1 The city of Palermo mourning the death
of William II, in: Peter of Eboli, *Liber ad honorem
Augusti sive de rebus Siculis.*
Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Codex 120 II, fol. 98r

A SEA-TO-SHORE PERSPECTIVE
LITTORAL AND LIMINAL SPACES OF THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN

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The present paper introduces a series of essays that study the various dimensions of liminality and littoral dynamics with a particular focus on early modern harbour cities of the Mediterranean and beyond. Rather than presenting a pre-established conceptual framework, through a small number of case studies we develop a set of questions, looking at visual constructions both at actual littoral spaces and in their pictorial representations or evocations. The questions posed will relate to the materiality of borders, the ways they were made visible by means of architecture, things and images — for example at the littoral itself or in urban structures behind it —, the specific aesthetics of variety that characterize harbour cities, and the spatial dynamics of the coast. In order to open a broad, transepochal perspective and question continuity and change over the centuries, the paper starts with a close look at a medieval image of a Mediterranean port city and then turns to the early modern period.

I. Mourning Palermo, 1189

A miniature in a manuscript of Peter of Eboli (Fig. 1) depicts the city of Palermo mourning the death of the last Norman king of Sicily William II (1166–1189).[1] The full-page miniature, a partly coloured pen-and-ink drawing, offers a view into the cityscape, with architectural elements framing the urban structure. The city is embodied by several groups of people, indicating its different quarters. The groups are differentiated as male or female, young and old, Muslims, Jews and Christians, distinguished by their costumes, hairstyles, hats or turbans. Many of

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[1] Petrus de Ebulo, *Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus siculis: Codex 120 II der Burgerbibliothek Bern: Eine Bilderchronik der Stauferzeit*, ed. by Theo Kölzer/Marlis Stähli, Sigmaringen 1994. Sibyl Kraft, *Ein Bilderbuch aus dem Königreich Sizilien: Kunsthistorische Studien zum "Liber ad honorem Augusti" des Petrus von Eboli (Codex 120 II der Burgerbibliothek Bern)*, Weimar et al. 2006. To William II see Annkristin Schlichte, *Der "gute" König: Wilhelm II. von Sizilien (1166–1189)*, Tübingen 2005.

them are shown in gestures of despair, sorrow and mourning, with their bodies driven, if not tormented, by strong emotions, directed towards the sarcophagus with the dead body of the king to the right. Inscriptions in red ink indicate the quarters and the monuments of the city. The miniature shows the segregation of the social world of late Norman Palermo and, at the same time, its plurality and its multiethnicity. Palermo as a Mediterranean port city was inhabited by peoples with various religions, mostly Arabs, Greeks, Normans, and Jews, a population formed over the centuries by conquest, changing dominions, and immigrations. This was symptomatic for a Mediterranean society of the eleventh and twelfth century, especially in the cities framing the littoral and/ or located on an island. For centuries port cities have been places of mobility and resettlement, driven by the logics of war, commerce, and the necessities of trade. In many cases, this has led to heterogeneous aesthetics and to a plurality of artistic languages, characteristics that challenge classical art historical narratives concerned with the development of styles or artistic schools.

The monumental building on the upper right side of the miniature represents the palace of the Norman kings, with its towers and the royal chapel crowned by a bell tower and a cross, identified by inscription as the "Cappella Regia" (today Cappella Palatina). There the sarcophagus of the dead king is displayed; its strigilated surface, which recalls late Roman sarcophagi, is indicated by few strokes of the pen. The church interior contains two large and three small oil lamps, a pair of massive candlesticks, and an altar with a chalice and a coloured altar cloth. Two rectangular fields flank the Royal Chapel indicating the city quarters: "Cassarum" on the right is populated by male and female inhabitants, mostly Latin, with veiled hands raised in sorrow,

whereas "Ideisini" at left shows gesticulating Muslims wearing turbans. To the left of the palace in the register above, a group of Normans is mourning, whereas in the field beside it, a garden with green trees evokes the abundance and richness of nature. The garden area is labelled "Viridarium Genoard", in Arabic the Jannat al-ard, the "Paradise of the Earth". With the tower at its left it probably refers to the garden-palace of the Zisa at the border of the city, begun by William I and completed by his son William II.[2] The trees, among them palm trees, the flowers, the variety of birds, and a hare present the fertility of the land and its flourishing under William's reign. The garden displays a courtly view of nature that can be found also in other Mediterranean contexts, Islamic as well as Byzantine, celebrated by poets and travellers and also in representations of vegetation and fauna in the decorations of the Norman palaces, such as the Sala di Ruggero in the Palazzo Reale.[3]

The lowest register of the miniature is again structured architectonically, showing the "Castrum maris" (Castello a Mare) on the right and the two fields representing city quarters, fragmented by the basin of the port. The quarters are named "[C]alza" with a population consisting mostly of Greeks, Jews and Normans, whereas the "Scerarchadium" shows Muslims pointing to the right.

The manuscript can be dated to the years 1196/97 and the miniature discussed here reflects the situation of seven years earlier, namely the moment following the death of William II. After a reign of 18 years, the Norman king died at around age 36, without a direct successor. His death led to a long, difficult and bloody struggle over the dominion of Sicily. The text and images of the *Liber* are driven by political interests and the imperial claims of the Hohenstaufen, the party of Constance, daughter of Roger II, and her husband,

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[2] Christine Ungruh, "Die normannischen Gartenpaläste in Palermo: Aneignung einer mittelmeerischen 'Koiné' im 12. Jahrhundert", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, LI (2007), pp. 1–44.

[3] Cf. *Cappella Palatina in Palermo: Geschichte, Kunst, Funktionen,* ed. by Thomas Dittelbach, Künzelsau 2011, especially the contributions by Jeremy Johns, William Tronzo and Ruggero Longo.

Henry VI, who died 1197 in Messina.[4] The miniatures are an extraordinary evocation and pictorialization of a specific moment in history. The manuscript is one of the very few surviving illustrated examples of a contemporary chronicle in verse and unique in its text-image relationship: each double page contains a poem in distychs on the left with a full page miniature on the right.

In the often quoted poem accompanying the miniature in question, the city is addressed as fortunate, being gifted with a trilingual population, "Hactenus urbs felix, populo dotata trilingui", but only until the death of the king is this happiness found. The three languages referred to here are Arabic, Latin, and Greek. In fact, the city at this time had a large Muslim community. After the Norman conquest of Palermo and Sicily following the Arab dominion (in Palermo from 831 to 1072), Islamic law had been retained on many levels. With the establishment of the monarchy, Roger II issued laws of special protection towards the Muslims, the *dhimma*, in a similar way as the Muslim rulers of Sicily before him had done towards the non-Muslim population. Freedom of religion was guaranteed by the king, in exchange for a special tax or penalty, the *jizya*. The court administration was mostly in the hands of Muslim eunuchs,[5] but the acceptance of religious diversity was already threatened in the late years of Roger's reign. Under his son William I, in 1161 violent riots were staged against the Muslim population. From the time of Roger to that of William II the presence of Muslims had been more and more concentrated in the western part of the island, in the Vallo di Mazara, whereas in the second most important port city of Northern Sicily, Messina, nearly no Muslim inhabitants remained. As we read in the accounts of the Mecca pilgrim Ibn Jubayr, who visited Messina and Palermo in the time of William II, the practice of religion among the court Muslims had become almost a secret affair. After the death of the king there were violent riots against Palermo's Muslim population by its Latin inhabitants, with Muslims being prosecuted and their goods stolen and destroyed. The miniature is therefore a document of the late, if not last, moment of a multiethnic and multireligious reality of medieval Sicily and especially of Palermo, the partly peaceful cohabitation of diverse religious and ethnic groups.[6] Beyond borders and divisions, they are united in their sorrow over the dead king. The miniature offers both an idealization of and a comment on a situation that had come to a crisis. It is clear that the Mediterranean Norman kingdom was conceptualized as a multiethnic and multireligious society, one in which coherence and social peace were understood as bound to and guaranteed by the king's body.

In the foreground of the page the painter has depicted the harbour basin, with several large fish swimming in the water as if in a pool. The basin is encompassed by a wall and enclosed by a sort of chain, mostly demarcating the lower frame of the picture space, whereas little wavy lines below the twisted chain allude to the waters of the open sea. The actual harbour of Palermo, formed by a large natural bay on rocky grounds, the so-called Cala, had already been used as a port by the Phoenicians. Over the centuries it has been reduced by landfill, and in Norman times the harbour formed an elongated half circle as it is represented in the miniature. The inscription quotes the name of this particular space: "portus Panormi", the actual name of Palermo deriving from the Greek *panormos*, which alludes to a convenient, appropriate place with the ability to moor on all sides. To the right of the basin, the miniature shows the fortifications of the harbour, the "Castrum maris", as the inscription indicates. The Castello a Mare was a defensive structure on the north-western side of the Cala, built by the Normans in the

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[4] Kraft (note 1).
[5] Jeremy Johns, *Arabic Administration and Norman Kingship in Sicily: The Royal Dīwān*, Cambridge 2002.

[6] Emperor Frederick II, the son of Constance and Henry VI, whom this manuscript celebrate, will finally expulse the Muslims from Sicily and relocate them to Lucera in Puglia.

eleventh century, probably on the place of a former mosque. Remains of the castle survived until the early twentieth century, and recent restorations and reconstructions have led to a partial rebuilding of the structure. In the miniature, the top of the castle is equipped with catapults, military machines directed against enemies that would attack the city from the sea.

The miniature of Palermo in Peter of Eboli's manuscript offers a surprisingly informative view of the cityscape, seen from a sea-to-shore perspective, that combines multiple pictorial renderings of space. At first glance, it gives the impression of a vertical order, articulated by the superimposed icons of the Castello a Mare and the Royal Palace. Looking more carefully, it is obvious that the miniature elaborates a cartographical representation of the city with its urban structure and its littoral, as if seen from the sea. Palace and castle (which are actually not on a single axis) form the poles of the lower and the higher ends of the city. The small tower on the left side of the harbour front refers to the old fortification that existed from the time of the Arab dominion, called la Calza, which gave the name to the quarter. On the whole, the miniature presents a unified image of Norman Palermo, which in reality had a rather complex structure, consisting of the old fortified centre of the Cassaro (here shown as a quarter in the middle), the peninsula between the two rivers that formed the old city, surrounded by the new town mostly built in Norman times.[7] The new ground southeast of the port, gained by the landfill, became the place for markets and foreign traders, located in proximity of the incoming goods and people, later forming merchant colonies (the Pisans and the Genoese, among others), as was characteristic for other major Mediterranean port cities as, for example, Constantinople from the medieval until the early modern period.

Palermo's harbour and its fleet guaranteed the Mediterranean dominions the Normans aimed for. Both as a prime trading spot and as a military base, Palermo's and the Norman's power strongly depended on the harbour and the fleet.[8] That its military role persisted beyond the Norman conquest is confirmed by the description of Palermo by the geographer Muhammad al-Idrisi (ca. 1099–1165/66) who worked at the Sicilian court. The political importance of the fleet (not confined to the harbour of Palermo) is evident from the eminent role of the commanders, the emir of emirs or in Latin *ammiratus ammiratorum*, regarding the political and strategic position of the kingdom within the system of Mediterranean powers.[9] The position of the *ammiratus* had dominated Norman politics in the decades before William's death. In several cases, it was held by personalities that moved between the religions of Islam and Christianity and that had served various Mediterranean powers. The most famous is the *ammiratus* George of Antioch, probably an Armenian who had served at the Byzantine court and also at that of the Zirid Sultan Tamim ibn Muizz in Ifriqyia before offering his service to the Normans and becoming the main impresario of Roger II. His predecessor Christodulus was most probably a *converso*, while Ahmed es-Sikeli, in charge for William I and the young William II, served the Normans as Peter, but later returned to Islam and took service under the Almohads on the African coast. These individuals are indicative of the Mediterranean careers that we encounter for centuries in various forms. They are characteristic of an elite that shared aesthetic values and practices in the competing Mediterranean courts.

This brings us back to the notion of plurality in the new Norman monarchy, which tried to establish itself in the middle of the Mediterranean world, and

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[7] For an overview on the city structure of medieval Palermo see especially the essay by Concetta Sottile, "Palermo, Memorie di tracciati urbani", in: *Luoghi dello scambio e città del Mediterraneo: storie, culture, progetti*, ed. by Concetta Fallanca De Blasio/Alireza Naser Eslami, Reggio Calabria 2003, pp. 385–405.

[8] The classical study of the Norman Sicilian fleet is: Willy Cohn, *Die Geschichte der normannisch-sicilischen Flotte unter der Regierung Rogers I. und Rogers II. (1060-1154)*, Wrocław 1910.

[9] *Giorgio di Antiochia: l'arte della politica in Sicilia nel XII secolo tra Bisanzio e l'Islam*, ed. by Mario Re/Cristina Rognoni, Palermo 2009.

in two dimensions. On the one hand, there was the necessity to be competitive and participate in the Mediterranean polyglot court culture, a world of marble fountains with their play of water and light, of carved ivory, rock crystal, embroidered silk or shimmering mosaics. This is fully evidenced by the artistic patronage of the Normans and the court workshops, where Byzantine, Islamic, and Latin artists and artisans collaborated. When Ibn Jubayr came to Palermo he was impressed by the beauty of the city and its gardens, for him comparable only to Cordoba. The monument that received his highest admiration, however, as the most wonderful edifice of the world was the Martorana, the church commissioned by George of Antioch, decorated with precious marbles, mosaics, and gilded glass, "which […] bewitch the soul". His only wish was that the monument would become a mosque.[10] On the other hand, there was the multiethnic and multireligious population of Palermo and of Sicily as a whole with its segregations and modes of coexistence on various levels. The interplay of these two aspects – the first the position of Sicily within the Mediterranean, the second the Mediterranean population of Sicily itself – is rather complex and depends on, among other things, social stratification and the local dynamics of cohabitation.[11] Nonetheless, Ibn Jubayr (himself not a neutral voice) continues his description of Palermo by turning attention from the splendour of the Martorana to that of Christian women, who, he notes, in fact look like Muslim ladies, fluent in speech, "dressed in robes of gold-embroidered silk, wrapped in elegant cloaks, concealed by coloured veils, and shod with gilt slippers". They would "parade to their churches […] bearing all the adornments of Muslim women, including jewellery, henna on the fingers, and perfumes".[12] A somewhat ironic and gendered cross-cultural look at

the visual culture of street life in Norman Palermo, it invites us to return to the city in despair. One would not expect such adornment in relation to the women shown in this miniature, and the display of this population follows one of differentiation rather than convergence. However, it might well be that the women in the Cassarum are Christians and those in Ideisini Muslims even if they look very similar. Picturing difference thus defines its own limits in a given context. In a broader perspective, codes and modes of diversification and assimilation between various communities is a constitutive element of the visual culture of port cities.

In the miniature of Peter of Eboli, Palermo's harbour is empty, without ships, and its chain is closed. It shows the city returned onto herself, even the fish (essential for the markets of the city) seem to take part in the mourning. Chains were part of the defensive structure of harbour fortifications, usually displayed between towers and sustained by logs or other devices to keep them floating on the water. They were used as effective barriers against enemies and pirates approaching via sea, they were raised and lowered by a windlass or other mechanisms. When the Pisans invaded Palermo shortly before the Norman conquest in 1063, they broke the chains of the city's harbour, looted six ships and adduced the treasure to Pisa. An inscription on the cathedral celebrates this act and binds the foundation of the new cathedral itself to this event.[13] In 1290 Pisa's own harbour chains were broken by the Genoese, taken as booty to Genoa, where in parts they were publicly displayed on the city walls and façades of churches, city gates, and public palaces until 1860, when the city restituted them to Pisa as sign of the unity of the new Italian State; they are now on display in Pisa's monumental graveyard, the Camposanto. The famous harbour chains of Constantinople, now

[10] *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. and ed. by Roland J. C. Broadhurst, London 1952, p. 349.
[11] Cf. Gerhard Wolf, "Alexandria aus Athen zurückerobern? Perspektiven einer mediterranen Kunstgeschichte mit einem Seitenblick auf das mittelalterliche Sizilien", in: *Lateinisch-griechisch-arabische Begegnungen: Kulturelle Diversität im*

Mittelmeerraum des Spätmittelalters, ed. by Margit Mersch/Ulrike Ritzerfeld, Berlin 2009, pp. 39–62.
[12] *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr* (note 10), p. 350.
[13] Marc von der Höh, *Erinnerungskultur und frühe Kommune: Formen und Funktionen des Umgangs mit der Vergangenheit im hochmittelalterlichen Pisa (1050–1150)*, Berlin 2006.

preserved in parts in the Naval Museum of Istanbul, spanned the full width of the Golden Horn, stretched between two towers, reaching from Galata to the quarter called Phosphorion, whereas other chains could even block the Bosphorus; for centuries they protected the city against various assaults. In 1453, they closed the city from the seaside, but were not effective against the invasion from the land when Mehmet II carried ships from the Bosphorus over the hill into the Golden Horn. Harbour chains are integral part of later designs for harbour fortifications, like the ones by Mariano Taccola (ca. 1430) or later those by Francesco di Giorgio Martini.[14] Beyond their functional dimension as fortification and as legal and fiscal border lines, harbour chains had a symbolic meaning: they stood for the integrity of a city and demonstrated the materiality of its borders. Their double use as tools and symbols embodies the peculiar liminality of ports and harbours as the place of exchange, but also their vulnerability. In the case of the miniature of Peter of Eboli, they can be understood in a similar way. They indicate the vulnerability of the city during the interregnum: with the death of the king, the harbour had to be closed and commerce had to stop, as in times of war. Here, death operates as the ultimate border. The death of the sovereign has destabilized the urban and social structure, creating a liminal "betwixt and between",[15] also destabilizing the city in its relation to the sea. Indeed, the text on the verso emphasizes that both sea and earth are weeping the dead king. In the foreground of the miniature, to the left of the harbour, a prominent female figure raises her arms in a gesture of despair touching her loose hair. Her corkscrew locks and the colour of her dress echo the chain, she seems to enhance this mo-

ment of liminality to the point of herself personifying the mourning harbour city of Palermo.

II. Littoral, Liminal, and Legal Regulations

In an important article, Oleg Grabar argued for a shared Mediterranean culture of the courts especially for the twelfth century, with a common taste for specific luxury goods and precious artefacts that went beyond political and religious borders;[16] we have referred to this aspect for Norman Sicily above. However, excavations in Alanya on the littoral of what is today southern Turkey[17] and in many other sites have shown that even in cities with otherwise divided religious quarters, a shared material culture existed and was practiced among non-elite inhabitants, alongside clear social and religious divisions. Thus the horizon must be widened: a further challenge for art history concerned with port cities and transcultural interaction is how to define its objects in relation to material and visual culture more generally. One of the most intriguing questions that still needs to be thoroughly studied is how borders are defined or negotiated via things, architecture, rituals, religion, and power structures, within the Mediterranean and beyond. The several thousand documents of Jewish merchants stored and found in the Geniza of Fustat (Cairo) – investigated on a large scale first by S. D. Goitein (1900–1985) since the 1930s and in ongoing projects by other scholars[18] – are extremely important for an understanding of the role of trade and legal matters in the medieval Mediterranean societies in a Jewish and Arab maritime network, within and across religious or political borders. In the last essay of this volume, Peter N. Miller presents the documents that testify to Goitein's

[14] Giorgio Simoncini, "L'architettura dei porti e appendice: la concezione del porto dall'Alberti al Canina", in: *Sopra i porti di mare*, I: *il trattato di Teofilo Gallaccini e la concezione architettonica dei porti dal Rinascimento alla Restaurazione*, Florence 1993, pp. 37–125.

[15] Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*", in: *Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, proceedings of the American Ethnological Society, ed. by Melford E. Spiro, Seattle 1964, pp. 4–20.

[16] Oleg Grabar, "The Shared Culture of Objects", in: *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. by Henry Maguire, Washington DC 1997, pp. 115–129.

[17] Scott Redford *et al.*, *Landscape and the State in Medieval Anatolia: Seljuk Gardens and Pavilions of Alanya, Turkey*, Oxford 2000.

[18] See the references in the essay by Peter N. Miller in this volume, especially p. 113, note 3.

difficult relationship to Fernand Braudel and examines the shift from the publication project regarding the trade between India and the Mediterranean (the "India book") to the shaping of Goitein's monumental work *A Mediterranean Society*. The Geniza documents are equally revealing for the understanding of what they tell us about the medieval trade in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea operating from Cairo, whereas in the broader Mediterranean area including the Black Sea, from about 1100 the Italian sea republics became increasingly important protagonists.

In the liminal spaces of the littoral and of the sea, significant legal concerns structured the ambivalent realities of seafaring and maritime trade. These legal concerns could have visible and invisible impact on the construction and making of spaces, seen both from land and from sea. Legal questions extend towards the sea and vice versa, maritime laws have impacts on the littoral societies or social groups. These could even be of ephemeral or transitional character, for example regarding passengers tied together by navigation on a specific vessel (often a heterogeneous, multireligious group). Maritime legal regulations do not so much regard territorial issues but questions of discipline on ship, passenger rights, risk management, jettison, jetsam, ship collisions, joint ownership, and restitution claims. According to Ibn al-'Attar, a Muslim jurist active in Cordoba, the finder of jetsam must declare his findings to the *qadi*, announce it in a public place like the market, and only after one year can he call it his own possession.[19] An even more important and intensely discussed topic concerns questions related to shared ownerships, legal forms like the *qirad* or *mudaraba*, *chreokoinonia*, or *commenda*. Here, very similar regulations are to be found in the maritime legislation of the Byzantine dominion, the Islamic world, and the Italian sea republics. It seems that the legal form of the *qirad* had a strong impact on the development of the *commenda* in the West. In a place like Amalfi, maritime laws were recorded from the ninth century onwards, again strongly resembling Islamic and Byzantine regulations, but significantly changing from Latin to the Italian vernacular in the thirteenth century. As Khalilieh has argued,[20] Byzantine and Muslim lawyers mainly applied the same principles of maritime law (with some significant exceptions), although they belonged – as Molly Greene has shown – to two distinct legal systems.[21]

Furthermore, commercial and diplomatic treaties between wide-ranging or/and provincial authorities around the Mediterranean Sea would regulate trade and commerce, although these could obviously always be broken by the parties involved (Tunis and Pisa in 1157; Florence and the Ottoman Court of Mehmet II after 1453; the trading privileges obtained by the French Court in the *Capitulations* between the Ottoman emperors and the French kings, starting in the early sixteenth century).[22]

Communal, as well as royal or imperial legal regulations and treaties between different sovereigns or political entities could regulate the harbour itself, in regards to questions of access and especially taxation. From the twelfth to the thirteenth century, the harbour of Genoa saw a set of significant changes promoted by the communal government, which aimed at creating larger areas for ships, anchorage, and embarkment and disembarkment. Private and communal rights of the littoral and harbour had to be negotiated, leading sometimes to very specific forms of social regulations and spatial arrangements. In 1162/63 the commune of Genoa managed to restructure the eastern side of the city's bay, building a larger pier, the Molo Vecchio, above the rocky grounds reaching into

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[19] Hassan Salih Khalilieh, *Admiralty and Maritime Laws in the Mediterranean Sea (ca. 800–1050): The* Kitāb Akriyat al-Sufun *vis-à-vis the* Nomos Rodion Nautikos, Leiden/Boston 2006, p. 250.
[20] *Ibidem*, p. 123.

[21] Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Princeton/Oxford 2010, pp. 15–17 and 138–141.
[22] *The Ottoman Capitulations: Text and Context*, ed. by Maurits H. van den Boogert/Kate Fleet, proceedings of the conference, Rome 2004; Maurits H.

the sea, and at the same time and close by a church as well as a house for the officials controlling and maintaining the harbour. One of the results of the urban regulation and transformation of the larger harbour structure was the building of houses with shops in the lower story that were in close proximity to the pier, in the nearby area of Ripa; a form of shops that might have migrated to Genoa from the Levant.[23] The area saw the construction of an impressive front of houses with porticoes along the littoral, approximately 900 meters long, that even centuries later would impress visitors. Nearly contemporary to this was the enlargement of the western side of the Genoese littoral, at Prè, which by the beginning of the twelfth century consisted of small private properties. It would seem that the commune in circa 1163 managed to buy these different possessions, deprivatize the area, and create a larger communal space for ship embarkments.[24] The construction of larger embarkment and disembarkment areas together with fortifications must be understood in relation to the growing size and therefore commercial power of the landing ships. Both the harbour construction and the ship building in the arsenal should be studied together. Another important feature is the storage space within the city, the *foundouks* or *fondachi*, housing often not only goods but also people and working as 'machines' of circulation and rest.[25] And fundamental is the availability of fresh water (so abundant for example in medieval Palermo and lacking in Constantinople) as well as the regulation of public and private access to it, and this, again, has a strong impact on the economic powers and the social formations of the harbour cities. All these aspects

contribute to the urbanistic situation and dynamics of harbour cities, under changing epochal premises, from the waterfronts to the interior spaces.

III. Livorno, ca. 1604

With the construction of the new harbour city of Livorno, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, legal regulations again were extremely important to position it within the Mediterranean system of trade and power, but also for the urban life itself.[26] The Livornese laws guaranteed freedom of religion and settlement to Jews and to a certain extent to other religious groups, like the Armenians and the English, but not to Muslims. The *Costituzione livornina*, dated 1591 and 1593, invited "all merchants of all nations" to settle in the Tuscan city and promised freedom of trade, tax redemption, storage facilities, and in theory allowed for the possession of books of all religions.[27] Moreover, Jews in Livorno were given the right to buy real estate. The harbour, promoted by the Medici grand dukes to revive the Tuscan economy, operated as a free port: that meant the free movement of goods and extremely low custom duties. Thus, the city saw a spectacular growth in the seventeenth century. Livorno served as a port for ships on their way to or from the Levant, but the city was also deeply involved in the corsairing economy of the seventeenth century. The grand ducal order of the Knights of Saint Stephen (Cavalieri di Santo Stefano), based in Pisa but operating from Livorno, would venture against Ottoman ships and convoys. In 1590, a new fort after an original design by Bernardo Buontalenti was constructed, as well as deep jetties for big ships. Twenty years later, a new pier of

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van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls, and Beraths in the 18th century*, Leiden 2005.

[23] Luciano Grossi Bianchi, *Una città portuale del Medioevo: Genova nei secoli X–XVI*, Genoa 1980, p. 304.

[24] *Ibidem*, p. 302.

[25] Ennio Poleggi, "Casa-bottega e città portuale di antico regime", in: *Genova, Venezia, il Levante nei secoli XII–XIV*, conference proceedings Genoa/Venice 2000, ed. by Gherardo Ortalli *et al.*, Venice 2001, pp. 159–174;

Michel Balard, "L'amministrazione genovese e veneziana nel Mediterraneo orientale", *ibidem*, pp. 201–228.

[26] Liciano Moni, *La costruzione di una città portuale: Livorno*, Livorno 2002; Olimpia Vaccari, *Breve storia di Livorno*, Pisa 2006.

[27] Filippo Sassetti, an erudite merchant, in a letter dated in the 1580s, has provided us with the economic reflections that were at the back of the new regulations. Cf. *Lettere edite e inedite di Filippo Sassetti raccolte e annotate da Ettore Marcucci*, Florence 1855, pp. 102–116.

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2 Cristofano Gaffurri after a drawing by Jacopo Ligozzi, Table with a view of the harbour of Livorno. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

enormous dimensions was built, creating a protected area reaching far into the seascape. From 1629, a new quarter for merchants was added to the city.

Furthermore, the grand dukes were engaged in engineering projects of large scale – like the digging of an impressive channel to connect the harbour to the river Arno, for transport of goods to Tuscany's capital Florence. In short, in the seventeenth century Livorno must be considered the most modern and best equipped port in the Mediterranean.

Tuscan sovereignty over and protection of the free port of Livorno finds its visual expression not only in the urban structure of the city, in its massive fort, but also in sculptural monuments, such as the four large bronze figures of African and Asian slaves by Pietro Tacca, tied by chains to a marble statue of the Grand Duke Ferdinando I. The bronze figures represent those whose bodies and physical forces formed the basis of the economic success of the harbour (and not only that of Livorno). Numerous slaves were physically in-

volved in digging the channels and building the structure of the new port. In addition, they were moving the oars of the galleys during their navigation through the salty waters.

The Medici claims were also articulated in representations of the city and its harbour. Among these is the famous table in *pietra dura* made for the Grand Duke Ferdinando I by Cristofano Gaffurri after a design by Pietro Ligozzi in 1601–1604 (Fig. 2).[28] The table is composed by the meticulous cutting of semi-precious stones in a variety of colours, lapis lazuli, green and yellow jasper, and a range of other stones. It is highly probable that the raw materials were imported via Livorno and crafted in the workshops of the grand duke, using the most elaborate and advanced cutting techniques.

The table shows Livorno in the upper right, from a sea-to-shore perspective, with the fortified harbour's basin, the arsenal, and other buildings, all clearly recognizable. The representation does not simply focus on the cityscape, but emphasizes the vast sea in front of Livorno's shores, the lapis lazuli with its white waves and golden spots of pyrite acting as a mineralized sea. The strong, very skilfully rendered foreshortenings of the built structures in the back have the effect of an extreme visual expansion of the sea, resulting in an apparently vast open space that serves as the arena for several ships entering or leaving the harbour. Both galleys, among them those of the Ordine di Santo Stefano, and various sailing boats, navigate between several lighthouses and towers. The towers refer to actual buildings, among them are the circular medieval Fanale, the smaller Magnale, and the Torre del Marzocco to the left. The latter was constructed in the fifteenth century when Pisa and the adjacent coast came under Florentine dominion; it served the fortification of the coast and antedates the new harbour by circa 150 years. The tower has an octagonal form and is covered on all sides in local white marble revetment, with the names of the eight major winds written in capital letters on each of its corners. With the bronze flag of the Marzocco on its top, it was a Florentine Tower of Winds. The gallery on the top of the high structure (ca. 54 m) allows a 360 degree view; it offers a panorama of the coast with the newly built harbour and the city, but also invites one to gaze over the open sea and allows for the control of navigational movements on the surface of the water.

The tower in the foreground of the table is the Torre della Meloria, rebuilt by Ferdinando I (no longer preserved). It took part in this chain of towers that, beyond being lighthouses and fortifying the maritime territory, indicated to sailors the shallow banks and small rocky islands, and create a majestic entry to the port. Since the *veduta* of the harbour of Livorno with its marvellous agate frame served as the surface of a table, it was looked at in an angular view from above, with the Torre della Meloria forming the geometrical axis. It doubles the position of the viewers in front of it, directing their gaze in a tower-to-shore perspective, ingeniously inserting a cartographical dimension in the pictorial mode of representation. One could imagine the grand duke with foreign ambassadors or his naval commanders leaning over the table and celebrating the assemblage of the imported stones fashioned by his court artists into an icon of his harbour, which exposes through its preciousness the wealth and power of the Tuscan state, including its religious fervour.

IV. Looking at Sea and Land: Cityscapes and Coastlines

Harbour cities structurally look in two directions, to the land and to the sea; this double engagement is often reflected in their urban structure. Harbour cities are constructed to see and to control the sea from strategic points, as they are built to be seen from the sea;

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[28] On the table designed by Ligozzi, now in the Uffizi (Inv. Mobili Artistici 1505), see most recently Annamaria Giusti, in: *Jacopo Ligozzi: "pittore uni-* *versalissimo"*, exh. cat., ed. by Alessandro Cecchi/Lucilla Conigliello/Marzia Faietti, Florence 2014, p. 142, no. 48.

even if this visibility under certain circumstances could enhance their vulnerability. Not only lighthouses, but also minarets, bell towers, churches, and mosques can function as visual markers. They offer visibility both from land to sea and from sea to land and can be used as fixed points for navigation and piloting. Very often, in the seventeenth century and also earlier, they were at the same time markers of a sacred landscape. This is true for the tenth-century mosque in Mahdiyya in present day Tunisia, erected on an artificial platform on the shore with a mihrab in the wall on the sea-side. It is also true for the ambitious twelfth-century Tower of Hassan in Rabat, a minaret that, had it reached its planned height, with its position close to the estuary mouth of the Bouregreg river to the Atlantic would have served as a navigational tool as well as a visual marker of sacralized territorial claims. The sea route towards Palestine from Venice was flanked with churches on hills along the coastline. In times of emergency, such sacred posts, visible from the sea, might also serve as interreligious sites.[29]

This brings us from the harbour cities to the coastlines, that is, outside the fortified spaces to the construction of the seascapes and landscapes as such, as well as to their cartographic or pictorial representation. Coasts are undefined, unbound spaces, the liminal area between land and sea. They are unstable zones without a precise border and are in constant flux, changed by erosion, storms, and aggradation. Territorial and visual markers, fortifications, piers, and jetties on the littoral all transformed the coastal areas; the methods and conventions of mapping translated these areas into coastlines, for navigational purposes as well as in their role as part of politically, legally, and fiscally defined territories.

In early Islamic cartography as well as in porto-lan charts, like the early *Carta Pisana*, the Mediterranean appears as a spatial icon.[30] The drafted coastlines are often inscribed with a dense sequence of toponyms, seemingly forming the outline of the sea and the border of the land. The land behind the coastal zone remains unspecified; in less settled and therefore less 'named' areas the littoral appears as a single line. In the portolans, written records or books that offer textual descriptions of the coasts and of navigational passages, the problem of coastlines was approached in different ways. Here, we find the technique of representing the coastal area as seen from a sea-to-shore perspective. The lines are mostly abstract renderings, or they connect profiles of mountains, promontories, and buildings to new forms of visualisation, insisting equally on perception, projection, and measurement. These astonishing scaled profile views of the coastlines change according to a given distance. A good example can be found in Jacob Aertsz Colom's *Colom de la Mer Mediterrannée*, published in Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century.[31]

In this introduction we have offered a close look at two images of the late twelfth and early seventeenth century, respectively. Both are representations of a harbour city viewed from within its specific cultural horizon and both present a sea-to-shore or harbour perspective, even if through different pictorial codes. These cases allow us to formulate questions regarding the monumental and pictorial construction of the littoral as a liminal space in social, political, commercial, military, and religious terms. Similar questions are approached in various ways in the essays that follow. They can be explored from two perspectives or directions. The first is that of travelling or looking along

[29] 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. by Erik Thunø/Gerhard Wolf, Rome 2004, pp. 223–248.

[30] Emilie Savage-Smith, "Das Mittelmeer in der islamischen Kartographie des Mittelalters", in: *Das Meer, der Tausch und die Grenzen der Repräsentation*, ed.

by Hannah Baader/Gerhard Wolf, Zürich *et al.* 2010, pp. 239–262; Ramon J. Pujades i Bataller, *Les cartes portolanes: la representació medieval d'una mar solcada*, Barcelona *et al.* 2007.

[31] Jacob Aertsz Colom, *Colom de la Mer Mediterrannée*, Amsterdam 1650; see for example p. 72, "Le Goulfe de Venetia, et aussi les Isles". Hannah Baader is preparing a study on these profile views of the coast.

the littoral, that is, from along the sequence of harbour cities or villages and the coastlines or coastal zones outside the inhabited places. The essay of Joachim Rees discusses these dynamics for early modern Japan and the Netherlands, in a transcultural and comparative perspective, but it engages also with the second direction, namely, approaching harbour cities from the sea. Here, particular attention could be given to the construction of a monumental and/or pictorial image of the city by means of architectonic regulations or gestures that give the city a seaside façade. Examples of this include Genoa in the twelfth century, Venice over the centuries, with its majestic and theatrical Bacino di San Marco, as well as Alexandria, Istanbul, Lisbon, and many other cities. For the Mediterranean, of particular interest are the monumental projects of the sixteenth and seventeenth century through which the seaside façade of a city was either built *ex novo* or reformulated. Stephanie Hanke's essay discusses such façades in Palermo, Messina, and Naples, with a special focus on the implications of royal representational projects and the invention of the promenade. These can be understood as symptomatic interventions in a politically marginalized Southern Italy. Through her examination of the seventeenth-century city palace of Toulon, Brigitte Sölch's essay offers a case study on the architectural decoration of ships and buildings, insisting on its military dimension, body politics, and the role of slavery. Chains in the context of harbour cities are not only those that spanned over the entry to the port, but also those that bounded prisoners and slaves. The pictorial *imaginaire* of the liminal space between the horizontal extension of the sea and the staging of Greco-Roman architecture in the light of Claude Lorrain's port scenes, with their embarking or otherwise performing actors, is the topic of Itay Sapir's essay. It explores the pre-Nietzschean aesthetics of these paintings in the dialectics of distance and proximity, on the *limina* between the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

However, the liminality of harbour cities is not restricted to the first and primary threshold space – the passage from sea to land –, as monumentalized as this might be. The entry to the harbour and the first steps on land are stratified by various thresholds that are diversified according to the social and political status of who and what is arriving or who and what is departing. More intriguing in the present context is the fact that the liminal space of the harbour cities is a space articulated and organized if not controlled by a series of thresholds or even borders, from the landing ship up to the city gate on the land-side walls.[32] It would thus be interesting to study the urban texture and transformations behind the monumental façades, like that in Palermo. What does indeed survive of the Arab-Norman quarter of the Kalsa? What are the architectonic interventions from the early modern period and, more generally, what is the impact of the palimpsest of building histories on the formation and transformation of social, cultural, and religious thresholds over the centuries or even today? What are the politics of marking and confining communities in multiethnic cities, what are contested or shared spaces? What are visual and non-visual techniques of exclusion, or techniques of deliberate exclusion from view? The miniature of Peter of Eboli allows a glimpse into the stratified liminal space of Palermo, offering an imaginary view from the sea side into the mourning multilayered city, opening in front of the observer-reader notwithstanding its closed chain and harbour walls. Who in fact sees the city as a whole? Who is allowed, feels encouraged, or gets paid to create its cartographic image? How do early modern maps represent and articulate the dynamics

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[32] On this topic see also Hannah Baader/Gerhard Wolf, "Ästhetiken der Schwelle: Sieben Aspekte der Morphologie/Topologie von Hafenstädten im nachantiken *Mediterraneum*", in: *Harbors and Harbor Cities in the Eastern Med-* *iterranean from Antiquity to Byzantium: Recent Discoveries and New Approaches*, ed. by Sabine Ladstätter/Thomas Schmidts/Felix Pirson, Vienna/Istanbul 2014 (in print).

of multilayered liminality? Çiğdem Kafescioğlu's essay analyses these aspects in a study of late sixteenth-century maps and images of Istanbul in relation to their experimentation with a multifocal representation of space. These maps are strongly related to the Ottoman court, but it is not just the view of the sultan and his officials that conditions this particular imaging of the city; the artists themselves play an important role in such transcultural dialogues inventing and responding to new representational paradigms. The sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Mediterranean is a dynamic area; even more so if we consider, as do the essays in this volume, a shared interest of all the protagonists in the aesthetics and politics of space.

However, the early modern Mediterranean and its ports must be studied in a wider horizon or even global context, beyond its iconic borders or coastlines. For new approaches to the harbour cities of the early modern era, the recent scholarship on Mocha and on Chaul offers revealing examples, with new insights into the urban space of a trading society at the Red Sea[33] and into seasonal constructions of ports and the co-existence of harbours used and controlled by different social and political groups, operating in close proximity and interdependence in the Indian Ocean. As Miller shows, Goitein's work with its broad conceptual and geographical range from India to the Mediterranean has become a source of inspiration for current and future research, that looks at these and other seas in a transregional or global perspective.[34]

Abstract

Harbour cities look in two directions, to the land and to the sea; this double engagement is often reflected in their urban structure. Harbour cities are constructed to see and to control the sea from strategic points, as they are built to be seen from the sea. This paper looks at visual constructions at actual littoral spaces and at their pictorial representations or evocations. The questions posed relate to the materiality of borders, the ways they were made visible by means of architecture, things, and images, the specific aesthetics of variety that characterize harbour cities, and the spatial dynamics of the coast. It argues that in the liminal spaces of the littoral and of the sea, significant legal concerns structure the ambivalent realities of seafaring and maritime trade; they have visible and invisible impact on the making and transformation of space. Two case studies, regarding the miniature of Palermo mourning the death of William II in Peter of Eboli's *Liber ad honorem Augusti* (1196/97) and the table in *pietra dura* showing the harbour of Livorno by Jacopo Ligozzi and Cristofano Gaffurri (1601/1604) introduce the main arguments of the essay and those of the volume in general.

[33] Nancy Um, *The Merchant Houses of Mocha: Trade and Architecture in an Indian Ocean Port*, Seattle 2009; Pushkar Sohoni, "Medieval Chaul under the Nizam Shahs: A Historic and Archaeological Investigation", in: *The Visual World of Muslim India: The Art, Culture and Society of the Deccan in the Early Modern Era*, ed. by Laura Parodi, London 2014, pp. 221–242.
[34] Cf. for example: *The Sea: Thalassography and Historiography*, ed. by Peter N. Miller, Ann Arbor 2013.