confraternity of soldiers who guarded Almería’s coastline against Muslim ships.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>124</sup> On Mary’s place of honor in Islam, see discussion and bibliography in REMENSNYDER, *La Conquistadora* (as n. 2), pp. 139-146.

<sup>125</sup> Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María* (as n. 22), No. 95 (1: pp. 292-294), No. 271 (3: pp. 34-36).

<sup>126</sup> On Rhodes: Felix Fabri, *Evagatorium* (as n. 74), vol. 3, p. 259; the texts edited in *Hospitaller Piety and Crusader Propaganda: Guillaume Caorsin’s Description of the Ottoman Siege of Rhodes, 1480*, ed. Donald J. KAGAY / Theresa M. VANN, Farnham 2015, pp. 108 (Philermos), 140, 250 (Philermos), 276, 294, 300, 308. On Lepanto: *Memorias del cautivo en La Goleta de Túnez (El Alférez Pedro de Aguilar)*, ed. Pascal de GAYANGOS, Madrid 1875, p. 127; Amy G. REMENSNYDER, *Warrior and Diplomat: Mary between Islam and Christianity*, in: *Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea (An Exhibition at the National Museum of Women in the Arts)*, ed. Elizabeth LYNCH, New York 2014, pp. 39-49, here pp. 38-40.

<sup>127</sup> Some examples include the miracles in: Alonso de Espinosa, *Del origen y Milagros* (as n. 26), chs. 4.18, 4.20, 4.32, Fols 142v-143r, 145r-v, 160v; Orlandini, *Trapani succintamente descritto* (as n. 75); and those in the inquest of 1592 edited in MELONI, *Il santuario della Madonna di Bonaria* (as n. 75), pp. 115-116, 119-120, 122-124, 127-129. In the same era, Santa María del Mar protected the city of Almería from attacks by Muslim corsairs (Pasqual y Orbaneja, *Vida de San Indalecio* [as n. 75], p. 151).

<sup>128</sup> *María Desamparados* MARTÍNEZ SAN PEDRO, *La Virgen en Almería tras la conquista*, in: *IV Estudios de Frontera: Historia, tradiciones y leyendas en la Frontera*, ed. Francisco TORO CEBALLOS / José RODRÍGUEZ MOLINA, Jaén 2000, pp. 373-394, here p. 385.

Yet when it suited Christians, they could praise Mary for aiding Muslims in trouble at sea. According to the *Cantigas de Santa María*, she once prevented some Catalan corsairs from returning home with their booty – boatloads of Muslim captives – by unleashing a storm to halt their ships. Mary had a particular stake in freeing these Muslims, for they were merchants who had been heading by sea to her newly acquired harbor town in Andalusia, El Puerto de Santa María, to engage in commerce there.<sup>129</sup> In working this miracle, her interests coincided with those of the royal patron of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, Alfonso X of Castile. Fostering trade in this port on the Gulf of Cádiz was one of his pet projects, as was stopping Catalan depredations along his kingdom's coasts. He did his best to attract not just Christian merchants, but also Muslim and Jewish ones to El Puerto.<sup>130</sup>

This story does not depict the Muslim merchants themselves as beseeching Mary for her intervention, but it is possible that such men would have done so. Muslims could be found venerating Mary at churches scattered across the Mediterranean, including some of the same shrines where the Christian beneficiaries of her belligerent nautical and naval miracles came to render their thanks.<sup>131</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for example, Turks and other Muslims received letters of safe conduct to join Christians in the August 15 celebrations at Trapani of that port's famous Madonna, who did her part in rescuing Christian ships from Turkish assault. Given the centuries-old significance of Trapani's Virgin to sailors, it is tempting to think that among the Muslim pilgrims who, according to a contemporary Italian writer, "anointed their faces" with oil from the shrine's lamps and petitioned her "in their language" for miracles were some mariners, perhaps even ones working on Christian ships.<sup>132</sup> In any case, by the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim and Christian sailors together had created a shrine where a very maritime Mary was venerated side by side with a Muslim saint. Located on the island of Lampedusa in the southernmost reaches of the Sicilian Channel, this shared shrine was actively tended by mariners of both faiths; the oil for the lamp that always was kept burning before the Marian image was replenished by sailors, "whether Christian or Muslim", whose ships anchored in the narrow bay leading to the shrine, wrote a late 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian author.<sup>133</sup> Both Muslim and Christian seafarers used the

<sup>129</sup> Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María* (as n. 22), vol. 3, No. 379, pp. 270-272.

<sup>130</sup> On Alfonso X and El Puerto de Santa María, see bibliography and discussion in REMENSNYDER, *La Conquistadora* (as n. 2), pp. 54f., 122, 128f.

<sup>131</sup> On Muslim veneration of Mary in Christian churches, see REMENSNYDER, *La Conquistadora* (as n. 2), pp. 149-163; and the references above (note 100) to the church of Saydanāyā, a famous site of such interconfessional Marian veneration.

<sup>132</sup> Orlandini, *Trapani succintamente descritto* (as n. 75).

<sup>133</sup> Giovanni Lorenzo d'Anania, *L'universale fabrica del mondo*, Venice 1576, p. 269. I am currently writing a book about Lampedusa and its shrine which is tentatively entitled *Island of Trust in a Sea of Danger*. In the meantime, see: Ivan ARNALDI, *Nostra Signora di Lampedusa: storia civile e materiale di un miracolo mediterraneo*, Milan 1990; Wolfgang KAISER, *La grotte de Lampedusa: pratiques et imaginaire d'un "troisième" lieu en Méditerranée à*

shrine as a refuge from the dangerous waters surrounding Lampedusa in which so many immigrants from North Africa now drown.

The suggestive evidence for Jewish and Muslim awareness of Mary's maritime powers hints at how practical necessity could compel shared devotion across religious lines.<sup>134</sup> So too does the spread among Greek Christians of belief in her intimate relationship to the sea. Anyone, regardless of faith, who braved a sea voyage, had one paramount need: to survive the trip. Fear of death is a powerful force that can erode inhibitions that rule in less fraught situations. When crisis overtook Latin Christian ships at sea, those Jews, Muslims and Greek Christians aboard probably first invoked God as they thought of him along with their own saints, but if those prayers had no effect, they could have added their voices to the chorus of Latins calling on Mary. Greek and Muslim sailors working on European ships would have had particular reason to adopt these Latin ways, given the trans-confessional solidarities that bound ships' crews together.

As Latin Christians expanded eastward in the Mediterranean, it was in fact Mary's ability to meet the needs – material and spiritual – of seafarers that ensured her reign as star of that multi-confessional sea. To be sure, European authors writing in cloister and cathedral had a part in establishing Mary's command of the waves and winds, for they extolled her with nautical and marine metaphors. But if that imagery had not resonated with lay mariners' multiple needs at sea, it would not have come to life with increasing vibrancy on the waters of the high medieval Mediterranean.

"These waters are hers" – this declaration by the *Cantigas de Santa María* in its account of Mary's miraculous protection of the Muslim merchants coming to El Puerto de Santa María could well be extended to the whole of the Mediterranean.<sup>135</sup> Ringed by her shrines, navigated by her wonder-working icons and statues, and traversed by ships bearing her name on which sailors recited daily prayers to her and people in panic beseeched her, this sea indeed by the later middle ages belonged to Mary. Soon the Atlantic would too. Erasmus would have been disappointed to learn that Mary had a long future ahead of her as queen of the maritime realm – a future profoundly shaped by the Mediterranean past.

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l'époque modern, in: *Topographien des Sakralen: Religion und Raumordnung in der Vormoderne*, ed. Susanne RAU / Gerd SCHWERHOFF, Munich 2008, pp. 306-329, here pp. 306-324; IDEM, La Madone et le marabout, in: *Lieux saints partagés*, Arles 2015, pp. 104-107; Simon MERCIECA / Joseph MUSCAT, A Territory of Grace: Lampedusa in Early Modern Times, in: *Öt Kontinens* 3 (2013), pp. 53-68.

<sup>134</sup> Alexandra Cuffel has suggested that saints particularly known for powers over weather could attract devotion from people of different faiths (personal conversation). Michele Bacci has argued that shared shrines often coalesced around saints who could meet "universal and primary requirements"; see his "Mixed" Shrines (as n. 40), p. 444.

<sup>135</sup> Alfonso X, *Cantigas de Santa María* (as n. 22), vol. 3, No. 379, p. 271.