Department of Ancient History
Faculty of Arts
Macquarie University

Superstition, Sin and Subversion:

Maritime Culture in Constantinople and Port Cities of the East in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium

by Janet Wade, BAncHist (Hons)

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Summary

The importance of sea-going trade to the Late Antique economy is widely recognised in scholarship, yet the people associated with this trade and its social impact are often overlooked. The sea played a significant social and cultural role in the lives, traditions and psyche of those living in and around the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. In large port cities like Constantinople and Alexandria, the maritime community must have had a substantial effect on everyday life, culture and social dynamics. This thesis examines the people and professions which comprised maritime society. It looks at leisure establishments such as taverns, theatres, baths and brothels, and at those who worked in them, servicing mariners when they were onshore. Civil and maritime legislation, literary sources and archaeological evidence are investigated to conduct a sociological study of maritime society, its associated culture, and its influence on general society in the fourth to seventh centuries.

The idea that members of the maritime community were collectively viewed as outsiders on the periphery of society is explored. So too is the role of sailors and sea-merchants in lower-class leisure culture in urban centres. Distinguishing features of maritime sub-culture are considered, including seafaring superstitions, traditions and practices. The role of maritime society in episodes of unrest is also investigated. Mariners provided strong-arm support for religious and political leaders, displayed a natural propensity for trouble, and were the perfect recruits for a range of uprisings. Importantly, the maritime community also facilitated communication networks that enabled institutions like the Church and circus factions to function as successful empire-wide organisations. Maritime sub-culture may have been an undesirable element of society, yet it was a significant one. It helped to shape the nature of Late Antique and Early Byzantine society and culture; even in Constantinople, the Queen of Cities.

Declaration

I, Janet Wade, declare that this thesis is my own work except where I have given fully documented references to the work of others. I understand that using the work of another person without stating or acknowledging the source is an act of plagiarism and that all forms of plagiarism and unauthorised collusion are regarded seriously by Macquarie University. I declare that this thesis has not previously been submitted for assessment at a tertiary institution.

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List of Abbreviations

ACO *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. E. Schwartz, 4 vols (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter De Gruyter, 1914-40).

CJC *Corpus Iuris Civilis,* eds. P. Krueger, T. Mommsen, R. Schoell and G. Kroll, 3 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892-1928).

CJR *Theodosiani Libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges Novellae ad Theodosianum Pertinentes* (*Corpus Iuris Romani*), eds. T. Mommsen and P. Meyer, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905).

EG *Epistolographi Graeci*, ed. R. Hercher (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1873).

MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1882-94).

PG *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J.P. Migne, 161 vols (Paris, 1857-66).

PL *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844-65).

RSL *Νομος Ροδιων Ναυτικος. The Rhodian Sea Law*, trans. W. Ashburner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

Introduction

General Introduction

Standing within the city walls of Constantinople in the fourth century, residents and visitors alike would have been in no doubt that they were in a port city. No matter where they stood, it is likely they could see or smell the sea.[1] The *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitae*[2] records that eleven of the total thirteen administrative regions within the fifth-century city were still bordered by water—and this was after the Theodosian walls had been built and the city enlarged.[3] When the Gothic king Athanaric visited Constantinople in 381, Jordanes says that he was totally captivated by the imperial maritime city:

> He marvelled as he beheld the situation of the city, the coming and going of the ships, the splendid walls, and the people of divers nations gathered like a flood of waters streaming from different regions into one basin.[4]

Themistius refers to fourth-century Constantinople as the earth's hub, a city that linked the continents and acted as an anchorage for all the world's seaborne trade.[5] Archaeological finds from the excavations of the Theodosian Harbour bear this out,

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[1] P. Magdalino, 'The Maritime Neighborhoods of Constantinople: Commercial and Residential Functions, Sixth to Twelfth Centuries', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 54 (2000), 209.

[2] Henceforth shown as *Notitia*.

[3] J. Matthews, 'The Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae', in *Two Romes. Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, eds. L. Grig and G. Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 81-115; Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 209.

[4] Jordanes, *Getica* 28.142-3 in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum Antiquissimorum Tomi 5 Pars Prior*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1882), 95 = MGH. English trans. in C.C. Mierow, *The Gothic History of Jordanes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915), 91: 'Aithanaricoque rege ... regia urbe ingressus est miransque: "en", inquid, "cerno, quod saepe incredulus audiebam", famam videlicet tantae urbis: et huc illuc oculos volvens nunc situm urbis commeatuque navium, nunc moenia clara prospectans miratur, populosque diversarum gentium quasi fonte in uno e diversis partibus scaturriente unda'.

[5] Themistius, *Or.* 6.83c-d, 4-17 in *Themistii, Orationes*, ed. G. Dindorf (Leipzig: C. Cnobloch, 1832), 100. English trans. in P. Heather and D. Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century. Select Orations of Themistius*, Translated Texts for Historians 36 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 197-8.

confirming that ships laden with cargo were sailing into Constantinople from ports near and far.[6]

Throughout Late Antiquity, merchants, sailors and ships were drawn to Constantinople. Wandering through the city's bustling markets and harbours, one would encounter seafarers from coastal regions and islands throughout the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and more distant lands.[7] Constantinople became the Christian imperial capital of the eastern empire, yet it always remained a maritime trading city, as Byzantium had been before it.[8] Emperors actively fostered maritime trade, and by extension (whether they wanted to or not), they also attracted sailors and merchants. The sea and the seafarers who traversed it were ever-present in the lives of the people of Constantinople and other port cities of the East. Despite this, the Late Antique literary sources rarely mention sailors, sea-traders or other members of the maritime community in their cities. References to them—when they are mentioned at all—are often incidental or disparaging. The dearth of evidence for the existence of mariners is not only limited to sources dealing with the eastern capital. The presence of the maritime crowd in any major port city is seldom mentioned.[9]

The situation is no different in modern scholarship. Scholars often refer to Constantinople as a maritime metropolis, but rarely as a working port city. Thus, there has been little acknowledgement of how Constantinople's maritime trading character affected everyday life. Yet the eastern capital *was* a large port city; its inhabitants were constantly surrounded by water and the people and products of maritime trade. This maritime setting—and the culture that came with it—was the

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[6] R. Asal, 'Commerce in Istanbul and the Port of Theodosius', in *Istanbul: 8000 Years. Brought to Daylight. Marmaray, Metro, Sultanahmet Excavations*, eds. A.K. Pekin and S. Kangal (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Foundation, 2007), 183-4.

[7] Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 183; M.L. Rautman, *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire* (Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2006), 85; J. Wade, 'Sailors, Merchants and the Maritime Cults that Sailed into the Ports (and Streets) of Early Byzantium', in *Byzantium, Its Neighbours and Its Cultures*, Byzantina Australiensia 20, eds. D. Dzino and K. Parry (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2014), 269.

[8] For a description of Byzantium as a maritime trading city, see Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12, 526d-e, trans. C.B. Gulick, in *Trade, Transport and Society in the Ancient World. A Sourcebook*, eds. F. Meijer and O. Van Nijf (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 14.

[9] Alexandria is perhaps an exception, yet even there the maritime community are not mentioned as often as one would expect.

essence of Constantinople, despite its imperial, political and ecclesiastical renown. The same is true of Alexandria, which was at its heart a working port and maritime trading metropolis. In recent years there have been numerous studies on the importance of seaborne trade and its role in the economy of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium.[10] As a result, the extent and products of this trade have begun to receive considerable attention. Regardless, the men and women involved in the everyday world of maritime commerce have largely been ignored or treated only in cursory detail. A comprehensive sociological study of maritime society and its influence has not yet been undertaken.

In regards to maritime society, it could be argued that the entire resident and itinerant populations of port cities like Constantinople and Alexandria were maritime communities due to their proximity to, and reliance on, the sea. This should be kept in mind when studying these centres. However, in order to determine the influence of mariners and other mobile members of society on broader culture, those who belonged to a distinguishable maritime culture or sub-culture must be identified. The most obvious are the men who spent a good deal of their lives at sea or engaged in maritime activities; sailors, merchants, pirates and, in some instances, shipowners. There were also those who could be found closer to shore and in dockside areas, like fishermen and dockyard workers. In addition, there were the men and women who fraternised with mariners while they were in port—including tavern, brothel and bath owners, barmaids, actresses, actors, prostitutes and pimps. These people collectively created a maritime and lower-class leisure industry, and thus they too should be considered important elements of maritime society.[11] The leisure industry

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[10] Examples include M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); M. Decker and S. Kingsley, eds., *Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean During Late Antiquity: Proceedings of a Conference at Somerville College, Oxford, 29th May, 1999* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001); M. Mango, ed., *Byzantine Trade, 4th-12th Centuries: The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange: Papers of the Thirty-Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St John's College, University of Oxford* (Oxford: Routledge, 2004); A.E. Laiou and C. Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); C. Morrisson, ed., *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2012).

[11] N.K. Rauh, M.K. Dillon, and T. Davina McClain, '*Ochlos Nautikos*: Leisure Culture and Underclass Discontent in the Roman Maritime World', in *The Maritime World of Ancient Rome. Proceedings of "The Maritime World of Ancient Rome" Conference held at the American Academy in Rome 27-29 March 2003*, ed. R.L. Hohlfelder (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 197-242. Rauh et al. refer to an 'underclass leisure culture' which encompasses the same groups of people referred to in this thesis.

was a crucial component of coastal centres and as such it is examined in considerable detail in this study.

It is important to recognise that in Antiquity many mariners lived at the mercy of nature and were regularly exposed to far greater risks than those who remained on land. The hazards of sea travel were great and the dangers are certainly confirmed by the large number of ancient shipwrecks found in modern times.[12] Yet despite these risks, there was money to be made on the sea. At the very least, sailors were assured a place to sleep and a daily meal when employed as part of a ship's crew. The allure of the sea should also not be discounted; there was an adventure and camaraderie to life at sea that is still experienced by sailors today. In the ancient world, sailors and merchants developed their own associations and cults, and maritime society became a community unto itself, regardless of the cultural and religious differences that existed between its members.[13] This thesis examines the internal relationships within maritime society and investigates the relationship of this society to the larger resident communities of coastal cities.

The venues in which mariners and non-mariners met and socialised are discussed. Social interactions occurred in work spaces such as warehouses, shipsheds and wharves, and in sacred spaces like sanctuaries and churches. Yet it was in leisure venues that many mariners would have come into contact with locals. These leisure establishments were largely recreational in nature, but they also acted as hubs of social unrest and lower-class resentment. They were meeting places for an assortment of characters, and acted as recruitment centres for factional, religious, and other forms of social and economic unrest. The vast maritime communications network that existed throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions is also considered in this study. The maritime community played a significant role in the facilitation and maintenance of communication networks utilised by a number of individuals and groups, including empire-wide institutions like the circus factions and Church. None of these institutions would have been as globally successful were it

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[12] A.J. Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks of the Mediterranean and the Roman Provinces*, BAR International Series 580 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1992); R. Ballard and C. Ward, 'Deep-water Archaeological Survey in the Black Sea: 2000 Season', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology,* 33, 1 (2004), 2-13.

[13] Wade, *Sailors, Merchants, and Maritime Cults*, 270.

not for the men and women of the maritime realm. This thesis recognises the role that maritime society played in the carriage of conflict and unrest from city to city, and its contribution to the overall atmosphere of tension in the period.

The primary focus of this study is Constantinople and its eastern Roman empire, although Alexandria and a range of other port cities are also examined. The main reason for focusing primarily on the eastern empire is to limit the scope, which would otherwise be too broad. Constantinople—and Alexandria to a lesser extent—have been chosen as major focal points because as imperial, administrative and ecclesiastical centres, they became hubs of culture and thus played a substantial role in the development of the Late Roman and Early Byzantine psyche. This thesis argues that the maritime character of the eastern capital, in particular, was reflected in many aspects of society and culture throughout the Mediterranean world.

Evidence from the West is incorporated in several places. Firstly, where it can shed light on mariners sailing into eastern ports, or on eastern sailors and merchants travelling to western ports; and secondly, where legislation from the West must have related to the East as well. The decision to include a variety of western-based evidence in a study otherwise focused on the eastern world is not without consideration. It reflects the itinerant nature of sailors and sea-merchants, the main subjects of this study. The inclusion of this evidence aims to ensure that the long-distance seafarers who moved between the major cities of the East and West are not forgotten. In the eastern empire, the men of the Alexandrian grain fleet have dominated ancient and modern sources, largely at the expense of other private shippers, sailors and merchants. This in turn has led to an overriding presumption that all members of the maritime community had fully adopted Christianity from an early stage.[14] Yet, in addition to Egyptians and Christians involved in the carriage of the *annona*, there was an ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse mix of sailors and merchants plying the eastern seas. A range of evidence is highlighted to demonstrate that mariners carried various beliefs, ideas and practices with them

[14] T.E. Gregory, *Vox Populi. Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century AD* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979); C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 59; F.R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization C. 370-529*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 184 and 192.

when they sailed into ports of this period.

This study concentrates primarily on mariners who were active from the fourth to the mid seventh centuries. The earlier date reflects Constantine's re-founding of Constantinople in the first half of the fourth century, an event that substantially changed the dynamics of maritime trade throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. The seventh-century date represents—to this author at least—the end of Late Antiquity, heralded by the substantial Roman territorial losses in the East and the reduced population size of many cities. These aspects of the seventh-century world also brought with them dramatic changes to the nature of maritime trade, and act as a suitable upper boundary for this thesis.

This is a social study of the people who were involved in maritime travel and trade and an investigation of the evidence of their existence and influence on broader society and culture. It is not a study of maritime trade itself, nor its effect on the economy. It is my belief that the actual people who enabled trade, travel, and communication to occur on an everyday basis, and on such an extensive scale, have for too long been treated as incidental or anonymous. This thesis hopes to bring these men and women into focus.

Methodology

In order to conduct a sociological study of maritime society in Late Antiquity, the Law Codes of the fourth to eighth centuries are investigated; the *Corpus Juris Romani* of Theodosius II (*Codex Theodosianus*, *Constitutiones Sirmondianae*, and *Novellae Constitutiones*),[15] *Corpus Juris Civilis* of Justinian (*Institutiones*, *Codex Justinianus*, *Digesta Justinianus*, and *Novellae Constitutiones*),[16] and the maritime laws known

[15] *Theodosiani Libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges Novellae ad Theodosianum Pertinentes*, eds. T. Mommsen and P. Meyer, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905) = CJR; *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, trans. and comm. C. Pharr (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952); J. Harries and I. Wood, *The Theodosian Code* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[16] *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol. 1: *Institutiones, Digesta*, eds. P. Krueger and T. Mommsen (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928) = CJC 1; *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol. 2: *Codex Iustinianus*, ed. P. Krueger (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892) = CJC 2; *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol. 3: *Novellae*, eds. R. Schoell and G. Kroll (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892) = CJC 3; *Justinian's Institutes*, trans. and intro. P. Birks and G. McLeod with the Latin text of P. Krueger (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987); E. Metzger, ed., *A Companion to Justinian's Institutes* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998); *The*

as *Lex Rhodia* or *Νομος Ροδιων Ναυτικος* (Rhodian Sea Law).[17] Evidence is also drawn from a range of additional sources to illuminate, substantiate or refute the information derived from the laws, or simply to fill any gaps in the extant legislation. Non-legislative sources include secular and ecclesiastical chronicles and histories, orations, sermons, hagiographical accounts, epigrams and poems, letters, and naval manuals or guidebooks. Iconographic evidence such as mosaics, paintings and picture graffiti are examined, as too are inscriptions and textual graffiti. Archaeological finds and excavation reports from harbour and coastal areas and shipwreck sites are also investigated, including shipwrecks, port infrastructure, shrines, churches and a range of smaller, portable objects.

One of the main research constraints for a social study of maritime society is that its subjects rarely wrote about themselves or other aspects of the maritime sphere. Poetry, mosaics, frescoes and paintings containing maritime subjects were also rarely commissioned by mariners. The same is true of the men and women whom these seafarers and dockyard workers fraternised with onshore. Literary and artistic works were not produced by, or for, those of the lower strata of society. As such, we are largely lacking in first-hand information about their lives, activities and opinions. Still, incidental—and not-so-incidental—references to mariners in written works and visual representations can provide valuable information on their social habits, activities, and the way that they related to broader society. Archaeological finds from excavations of port areas also prove invaluable for increasing our knowledge of the men and women who utilised these ports. As such, relevant archaeological data has been consulted in this thesis wherever possible.

In regards to the civil and maritime legislation, there are a few queries that should be pre-empted. Firstly, a social study of maritime society that relies heavily on legislation may seem an unusual and ill-considered choice to some. Yet when

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Digest of Justinian, trans. and comm. A. Watson, 2 vols (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); *The Civil Law including The Twelve Tables, The Institutes of Gaius, The Rules of Ulpian, The Opinions of Paulus, The Enactments of Justinian, and The Constitutions of Leo*, 17 vols., trans. and ed. S.P. Scott (Cincinnati: The Central Trust Company, 1932).

[17] *Νομος Ροδιων Ναυτικος. The Rhodian Sea Law*, trans. and comm. W. Ashburner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909) = RSL. Ashburner's book contains both the Greek text and English translation. Unfortunately, the new translation by Humphreys was published too late to consult. Refer to *The Laws of the Isaurian Era. The Ecloga and its Appendices*, ed. and trans. M. Humphreys, Translated Texts for Byzantinists 3 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017).

legislation that relates or alludes to the maritime community is read carefully—sometimes between the lines—it can provide valuable social information. The Law Codes contain data on the make-up of maritime society, the status of its members, how these people were viewed by contemporaries, and their attitudes and behaviours. Legislation also inadvertently supplies important details on the impacts of the maritime community on wider society, particularly in larger coastal centres. Both the civil and maritime laws illustrate how the maritime crowd intermingled with the rest of society whilst simultaneously remaining on the fringes of that society.

An issue relating predominantly to the earlier laws of this period is that it is sometimes difficult to know whether laws promulgated in the western half of the empire also related to the East, and vice versa. However, many of the laws contained in the *Codex Theodosianus* were retained in Justinian's legislation a century later. It is therefore reasonable to assume that these laws and edicts still had some contemporary value in Justinian's eastern-centred world. As previously mentioned, there were sailors and merchants who travelled extensively between the East and West. These laws were of relevance to them, regardless of where they were promulgated. Still, laws with a decidedly western bias are excluded unless they are of direct value to a study of maritime culture in the East.

The law corpus of Theodosius II contains legislation from the time of Constantine to the mid fifth century, and the *Novellae* of Justinian include only new legislation from the sixth century. The laws contained in these works are thus contemporary with the period under study. The *Codex*, *Digesta* and *Institutiones* of Justinian are also works of the sixth century, but many of the enactments contained therein preserve statutes and legal statements originally made by earlier jurists. In the case of *Digesta*, some of these date as far back as the first century BCE.[18] One might then ask how relevant these laws were to the men and women of Late Antiquity. Here we should be mindful of the motives behind the compilation of the law codes in the sixth century. Justinian's aim was to free the legislation from ambiguity, inconsistency and

[18] An excellent summary and guide to Roman law can be found in P. Stein, *Roman Law in European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

repetition, and to remove all superfluous laws.[19] In the *Preface* to the *Digesta*, Justinian stresses:

> If any laws included in the old books have by now fallen into disuse, we by no means allow you to set them down, since we wish only those rules to remain valid which have either had effect in the regular course of the judicature or which the long-established custom of this generous city has sanctioned.[20]

Justinian's corpus was commissioned for contemporary purposes, rather than antiquarian ones.

Laws were generally only written and retained to deal with problems already identified in society, so they should be seen, for the most part, as reflective of everyday reality.[21] That said, mariners and maritime leisure culture were at odds with the public image that imperial authorities and contemporary historians had created for cities like Constantinople. As such, the laws do not mention the maritime community as often as we might expect. The civil authorities seem to have highlighted maritime activities and those involved in them only when they impacted on state revenue.[22] This problem is partially rectified by the codification of specific maritime laws after Justinian's time; however, it should be expected that there will be gaps in the civil legislation.

One of the most important bodies of legislation for this thesis is the collection known as *Rhodian Sea Law*. This text dates to the eighth century, and is comprised of

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[19] *Dig.* 'De Conceptione Digestorum' 1-12 (*CJC* 1.13-14). English trans. in Watson, *Digest of Justinian*, 1.xliii-xlvi.

[20] *Dig.* 'De Conceptione Digestorum' 10 (*CJC* 1.14). English trans. in Watson, *Digest of Justinian*, 1.xlv.

[21] P. Sarris, 'Merchants, Trade, and Commerce in Byzantine Law from Justinian I to Basil II', in *Trade in Byzantium. Papers from the Third International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium*, eds. P. Magdalino and N. Necipoğlu (Istanbul: Koç University, 2016), 11 and 16. Sarris argues that merchants, traders and aristocrats were sometimes able 'to invert, subvert, and reshape elements' of the laws to serve their own interests. This should be taken into account when investigating the extent to which laws were a reflection of contemporary society.

[22] The same is largely true for commercial activities as a whole. Such activities were generally only mentioned in the legislation once they had begun to negatively impact on the fiscal system. See Sarris, *Merchants, Trade, and Commerce*, 14.

earlier maritime legislation and customs, updated to suit conditions in the period of its composition.[23] It is assumed, with reason, that any laws that survived to be included in this maritime treatise were part of the living law for mariners, and are thus relevant for this study. In addition to the inclusion of statutes dealing with loans, insurance, liability and similar branches of maritime law, *Rhodian Sea Law* also contains a great deal of information on the behaviour of shipmasters, sailors and merchants. This information relates to the manner in which these men conducted their business and their social behaviours, both at sea and on shore.

The inclusion of a wide variety of literary sources and archaeological data in this study has helped to fill any gaps that exist in the civil and maritime legislation. It should also alleviate other potential issues or bias contained in the laws regarding mariners, written as they were by men unfamiliar with maritime and lower-class society. Of course, non-legal literary sources have their own strengths and weaknesses as evidence of social history and culture. The genre, date and reasons behind a written composition influence the quality of the evidence that it yields, as too do the individual beliefs and thoughts of the author.[24] As previously noted, both hagiography and poetry are used as additional evidence where relevant. These sources deserve special mention as there is a tendency in scholarship to discount them as unreliable or fictitious. It is important to acknowledge that the hagiography and poetry of this period were regularly set in the contemporary world of their authors; hagiographical accounts and epigrams often depicted contemporary figures, monuments and events.[25] As such, the environment and context presented

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[23] For detailed background information on *Rhodian Sea Law*, see M.T.G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era, c.680-850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 179-94. For the originality of *Rhodian Sea Law*, despite its derivation from previous law codes (especially Justinianic laws) and Mediterranean maritime customs, refer to Humphreys, 182-3. In regards to the dating of the text, Ashburner, *RSL*, lxxv, dates it to between the years 600 and 800; Sarris, *Merchants, Trade, and Commerce*, 15-6 argues that the extant version of the law was compiled in the eighth century; and Humphreys, *Law, Power and Imperial Ideology*, 191-2 also concludes that it was compiled c.750-775.

[24] The strengths and weaknesses of non-legal literary sources and the evidence of mariners and maritime culture that can be derived from them is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. For an introduction to historians and writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, their styles and the traditions that they adhered to, see D. Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). For the writing of various genres and styles of history from the third to seventh centuries, see B. Croke and A.M. Emmett, eds. *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1983). In particular, refer to the introductory chapter by Croke and Emmett, 'Historiography in Late Antiquity: An Overview', 1-12.

[25] For hagiography, see the excellent and brief discussion of the differing views in scholarship of hagiography as history in D. Frankfurter, 'Hagiography and the Reconstruction of Local Religion in

in works of these genres generally have some basis in reality. Members of the maritime crowd are often incidental characters in this type of literature and, as such, there is little reason to assume that they were depicted by their authors in a non-realistic manner. The maritime and lower-class crowd must sometimes have been included in a text simply to provide a realistic context and background setting for the main protagonist's story. Again, when used in conjunction with other evidence, these types of sources are useful for a social study of the maritime realm.

Previous Scholarship

Considering the increased interest in Late Antique trade and the economy, there is a surprising lack of modern scholarship that mentions sailors, sea-merchants, pirates and other seafarers in anything more than a perfunctory manner. Rarely is the presence of mariners noted in large coastal urban centres of this period—it is almost as though they disappeared as soon as their ships docked at port, only to reappear when they were due to depart. Yet we need only look at Jordanes' description of the bustling ports of Constantinople to know that there was a pronounced maritime presence in port cities of this time.[26] A few books have emerged in recent decades which note the presence of sailors and sea-merchants in cities of the Roman East. Some of these works include brief commentary on the Late Antique period, but

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Late Antique Egypt: Memories, Inventions, and Landscapes', *Church History and Religious Culture,* 86 (2006), 13-5.

For epigrams and poetry and the traditions and contexts in which they were written, see W.R. Paton, 'General Introduction', in *The Greek Anthology. Books 1-5*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library 67 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), ix-xx and A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology from Meleager to Planudes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Paton notes that for all their traditional characteristics, epigrams took ordinary people rather than mythical themes as their subjects (Paton, x). Paton notes that poets took topics from earlier epigrams, but varied them for their own time or means (Paton, xv-xvi). In his discussion of the mid-sixth century anthology of Agathias, Cameron points out a number of contemporary events and people mentioned in the epigrams (for example, epigrams speak of the Church of Hagia Sophia and other sixth-century buildings, monuments and statues, and of contemporary rulers like Justin II and his empress Sophia (Cameron, 70-5). Epigrams may have adhered to longstanding literary traditions and conventions; however, in the sixth century, they could still provide evidence of contemporary society. For the view that the epigrams of men like Agathias should never be treated as though they were 'a faithful reflection of contemporary life', see A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 177. Kaldellis takes his argument too far; poets and other writers often reported on real events, activities and people in a romantic manner and according to tradition, but this does not discount their contemporary value. Indeed, such epigrams would not have been as witty, charming or appealing to a contemporary audience had they not had at least some basis in reality.

[26] Refer to Introduction, footnote 4.

overall they are few and far between.

Two works that have provided valuable information for this thesis are Arzu Pekin and Selmin Kangal's catalogue and collection of articles in *Istanbul: 8000 Years,* and a small volume edited by Diana Zafiropoulou called *Journeys on the Seas of Byzantium.*[27] The first of these works focuses on recent archaeological finds from Istanbul, including the excavations of the Theodosian Harbour and surrounding port areas. The artefacts included in the catalogue are from a range of periods, with only a relatively small percentage from the fourth to seventh centuries. Regardless, this volume has shed much-needed light on the people who were using Constantinople's ports. The second is a general and relatively brief work, but its editor has included a range of articles that investigate literary and archaeological evidence in an attempt to build a broad picture of the seafaring world of Byzantium across its entire history.

There have been several important studies of seafaring and ships in Constantinople and the Byzantine world in general. These include Hélène Ahrweiler's seminal work, *Byzance et la mer* and a list of excellent books and articles by John Pryor, including his chapter on 'Shipping and Seafaring' in the *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*.[28] However, many of these works have naval vessels and the activities of the Byzantine navy as their primary focus. As such, discussion of the actual sailors and other mariners involved in sea travel—both merchant and naval—is necessarily brief. These studies of Byzantine seafaring also tend to concentrate on the period from the seventh century on, and as such have only limited usage for this thesis. Ufuk Kocabaş' documentation of the shipwrecks found in the Yenikapı excavations

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[27] A.K. Pekin and S. Kangal, eds., *Istanbul: 8000 Years. Brought to Daylight. Marmaray, Metro, Sultanahmet Excavations*, Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Foundation, 2007); D. Zafiropoulou, ed., *Journeys on the Seas of Byzantium* (Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 1998).

[28] H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer: la marine de guerre, la politique, et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe-XVe siecles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); J. Pryor, 'Shipping and Seafaring' in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, eds. E. Jeffreys, J. Haldon, and R. Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 482-91. There are a host of other works by Pryor including *Commerce, Shipping, and Naval Warfare in the Medieval Mediterranean* (London: Variorum, 1987); 'The Maritime Republics', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume V, c. 1198-1300*, ed. D. Abulafia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 419-46; 'Byzantium and the Sea: Byzantine Fleets and the History of the Empire in the Age of the Macedonian Emperors, c. 900-1025 CE' in *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. J.B. Hattendorf and R.W. Unger (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 83-104; J.H. Pryor and E.M. Jeffreys, *The Age of the Dromon. The Byzantine Navy ca.500-1204* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

in Istanbul provide practical archaeological evidence and commentary on seafaring and ships in the eastern capital itself.[29] Kocabaş' work is pertinent for this thesis, even though archaeological evidence of ships on its own cannot supply extensive information concerning the men who sailed these vessels.

There are numerous comprehensive works that deal with the city of Constantinople, many of which contain sections covering Late Antiquity/Early Byzantium. These include Nevra Necipoğlu's edited volume *Byzantine Constantinople* and Jonathan Harris' *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium* as but two examples.[30] Despite the fact that Constantinople was a maritime trading metropolis, these studies rarely mention the presence of mariners in the city; presumably because they were often not part of the permanent resident population. There are also several topographical studies of Constantinople that deal with the importance of the sea to the city, and the commercial facilities that were set up to handle its maritime trade. Such works include Paul Magdalino's *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople*; Cyril Mango's *Le Developpement Urbain de Constantinople*; Marlia Mango's article 'The Commercial Map of Constantinople'; and Necipoğlu's previously cited book.[31] These studies have provided excellent material on the city and its maritime trading facilities, much of which has been invaluable for this thesis. However, these scholarly works are not, and do not purport to be, social studies of the people involved in maritime trade.

Other important port cities of the East had large numbers of seafarers sailing into their harbours as well. There are several detailed books available on many of these sites. Ephesus is one example, with works on the Roman harbour city written by

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[29] U. Kocabaş, *The 'Old Ships' of the 'New Gate': Yenikapi Shipwrecks* 1 (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari, 2008).

[30] J. Harris, *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007); N. Necipoğlu, ed., *Byzantine Constantinople. Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[31] P. Magdalino, *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* (Hampshire and Burlington: Routledge, 2007). Of particular interest in Magdalino's collection is his article, *Maritime Neighborhoods*; C. Mango, *Le Developpement Urbain de Constantinople (IVe - VIIe Siecles)*, TM, College de France, Monographies 2 (Paris: De Boccard, 1990); M.M. Mango, 'The Commercial Map of Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 54 (2000), 189-207. Also see R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine. Développement urbain et répertoire topographique* (Paris: Institut Français D'Etudes Byzantines, 1964).

Clive Foss and Helmut Koester.[32] Yet, as is the case with Constantinople, the presence of maritime society in Ephesus or her ports is not mentioned in any detail. Some scholarship on Alexandria in this period appears to be an exception. Christopher Haas' *Alexandria in Late Antiquity* acknowledges the ongoing presence of sailors, sea-merchants and shipowners in the port areas of this thriving trading city.[33] Yet, other recent works on Alexandria such as Edward Jay Watts' *Riot in Alexandria* rarely mention the maritime crowd—even in relation to events in which they must have taken part—thus downplaying their role in the Egyptian maritime metropolis.[34]

Several books on trade and the economy provide extensive coverage of both sea and land commerce in Late Antiquity. A few good examples include Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy*; Cécile Morrisson's edited volume *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*; Angeliki Laiou and Morrisson's *The Byzantine Economy*; Marlia Mango's edited collection of papers in *Byzantine Trade, 4th-12th Centuries*; and Michael Decker and Sean Kingsley's *Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean During Late Antiquity*.[35] These books are of immense value to any study of maritime trade and crucially highlight a range of evidence for trading activities; literary, visual and archaeological. Yet, for the most part, these are not social studies. Brigitte Pitarakis' work on daily life in the Late Antique and Byzantine marketplace is a striking exception.[36] She deals with social aspects of the lower and commercial classes, particularly in relation to their interactions and everyday activities in the marketplaces of Constantinople and other large cities. Pitarakis has collected an impressive array of evidence for lower-class beliefs, practices and activities, which have been of great value to this research. A recent article by Magdalino on Constantinopolitan merchants has also proven useful for its

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[32] C. Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity: A Late Antique, Byzantine, and Turkish City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); H. Koester, *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to its Archaeology, Religion and Culture* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995).

[33] Haas, *Alexandria*.

[34] E.J. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2010).

[35] Refer to Introduction, footnote 10.

[36] B. Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace in Late Antiquity and Byzantium', in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 399-426; B. Pitarakis, 'The Byzantine Marketplace: A Window onto Daily Life and Material Culture', in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 211-31.

investigation of the evidence of individual merchants who hailed from the eastern capital.[37]

McCormick's aforementioned book is also worth particular note. It is a thorough history of communication and trade, and comes close to a sociological study of the men and women who facilitated these important elements of the Late Roman and Medieval world. McCormick includes commentary on numerous individual sea travellers, including some merchants. Unfortunately, many of the travel accounts listed in his volume are from the West, and relate predominantly to travellers of the eighth to tenth centuries, so they are not always relevant to this study. McCormick looks at the civil legislation for evidence of the ships and shipowners involved in the transportation of the *annona*, but he is of course most interested in the economic implications of the state-sponsored fleet.[38] His comprehensive work has, nevertheless, been extremely useful. One other short work which deserves mention is a chapter called 'Entrepreneurs' by Nicolas Oikonomides.[39] Oikonomides primarily focuses on the commerce of Byzantine Constantinople, but he does so with an emphasis on the people who were involved in this trade. Sadly, Oikonomides' study is all too short to really tap into the human side of commerce.

Several cultural studies relating to the sea and maritime communities in the ancient world have been published in the last two decades. These include Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's *The Corrupting Sea* and Peter N. Miller's edited volume, *The Sea: Thalassography and Historiography*.[40] These books cover both a large area and an extensive period of Mediterranean history. As a result, they contain little specific commentary on the Late Antique period. However, the value of such cultural studies is not in the evidence that they provide for any one period; rather, it is in the questions they pose concerning the history of writing about the sea (thalassography),

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[37] P. Magdalino, 'The Merchant of Constantinople', in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 181-91.
[38] McCormick, *Origins*, 87-9.
[39] N. Oikonomides, 'Entrepreneurs' in *The Byzantines*, ed. G. Cavallo (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
[40] P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000); P.N. Miller, ed., *The Sea: Thalassography and Historiography* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2013). Also see J. Mack, *The Sea: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

its overall significance in history, and human interactions with, and reactions to, the sea. Put simply by Miller, 'The histories of what human beings do at sea affects the history they make on land and thus our writing of that history'.[41] Miller also highlights the gap that exists in modern scholarship, wherein the history of thalassography, and the history of sea studies in general, have received little attention to date. In the same volume, Purcell stresses that research into maritime history or historiography of the sea needs to investigate not only the sea itself, but the 'social relations and processes' that it has always enabled.[42] This thesis attempts to do this by concentrating on the human element of maritime travel and trade, and the social encounters and communications that the sea allowed.

There are several books that explore the cultural and social aspects of everyday life in the Byzantine world, including Marcus Rautman's *Daily Life in the Byzantine Empire* and Averil Cameron's *The Byzantines*.[43] These works deal with the eastern empire from the fourth through to the fifteenth century, and thus their main concern is never specifically the Late Antique period. Still, such books are of value for their overall perspectives on Byzantine society. Rautman includes some discussion of sailors, merchants and fishermen, and he mentions the importance of maritime trade in the lives of the residents of major cities. Most of the modern studies that investigate social aspects of Byzantium's history do not include maritime society in their discussion. There is a noticeable gap in modern scholarship when it comes to a social or sociological study of the mobile members of society, especially for the period prior to the seventh and eighth centuries.

A groundbreaking study of maritime leisure culture entitled '*Ochlos Nautikos*: Leisure Culture and Underclass Discontent in the Roman Maritime World' has been published by Nicholas Rauh, Matthew Dillon and T. Davina McClain.[44] In this work,

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[41] P.N. Miller, 'Introduction' in Miller, *The Sea: Thalassography*, 2.

[42] N. Purcell, 'Tide, Beach, and Backwash: The Place of Maritime Histories' in Miller, *The Sea: Thalassography*, 84-6.

[43] Rautman, *Daily Life*; A. Cameron, *The Byzantines* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

[44] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 197-242. Other works on maritime culture in the Graeco-Roman world by the same authors include T.D. McClain and N.K. Rauh, 'The Brothels at Delos: The Evidence for Prostitution in the Maritime World' in *Greek Prostitution in the Ancient Mediterranean 800 BCE–200 CE*, eds. A. Glazebrook and M. Henry (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 147-171; N. Rauh, *Merchants, Sailors, and Pirates in the Roman World* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003).

the authors cite legislative evidence preserved in Justinian's sixth-century law corpus, but the overall study is of the Hellenistic, Republican and Roman Imperial periods. Rautman provides a tantalising hint of the continued presence of maritime and underclass leisure culture into later centuries; he notes that the theatre in particular was known to attract 'socially marginal individuals, especially foreigners and women, who comprised a cultural demimonde within the city'.[45] The foreigners mentioned by Rautman would have included sailors, merchants and other mobile elements who were on the margins of society. There is still much to be said about such characters. Actresses, prostitutes and other lowly women also played an essential part in leisure culture during this period, and the comprehensive research conducted by Thomas McGinn on these women has proven extremely useful.[46] It is my intention to bridge a gap in existing scholarship by expanding on the research conducted by Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain on leisure culture, and to record the presence of Rautman's 'cultural demimonde' beyond the third and fourth centuries.

There are a number of in-depth studies of conflicts and riots that occurred in urban centres and port cities during this period, many of which look at particular protests and the general climate that led to them. Of particular note for their insightful commentary and engagement with the sources are Peter N. Bell's *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian*; Timothy Gregory's *Vox Populi;* J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz's *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*; and the social commentary in general in Évelyne Patlagean's *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance.*[47] With the exception of Gregory, however, very few scholars have mentioned the presence of the maritime community in such conflicts and controversies. The role that mariners

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[45] Rautman, *Daily Life*, 114.

[46] T.A.J. McGinn, 'The Legal Definition of Prostitute in Late Antiquity', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 42 (1997), 73-116; T.A.J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); T.A.J. McGinn, *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World: A Study of Social History and the Brothel* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004).

[47] E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4e–7e siècles,* Civilisations et Sociétés, 48 (Mouton, Paris and La Haye: University of Michigan Library, 1977); Gregory, *Vox Populi*; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); P.N. Bell, *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Other works dealing with social conflict and riots in this period (and earlier) have also been of use in this thesis. These include (but are not limited to): R. MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); A. Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); G. Greatrex, 'The Nika Riot: A Reappraisal', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997), 60-86.

and other mobile members of society played in episodes of unrest in large urban centres has not been studied in sufficient detail to date. Scholarship has focused heavily on the role of the circus factions in episodes of civic unrest and on bands of wayward monks as the perpetrators of violence in religious disputes. Patlagean suggests that scholars have focused too much on these two groups (particularly the circus factions), leading them to miss other important, albeit less noticeable, members of the urban crowd.[48]

Patlagean investigates the role of migrants, the unemployed, the socially excluded, and other mobile and displaced members of society in periods of unrest in the fourth to seventh centuries. Yet few scholars have even contemplated the involvement of sailors and merchants—obvious mobile elements of society—in events of onshore unrest. This is interesting, given the rebellious and oppositional nature of sailors in particular. Mariners were often outsiders with no ties or obligations to the cities they visited. They would have had few qualms about participating in events of unrest. Gregory does acknowledge that sailors of the Alexandrian grain fleet took part in religious disputes of the fifth century. However, he sees them as outside agitators brought in specifically to stir up unrest, suggesting that their motives were entirely theological or spiritual. Gregory downplays the role of sailors in these controversies, believing that they were never an influential group in cities like Constantinople, where much of this unrest came to the fore.[49]

In relation to the religious beliefs of mariners, there appears to be an unquestioned assumption in modern scholarship that most sailors had converted to Christianity by the early Late Antique period.[50] I challenge this notion as one based predominantly on ecclesiastical material and evidence that deals solely with the Alexandrian fleet servicing the *annona*.[51] A close reading of a variety of sources actually suggests that there were members of maritime society who retained non-Christian beliefs throughout Late Antiquity. Prominent scholars such as Averil Cameron, Ramsay

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[48] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 206.

[49] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, Preface ix, 108, 203, 208 and 221.

[50] See for example Gregory, *Vox Populi*; Haas, *Alexandria*, 59; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 184 and 192; M.J. Hollerich, 'The Alexandrian Bishops and the Grain Trade: Ecclesiastical Commerce in Late Roman Egypt', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 25, 2 (1982), 187-207.

[51] Wade, *Sailors, Merchants and Maritime Cults*, 269-87.

MacMullen, and Frank Trombley have proven that a large majority of the population of the eastern empire remained non-Christian until at least the sixth century.[52] The continuous anti-pagan legislation of the fourth to sixth centuries shows that non-Christian beliefs were persistent, even in the eastern capital.[53] Despite the widespread retention of traditional beliefs, scholars do not seem to have questioned the supposedly unwavering Christian beliefs of sailors, merchants and other mariners. Yet it is implausible to think that all mariners had converted to Christianity as early as the fourth century, when so much of the overall population had not.

Modern scholarship has not considered that seafarers were a naturally superstitious group, and that bodies of water, in general, continued to attract cult throughout Late Antiquity. Evidence suggesting that non-Christian ideas and beliefs were retained by the seafaring community has largely been dismissed or secularised by historians. Indeed, scholars have sometimes gone to great lengths to provide alternative explanations for traditional rituals or objects that survived into the fifth to seventh centuries. Steelyard weights of the goddess Athena are a good example. These small, everyday trading objects have been secularised or Christianised by scholars who find it difficult to place them in a Christian world. Late Antique weights of Athena have been studied thoroughly by Liz James and Anne McClanan, but both refuse to allow them any pagan meaning, even if only to some of the merchants and traders who used them.[54] In contrast, this thesis looks at the Athena weights, along with other objects and rituals, to see if they might demonstrate that some itinerant merchants and traders continued to look to traditional deities on a daily basis.

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[52] A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity AD 395-600* (London: Routledge, 1993), 10-13, 20, 69-70, and 143-4; F.R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization C. 370-529*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1994); R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). Also refer to T.E. Gregory, *A History of Byzantium* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 119.

[53] K.W. Harl, 'Sacrifice and Pagan Belief in Fifth and Sixth Century Byzantium', *Past and Present,* 128 (1990), 7-27. On page 7, Harl provides a summary of the 'anti-pagan' legislation from Theodosius I to Justinian I. Also see Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 143-4 and Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 2.

[54] L. James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001), 115-7 and 142; A. McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 29-64. See also C.W.J. Eliot, 'A Bronze Counterpoise of Athena', *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* 45/2 (1976), 163-70 and N. Franken, *Aequipondia. Figürliche Laufgewichte römischer und frühbyzantinischer Schnellwaagen* (Alfter: VDG, 1994). Refer to Franken for a detailed discussion of the Late Antique Athena weights, their date of manufacture, and context.

Finally, the question needs to be asked as to why there has been so little modern interest in maritime society and its fascinating sub-culture. As I have discussed in an earlier article, modern perspectives of maritime culture have been heavily influenced by the nature of the extant primary sources.[55] There is little textual evidence from this period that was written by mariners themselves and there is a relative lack of overall evidence for the social activities of this group prior to the ninth century.[56] With the rise of Christianity, ecclesiastical and secular historians alike may have been loath to talk about the seedy maritime sub-culture that existed in their cities; a sub-culture that was certainly at odds with the ideal image being promoted for the eastern capital. Magdalino believes that the sources rarely mention commerce because it was considered a lowly occupation.[57] Conversely, Pryor argues that maritime commerce was important and mariners could be highly skilled, and thus they would not have been scorned by all sectors of society.[58] Regardless, very little was written by or about this group directly in the Late Antique period. Members of the maritime crowd are mentioned in ecclesiastical histories, but often only in reference to their support for one or another church faction. Where these men are mentioned in other written accounts, it is usually indirectly or incidentally. These are perhaps also the main reasons that sailors and sea-merchants are frequently ignored in modern histories. One of the few places where mariners are directly and regularly mentioned is in maritime law.[59]

A shortage of evidence cannot be the only reason for the lack of modern scholarship on maritime society. Maritime culture is rarely mentioned because sailors and sea-merchants were generally not permanent residents in the urban centres that feature as the subject of most scholarly works. By their contemporaries, mariners were treated as foreigners or outsiders in the ports that they visited; thus they have also been overlooked by modern historians as not truly representative of the average

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[55] J. Wade, '"Lock Up Your Valuables": Perceptions of Sailors and Sea-Merchants in Port Cities of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium', *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, 10 (2014), 47-75.

[56] See Magdalino's discussion of the documentary evidence that is available for the study of maritime commerce in Constantinople in the tenth century in P. Magdalino, 'Medieval Constantinople', in *Studies on the History and Topography*, 1-111.

[57] Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 209-10. Sarris, *Merchants, Trade, and Commerce*, 17 agrees that trade and commerce were seen 'as a socially suspect area of activity'.

[58] Pryor, *Shipping and Seafaring*, 482-3.

[59] Pryor, *Shipping and Seafaring*, 483.

Late Roman or Byzantine citizen. There have been several studies of the concept of the outsider in Byzantium, including Dion C. Smythe's edited collection of papers entitled *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* and separate chapters by Smythe and Magdalino in *A Companion to Byzantium*.[60] None of these works have considered members of the maritime community as examples of outsiders, even though many of the mobile elements of society would undoubtedly have been viewed in this manner by their contemporaries.

Unlike most literary accounts, legislation could not ignore the presence of outsiders like sailors and merchants for the simple reason that the maritime community had a substantial impact on everyday life and the law. Although now quite dated, Walter Ashburner's commentary and translation of the Greek text of *Rhodian Sea Law* is an extremely valuable resource which has been crucial in the formulation of this thesis.[61] There are also several scholarly works and commentaries on the civil legislation. Boudewijn Sirks' *Food for Rome* has proven particularly useful for its discussion of the laws dealing with both private and state shippers involved in the carriage of the *annona.*[62] A special mention should be given to work done by Peter Sarris as well, including his recent paper on merchants and trade in Byzantine law.[63] Sarris' work has been both useful and refreshing for its concentration on the evidence of merchants and trading activity in the legislation.

To this author's knowledge, no comprehensive social study of maritime society in Late Antiquity has yet been undertaken. The extant legislation has been studied for its evidence of the transport of grain and other essential items. The laws have also been investigated for their evidence of prostitutes and actresses; important to the

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[60] D.C. Smythe, ed., *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider. Papers from the Thirty-second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1998* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); P. Magdalino, 'Byzantium = Constantinople', in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. L. James (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 43-54; D.C. Smythe, 'Insiders and Outsiders', in James, *A Companion to Byzantium*, 67-80.

[61] Ashburner, *RSL*. As noted in Introduction, footnote 17, Humphreys' recent translation of *Rhodian Sea Law* was published too late for consultation (see Humphreys, *Laws of the Isaurian Era*).

[62] B. Sirks, *Food for Rome: The Legal Structure of the Transportation and Processing of Supplies for the Imperial Distributions in Rome and Constantinople* (Amsterdam: Gleben, 1991). As previously noted, the discussion of legislation in McCormick's *Origins* has also been of value.

[63] Sarris, *Merchants, Trade, and Commerce*, 11-23**.** Other relevant works by Sarris include *Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and 'Economics, Trade, and "Feudalism"' in James, *A Companion to Byzantium*, 25-42.

subject of this thesis because they were a part of the onshore leisure culture that serviced the maritime community. Yet the legislation has not been used extensively to investigate sailors, sea-merchants and other important members of the maritime community, nor has it been utilised to examine maritime leisure culture in urban centres. The maritime crowd had an ongoing presence in coastal cities and they played an important role in the everyday lives of the residents of these centres; the lack of modern scholarship that relates to this community simply does not reflect its presence nor its overall significance.

Thesis Outline

A separate introduction is provided as a preface to each thesis chapter, and as such, the outline contained in this section is intentionally brief.

Chapter One highlights the fact that Constantinople and other large coastal cities of the East were working port cities; their maritime setting and character were a crucial aspect of their overall identity. The existence of a 'distinctive maritime milieu'[64] in coastal regions is discussed and the evidence of the cultural influence of this milieu on broader society is examined. This chapter confirms that members of the maritime community were an integral part of everyday life and culture, not only in the capital, but throughout the Roman world.

Chapter Two investigates the members of the maritime community who existed on the fringes of general society. It looks at the hierarchy aboard ships and the roles played by sailors, captains, shipowners and merchants. The origins, ethnicities and social standing of these men are examined, and the pigeonholing of many of them into one or two ethnicities or cultures is challenged. It is proposed that the men who sailed the seas of Byzantium were culturally, ethnically and socially diverse.

Chapter Three focuses on the perceptions that contemporaries had of maritime society. It demonstrates that members of the maritime community were considered outsiders in the port cities and urban centres they visited. Sailors and sea-merchants

[64] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 133.

were scorned or ignored by many, yet their presence was a necessary, persistent and unavoidable one. The manner in which maritime men were treated by their contemporaries has been mirrored by modern scholars, leading to a lack of overall scholarship that sufficiently acknowledges their importance and cultural influence.

Chapter Four discusses the superstitious nature of seafarers and the evidence that non-Christian deities, beliefs and rituals continued to be harboured well into the Late Antique period. It is argued that a heavy focus on the men of the Alexandrian grain fleet has provided a distorted picture of the maritime community as indisputably Christian by a very early date. However, the day-to-day hardships, risks and alienation faced by mariners led to the retention of traditional maritime customs. This chapter explores Christian and non-Christian maritime practices that existed side-by-side relatively peacefully; on ships, in harbours, and in the marketplaces of large urban centres like Constantinople.

Chapter Five examines leisure establishments and the lower-class leisure industry that serviced the maritime community. It investigates those who regularly consorted with mariners, such as tavern workers, prostitutes and actors/actresses. The social impact of the maritime leisure industry is assessed and it is proposed that this industry and its associated culture helped shape the overall character of society in centres like Constantinople and Alexandria. Yet lower-class leisure culture was often ignored by contemporary sources, incompatible as it was with the imperial, administrative and ecclesiastical façade of these cities.

Chapter Six investigates the role of the maritime community in episodes of unrest in urban centres. It highlights leisure establishments as hubs of social unrest and as places where support could be found for a variety of protests. Sailors and merchants were part of the core clientele of leisure venues, and would have become embroiled in the riots and skirmishes that centred around them. As itinerant outsiders, mariners could participate in these clashes without inhibition. This chapter suggests various motives for the involvement of mariners in disturbances, including a general willingness to sell their services for payment. Finally, the role of the maritime community in the facilitation of highly effective, empire-wide communication networks is highlighted. These maritime networks enabled the transmission of

ideology and unrest from one city to the next in a surprisingly efficient manner.

Chapter 1. The Maritime World of Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire

Introduction

In this chapter, Constantinople is contextualised as a working port city in order to demonstrate the extent to which the sea, seafarers and maritime culture permeated everyday life in the renowned metropolis. The identity of the eastern capital was largely shaped by its maritime character. A maritime milieu existed in Constantinople and throughout the Late Roman world, with hubs of maritime culture and activity all over the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions.[1] There was a vast and influential Late Antique maritime network, and its eastern centres were the great cultural hubs of Constantinople and Alexandria. In the fourth century, Constantinople became the new eastern Roman capital. It was a maritime city at its core; unlike the old Rome whose major ports were outside of the city itself. The maritime sphere had existed for centuries in the Mediterranean, but with the founding of Constantinople, maritime culture came to the fore.

Constantinople: Imperial, Christian and Maritime Capital

Constantinople was an imperial, political, ecclesiastical and cultural centre. It was also, fundamentally, a large entrepôt. Many of our primary sources mention the maritime aspect of the city, although their choice to do so was generally in order to justify or enhance its imperial and political status. Themistius, senator and urban prefect of Constantinople, is a good example. In his *Oration* 6, Themistius claims that Constantinople:

> … links the two continents, is an anchorage for maritime needs, a market for trade by land and sea, an effective adornment of Roman rule ... whenever it keeps them (the emperors) closest to home, it puts them at the very centre of the whole empire.[2]

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[1] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 133.

[2] Themistius, *Or.* 6.83c-d, 9-17 (Dindorf, 100). English trans. in Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 197-8: '… συνοχὴ τῶν δυοῖν ἠπείρων, ὅρμος τις ἐν χρείᾳ θαλάττης,

Procopius highlights the superiority of the imperial city's strategic location on the sea. In *Buildings*, in addition to his account of the many churches and other infrastructure erected on the shores of sixth-century Constantinople, Procopius describes in detail the straits and bays encircling the city.[3] He notes that the sea both beautifies and serves the city, providing Constantinople with 'the necessities of life and making it rich in all useful things' as was fitting for an imperial metropolis.[4] Corippus' description of the view over the harbour of Julian from the royal residence of Justin and Sophia also stresses the beauty of the waters of Constantinople whilst simultaneously recording that the royal pair were able to watch 'ships carrying all the trade of two worlds' into their imperial city.[5] At the end of the seventh century, the visiting Gallic author of *De Locis Sanctis* refers to Constantinople as the imperial capital of the Roman empire, surrounded by sea.[6] Even political invective aimed at Constantinople and its administration acknowledges the city's maritime setting. In the hope that its maritime surrounds would be its downfall, Claudian laments 'Would that you would lean on your trident, Neptune, and drown the polluted land …'.[7] Clearly, the sea featured prominently in Constantinople's identity, for visitors and locals alike, throughout this period.

ἀγορὰ τῆς πλοίμου καὶ πορευσίμης, ἐγκαλλώπισμα ἐνεργὸν τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας. οὐ γὰρ ἀπῴκισταί γε, ὥσπερ τέμενος, ἔξω τοῦ πόρου, οὐδε παραιρεῖται τοὺς αὐτοκράτορας τὴν τῶν κοινῶν ἐπιμέλειαν, εἰ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἀσχολήσειαν, ἀλλὰ πανταχόθεν ἐστὶ καὶ ἐφ'ἅπαντα ὁρμωμένοις ἀναγκαία διαγωγὴ, καὶ ὅταν μάλιστα οἴκοι κατέχῃ, τότε μάλιστα ἐν μέσῳ ποιεῖ τῆς ὅλης ἀρχῆς.'

[3] Procop. *Aed.* 1.5, in *Procopius. On Buildings*, vol. 7, trans. H.B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library 343 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), 56-61.

[4] Procop. *Aed.* 1.5.2 (Dewing, 56-7): 'Πρὸς τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ἐν καλῷ τίθεται ἀμφ' αὐτὸ μάλιστα, ἐγκολπουμένη τε καὶ εἰς πορθμοὺς ξυναγομένη καὶ χεομένη ἐς πέλαγος μέγα, ταύτῃ τε τὴν πόλιν εὐπρόσωπόν τε διαφερόντων ἐργαζομένη καὶ σκέπας λιμένων ἡσύχιον τοῖς ναυτιλλομένοις παρεχομένη, τά τε εἰς τὴν δίαιταν εὔπορον καὶ τὰ ἐς τὴν χρείαν εὐδαίμονα.'

[5] Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, I 91-111, in Flavius Cresconius Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris*, *Libri IV*, ed. and trans. A. Cameron (London: The Athlone Press, 1976), 39 and 89: '… est domus interior tectorum in parte superna … pars prospicit una inmensum pelagus, pars respicit altera portum, portum quem geminae conplexant brachia ripae moenibus adpositis, rapidos contemnere ventos et faciunt, praebentque salum statione quietum: aequoreos frangunt obiecto marmore fluctus, et prohibent refluas angustis faucibus undas. Gratior ille fuit dominis locus, unde *solebant undivagum spectare fretum curvasque carinas omnia vectantes gemini commercial mundi'*.

[6] *Sancti Adamnani Abbatis Hiiensis De Locis Sanctis ex Relatione Arculfi Episcopi Galli* 3.1 (*PL* 88.807-8).

[7] Claudian, *In Eutropium* 2.37-8. English trans. in G. Kelly, 'Claudian and Constantinople', in Grig and Kelly, *Two Romes*, 253: '… incumbas utinam, Neptune, tridenti pollutumque solum toto …'

Other sources mention the surge in Constantinople's population in the first few centuries after its foundation.[8] By all accounts, the city became densely populated and maritime trading activity increased to cater for this. In turn, the number of traders and sailors in the city also multiplied. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Socrates admires Constantinople's prosperity and plenitude, noting that despite its vast population, it was always abundant in the necessaries of life. Socrates says this was because all manner of supplies were imported into the city by sea.[9] By the early sixth century, Zosimus claims that Constantinople had surpassed all other cities in prosperity and size. He did not see this growth in a particularly favourable light, stating that Constantinople had become overcrowded, with people from all walks of life attracted to it, including soldiers and traders.[10] Jordanes' account of the city's busy harbours filled with ships and people from diverse regions is more complimentary.[11] His reporting of Athanaric's reaction to the city is extremely evocative of Constantinople's maritime ambience in the fourth century. Theophylact Simocatta's description of the waters around Constantinople as crowded with ships suggests that the city's maritime character did not change dramatically in the following centuries.[12] Whatever their motivations, these sources highlight the fact that large numbers of ships and their crews were sailing into Constantinople. The maritime setting of this great city was its core.

In the late nineteenth century, Alexander van Millingen called Constantinople 'the greatest emporium of trade during the Middle Ages'.[13] He referred to it as the place where many of the world's most important land and sea highways converged.[14] More

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[8] See L. Grig and G. Kelly, 'Introduction' in Grig and Kelly, *Two Romes*, 13. Examples given by these authors include Julian, *Or.* 1.8bc and Libanius, *Ep.* 399. Also see Zosimus, *NH* 2.35.1-36.2 in *Zosimi. Historia Nova*, ed. L. Mendelssohn (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), 92 and Procop. *Aed.* 1.11.23-7 (Dewing, 94-7).

[9] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.16 (*PG* 67.501-2): '… Κωνσταντινούπολις, καὶ ἄπειρα τρέφουσα πλήθη, τὰ πολλὰ εὐθηνεῖται, τῷ τε διὰ θαλάσσης ἔχειν τῶν πανταχόθεν ἐπιτηδείων τὴν προσκομιδὴν …'.

[10] Zosimus, *NH* 2.35.1-2 and 2.36.1 (Mendelssohn, 92).

[11] Refer to Introduction, footnote 4.

[12] Theophylact Simocatta, *Hist.* 2.14.7, in Theophylactus Simocatta, *Historiae*, ed. C. De Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), 98: 'εἰ γὰρ παραπλήσιοι ἦσαν τῇ τοῦ χιλιάρχου ψυχῇ, οὐ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἐκράτησαν ἄν, οὐ τὴν Λιβύην εἶχον ὑπήκοον, οὐκ ἀργυρολόγους ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσιαν ἐξέπεμπον, οὐ τὸν Νεῖλον ὑπηρέτην ἐκέκτηντο τὸν Αἰγύπτιον πλοῦτον ὥρᾳ θέρους ταῖς Ῥωμαϊκαῖς πελαγίξοντα πόλεσι καὶ ταῖς ὁλκάσιν ὥσπερ ἀποχερσοῦντα τὴν θάλαπαν.'

[13] A. van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople. The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (London: John Murray, 1899), 179.

[14] Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 4.

recently, Marcus Rautman wrote that Constantinople's ideal situation and stable political environment encouraged merchants to travel to it from a variety of distant lands. By the sixth century, Constantinople's markets were full of goods from all over the Mediterranean and Black Seas, and from as far afield as northern Europe, Central Asia, India, China and the Red Sea coast.[15] Based on the major harbours and granaries built and maintained in the city during the Late Antique period, Cyril Mango estimates that there were between 2400 and 3600 ships of the Egyptian grain trade alone docking into Constantinople's ports each year.[16] Mango's estimates do not include ships carrying other products into the city, and thus the total number of vessels would have been even higher. Once grain supplies from Egypt had been assigned to Constantinople in the fourth century, the flow of other maritime traffic into the city also increased considerably. McCormick suggests that all of Constantinople's ports together may have been able to accommodate up to 500 ships at any one time.[17]

Clearly, there is a general consensus amongst scholars that Constantinople was a great maritime metropolis. Yet this perception of the city seems to be held at an abstract or conceptual level only. Despite the references to Constantinople's flourishing trade and markets, and to merchants and ships arriving into her ports, scholars have not delved deeper to consider what life would actually have been like in a large, active, maritime city in this period. There has been little acknowledgement of the everyday social dynamics of a maritime centre like Constantinople. The city would have been overcrowded with sailors, merchants, soldiers, migrants and itinerants, and teeming with the types of establishments that serviced them. Instead, from a sociological perspective, the focus to date has been on elite society and the imperial, political and ecclesiastical elements of the capital. The primary sources on Constantinople have certainly provided modern historians with more material on

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[15] Rautman, *Daily Life,* 98. Rautman's claim is confirmed by the excavations of the Theodosian Harbour which have unearthed items dated from the fourth to seventh centuries. These items include: North African and Egyptian amphorae, lamps and pottery; Eastern Mediterranean amphorae; Anatolian and Balkan lamps; Aegean amphorae and decorative wares; and a range of other items from Northern Europe and other regions. Also see Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 183-4.
[16] C. Mango, 'The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre', in *Studies on Constantinople*, ed. C. Mango (Aldershot: Routledge, 1993), 120-1. See P. Magdalino, 'The Harbors of Byzantine Constantinople', in *Stories of the Hidden Harbor. Shipwrecks of Yenikapı*, eds. Z. Kızıltan and G. Baran-Çeilk (Istanbul: Istanbul Archaeological Museums Press, 2013), 11-5 for a description of all of the major harbours and many of the smaller jetties and docks in Constantinople.
[17] McCormick, *Origins*, 85-6 and 91-2.

these respectable elements of society, showing a general unwillingness to talk about the seedier, lower class and transient cultural aspects that also existed. Magdalino points out that many writers chose to ignore the commercial merits of the waters surrounding Constantinople, stressing only their 'recreational value'.[18] Although scholarship certainly acknowledges the commercial importance of sea trade in Constantinople's early history, this does not always extend to the regular activities and daily social interactions upon which this trade relied. These activities and interactions have received little attention, even though they were a part of everyday life for the majority in the city. In this way, scholars have followed the lead of the ancient sources; Constantinople is often referred to as a great maritime metropolis, but rarely as a working port city and coastal community.

Studies of the topography and commercial infrastructure of Late Antique Constantinople demonstrate the influence that the city's maritime setting had on its organisation. Such studies hint at the regular presence of mariners travelling through the city streets.[19] Since a large portion of Constantinople's supplies arrived by sea, access from the main ports to the marketplaces and other commercial buildings would have been a crucial factor in the city's urban development.[20] The northern Neorion and Prosphorion harbours, and the nearby forum known as the Strategion, were important areas of commercial activity before the foundation of Constantinople, and remained in use throughout its history.[21] The fifth century *Notitia* lists a number of important commercial facilities such as markets (*macella*), granaries and warehouses (*horrea*) that existed in these areas (see Figure 1).[22] The two northern ports were unable to support the city's burgeoning population, and new harbours were built on the southern coastline in the reigns of Julian and Theodosius I in the

[18] Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 209-10.
[19] Of particular note are Mango, *Commercial Map*; Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*; Mango, *Development of Constantinople*.
[20] Mango, *Commercial Map*, 189-92.
[21] Mango, *Commercial Map*, 189; Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 211-2. Refer to Figure 1.
[22] *Notitia* 233-235, Region V (Matthews, 89-90). Also see Mango, *Commercial Map*, 192-4 and Mango, *Development of Constantinople*, 120.

latter half of the fourth century.[23] Large granaries and markets listed in the *Notitia* would have serviced both of the southern ports (see Figure 1).[24]

The city's main fora were also hotspots of commercial and cultural interaction. As well as the Strategion servicing the northern ports, there were several other fora in the city. Lining the main street known as the Mese were the fora of Constantine, Theodosius, Amastrianus, Arcadius and the Tetrastoon (or Augusteon). Other centrally located fora that were in use in the Late Antique period were those of Leo and Marcian.[25] The Mese was also a commercial and social hub; it hosted many of the city's marketplaces, effectively bisected the city from east to west, and had access to all of the city's ports and quays via other arterial roads.[26] As previously mentioned, access from the ports to the fora and markets would have been important. However, of all the city's main fora, only the Strategion was situated directly alongside a port or on the coastline.[27] The transport of goods through the city from trading vessels in the harbours to the various fora would have been commonplace. There were also two *macella* close to the Theodosian Forum, at which some of the fish and livestock arriving via sea would have been sold. These two markets are listed in Region VIII of the *Notitia*; one of the only administrative regions not bordering on the sea.[28] Since there was a fairly steep climb to these markets from either of the two closest harbours (those of Theodosius and Julian), the *macella* must have been terraced.[29] It is worth highlighting at this point that Constantinople was a city built on hilly terrain.[30] As such, steep ascents from the

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[23] Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 211; Rautman, *Daily Life*, 101; Mango, *Development of Constantinople*, 120-1.

[24] *Notitia* 236-8, Regions VIII and IX (Matthews, 92-3); Mango, *Commercial Map*, 192-4; Mango, *Development of Constantinople*, 121.

[25] Mango, *Commercial Map*, 191-2. Figure 1 shows the Mese in the centre of Constantinople, and the location of all of the main fora and harbours included in the *Notitia*.

[26] M. Mango, 'The Porticoed Street at Constantinople', in Necipoğlu, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 31; Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 217.

[27] Mango, *Commercial Map*, 192; K.R. Dark, 'The Eastern Harbours of Early Byzantine Constantinople', *Byzantion*, 75 (2005), 152-63; K.R. Dark and A.L. Harris, 'The Last Roman Forum: The Forum of Leo in Fifth-century Constantinople,' *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 48 (2008) 57-69.

[28] *Notitia* 236-7 (Matthews, 92).

[29] Mango, *Commercial Map*, 193-4.

[30] N. Westbrook, 'Notes Towards the Reconstruction of the Forum of the Strategion and its Related Roads in Early Byzantine Constantinople', *JAEMA* 9 (2013), 17-26. Westbrook concentrates on the topography of the north-eastern section of Constantinople, but he discusses the sloping descents from the Mese and fora to the harbours and coastline in the north and south of the city.

ports to many of the markets would simply have been commonplace for locals and foreigners alike.

It is also important to bear in mind that during Late Antiquity and the following centuries, there was nowhere within the city of Constantinople that could be considered far from the sea. This might seem an obvious fact, but it is easy to overlook when faced with the developed, modern city of Istanbul. The sea would have been visible from many of the fora along the Mese and vice versa. Despite the imposing sea walls, anyone approaching Constantinople from the sea could distinguish the location of its commercial and cultural hubs, not least from the imperial statues and columns erected therein.[31] Magdalino highlights the strong, pervasive effect that the sea had on the city from its inception. He questions what distinguishes maritime and inland neighbourhoods in such a city, and suggests that Constantinople could be broadly split between the regions focused primarily on the sea, and those focused on the central fora, roads and public buildings.[32] The separation of maritime from inland neighbourhoods works well for Magdalino's study; however, such a clean distinction can also be misleading. From a sociological perspective, it is important to acknowledge the all-pervasive influence that the sea and maritime commerce had on the entire city and its inhabitants. The coastal or maritime atmosphere would not only have been felt in the city's ports and their immediate surrounds. Indeed, the fact that many of the fora and marketplaces were not directly adjacent to the city's harbours indicates that the presence, and influence, of the maritime world extended well beyond Constantinople's primary ports.

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[31] B. Ward-Perkins, 'Old and New Rome Compared. The Rise of Constantinople', in Grig and Kelly, *Two Romes*, 58-9. Ward-Perkins refers to the Columns of Theodosius I and Arcadius in their respective forums as visible from the sea; Procop. *Aed.* 1.2.1-12 (Dewing, 32-5) mentions the statue of Justinian in the Augusteon, and travel accounts from later centuries also confirm that this famous statue was visible from far out to sea. See G.P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984), 237-8. Also see C. Mango, 'Justinian's Equestrian Statue', in *Studies on Constantinople* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 1-16 and C. Mango, 'The Columns of Justinian and his Successors', in *Studies on Constantinople* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 1-20.
Refer to 'Byzantium 1200' (updated 2009) on: http://www.byzantium1200.com/ for a virtual reconstruction of Constantinople in the year 1200. There is also an anonymous epigram that mentions a statue of the emperor Justin that was erected near one of Constantinople's harbours where it could be seen by ships at sea. See *Anth. Gr.* 16.64, in *The Greek Anthology. Books 13-16*, vol. 5, ed. and trans. W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library 86 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 194-5. Also refer to Dark, *Eastern Harbours*, 159-60 for a discussion of the visibility of the city's monumental core from the harbours and ports.

[32] Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 209.

There was, of course, more concentrated maritime commercial activity in and around the city's harbours.[33] It is tempting to romanticise the city's ports and markets as the bustling, cosmopolitan environments described by Jordanes; however, for the men and women who worked there, life would have been extremely hard. Many of those working in port areas would have been slaves. Human skeletal remains located in the Theodosian Harbour excavations show signs of a number of diseases and physical conditions caused by poor diet and overwork. Forensic analysis of the skeletons has uncovered osteophytes, osteoporosis and schmorl nodules on the

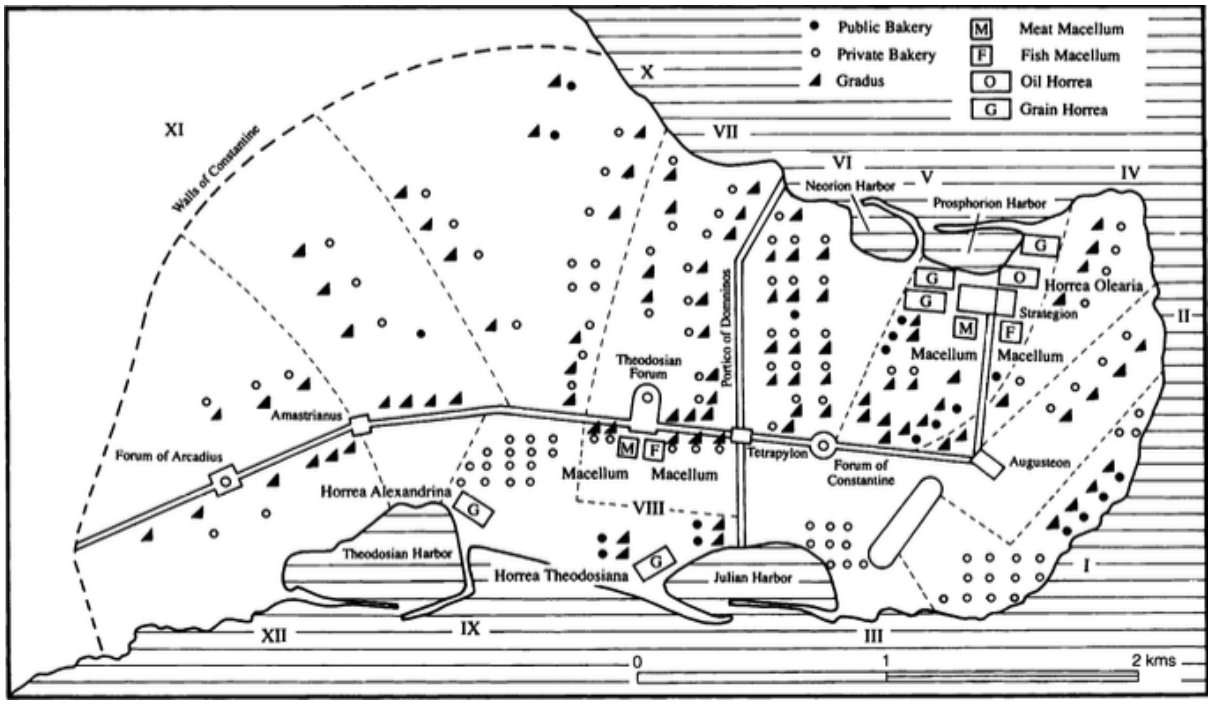

Figure 1. Commercial map of Constantinople showing the major harbours, markets, granaries, streets, and administrative regions I to XII from the fifth century *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (Drawing by A. Wilkins, taken from M.M. Mango, 'The Commercial Map of Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 54 (2000), 189-207).

[33] See Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 188-9; G. Baran Çelik, 'Daily Life in Yenikapi', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 223-4. The large number of artefacts and amphorae discovered near the Theodosian Harbour clearly demonstrates that portside neighbourhoods like this were busy and vibrant areas from the late fourth century. Refer to the catalogue of items in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years* for a selection of artefacts discovered in the Theodosian Harbour and other Istanbul excavations.

vertebrae; the last condition in particular is likely to have been caused by the extreme mechanical stress that comes with hard physical labour.[34] Analysis of horse and camel skeletons found around the jetties of the port show that these animals were often used to carry goods to the markets and, like their human counterparts, were also pushed to their limits.[35] Even the men who had less physically gruelling jobs at the ports seem to have had a tough life. A miracle of Saint Artemios mentions a guard at one of the port warehouses who slept at his workplace because if he left he would lose his job and his livelihood.[36]

According to the *Notitia*, Constantinople's population density was at its greatest in the city's shoreside and port areas (see Figure 1 for the locations of city Regions I to XII).[37] In particular, the administrative regions bordering on the Golden Horn, including Region VI with the Neorion harbour and Regions VII and X in the city's northwest, had high numbers of dwellings and *collegiati*.[38] Region XIII (Sycae), on the opposite shore of the Golden Horn, had a relatively large number of houses, along with another forum, docks and other infrastructure. There were regular ferries connecting Sycae to the main city.[39] Regions XI and XII also had a large number of dwellings for their correspondingly low number of streets. Region XII was coastal, extending from the Constantinian walls to the southern shoreline and the Theodosian Harbour.[40] The high-density housing, commercial installations, large numbers of *collegiati*, and lack of noble houses along Constantinople's north and southwestern shorelines demonstrate that these large areas were lower-class in nature.[41] It was in the overcrowded port areas of the Late Antique city where several devastating

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[34] M.Görgülü, 'Forensic Paleodemography of Byzantine', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 248-9. The skeletal remains also show traces of diseases such as trachoma, scurvy, and cribra orbitalia. The date of these skeletons has not been specified, other than that they are from the Byzantine period.

[35] Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 189; Baran Çelik, *Daily Life in Yenikapi*, 224; Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 27; M. Metin Gökçay, 'Architectural Finds from the Yenikapi Excavations', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 177.

[36] *Miracles of St Artemios*, 16, in *The Miracles of St Artemios. A Collection of Miracle Stories by an Anonymous Author of Seventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. and trans. V.S. Crisafulli and J.W. Nesbitt (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 106-9.

[37] *Notitia* 230-43 (Matthews, 90-6).

[38] *Notitia* 234-9 (Matthews, 90-5).

[39] *Notitia* 240 (Matthews, 95-6).

[40] *Notitia* 238-9 (Matthews, 93-5); Matthews, *Notitia*, 116. It should be noted that Region XI did not border on the sea at all; it stretched from the city walls to the Mese, suggesting that the areas close to the city walls were also heavily populated.

[41] Matthews, *Notitia*, 114-5.

fires started. The intensity with which these fires took hold highlights the cramped, lower and working-class conditions that existed in these parts of the city.[42] One fire that started at a northern harbour (most likely the Neorion) in the mid fifth century raged all the way through the city to the Harbour of Julian in the south.[43]

It is easy to imagine these lower-class, heavily populated, maritime centres as small areas on the periphery of the city. Yet due to the overall size of Constantinople and the fact that it was surrounded by water on three sides, a significant part of the city was actually on, or directly adjacent to, the coast. When looking at a map of Constantinople from this period, one could be forgiven for thinking that the ports and harbours dominated only the city's coastline. However, the section of a port that is shown on a map is generally only the part which juts out into the water. A terrestrial component always surrounds the water and docking facilities as well. The recent Yenikapı excavations of the Port of Theodosius demonstrate that ports and their surrounding regions could be quite extensive; the excavations in and around the port covered approximately ten city blocks in modern Istanbul (the equivalent of 58,000 square metres).[44] Despite this large area, the excavations only include the harbour itself and structures such as jetties and walls. Very little of the surrounding area or its infrastructure has been excavated due to modern urban development.[45] Ken Dark's re-examination of excavation notes made during the construction of a post office in northeastern Istanbul in 1905 may also suggest that the Neorion harbour

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[42] One example is a fire in 433 recorded by the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* and by Socrates. See *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 1, year 25, in *Chronicon Paschale*, vol. 1, ed. L.A. Dindorf (Bonn: E. Weber, 1832), 582. English trans. in M. and M. Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284-628AD*, Translated Texts for Historians 7 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 71; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.39 (*PG* 67.827-30). This fire started in the Neorion harbour and apparently destroyed a large section of the city. Another example is a sixth-century fire that started in the Harbour of Julian and destroyed many houses in its path. See Malalas, *Chron.* 18.131, in *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Byzantina Australiensis 4, trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne: Australian Association of Byzantine Studies, 1986), 299.

[43] *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 3, year 8 and Indiction 7, year 12 (Dindorf, 1.595 and 598). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale,* 87 and 90-1; Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.13, in *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, eds. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London: Methuen and Co., 1898), 64-5. English trans. in M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, Translated Texts for Historians 33 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 96-7; Malalas, *Chron.* 14.43 (trans. Jeffreys et al, 206).

[44] Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 9.

[45] Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 30; C. Pulak, 'Yenikapi Byzantine Shipwrecks', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 202; Metin Gökçay, *Architectural Finds*, 166-79.

occupied a larger area than originally assumed.[46] The excavation notes mention an old quay located to the west of the natural harbour believed to be the Neorion.[47] The presence of the quay extends the area occupied by this important harbour and, in turn, the size of its surrounding terrestrial neighbourhood.[48] Dark also records the presence of a marble-paved porticoed street dating from the Late Antique period, which leads uphill from the natural harbour of the Neorion to the city centre. This porticoed street provided a direct connection from one of the city's busiest harbour complexes to the centrally located Forum of Constantine on the Mese.[49]

Cyril Mango reminds us that Constantinople was not just the area bound by the city walls. Regions such as Sycae (modern Galata) on the northern shore of the Golden Horn, Chalcedon (modern Kadıköy) across the Bosporus, and Hebdomon were all coastal suburbs of Constantinople as well.[50] A variety of written sources record important ports in the suburbs around Constantinople. When Agathias details the effects of the earthquake of 557 on Constantinople, he says that the greatest damage was to houses in the district of Rhegium (modern Küçükçekmece in Istanbul's west). He refers to Rhegium as the shipyard or dock of Constantinople (ἐπίνειον), and the devastation caused by the earthquake suggests that it was a densely populated area.[51] Procopius praises Justinian for the new harbours and other infrastructure like porticoes, markets and churches erected at Hieron and Eutropius on the Bosporus. These harbours acted as safe refuge for sailors, providing shelter for shipping using the Bosporus strait, even during winter storms.[52] Hieron, at the mouth of the Black Sea, was also the site of a customs station. In

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[46] K.R. Dark, 'The New Post Office Site in Istanbul and the North-Eastern Harbour of Byzantine Constantinople', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology,* 33 (2004), 315-19 and Dark, *Eastern Harbours*, 152-63.

[47] The proposed location of the Neorion harbour is based on information derived from written texts.

[48] Dark, *New Post Office*, 315. Most scholars agree that the area around Istanbul's modern Sirkeci station corresponds to that of the ancient Neorion harbour. Refer to S. Eskalen, 'Marmaray Project Sirkeci station excavations: Byzantion', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 107.

[49] Dark, *New Post Office*, 317; Dark, *Eastern Harbours*, 154-7.

[50] Mango, *Development of Constantinople*, 118.

[51] Agathias, *Histories* 5.3.9, in *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum Libri Quinque*, ed. R. Keydell, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967), 167. English trans. in J.D. Frendo, *Agathias. The Histories* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 138: 'συχναὶ μὲν οὖν ἐκείνης τῆς νυκτὸς οἰκίαι καταβέβληνται, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τῷ Ῥηγίῳ, ἐπίνειον δὲ τοῦτο τῆς πόλεως …' ('During that night many houses were destroyed, particularly in the district of Rhegium, which is the port of Constantinople').

[52] Procop. *Aed.* 1.11.18-20 (Dewing, 92-5).

sharp contrast, Procopius criticises Justinian for using this station to make hefty profits from shippers sailing in and out of Constantinople via the strait.[53] Another important harbour was at Hebdomon on the outskirts of Constantinople (approximately seven miles to the west of the city). Hebdomon was an important imperial and military centre; fourth and fifth-century emperors were proclaimed there, and the site had a military training ground and churches.[54] Hebdomon's role as a harbour is specifically mentioned by several sources and it was obviously an important stop for vessels on their way to Constantinople. Themistius praises Valens for his intention to upgrade Hebdomon with infrastructure in the latter half of the fourth century, and John Malalas records that the harbour had to be dredged under Justinian.[55] According to Socrates, Hebdomon was the landing place for visiting ecclesiastics like Epiphanius travelling from Cyprus.[56] One of the miracles of Saint Artemios deals with a merchant from Chios called Euporos who regularly conducted business in Constantinople. The sailors on Euporos' ship anchored overnight in the port at Hebdomon, demonstrating that it was still in use by the seventh century.[57]

It is not coincidental that places like Hebdomon, Sycae, Chalcedon, Rhegium and Hieron were prominent suburbs and satellite towns of Constantinople; they were all coastal areas easily accessible by sea. Alfonso Moreno says Hieron's 'obvious link to the rest of the world—in fact, the very reason it existed—was always the sea'.[58] The same could be said for Constantinople as a whole. Overland trade was an important part of Constantinople's economy, yet it was the unique maritime geographical setting which gave it the edge over other cities. Constantinople was a maritime metropolis at the centre of a much wider maritime landscape. It had control of the Bosporus strait to the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara (Propontis), and the

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[53] Procop. *Anec.* 25.4-10, in *Procopius, The Anecdota or Secret History*, vol. 6, ed. and trans. H.B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library 290 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 290-5. Control of Hieron also had its strategic advantages. See Alfonso Moreno, 'Hieron. The Ancient Sanctuary at the Mouth of the Black Sea', *Hesperia* 77 (2008), 655-709 (including Figure 9, 662 which shows the location of Hieron).

[54] J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire. From the Death of Theodosius to the Death of Justinian*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 80; C. Mango, 'The Triumphal Way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 54 (2000), 176. Mango notes that the Hebdomon was first attested in 364; Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 336-7.

[55] Themistius, *Or.* 6.83a (Dindorf, 99); Malalas, *Chron.* 18.114 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 293).

[56] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.12 (*PG* 67.699-702).

[57] *Miracles of St Artemios,* 5 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 84-7). The port of Hebdomon must have been in use during this period, otherwise this part of the story would have had little credibility.

[58] Moreno, *Hieron*, 665.

Dardanelles strait (Hellespont) to the Aegean. There were port and harbour facilities scattered along its neighbouring coastlines and straits. Polybius had described the economic and strategic superiority of ancient Byzantium's maritime aspect long before Constantine chose it as his eastern capital for the same reason.[59] All of Constantinople's coastal suburbs and satellite towns allowed greater control of the seas and straits around the capital. These outlying districts enhanced—and extended—the maritime setting that was the essence of this great city and its empire.

In addition to the large harbour complexes within the city and its suburbs, there were other less prominent quays (*scalae)* and ports dotted along the coastline. Magdalino highlights that the northern inlet of the Golden Horn was itself one 'large protected harbor where ships could moor, anchor or be beached almost anywhere along the coast'.[60] The presence of these smaller anchorages acts as a reminder that Constantinople was fundamentally a coastal community where the sea was a part of everyday life. Fishermen and their boats would have been a common sight at many jetties, with local seafood one of the city's main food sources.[61] The *Notitia* mentions several quays, including the Scala Timasii, in Region IV. This quay, situated on the Golden Horn, was in the region where Justinian and Theodora built a hostel for destitute travellers.[62] It was also close to the early seaside sanctuary of Saint Menas, a popular stop for pilgrims visiting Constantinople.[63] This area was to the east of the major northern ports and it would have been a busy spot for itinerant visitors to the city. The *Notitia* also records the presence of the Scala Sycena in Region VI, the administrative region containing the Neorion harbour and shipyard. This quay was

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[59] Polybius, *The Histories*, 4.38-44, ed. and trans. W.R. Paton, vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library 137 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), 392-411. *Patria* 1.10 (Berger, 8-9) records that the original city of Byzantium was founded on the coast 'with the help of Poseion and Apollo' ('Ποσειδῶος δὲ καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος ὥς φασι συνεργούντων ἀνοικοδομεῖ τὰ τείχη λόγου τε παντὸς κρείττονα μηχανώμενος.'). Also see Zosimus, *NH*, 2.30-2-4 (Mendelssohn, 87-8); S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 19; Rautman, *Daily Life*, 62.

[60] Magdalino, 'Harbors of Byzantine Constantinople', in Kızıltan and Baran-Çeilk, *Stories of the Hidden Harbor*, 12.

[61] Rautman, *Daily Life*, 101.

[62] *Notitia*, 232-4 (Matthews, 88-9); Matthews, *Notitia*, 103-4; Procop*. Aed.* 1.11.23-7 (Dewing, 94-7). For the location of all these regions, see Figure 1.

[63] *Notitia*, 233 (Matthews, 89); *Patria* 1.13, in *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, trans. A. Berger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 8-9. See K. Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York: New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 573-8 for archaeological evidence of the popularity of Saint Menas with pilgrims in the fifth to seventh centuries.

probably located near the gate of Perama, with spice and fish markets nearby.[64] Region VI extended from the Forum of Constantine to the Scala Sycena, and this is possibly the aforementioned quay noted by Ken Dark.[65] The Scala Sycena connected the city to the suburb of Sycae where there was also a ferry terminal.[66] Since Sycae was one of the city's fourteen main administrative regions, ferry trips across the Golden Horn would have been fairly routine for the city's inhabitants.

The Scala Chalcedonensis is also listed in the *Notitia* as situated near the Prosphorion in Region V.[67] Written sources, including the *Chronicon Paschale,* record instances of ferries travelling from Chalcedon to this jetty, demonstrating that it was in frequent use throughout Late Antiquity.[68] Archaeological excavation in modern Üsküdar (Roman Scutari), near Chalcedon, has unearthed jetties, piers and breakwaters.[69] Amphorae, pottery, lamps, lead seals and coins found in the excavations prove that this was a busy port.[70] Scutari was also an important stop for merchants travelling overland from Persia and Armenia.[71] Vessels would have travelled back and forth across the Bosporus from Chalcedon and Scutari to the quay near the Prosphorion on a regular basis. In a sixth-century letter from Paulus Silentiarius to his friend Agathias, who was studying on the Asian side of the Bosporus, the writer talks of the 'narrow strait of the sea' between them and quips, 'you, my friend, can take the ferry'.[72] Procopius also tells the story of a couple who were crossing to a suburb on the opposite mainland when they were met by a boatload of factionists.[73] Clearly these short trips from one mainland to another were commonplace in the coastal community of Constantinople.

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[64] Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 216.

[65] *Notitia*, 234 (Matthews, 90); Matthews, *Notitia*, 105; Dark, *New Post Office*, 315-19.

[66] *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 6, year 1 (Dindorf, 1.618). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale,* 110; *Notitia*, 240 (Matthews, 95).

[67] *Notitia*, 233-4 (Matthews, 89-90); Matthews, *Notitia*, 104-5.

[68] *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 4, year 12 and Indiction 13, year 7 (Dindorf, 1.569 and 572). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, 60 and 64; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.15 (*PG* 67.709-10).

[69] Ş. Karagöz, 'The Role of Chrysopolis in History as a Colony City', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 49.

[70] 'Üsküdar: Catalogue', in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*. Examples include Catalogue Items Ü14, Ü15, and Ü22 to Ü30. Also see Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 57 and 61-3.

[71] Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*, 56-7.

[72] *Anth. Gr.* 5.293 (Paton, 1, 418-9): '… βαιὸς ἁλὸς πόρος … σοὶ δέ, φίλος, παρέασι καὶ ὁλκάδες·' (5.293). Also see and 5.292 (Paton, 1, 416-7).

[73] Procop. *Anec.*, 7.37-8 (Dewing, 88-9).

Christer Westerdahl has written extensively on the maritime cultural landscape and he stresses that there is a clear difference between inland and maritime culture. He highlights, however, that the two rarely, if ever, exist in complete isolation in coastal regions.[74] Coastal communities rely on their marine and terrestrial resources and environments in order to function effectively, and this raises the question of whether they should be called maritime or terrestrial, or both.[75] Historians and archaeologists all too often study the marine and terrestrial aspects of culture and the cultural landscape separately, creating what Westerdahl calls an 'instinctive barrier' between the water and land.[76] Yet the border between land and sea, or inland and maritime, is far more difficult to draw in real life than it is in theory.[77] The sea played an important role in the overall rhythm of life in Constantinople and, as such, the barrier between the inland and maritime should be lifted by modern researchers interested in the city and her empire.

In the case of Constantinople, it has been all too easy for scholars to assume that maritime culture was confined to small pockets of territory around the major ports, thus divorcing it from the city's terrestrial culture. Despite its coastal setting and maritime character, there seems to be an imaginary border that has been created between the ports and the rest of the city. This barrier has separated the political, imperial, ecclesiastical and elite cultural aspects of Constantinople from its maritime and lower-class elements, which have been shunted to the periphery. Yet in a city like Constantinople, the border between the terrestrial and maritime would have been blurred. Constantinople and the empire it controlled relied heavily on the sea and on sailors, merchants and their trading activities. These maritime elements were an everyday part of life and cannot be divorced from Constantinople's terrestrial or inland aspects. In the third century, one of Athenaeus' characters in the *Deipnosophistae* discusses Byzantium and its inhabitants. The fictional philosopher–based on the fourth-century BCE historian Theopompus of Chios–says that due to

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[74] C. Westerdahl, 'The Maritime Cultural Landscape', in *The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology*, eds. B. Ford, A. Catsambis and D.L. Hamilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 742 and 744-5.

[75] J. Ransley, 'Maritime Communities and Traditions', in Ford et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology*, 895. Ransley's archaeological and anthropological studies focus predominantly on small, indigenous communities, but her ideas are relevant for any coastal community (including large ones like Constantinople or Alexandria).

[76] Westerdahl, *Maritime Cultural Landscape*, 734.

[77] Westerdahl, *Maritime Cultural Landscape*, 750.

Byzantium's location and role as a trading post, 'the entire populace spent their time in the market-place and by the waterside, hence they had accustomed themselves to dissipation and amours and drinking in the taverns'.[78] Constantinople may have become much larger and more prominent than its earlier incarnation of Byzantium but it still remained a trading and coastal city, as it had been for centuries.

To acknowledge that Constantinople—or any other important harbour city—was a working maritime port and coastal community is to view it differently to the way in which it is normally viewed. The surviving architecture and sources highlight the monumental and elite aspects of the city, and yet these elements tell us very little about everyday life in a trading centre. From a sociological perspective, the coastal setting and maritime atmosphere of Constantinople is critical to understanding the influence that sailors, merchants and other members of the maritime community had on broader society and culture, and to recognising the everyday realities of life in the eastern capital. It should also be noted that Constantinople was culturally influential throughout the entire Mediterranean world. As such, the extent to which maritime sub-culture permeated society in Constantinople is relevant for our understanding of Late Roman and Early Byzantine identity and culture, on a much wider scale.

The Maritime Milieu in the Eastern Roman Empire

In *The Corrupting Sea*, Horden and Purcell state that throughout history the sea played a crucial role in binding the entire Mediterranean region together. The importance of the sea for travel, trade, and communication meant that a conspicuous maritime milieu developed throughout the region, dominating the parts of the terrestrial world with which it came into contact.[79] Maritime society and culture was present on ships and in the immediate surrounds of major ports, but it also existed in a wide range of other spaces. These include residential, commercial, leisure, and recreational facilities in coastal urban environments; regional and urban markets and the roads leading to them; smaller seaports and anchorages along sea routes; local

[78] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12, 526d-e (trans. Gulick in Meijer and van Nijf, *Trade, Transport and Society*, 14).
[79] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 133.

areas that supplied materials and resources for shipbuilding, trade, and other sailing activities; and in the mindset of people living near the sea.[80]

This maritime backdrop was influenced by the seasons but it was still a year-round phenomenon. Mariners may have been more conspicuous in Constantinople and other coastal regions during the preferred sailing season, yet recent studies show that sea travel and maritime commerce never stopped altogether.[81] Horden and Purcell suggest that there was 'a lower level of more or less constant shipping activity throughout the year'.[82] Sea travel was at its height between the months of April and October, but ships continued to travel all year round.[83] James Beresford demonstrates convincingly that winter sailing was commonplace and that 'large numbers of vessels and mariners routinely made voyages onto what has, for too long, been regarded as a "closed sea"'.[84] Several primary sources talk of winter sailing activities, including in the waters leading to and from Constantinople. Procopius, for example, describes the sheltered bays and anchorages of the city which were available to ships sailing the open seas and through the Bosporus Strait during winter.[85] Smaller vessels able to hug the coastline, and larger vessels with captains, shipowners and merchants willing to take risks continued sailing and docking in ports over the winter months. Sailors and merchants may have been forced to wait around in cities for lengthier periods during winter due to adverse

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[80] See Westerdahl, *Maritime Cultural Landscape*, 746 for a comprehensive list of areas that he considers comprise the 'maritime cultural landscape'.

[81] The preferred sailing season was between March and September. See Vegetius, *Mil.* 4.39 in *Flavi Vegeti Renati, Epitoma Rei Militaris*, ed. C. Lang (Leipzig: Teubner, 1885), 156-8 and *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.3.3 (*CJR* 1.761-2). The *Isidis Navigium* symbolically launched the sailing season each year in many Graeco-Roman cities and this festival was held in March. See M.R. Salzmann, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 170. For the outdated view that sailing halted almost entirely throughout the autumn and winter months, see L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 270-2. Refer to J. Beresford, *The Ancient Sailing Season* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), for an updated reading of the sources to show that sailing continued throughout the entire year. Beresford also provides a summary of previous scholarship on ancient sailing seasons on pages 1-7.

[82] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 142-3.

[83] McCormick, *Origins*, 450-9. McCormick notes on page 464 that ship movements 'even in the winter, were part of the fabric of life in the central sea corridor of the Byzantine empire that ran from the Black Sea and through the Aegean'. McCormick's inventory shows that vessels were certainly still sailing in March, November and December.

[84] Beresford, *Ancient Sailing Season*, 6.

[85] Procop. *Aed.* 1.5.2-13 and 1.11.18-21 (Dewing, 56-61 and 92-5).

weather conditions, yet even then their presence would have been strongly felt as they searched for ways to occupy their time.[86]

The geographical features of the Bosporus, Sea of Marmara, and the Aegean enabled ships to continue sailing in winter, with numerous peninsulas, islands and straits allowing short trips between anchorages.[87] Much of the maritime traffic destined for large port cities like Constantinople also visited smaller harbours and seaports. John Oleson and Robert Hohlfelder conducted a study of the small port of Aperlae on the southern coast of modern Turkey.[88] The study shows that small harbour towns had a significant role in the larger world of maritime commerce. Towns like Aperlae were involved in local seaborne trade, and provided anchorage for trading vessels heading from regional markets to the great harbour cities.[89] Such coastal communities were by nature resourceful, and the mariners who moved freely through them learned to deal with the elements in order to survive. As a result, these coastal settlements often had small but thriving year-round maritime communities, and catered for a number of visitors involved in maritime trading activities over the greater region.[90] Together with larger port cities like Constantinople and Alexandria, these settlements created a network of harbours that acted as hubs of Late Roman and maritime culture in all seasons and over a vast area.

There were popular and regular shipping routes throughout the Mediterranean, but captains would have diverged from these routes for a number of reasons.[91] Not all small seaports, like Aperlae, could have catered for large ships, but there was a strong network of ports that did. Based on edicts promulgated in Constantinople in 409, even ships of the *annona* took indirect routes to their destinations in order to

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[86] Rautman, *Daily Life*, 149. John Chrysostom, *De Eleemosyna* 1 (*PG* 51.261.20-39) mentions sailors who were destitute during winter because they only had regular work during summer.

[87] McCormick, *Origins*, 464; Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 126-7 who note that due to these geographical features, there were always large sections of the Mediterranean where sailors could stay in sight of land, at least in clear weather. This provided mariners with the perception of being close to land, thus encouraging more mariners to risk sailing in winter.

[88] J.P. Oleson and R.L. Hohlfelder, 'Ancient Harbors in the Mediterranean', in Ford et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology*, 809-33. This paper is predominantly concerned with the Roman Imperial period, but the port of Aperlae was in use through to the seventh century.

[89] Oleson and Hohlfelder, *Ancient Harbors*, 818-9.

[90] Oleson and Hohlfelder, *Ancient Harbors*, 822.

[91] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 139-40; McCormick, *Origins*, 93. Captains would have taken different routes for economic reasons, due to adverse weather or seas, to avoid pirates or simply out of preference for particular ports and cities.

sell additional cargo or to sit out the summer sailing season.[92] Clearly there were seaports that welcomed these vessels which were not on the main sea routes. *Journeys on the Seas of Byzantium* includes a map and detailed list of the important Byzantine seaports of the fourth to seventh centuries (see Figure 2).[93] In addition to prominent cities like Constantinople, Alexandria, Berytus, Cherson and Thessalonike, the map shows over eighty port cities and towns throughout the greater Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. This myriad of seaports harboured vessels of all shapes, sizes, cargoes and crews. The sea was the reason that many lesser known coastal towns existed. Smaller maritime trading centres often only survived because ships docked into their ports carrying merchants, sailors and their cargoes. The maritime aspects of these settlements were a significant part of their character and identity, and helped to shape the manner in which the inhabitants viewed their place in the wider Roman world. Working seaports and harbour towns—large and small—were a crucial part of the overall Mediterranean maritime network and social milieu.

The Black Sea port of Tomis (Constanța), in modern Romania, is a good example of how integral maritime culture and trade could be to everyday life in a coastal centre. The city was one of the largest on the shores of the Black Sea and it flourished through to the seventh century. A tower and fifth-century Christian basilica were prominent features of the harbour, and both structures were visible to those entering the city by sea.[94] The agora and a magnificent fourth-century mosaic-floored complex have been located next to the city's port, acting as testament to the centrality of harbour life in the city. Many of the vaulted rooms within the multi-storied complex were utilised as storage for the agora, with amphorae and other imported goods, anchors, weights and products used for ship repairs found within them. The complex contained a large, open-air marketplace with a full view of the harbour, and

[92] *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.32 and *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.33 (*CJR* 1.755).

[93] Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 183 also details some of the most important trade routes to and from Constantinople.

[94] V. Canarache, *The Archaeological Museum of Constantza* (Constanța: No. 4 Printing Works, 1967), 4-5 and 11; V. Canarache, *The Mosaic-Floored Edifice of Tomi* (Constanța: Regional Archaeological Museum, 1967), 2-3.

Figure 2. Map showing Mediterranean and Black Sea ports in the 4th to 7th century period (based on the map in Y. Vitaliotis, 'Seaports through the Ages', in ed. D. Zafiropoulou, *Journeys on the Seas of Byzantium* (Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Culture), 1998, 10-11). The exact location of some of these seaports is unknown and may have been estimated on this map. The distance between port cities is also not always to scale.

there was a staircase leading directly from the docks to all levels of the building.[95] Grain depots, workshops and baths were all built close to the edifice.[96] The harbour complex was clearly an intrinsic component of life in Tomis. It acted as 'the meeting place of the city's inhabitants, of the magistrates, merchants, and sailors, and of commercial transactions'.[97] Tomis is but one example of the many coastal centres that saw maritime society mingling with the general community as a part of everyday life. It is also only one of many cities and towns that both accommodated and harboured mariners and their culture.

The city of Alexandria should be mentioned briefly at this point, as it was one of the most important seaports and market cities of Late Antiquity. Indeed, until the Arab invasions of the seventh century, Alexandria's influence over the eastern Mediterranean region rivalled that of Constantinople. Alexandria's character was essentially a maritime one. In his study of Late Antique Alexandria, Haas highlights its role as an international port city and large emporium, noting that the city's harbours always retained pride of place.[98] The city's ports dealt with grain exports and an array of local Egyptian and imported products destined for Constantinople and other harbours all over the Mediterranean.[99] At any given time, the cosmopolitan city contained sailors, merchants and other traders from a range of regions, and the presence of Egyptian sailors would have been felt in Alexandria, Constantinople and throughout the entire Late Antique world. Yet Alexandria was only one city in a vast network of port cities. Along with a host of other seaports, Constantinople, Alexandria, Tomis and Aperlae bound together an incredibly vast region and mix of peoples, creating the distinctive and influential maritime milieu of Late Antiquity. Maritime communities extended the influence of Late Roman and Byzantine culture in general, and enabled maritime culture to thrive on land as well as at sea.

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[95] Canarache, *Mosaic-Floored Edifice*, 7 and 17; Canarache, *Archaeological Museum,* 78-85.

[96] Canarache, *Mosaic-Floored Edifice*, 2-4.

[97] Canarache, *Mosaic-Floored Edifice*, 5.

[98] Haas, *Alexandria*, 22-33 and 41.

[99] *Expositio Totius Mundi Et Gentium* 35-6, in *Geographi Graeci Minores*, vol. 2, ed. C. Muller (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1861), 520. English trans. in J.E. Woodman, *The Expositio Totius Mundi Et Gentium: Its Geography and Its Language*, Masters Thesis (Ohio: Ohio State University, 1964), 33-4; Haas, *Alexandria*, 43. Also see R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 107-8 and 291-2 for a discussion of Egypt's international exports. Bagnall notes that the export of goods from Egypt is barely attested in the papyri (as opposed to the shipment of grain along the Nile which is very well attested). Sea transportation of grain is also rarely mentioned in the papyri.

The maritime atmosphere in cultural centres like Constantinople and Alexandria ensured that maritime symbolism and imagery were intensely evocative to anyone living in these cities. The ongoing reliance of these centres on the sea also ensured that classical maritime themes and imagery—especially those with overt non-Christian connotations—retained their relevance as the Roman world transitioned from a polytheistic to a monotheistic one.[100] The continuing cultural influence of the maritime milieu is clearly discernible in the seamless transfer and integration of maritime themes, images and ideas into Late Roman and Early Byzantine literature, art, religion and thought. Seafaring imagery was used in political oratory, poetry and ecclesiastical writing, and it regularly had contemporary and local significance. Great political orators like Themistius compared Late Roman emperors to skilled helmsmen who steered their ships through raging seas. Themistius' description of the empire in tumultuous times in his *Oration* 15 is full of detailed maritime imagery. He speaks of rising from the belly of the ship to its deck; taking hold of the tillers; riding anchor in a calm harbour; the wind swelling the ship's various sails; the sides of the ship labouring in the swell and rough waves; and of looming squalls. The orator talks of the ship's crew, including the helmsman, officer, cook, deckhands and sailors.[101] In another address, Themistius compares the Roman state to the maritime realm. In the same speech, he notes that in his time, shipowners and merchants did not pray for legendary seas to be calm. Rather, mariners prayed for the waters of the Hellespont, Aegean and the Ionian Seas to be still, because all contemporary sailors and merchants had to cross these seas at some stage of their travels.[102] Themistius' oratory may have been imbued with maritime tropes but his knowledge

[100] For the history of maritime imagery in political oratory from the Archaic period through to Roman imperial times, see R. Brock, *Greek Political Imagery from Homer to Aristotle* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 53-62.

[101] Them. *Or*. 15.194d-195d (Dindorf, 238-40). English trans. in Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 249-50. This is a lengthy passage, and thus the Greek will not be reproduced here.

[102] Them. *Or*. 1.6d (Dindorf, 7). English trans. in Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 83-4: '… οὐκ εὔχεται ναύκληρος οὐδὲ ἔμπορος τὸν Χαλκιδικὸν πορθμὸν εὔδιον εἶναι - πόσοι γὰρ αὐτὸν ἤ πλέουσιν ἤ θεῶνται; - ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον καὶ τὸν Αἰγαῖον καὶ τὸν Ἰόνιον, οὕς πᾶσαι τέμνουσιν αἱ φορτίδες.'

of sailing, ships and mariners is quite detailed; it did not all come from history books or a Classical education.

Libanius refers to men who had lost access to their temples as shipwrecked mariners, swept away from their vessels by rough seas.[103] He compares an emperor who would allow traditional temples to be vandalised, or to fall into disrepair, to the helmsman of a ship who orders his sailors to throw their oars into the sea, or cuts the anchor cable that holds them at safe harbour in a storm.[104] Orators and poets alike spoke of life as a voyage on open seas, with Fortune controlling the winds and steering the ship.[105] The metaphorical use of maritime imagery was also popular in Christian contexts. Just as orators like Themistius and Libanius compared the Roman empire and its rulers to the sea and the captains who steered their ships through stormy waters, so too did Christian writers talk of their spiritual leaders.[106] To men like Gregory of Nazianzus and Theodoret, it was not Fortune or some other traditional deity who navigated the stormy seas of life, but Christ and saints like Peter of Alexandria who sailed men into safe harbours.[107] Ambrose of Milan lectures on the benefits of praying to Jesus, the ever-vigilant pilot who watched over men and calmed the storms and seas of everyday life and faith.[108] Augustine of Hippo reminds

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[103] Libanius, *Or*. 30.23, in Libanius, *Selected Orations*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. A. F. Norman, Loeb Classical Library 452 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 122-3: '… καὶ νεναυαγηκόσιν οἱ ταῦτα παθόντες ἐοίκασιν ἀνθρώποις ἐκπεσοῦσι τῶν νεῶν ἐφ' ὧν ἔπλεον.'

[104] Libanius, *Or*. 30.43 (Norman, *Selected Orations,* 2.138-41): '… οὐκοῦν τῶν μὲν βασιλέων οἱ νεῲ κτήματα, καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, τὸ δὲ τὰ αὐτῶν καταποντίζειν ὅρα εἰ σωφρονοῦντων. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν βαλάντιον ῥίπτων εἰς τὴν θάλατταν οὐχ ὑγιαίνει οὐδ' εἴ τις κυβερνήτης τέμνοι κάλων οὗ δεῖ τῷ πλοίῳ, καὶ ναύτην δὲ εἰ κελεύσειε τῇ θαλάττῃ τὴν κώπην ἀφεῖναι, δεινὰ ἂν δοκοῖ ποιεῖν·'.

[105] Libanius, *Or*. 21.17 (Norman, *Selected Orations,* 2.360-1): '… ὡς δήτοι καὶ κυβερνήτης ἅπας σώζειν μὲν ἂν θέλοι τὴν ναῦν, σώζει δὲ οὐχ ἅπας, ἀλλ' οἷς συμπράττει τὰ πνεύματα. τοῦτο δ' ἂν εἴη τῆς Τύχης.'; *Anth. Gr*. 10.65 (Paton, 4.36-7): 'Πλοῦς σφαλερὸς τὸ ζῆν· χειμαζόμενοι γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ πολλάκι ναυηγῶν πταίομεν οἰκτρότερα. τὴν δὲ Τύχην βιότοιο κυβερνήτειραν ἔχοντες, ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ πελάγους, ἀμφίβολοι πλέομεν, οἱ μὲν ἐπ' εὐπλοίην, οἱ δ' ἔμπαλιν· ἀλλ' ἅμα πάντες εἰς ἕνα τὸν κατὰ γῆς ὅρμον ἀπερχόμεθα.'

[106] Brock, *Greek Political Imagery*, 56 notes that 'Since helmsman imagery is, naturally, used of individuals exercising power or authority … it finds ready parallels in passages concerned with divine guidance or control'.

[107] Examples include Theodoret, *Compendium haereticarum fabularum*, 5.10 (*De Providentia*) (*PG* 83.484): '… τοῦ θεοῦ κυβερνῶντος, ἕτερον τῷ σκάφει τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐπεισαγαγεῖν κυβερνήτην'; Greg. Naz. *De rebus suis* 573-75 (*PG* 37.1013): '… Νωμᾷς δ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα σοφῶς οἰήϊα κόσμου, Οἷσιν ἐλαυνόμενοι τρηχὺ σπιλάδεσσι κακῇσι λαῖτμα μέγ' ἐκπερόωμεν ἀπιστοτάτου βιότοιο …'; *Panégyrique de Saint Pierre D'Alexandrie*, f195, in *Les actes des Martyrs de L'Egypte*, ed. H. Hyvernat (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1886), 257: 'Lorsqu'il eut pris le gouvernail du vaisseau spirituel, il en rendit les passagers égaux dans la richesse du Dieu bon; car il les faisait voguer vers les bons ports, je veux dire les saints évangiles ...'.

[108] Ambrose, *Hexameron* 3.5.24 (*PL* 14.165-6): 'Det nobis Dominus illa successuum flumina prospero ligno currere, tuto portu consistere, nequitae spiritalis graviora quam ferre possumus,

his readers and listeners of the biblical stories of Christ calming the waters, and of storms and heavy seas testing the faith of his disciples. He relates these to his contemporary congregation, warning them to maintain their faith and trust in God in the face of the temptations, tempests and waves buffeting them from all sides. Augustine entreats his listeners to remain in the safety of the Church—which he calls a ship—guided, as it was, through all manner of squalls and disturbances by his god.[109]

The metaphor of the Christian church as a ship was a potent one with contemporary significance. In a passage from a late fourth-century document known as the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the ideal church is described as one that resembles a ship. The document indicates that the bishop's throne should sit in the middle of the church, with deacons standing nearby 'like seamen or boatswains'. Other members of the clergy were to guard the church 'in the guise of ship's stewards'.[110] Maritime culture and symbolism had clearly permeated many aspects of the Christian Church by this time. Seafaring imagery in general became very popular in the language and symbolism of early Christianity, yet it is important to place this in its cultural context.[111] The allegorical use of the sea, storms, and the risk of shipwreck may have had theological significance for many Christian writers; however, seafaring language had a more evocative, tangible, and powerful contemporary relevance for the average man and woman who lived in the Roman world. Maritime symbolism had

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tentamenta nescire, fidei ignorare naufragia, habere pacem profundam; et si quando aliquid sit, quod graves nobis saeculi huius excitet fluctus, evigilantem pro nobis habere gubernatorem Dominum Jesum, qui verbo imperet, tempestatem mitiget, tranquillitatem maris refundat ...'.

[109] Augustine, *Sermo* 75.1-10 (*PL* 38.474-9). This sermon is full of maritime imagery. Examples of references to the Church as a ship (*navis*) include: *Sermo* 75.2 and 75.4 (*PL* 38.475) and 75.7 (*PL* 38.476-7): 'Interea navis portans discipulos, id est, Ecclesia, fluctuat et quatitur tempestatibus tentationum'. There are many more examples in ecclesiastical writing, such as John Chrysostom's *Homiliae De Statuis* 17.1 (*PG* 49.171). This passage refers to the city of Antioch after the Riot of the Statues in the late fourth century as on the verge of slipping under the waves. He says that the city was rescued from imminent shipwreck by God.

[110] *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 2.7.57, in *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453. Sources and Documents,* ed. C. Mango (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 24. A non-textual example of the Church as a ship is a bronze lamp belonging to the Valerii of Rome in the shape of a sailing vessel steered by Saints Peter and Paul. See K. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 81 (Figure 14).

[111] See R.W.H. Miller, *One Firm Anchor: The Church and the Merchant Seafarer, an Introductory History* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2012), 25-9 for a discussion of maritime metaphors in the works of early Christian writers such as Cyprian and Tertullian. On pages 28-9, Miller also notes the use of maritime imagery in a range of biblical texts. He writes that 'There is no shortage in the New Testament of passages from which to cull maritime metaphors' whilst at the same time he highlights that, in the works of a writer like Tertullian, 'some (maritime) imagery is sourced from experience'.

always been a potent reminder of the importance of the sea to the Roman empire. In many ways, it became even more relevant in the eastern empire, which had a maritime entrepôt as its cultural centre.[112] Unlike Rome, which was serviced by satellite ports such as Ostia and Portus, the new eastern capital of Constantinople was itself a coastal port city. By the Late Antique period, maritime culture had thoroughly infiltrated mainstream Mediterranean culture and it did not lose relevance or influence as the Graeco-Roman world slowly turned into a Christian one.

One of the visual reminders of the significance of the maritime realm to everyday life is in the many mosaics that have been unearthed throughout the Mediterranean. Maritime motifs were extremely popular in mosaics located in private dwellings, churches and synagogues.[113] The subject matter depicted in these mosaics ranges from simple illustrations of ships, sailors and fishermen to Classical myths, traditional deities and personifications of the sea. In the port of Ostia, a private dwelling known as the House of the Dioscuri contains several late fourth or early fifth-century mosaics illustrating the Dioscuri (who were still very popular sea-gods at the time), and other deities like Venus and her marine entourage.[114] These deities were seen to play an important role in protecting the maritime traders who utilised Ostia and other Roman ports during this period.[115] Mosaics depicting Thetis and Oceanus were popular in the region around Antioch. These deities may have come to represent all bodies of water to the people of this area.[116] Antioch, its ports and hinterland relied heavily on both sea and river-borne trade, and thus maritime deities were particularly

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[112] As Brock, *Greek Political Imagery*, 53 notes, 'Maritime imagery comes naturally to those who live by the sea and get their living from it'.

[113] E. Grossmann, *Marine Craft in Ancient Mosaics of the Levant*, BAR International Series 2249 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 67-8, Tables 1-4. Grossmann lists extant mosaics with maritime motifs from the Levant region and demonstrates just how popular they became in churches from the fifth century. Also see K.M.D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and G.W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History. The Near East from Late Antiquity to Islam* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

[114] Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 65-7. Venus is shown in her shell, surrounded by Tritons, Nereids and sea monsters.

[115] For a lengthy discussion of Graeco-Roman maritime deities who were still popular during this period, refer to Chapter 4. Also see Wade, *Sailors, Merchants and Maritime Cults.*

[116] Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 9. Examples of mosaics depicting the sea nymph Thetis and Oceanus in Antioch and its surrounding region include fifth-century mosaics from the House of Okeanos and Thetis in Antioch, and another from the Yakto Complex near Daphne that shows Thetis rising from the sea (Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 8-10). Tethys, sister and wife of Oceanus, is also depicted prominently on a mosaic located in Shahba-Philippopolis in southern Syria (see Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 166, Figure 173 and Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 18).

appropriate for those living in this region. Thetis was perhaps also personified in a statue that was still standing in the eleventh century in the Forum of Constantine in Constantinople.[117]

Interestingly, one of the best preserved of the Late Antique mosaics that depict the sea in anthropomorphic form is in the Church of the Apostles at Madaba in Jordan. Thalassa, who is both pictured and named in the late fifth or early sixth-century floor mosaic, is clearly giving her blessing to the church and its congregation (see Figure 3).[118] Many scholars see the depiction of deities and personifications in Late Antique mosaics as completely devoid of non-Christian meaning.[119] Henry Maguire points out that personifications of nature often symbolised prosperity and, as such, continued to be 'a common frame of reference for pagans, Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike'.[120] This does not mean that such images were completely neutral; many provoked opposition from Christians, demonstrating that they were not completely lacking in non-Christian sentiment to all who viewed them.

Another famous sixth-century mosaic, also from Madaba, is a topographical map of the Middle Eastern region with Jerusalem at its centre. The configuration of cities on the Madaba map is such that the entire region is seen from the perspective of the Mediterranean Sea, as though the viewer sails towards the shoreline.[121] Many of the port cities along the Mediterranean coast, like Gaza, Ascalon and Pelusium, have been included in the map. Bowersock believes that Constantinople, Ephesus and Antioch would originally have been depicted as well, although these sections are no longer extant.[122] The configuration of the map highlights the significant role of the

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[117] Arethas, *Schol. Arist. Or.* 50T, III refers to this statue as Thetis but Kedrenos, I,565 calls it Amphitrite (in Bassett, *Urban Image*, 188-9). Paulus Silentiarius also mentions Thetis in one of his sixth-century epigrams, *Anth. Gr.* 10.15 (Paton, 4.10-3).
[118] Bowersock. *Mosaics as History*, 43-4 and 48 (Figure 2.13); Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 200 (Figure 212).
[119] Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 199 and 299 is a good example. After describing a sixth-century mosaic depicting a number of deities including Dionysius, Achilles, Heracles, and Aphrodite, Dunbabin states emphatically that such mosaics show 'no sign of pagan religious content'. Dunbabin seems to assume that the empire was 'Christianised' in the fourth century, and that any pre-Christian meaning attached to deities simply disappeared from that point.
[120] H. Maguire, 'The Good Life', in *Interpreting Late Antiquity. Essays on the Postclassical World*, eds. G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown and O. Grabar (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 253.
[121] Bowersock, *Mosaics as History*, 19-20. See A.M. Madden, 'A New Form of Evidence to Date the Madaba Map Mosaic', *Liber Annuus* 62 (2012), 495-513 for revised dating of the mosaic.
[122] Bowersock, *Mosaics as History*, 28.

Figure 3. Mosaic of Thalassa in the Church of the Apostles at Madaba, Jordan (Image taken from G.W. Bowersock, *Mosaics as History. The Near East from Late Antiquity to Islam* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 48).

Mediterranean Sea in this entire region.[123] An interesting detail of the mosaic is the depiction of sailing vessels on the waters of the River Jordan and Dead Sea. Most

[123] In this regard, the map shows a similar configuration to a leather parchment of the Black Sea region which was found at Dura Europos. The Dura Europos map dates to the middle of the third century and was possibly placed on the inside of a shield. It depicts a maritime itinerary in the Black Sea, with ships manned by sailors in the centre of the map and port or harbour cities dotted along the shoreline. See D. Halmagi, 'Notes on the Dura Europos Map', *Revista CICSA*, 1 (2015), 41-4.

of the sailing vessels are heavily loaded with cargo, indicating the importance of these waterways to the local economy.[124]

Many of the mosaics containing seafaring imagery depict simple subjects such as sailing vessels, sailors and fishermen rather than grand ones like deities, personifications or myths. Since many of these mosaics have been found in churches, one would expect them to contain Christian subjects or symbolism. A perfect example is a floor mosaic in a fifth-century basilica in Khirbet Cheikh Messaoud, south of Antioch. Several sailing vessels are depicted, one of which has a square sail and mast that ends in a cross.[125] Another is a mosaic from Beth Guvrin (Eleutheropolis) which includes a scene from the biblical story of Jonah and the whale alongside sailing vessels, sailors and fishermen.[126] It is interesting to note, however, that mosaics also illustrate some of the more humble, everyday aspects of sea and river trade.[127] For example, a mosaic from the Church of Lot and Procopius on Mount Nebo includes a vessel with LRA4 amphorae used locally for the transportation of fish.[128] Likewise, in the private fifth-century Jewish residence known as the House of Kyrios Leontius, in Beth Shean, a mosaic floor with panels depicting episodes from Homer's *Odyssey* also shows two merchant vessels. These vessels are loaded with amphorae of the LRA4 and LRA5 types, which were common from the late fifth to early sixth centuries in the Mediterranean.[129] Such small details suggest that many of these images were inspired not only by Christian sentiment, but also by contemporary waterborne trading activities, which were crucial to both the local and imperial economy.

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[124] Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 42-3 (Figures 72 and 73).

[125] Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 15-8. Also see Figure 17 in Grossmann for a ship from the Rayan Basilica (southeast of Antioch) with a Christian inscription.

[126] Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 35-7 (Figure 61).

[127] The structural details of many of the merchant sailing vessels shown in these 'marine' mosaics are also quite realistic and detailed. See Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 31-4 (Figures 54-58); D. Asimakopoulos, A. Oulkeroglou and O. Katzaveli, 'Depictions of Late Roman Transport Amphorae: A Preliminary Report', in *LRCW 4. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean. Archaeology and Archaeometry. The Mediterranean: A Market without Frontiers'*, vol 1, eds. N. Poulou-Papadimitriou, E. Nodarou and V. Kilikoglou, BAR International Series 2616 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014), 607, 615 (and Figures 10, 12-13).

[128] Asimakopoulos et al., *Depictions of Late Roman Transport Amphorae*, 608-9 (Figures 12-13). LRA = Late Roman Amphora.

[129] Grossman, *Marine Craft,* 31-4 (Figures 54-58); Asimakopoulos et al., *Depictions of Late Roman Transport Amphorae*, 607 and 615 (Figure 10); O. Karagiorgou, 'Mapping Trade by the Amphora', in Mango, *Byzantine Trade, 4th-12th Centuries*, 41-2.

Summary

The essence of Constantinople was its maritime locale. The sea and members of the maritime community had a ubiquitous presence throughout the city and its suburbs; with an influence that extended well beyond the coastal fringes. The fact that Constantinople was a coastal community, maritime trading hub and working port city played a huge role in the city's development, the shaping of its identity and its prevailing social climate. Alongside Alexandria, Constantinople was central to the vast network of seaports that existed throughout the eastern empire. Sailors and merchants travelled along this network, carrying products, people, ideas, ideologies and a distinctive maritime and Roman culture. The Mediterranean Sea had played an important role in the Roman psyche for centuries.[130] This did not change in Late Antiquity. The transfer of maritime culture and symbolism into eastern Roman and Christian thought was assured when the coastal trading metropolis of Constantinople became the new centre of the eastern Roman world. In many ways, maritime symbolism became more relevant and tangible than ever before.

[130] Cicero, for example, refers to the Mediterranean as, '… one safe and closed harbour in the control of the Roman people'. Cicero, *On the Consular Provinces,* 31, in *Cicero, Pro Caelio. De Provinciis Consularibus. Pro Balbo*, ed. and trans. R. Gardner, Loeb Classical Library 447 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 576-7.

Chapter 2. On the Fringes of Society: The Men Who Sailed the Seas of Byzantium

Introduction

Cities like Constantinople and Alexandria were entrepôts and yet the extant sources imply that the maritime crowd only existed on the fringes of society in these centres. In order to examine the cultural role of maritime society and the everyday social and commercial dynamics of coastal cities, the men and women of the maritime community need to be considered in more detail. In this chapter, key members of maritime society are investigated, including sailors, sea-merchants, captains, shipowners and even fishermen. Consideration is given to the manner in which shipboard micro-societies functioned because the nature of life at sea influenced the ways that mariners integrated into general society when they were on land. The origins of mariners are discussed in order to demonstrate that the men who owned and manned ships were not only Egyptians and Syrians of the state-sponsored fleets, but men from a variety of backgrounds. Investigation of the class and status of members of maritime society is also conducted, as mariners hailed from different levels of society. The evidence demonstrates that the influence of the maritime community was socially, culturally and ethnically diverse.

Shipboard Crews and the Hierarchy of the Sea

Merchant sailors, captains, traders and, to a lesser extent, shipowners were the men of the maritime community whose physical presence would have been felt most strongly in port cities.[1] An issue that arises when looking at the evidence of mariners is the inconsistency and ambiguity of the nomenclature used for them in the written sources. Technically, the law distinguished between the different working roles on seafaring vessels and the various business roles involved in maritime ventures.[2] In

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[1] The majority of evidence presented in this chapter pertains to merchant seamen, although the crews of naval vessels would also have been present in large eastern cities in this period.

[2] See Ashburner, *RSL*, cxxx-cxxxvi. Ashburner discusses the different shipboard roles and their treatment in Roman civil law versus maritime law. In the Latin civil laws, regular references are made to the *exercitōrēs* (shipowners or hirers), *magistri* (captains or shipmasters), *nāviculārii* or *naucleri* (shipowners, captains or shipmasters), *mercatores* (merchants) and *nautae* (sailors).

reality, there seems to have been a regular merging of positions. It is often difficult to know the exact function performed by men referred to as *navicularii* (state 'shippers'), *naucleri* and ναύκληροι (private 'shippers'). These men could act as shipowners, shipmasters, captains, sailors, merchants, or in several (or all) of these roles simultaneously.[3] Throughout the civil and maritime laws, common sailors (*nautae* or ναῦται) are often mentioned as distinct from the more highly ranked crew members on ships and other vessels. This is not always the case, however. In *Rhodian Sea Law*, for example, shipowners and captains (ναύκληροι) are generally deemed responsible or liable for the rest of their crew.[4] Yet these same shipowners and captains are also frequently referred to as one of the crew.[5] In several instances, shipowners and masters are not even mentioned by a distinguishing title, despite the fact that they are clearly being included in a reference to an entire shipload of sailors (ναῦται*).* This is illustrated in several chapters of *Rhodian Sea Law* that deal with the hiring of ships and their crews by merchants. In one instance, merchants are warned to choose a sturdy ship with able sailors, and in another, merchants are deemed liable for the rations of all sailors (τῶν ναυτῶν) if there are delays in loading a ship in port.[6] In both examples, the captain is not mentioned specifically, and yet ships for hire would have come with a captain and general crew. In these situations, the captain is clearly meant to be considered as one of the crew that came with the ship. Justinian's *Digesta* 4.9 emphasises that laws often collectively refer to those responsible for ships as simple seamen or sailors (*nautae*), rather than always as shipowners, masters or captains.[7] This highlights an integral aspect of the nature of

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Nāviculārii figure prominently in the *Codex Theodosianus* as the shipowners or shipmasters of the state-sponsored fleets.

[3] Magdalino, *Merchant of Constantinople*, 182. Magdalino notes that the term *naukleroi* in particular could refer to different shipping roles (traders, shipowners and captains).

[4] Examples include *RSL* 3.2, 3.3, 3.9, 3.13, 3.15, 3.19, 3.20, 3.22-4, 3.33, 3.36-7, 3.42, 3.44, and 3.46 (Ashburner, 10-37 and 79-118). In the sixth-century civil legislation, these same men are generally referred to as either *exercitōrēs, magistri* or *nāviculārii/naucleri.*

[5] Examples include *RSL* 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.15, 3.25-7, 3.31, 3.34-6, and 3.38-9 (Ashburner, 15-34 and 85-113).

[6] *RSL* 3.11 (Asburner, 19 and 91-2): 'ναύτας τοὺς ἀρκοῦντας ναυτικοὺς γοργοὺς γρηγοροῦντας τὰ πλάγια μὴ παραλελυμένα …'; *RSL* 3.25 (Asburner, 26): 'ἐὰν ἡ προθεσμία τῶν ἡμερῶν τῶν ἐγγεγραμμένων παρέλθῃ, ἕως ἡμερῶν δέκα παρεχέτω ὁ ἔμπορος τὰς σιταρχίας τῶν ναυτῶν.'

[7] *Dig.* 4.9.1 (*CJC* 1.101-2). In particular, see 4.9.1.2 (*CJC* 1.101): '… ait praetor 'nautae'. nautam accipere debemus eum qui navem exercet: quamvis nautae appellantur omnes, qui navis navigandae causa in nave sint: sed de exercitore solummodo praetor sentit …'. Also see *Dig.* 4.9.5 (*CJC* 1.102) which simply refers to the owner of a ship as *nauta*.

sailing; when a vessel is at sea or docked in port, the owner or captain on board is part of the working crew. He is one of the sailors.

Shipowners and their agents, captains and other officers often performed a variety of roles on their ships, such as navigating, trading and other jobs that were the duty of the entire crew. It is true that many wealthy shipowners, particularly those involved in the transport of the *annona*, may never have set foot on the decks of their ships. Yet their representatives or agents certainly did and these are the men who are of most interest here. The multiplicity of functions performed by many seamen is one of the reasons that the terminology used for them in our sources is ambiguous. According to Ashburner, by the Medieval period ships' crews had become fluid; no matter what class or title a man might have, when he was working on a ship he could be 'constantly found performing the functions of another class'.[8] This is exemplified by a man named Theoteknos, a Gallic shipbuilder by trade, who captained his own merchant vessel from Constantinople and acted as the ship's diver to make any necessary repairs whilst at sea.[9] Life at sea would not always have been easy, and all crew members on a vessel had to pitch in to ensure a successful voyage. Even passengers served as crew members on occasion, working in exchange for their passage.[10] There is no reason to believe that the situation was vastly different on larger ships like those of the *annona*. Many of the vessels servicing the state were privately owned, and higher-ranking crew members would have been forced to perform a variety of functions while aboard. So too would the crews of naval vessels. As Pryor and Jeffreys demonstrate, emperors from Constantine to Justinian I were able to rapidly mobilise significant naval forces for expeditions and engagements with their enemies. They note that around fifty men were required to man one dromon (or war-galley) and this suggests that there were large numbers of sailors on the vessels engaged in these naval expeditions.[11] There would have been little idle time

[8] Ashburner, *RSL*, cxxxv.

[9] *Miracles of St Artemios*, 27 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 152-5).

[10] *Dig.* 4.9.7.2 (*CJC* 1.102).

[11] Pryor and Jeffreys, *Age of the Dromon*, 7-19. The examples provided by these authors include the 100 war galleys that were sent to Italy in 508CE by Anastasius I. There would have been approximately 5000 sailors (plus additional officers and marines) involved in the expedition. Belisarius' expedition from Constantinople to Africa later in the sixth century required a large force of ships and men, and Justinian also sent fresh forces to Italy every year during the Gothic War.

on such ships. All of those working on a merchant or naval vessel were an integral part of the crew; every man depended on his fellow sailors for survival.

When they were at sea, mariners were cut off from the terrestrial world. This was the case even on vessels that stayed relatively close to shore, travelling only short distances between ports. Patrice Pomey refers to the shipboard environment as a 'micro-society … a closed society whose hierarchy, beliefs, rules, rhythms of life, and tools make up a particular social system'.[12] Sailors and sea-merchants spent a good deal of their lives functioning as a part of these unique, small-scale societies. In between voyages, they also spent time on land. It would be ill-considered to think that seafarers simply moved from one to the other of these environments without hesitation, smoothly integrating themselves into general society once they arrived in port. Sailors and sea-merchants brought their distinctly maritime culture, mindset and way of life with them when they landed in ports. As a result, the different shipboard micro-societies mingled to create a maritime sub-culture within broader society. The way that shipboard micro-societies functioned is therefore important for understanding both how mariners integrated with land-based society, and the reasons why they were different to their contemporaries on shore.[13]

The casual observer could be forgiven for thinking that captains or helmsmen were the only men on sailing ships, since they were frequently the only sailors poeticised in secular and ecclesiastical literature of the time. Yet there were always other crew members on vessels as well. The most important shipboard roles are attested in numerous sources, including *Rhodian Sea Law*, which conveniently lists positions and their relative share in maritime profits. The essential roles noted in the sea laws are: ναυκλήρου/ναυκλήρος (shipowner or captain), κυβερνήτης/κυβερνήτου (helmsman or pilot), πρωρέως/πρωρεύς (navigator), ναυπηγοῦ/ναυπηγός (carpenter or shipwright), καραβίτου/καραβίτης (possibly the boatswain),

[12] P. Pomey, 'Defining a Ship: Architecture, Function, and Human Space', in Ford et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology*, 26; M. McCormick, 'Byzantium on the Move: Imagining a Communications History', in *Travel in the Byzantine World. Papers from the Thirty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, *Birmingham, April 2000*, ed. R. Macrides (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2002), 5. McCormick notes that there were different rhythms and rules on sailing vessels, depending on the nature and speed of travel and the duration of journeys. For example, long-distance dromons carrying urgent news would have run to different clocks than merchant vessels involved in tramping.

[13] The ways in which mariners interacted and integrated with terrestrial society is the subject of later chapters.

ναύτου/ναύτος (sailor), and παρασχαρίτου/παρασχαρίτης (possibly the deckhand).[14] This last and lowest-paid position is translated by Ashburner as either the cook or the person in charge of the deck, neither with certainty.[15] The meagre share of profits assigned to this position suggests it was the equivalent of a deckhand. The order in which these positions are listed in *Rhodian Sea Law* varies in the manuscript tradition, although the captain, helmsman and pilot can safely be considered crucial for every voyage. Carpenter's tools have been located on a number of shipwrecks, which also indicates that this role—and the ability to make running repairs on a vessel—was critical.[16] Immediately following the list of essential crew members in *Rhodian Sea Law* is an item relating to the ἐμπόρῳ/ἐμπόρος (merchant).[17] Merchants were significant figures on trading vessels of the day, even though they are often viewed separately and not considered as part of the crew.

On the seventh-century Yassi Ada shipwreck, the shipowner or captain was a man named Georgios. The presence of a steelyard weight and bar inscribed with his details suggests that Georgios was also the ship's merchant.[18] Richard Gould identifies the two main types of maritime commerce practiced in the Mediterranean: 'destination-conscious shipping' (exemplified by the long haul routes of the grain trade) and 'tramping' (which involved shorter routes between a succession of ports with ongoing sales, purchases and exchanges along the way).[19] Based on its cargo, contents and size, the ship captained by the merchant Georgios was a tramping vessel. It was found with approximately 850 to 900 amphorae, other cargo, and a

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[14] *RSL*, 2.1-7 (Ashburner, 1-5 and 57-8). Many of these positions are also mentioned in *RSL* 3.9 (Ashburner, 16-7 and 87-91). Ashburner's commentary on these titles and their variations in the manuscript tradition is to be found on pages 57-9. I have not chosen to translate all of these positions exactly as per Ashburner's suggestions.

[15] Ashburner, *RSL*, 58-9.

[16] Examples of shipwrecks with carpenters' equipment can be found in Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks,* 270-1, 329-30 and 454-5. These wrecks include the *Port Vendres A* (from the early fifth century, located near L'Anse Gerbal, France), *Mateille A* (early fifth century, Gruissan, France) and *Yassi Ada A* (c.626, Yassi Ada, Turkey). Details of the ship's tools found on the *Yassi Ada A* wreck (which include grapnels and other items used by a boatswain) are also contained in G.F. Bass and F.H. van Doorninck Jr., *Yassi Ada: A Seventh-Century Byzantine Shipwreck* (Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 1982), 314.

[17] *RSL*, 2.8 (Ashburner, 2 and 59).

[18] Bass and van Doorninck Jr. *Yassi Ada*, 212-8. The inscription on the steelyard weight reads: 'ΓΕΟΡΓΙΟΥ ΠΡΕΣΒΥ / ΤΕΡΟΥ ΝΑΥΚΛΕΡΟΥ'.

[19] R.A. Gould, *Archaeology and the Social History of Ships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 152-3.

variety of weighing implements.[20] Merchant ships involved in tramping required a selection of weights and measures in order to engage in commercial activities in all of the ports that they visited.[21] Based on evidence collected in Parker's volume of shipwrecks, tramping or shipboard trading increased rather than declined in the later Roman Empire.[22] The number of smaller-sized merchant ships dated between the fourth and seventh centuries discovered off the Aegean coast of Turkey in recent years would also suggest a predominance of tramping vessels and activity in this region and period.[23]

Shipboard trading was frequently conducted by shipmasters or captains (like Georgios), but also by merchants and other characters travelling on their vessels. The legislation contains a number of warnings to shipowners and captains who were taking private goods for sale onto ships carrying public or other contracted cargoes.[24] Such laws would not have existed unless merchant shippers had been carrying additional private merchandise at the expense of the cargo they were contracted to carry. Yet there are also fourth-century laws actively encouraging shipmasters involved in the carriage of state goods to conduct their own private trading activities. Legislation in the *Codex Theodosianus* exempts these men from customs levies on any merchandise carried and traded on their own behalf.[25] Thus, even the ships of the *annona* carried men who were involved in private trading activity.[26] In *Digesta* we read of common sailors who acted as sea-traders as well.[27] This would not have

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[20] Bass and van Doorninck Jr., *Yassi Ada*, 155; Gould, *Archaeology*, 170-1; van Alfen, P.G., 'New Light on the 7th-c. Yassı Ada Shipwreck: Capacities and Standard Sizes of LRA1 Amphoras', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996), 190.

[21] Gould, *Archaeology*, 153 and 171; Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 30. Parker notes that larger weights and steelyards would have been most appropriate for weighing goods for commercial transactions. Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 407-10 also notes that weights and measures were common finds on shipwrecks.

[22] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 22 and 30. Examples of Late Antique shipwrecks with steelyards and other weights or weighing implements are included in Parker, 205, 319 and 455. These are the *Plemmirio A* (fourth-fifth century, Sicily), *Yassi Ada B* (late fourth-early fifth century, Yassi Ada, Turkey) and *Grazel B* (c.631, Gruissan, France).

[23] A. Harun Özdaş, 'Some Byzantine Shipwrecks Discovered on the Aegean Sea Coast of Turkey' (paper presented at *Trade in Byzantium*, The 3rd International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Koç University, Istanbul, June 24-27 2013).

[24] *Cod. Theo.* 13.8.1 (*CJR* 1.760) = *Cod. Just.* 11.5.1 (*CJC* 2.429); *Dig.* 14.1.1.12 (*CJC* 1.218); *RSL* 3.22 (Ashburner, 25 and 102-3).

[25] Examples include *Cod. Theo* 13.5.24 (*CJR* 1.753); 13.5.5 (*CJR* 1.748).

[26] See Sarris, *Economics, Trade, and Feudalism*, 33 for a discussion of how the carriage and trade in the *annona* also bolstered private trading activity.

[27] One example is in *Dig.* 4.9.7.2 (*CJC* 1.102).

been uncommon. After all, the primary purpose of the average merchantman was to trade, and many sailors would have engaged in a little casual commerce whenever they were in port—even if there were only meagre profits to be made. Whether it was to trade in goods, services or ideas, or even just to socialise, most of the sailors and merchants who docked into a port would have interacted with the local population in some fashion.

Wealthy Shipowners and Lowly Sailors: Social Status, Means and Reputation in the Maritime Community

Sailors, sea-merchants and their kind were regularly lumped together as low or disreputable elements of society; yet the extant evidence shows that these men were of different classes, backgrounds and means. Many sailors were of the lower social strata, but certainly not all. Even amongst shipowners and shipmasters—generally considered wealthy men—status could vary greatly. Most of the civil legislation relating to shipmasters gives the impression that they were of at least moderate means. The laws regularly refer to them as landholders and as men of rank.[28] However, an edict of 380 notes that equestrian status was granted to *navicularii* who were not already of the middle or upper classes; so not all of them were born into the upper tiers of society.[29] It is also clear from other sections of the civil laws that not all shipowners were of the wealthy classes, nor did they all choose to ship state-sponsored goods. There were a number of privileges available to shipowners involved in the carriage of goods for the state.[30] These incentives would have been necessary to entice private businessmen into state shipping, because the rate paid for transporting state goods was substantially lower than that commanded by private freight.[31] McCormick strongly believes that 'the benefits of state service outweighed

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[28] Examples include *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.14 (*CJR* 1.750-1) and *Cod. Theo.* 13.6 (*CJR* 1.757-9). These laws date to between 326 and 423. Of course, ownership of a sailing vessel would not have been cheap. In reference to boats used on the Nile, Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 36-7 notes that the cost of a vessel and its maintenance would certainly not have been within everyone's grasp.

[29] *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.16 (*CJR* 1.751): '... Corpori navicularorum ... Delatam vobis a divo Constantino er Iuliano principibus aeternis equestris ordinis dignitatem nos firmamus'.

[30] Legislation in *Cod. Theo.* 13.5 (*CJR* 1.747-57) and *Dig.* 50.6.6 (*CJC* 1.901) contains evidence of a number of exemptions, privileges and protections that were granted to *navicularii* involved in the transport of state goods.

[31] McCormick, *Origins*, 87-8 notes that the state rate was approximately 7% compared to the private rate of approximately 12% in the fourth century. The state rate increased to 10% in the reign of Justinian; Sirks, *Food for Rome*, 203 and 228-9. *Dig.* 50.6.7 (*CJC* 1.902) notes that shipowners,

the costs' for shippers.[32] Yet it seems to have been relatively commonplace for *navicularii* to try to avoid their duties; suggesting that not all of these men would have agreed.

In 441, the provision of the *annona* was listed as one of the main compulsory public services considered undesirable by those compelled to do it.[33] Fourth and fifth-century laws repeatedly stress that men born into the guild of shipmasters were bound to it for life.[34] The existence of this legislation demonstrates that there were men who regularly strived to avoid this onerous life sentence. Another set of laws from the same period report that men were selling or transferring property into another's name in order to escape the compulsory burden of the guild of *navicularii*.[35] Financial difficulty was often cited as the reason for being unable to fulfil one's duty as a *navicularius.* In the fifth century, the emperor was regularly supplicated by men who said they could not afford to be shipowners or shipmasters.[36] It should not simply be assumed that all such men were parsimonious. Not all veteran shipmasters or those born into the guild were wealthy and influential. Several of the edicts in the *Codex Theodosianus* dealing with the exemptions granted to *navicularii* mention that these dispensations related to all shipmasters, regardless of their class or rank, and included the *plebei* amongst them.[37] Other legislation also refers to the lower-class *navicularii.* For example, there are instances where less privileged men requested compensation for having to conduct lengthy voyages on behalf of the state, and laws were put in place to share the burden of such voyages with their wealthier counterparts.[38]

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helmsmen and shipbuilders who were involved in the supply of state goods (particularly for the feeding of the military) were exempt from public office.

[32] McCormick, *Origins*, 89-90.

[33] *Nov. Val.* 10.3 (*CJR* 2.91-2).

[34] Examples include *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.1, 13.5.3, 13.5.19-20 and 13.5.25 (*CJR* 1.747-53).

[35] *Cod. Theo.* 13.6.1-10 (*CJR* 1.757-9).

[36] *Cod. Theo.* 1.5.14 (*CJR* 1.38); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.5-6 (*CJR* 1.748-9); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.17 (*CJR* 1.752).

[37] *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.5 (*CJR* 1.748): 'Navicularios omnes per orbem terrarum per omne aevum ab omnibus oneribus et muneribus cuiuscumque fuerint loci vel dignitatis, securos vacuos inmunesque esse praecipimus, sive decuriones sint sive plebei seu potioris alterius dignitatis, ut a conlationibus et omnibus oblationibus liberati integris patrimoniis navicularium munus exerceant'. Also see *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.17 (*CJR* 1.752).

[38] One example is *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.6 (*CJR* 1.748-9). *Nov.Theo.* 8 (*CJR* 2.22.3) also suggests that the wealthier shipowners were shirking their duties, leaving the less wealthy shipowners to carry more than their share of the burden of the *annona*.

By the sixth century, the sea-borne transportation of grain, oil and wine for the state was primarily conducted by private contractors.[39] As such, the corporations of shipowners and shipmasters may have come to exist as largely private, professional associations. By this period, more of the shippers who transported goods for the state would likely have done so by choice; perhaps those men who could not afford to conduct lengthy voyages were no longer forced to undertake them. Unfortunately, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between private and state shippers in many of our eastern sources. This is because the Greek term ναύκληρος came to be used for both.[40] There is little doubt that many of these men became wealthy and influential entrepreneurs during this period.[41] Certainly by the late sixth century, John of Ephesus was able to refer to the shipowners of Alexandria as one of the more powerful and wealthier groups in the city.[42]

In his *Secret History*, Procopius insinuates that many of the shippers and merchants who were using Constantinople's ports were wealthy until they and their profitable cargoes were targeted by Justinian's corrupt customs officials.[43] Despite Procopius' almost certain exaggeration of Justinian's corruption and greed in this passage, it acts as a reminder of the impact that heavy tariffs had on the profits of private shippers and traders. In a letter to an official at Portus, Cassiodorus warns of the disastrous impact harsh taxes could have on these men.[44] Cassiodorus' letter somewhat validates Procopius' claim that taxes could force otherwise wealthy men out of the shipping business, and it confirms that not all shippers remained wealthy and powerful during this period. As a rule, independent or private merchantmen do not appear as frequently in the written sources prior to the seventh century. As such, we are forced to rely heavily on the testimony of men like Procopius and Cassiodorus. Yet, despite the dominance of ships of the *annona* in the extant sources, maritime trade was not solely the realm of state shippers prior to the

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[39] Sirks, *Food for Rome*, 35-6, 211, and 235-6.

[40] McCormick, *Origins*, 105.

[41] Sirks, *Food for Rome*, 35-6 and 230-2.

[42] John of Ephesus, *HE*, 3.1.33, in *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John Bishop of Ephesus*, trans. R. Payne-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860), 69.

[43] Procop. *Anec.* 25.4-10 (Dewing, 290-5).

[44] Cassiod., *Variae* 7.9 (*MGH* 12.208): '... Tu copiam facis, dum ingredientes iuste tractaveris. avara manus portum claudit et cum digitos attrahit, navium simul vela concludit. merito enim illa mercatores cuncti refugiunt, quae sibi dispendiosa esse cognoscunt. quapropter adversus ibi ventus est immoderata praesumptio: nam placidum mare damnat, qui undas cupiditatis exaggerat'.

seventh century. Justinian deliberately retained edicts and rescripts in his legislation relating to private shipowners and captains.[45] This confirms, along with shipwreck evidence of private tramping vessels, that private shippers continued to play an ongoing role in maritime commerce during Justinian's reign.[46]

Unless a captain was both the owner of his vessel and a successful merchant, he would not have had the opportunity to acquire great wealth or social standing. A perusal of the legislation demonstrates that ship captains were generally of a much lower status and reputation than shipowners. *Digesta* 14.1 deals with legal action that could be taken against shipowners (*exercitoria*). In the majority of instances, the shipowner was liable for the actions of, and any contracts made with, the captain whom he appointed to run his ship.[47] According to the edict, the reason for this was because people were being forced to enter into contracts with the captains of vessels without first being able to check their background or quality of character. The law insinuates that this had been the undoing of many who hired the services of a captain and his ship; hence the need to make the shipowner responsible for appointing a man of poor calibre.[48] The shipowner or hirer of the ship was also liable for any transgressions committed by the sailors on board.[49] According to the law, the onus was on the shipowner or hirer to appoint a trustworthy and competent captain and crew.[50] There were obviously captains and sailors from whom merchants and passengers needed to be protected. Yet it is also clear that shipowners had a choice of employees, so there must have been some trustworthy, competent and reputable captains and sailors available.

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[45] Refer to laws contained in *Dig*, 4.9 (*CJC* 1.101-2), 14.1 (*CJC* 1.218-9), 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825).

[46] Refer to Chapter 2, footnotes 21 and 22.

[47] *Dig.* 14.1.1.1-10 (*CJC* 1.218).

[48] *Dig.* 14.1.1 (*CJC* 1.218): 'Utilitatem huius edicti patere nemo est qui ignoret. nam cum interdum ignari, cuius sint condicionis vel quales, cum magistris propter navigandi necessitatem contrahamus, aequum fuit eum, qui magistrum navi imposuit, teneri, ut tenetur, qui institorem tabernae vel negotio praeposuit, cum sit maior necessitas contrahendi cum magistro quam institore. quippe res patitur, ut de condicione quis institoris dispiciat et sic contrahat: in navis magistro non ita, nam interdum locus tempus non patitur plenius deliberandi consilium'. Also see *Dig.* 14.1.1.5 (*CJC* 1.218): '… omnia enim facta magistri debeo praestare qui eum praeposui, alioquin contrahentes decipientur: et facilius hoc in magistro quam institore admittendum propter utilitatem'.

[49] *Dig.* 14.1.1.2 (*CJC* 1.218).

[50] *Dig.* 4.9.7 (*CJC* 1.102). In particular: 'Debet exercitor omnium nautarum suorum, sive liberi sint sive servi, factum praestare: nec immerito factum eorum praestat, cum ipse eos suo periculo adhibuerit'. Also see Just. *Inst.* 4.5.3 (*CJC* 1.47); *Dig.* 4.9.1.2-4, 4.9.1.6, 4.9.1.8, 4.9.3 (*CJC* 1.101-2); *Dig.* 14.1.1.2-4, 14.1.1.9 (*CJC* 1.218); *Dig.* 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825). The captain could also be held responsible for the actions of the rest of his crew.

According to *Rhodian Sea Law*, the captain of a vessel received two shares of a ship's profits, as opposed to the other skilled crew members, such as the helmsman, navigator, carpenter and boatswain, who each received one and a half shares. The sailors themselves only received one share each.[51] This profit sharing scenario probably relates to the small merchant ships of the seventh and eighth centuries, yet it is useful for demonstrating the captain's relative position on any ship in this period and throughout the preceding centuries. The captain did receive a higher share of profits, but not substantially more than other skilled members of the crew. The captain had a greater responsibility for the ship than the other men on board; however, his wages and status did not necessarily reflect this. A captain's responsibilities ranged from the general management of the ship, keeping passenger goods secure, making contracts with merchants, and, of course, sailing the ship and its cargo safely from port to port.[52] This last duty was perhaps the most troublesome. Until the reign of the emperor Maurice, captains and sailors were routinely tortured as witnesses in cases of alleged shipwreck events.[53] Apparently, captains were particularly useful in this regard; their first-hand knowledge of the events of a shipwreck made them prime candidates for extended questioning under torture.[54] Captains were assumed to have a more important role on their ships, and advanced knowledge of the goings-on at sea, yet they were still subjected to the same base treatment as the rest of their crew. It is telling that captains and sailors were, like slaves, able to be tortured as witnesses under law.[55] These men were clearly not considered the worthiest elements of society.

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[51] *RSL* 2.1-7 (Ashburner, 1 and 57-8).

[52] *RSL* 2.14 (Ashburner, 3 and 62) and *RSL* 3.12-13, 3.34, 3.38, 3.42, 3.44 (Ashburner, 19-20, 30-3, 35-7, 93-4, 109-10, 112-3, and 116-7). *Dig*. 4.9 (*CJC* 1.101-2) deals with the captain's responsibility to keep passenger and merchant goods secure; *RSL* 3.22-5 (Ashburner, 25-6 and 102-3) deal with contracts made with merchants; *RSL* 3.36 (Ashburner, 31-2 and 110) and *Dig*. 19.2.13.2 (*CJC* 1.285) relate to the captain's responsibility to sail his ship safely into port.

[53] *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.2-3 (*CJR* 1.761-2) = *Cod. Just.* 11.6.3.1 (*CJC* 2.429). John of Nikiu records that Maurice published a decree ending this harsh punishment of ship captains. See John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 103.1-3, in *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu. Translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic Text*, trans. R.H. Charles (New Jersey: Evolution Publishing, 2007), 164-5.

[54] *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.3 (*CJR* 1.761) = *Cod. Just.* 11.6.3.1 (*CJC* 2.429): 'Quotiens obruta vel submersa fluctibus navi examen adhibetur praefecti annonae duorum vel trium quaestione destrictum, purgandi in alios nautas licentia offeratur. Quid est enim, quod non abunde intra praefinitum numerum sollers quaesitor inveniat? Circa magistros navium, quibus est scientia plenior, inmoretur …'

[55] The laws contained in *Dig.* 48.18 (*CJC* 1.862-3) deal extensively with the torture of slaves as witnesses.

Based on their maritime study of the Hellenistic to Roman periods, Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain believe that 'ancient sailors were the castoffs of Mediterranean society' and that 'the truly destitute, used-up, and socially discarded elements were pushed out onto the sea'.[56] It would be wrong to suggest that all sailors during Late Antiquity (and the following centuries) were indigent men who had little or no choice but to find work on ships or in dockyards. There is, however, evidence to suggest that many of them were. In a sermon on almsgiving, John Chrysostom mentions the numerous beggars living in the alleyways and marketplaces of Antioch. Apparently, these men were destitute during the winter months, but in summer many of them found seasonal work in construction and agriculture, or on ships and in dockyards.[57] Synesius gives a similar impression of sailors working on ships travelling to and from Egyptian ports. On one of his voyages, he records the presence of twelve sailors, roughly half of whom were peasants with questionable sailing experience. These seamen each had some form of physical defect, so they probably had very few other employment options available to them.[58]

Archaeological evidence would seem to support the idea that many sailors were of humble rank or origin. In graffiti from this period, ships and sailing activities were very popular subjects.[59] There are numerous graffito drawings depicting river and sea-going vessels from the Late Antique excavations of Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria.[60] Julian Whitewright examines depictions of ships from the fifth to early seventh centuries from a range of regions, including a graffito from Kellia in northern Egypt, and another from Corinth.[61] It is likely that these graffiti artists were sailors or dockyard workers. Whoever etched these simple illustrations had working knowledge of sailing vessels; masts, sails and often complex rigging systems are

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[56] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 222-3.

[57] John Chrysostom, *De eleemosyna* 1 (*PG* 51.261.21-8).

[58] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640a-b).

[59] Ships of varying types were a common theme in graffiti throughout Antiquity. See P. Keegan, *Graffiti in Antiquity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 234-6.

[60] M. Rodziewicz, *Les Habitations Romaines Tardives d'Alexandrie: à la Lumière des Fouilles Polonaises à Kom el-Dikka, Alexandrie III* (Warsaw: PWN-Editions scientifiques de Pologne, 1984), 219. Sailing vessels are one of the most common themes of graffiti at the site.

[61] J. Whitewright, 'The Mediterranean Lateen Sail in Late Antiquity', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 38,1 (2009), 98-101. For the Corinth graffito, also see Figure 12.1 in Gregory, *History of Byzantium*, 301.

depicted, and sailors are shown performing a variety of shipboard roles.[62] Graffiti such as these may have been made by sailors as votive offerings prior to sea and river voyages.[63] These detailed, yet generally rudimentary, drawings may also have been done by idle sailors waiting in port with little else to occupy their time. Either way, it is unlikely that they were created by men with the resources to erect more sophisticated inscriptions or monuments.

Sailors are also depicted as lowly and unsophisticated men on objects or structures of a more elite nature. One of the only visual representations that we have of sailors from Late Antiquity is in mosaic marine scenes. In these scenes, sailors and fishermen are shown dressed in simple working attire, semi or fully naked.[64] As time moved on, and Christian morals dominated all aspects of society, these men came to be portrayed in more modest attire.[65] It has been suggested that the naked or semi-naked depiction of sailors in Late Antiquity was simply a throwback to earlier Classical times.[66] Indeed, the subject matter of many marine scenes shows a continued enthusiasm for mythological and non-Christian themes.[67] Yet some of these scenes depict contemporary aspects of local trade, suggesting that they were not simple replications of earlier Classical imagery.[68] Thus, the sailors and fishermen

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[62] Whitewright, *Mediterranean Lateen Sail*, 98-9 and 101-2. Figures 2 and 4 in Whitewright's article show the graffiti from Kellia and Corinth. Also see Haas, *Alexandria*, 22-3 (Figure 2) which includes an example from Kom el-Dikka where six sailors are depicted on various parts of a sea-going vessel.

[63] As suggested by Gregory, *History of Byzantium*, 301.

[64] Examples in Grossmann, *Marine Craft* include a mosaic floor from the so-called Triclinium in Apamea, Syria from the fourth century (Figures 18 and 19), 14-5; a mosaic floor from the House of Kyrios Leontis, Beth Shean, Israel from the fifth century (Figure 58), 34; a mosaic floor from an ecclesiastical building in Haditha, Israel from the sixth century (Figure 69), 41; a mosaic from the Church of the Holy Martyrs Lot and Procopios in Mount Nebo, Jordan from the sixth century (Figure 86), 50; and a mosaic from Carthage (currently in the Bardo Museum in Tunisia) from the fourth century that depicts Venus flanked by two sailing vessels containing sailors (Figure 43), 26.

[65] There are a number of examples of manuscript illustrations and mosaics dated from between the ninth and thirteenth centuries in Zafiropoulou, *Journeys on the Seas.* These include Figure 1, 71; Figure 2, 82; Figure 5, 72; Figure 6, 72; and Figure 9, 38.

[66] Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 40-1.

[67] There are examples from locations as far and wide as the port of Ostia in Rome to the city of Beth Shean (or Scythopolis) in northern Israel. For the marine mosaics in the House of the Dioscuri in Ostia, dated to the late fourth or early fifth century, see Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 65-7 (Figure 67). These marine scenes include depictions of the Dioscuri, Venus, sea nymphs and monsters. For a mosaic panel in the House of Kyrios Leontius in Beth Shean dated to the fifth century, see Grossman, *Marine Craft*, 33-4 (Figures 54-58). Dunbabin *Mosaics*, 299 notes that mythological themes were very common on mosaics in general through to the sixth century.

[68] Refer to Chapter 1, footnotes 127 to 129.

depicted on these vessels are perhaps also contemporary reflections of men who lived and worked on the water.[69]

Travel accounts or geographical treatises such as *Expositio Totius Mundi Et Gentium* and Cosmas Indicopleustes' sixth-century *Christian Topography* were written by merchants who regularly engaged in sea voyages.[70] There were captains and sea-merchants who also made use of navigation and trading manuals, indicating that many were able to read.[71] However, Patrick Gautier Dalché argues that *periploi* functioned more as travel guides for educated travellers than as navigational aids for captains and sailors.[72] As such, the existence of *periploi* does not prove a high literacy rate on ships. It is unlikely that many common sailors were literate during this period. A will made by an Egyptian soldier in the late sixth century on behalf of a sailor called Aurelius Patermouthis refers to the mariner as illiterate.[73] Life was hard on ships and in dockyards in this period and, aside from wealthy merchants, men with even a rudimentary education would generally have sought employment elsewhere. There were a variety of reasons why men sailed the seas for a living, but many may not have had a choice. The fact that there were beggars and peasants in need of the seasonal work available on sailing vessels and in dockyards has already been discussed. Several sources also suggest that young boys found places on ships. Some of these youths were employed as apprentice seamen but others may have been pressed into sexual slavery. Both *Digesta* and *Rhodian Sea Law* contain laws mentioning youths on vessels and many boys would have been introduced to

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[69] The tendency for sailors to 'dress down' when they were on their vessels is confirmed by several belt buckles and a tab found together without accompanying skeletons on the seventh-century Yassi Ada shipwreck. The ship's excavators suggest that these clothing items were part of the crew's 'shore-leave change of costume' which was simply too restrictive to wear on board. Bass and van Doorninck Jr. *Yassi Ada*, 278.

[70] *The Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes*, ed. E.O. Winstedt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909); *Expositio Totius Mundi* (Muller, 514-28).

[71] See Muller, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, vol. 2 for a collection of the earlier *periploi*. For a discussion of the surviving Byzantine *portulans* (nautical manuals) and *periploi*, see P. Gautier Dalché, 'Portulans and the Byzantine World', in Macrides, *Travel in the Byzantine World*, 59-71. Gautier Dalché says that portulans were a later Medieval creation. See also J. Albani, 'Maps - Naval Handbooks', in Zafiropoulou, *Journeys on the Seas*, 41-3 and L. Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989). The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* is from the first century, but it was presumably still used by merchants in the Late Antique period.

[72] Gautier Dalché, *Portulans and the Byzantine World*, 64-5.

[73] *P. Lond* 1727 (86) in *Select Papyri: Private Documents*, vol. 1, trans. A.S. Hunt and C.C. Edgar, Loeb Classical Library 266 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 254-61.

the sailing life at a young age.[74] *Rhodian Sea Law* specifically rules that merchants were able to bring two boys with them onto a vessel, but they did have to pay for their fare.[75] It is, of course, likely that at least some of the youths working on sailing vessels were slaves.

Slaves were an important part of maritime society and were employed on ships and in dockyards. According to the civil legislation, they could even be appointed as captains.[76] Although slave-owners were ultimately responsible for the actions of their slaves and any contracts made with them, the legislation suggests that slaves who acted as captains had a degree of autonomy when at sea, sometimes acting independently of their owners.[77] The legislation assumes an owner's implied consent for a slave's actions, since it was he who appointed the man as his manager or agent.[78] Yet, slaves who acted as shipmasters were entrusted with a good deal of responsibility, albeit in an environment considered beneath many of the slave-owning shippers themselves. In many cases, there were probably several slaves working on a ship at any one time. This scenario is attested by an edict in *Digesta* that refers to slaves who captained ships with other slaves serving under them as lower-ranking sailors.[79] Sailors could certainly be either freemen or slaves, and a shipowner made use of the services of both types of men at his own risk (apparently due to all sailors' penchant for theft).[80] Slaves who were part of a ship's crew could belong to either the shipowner himself or be the property of another man.[81] A letter of Cassiodorus records that slaves were enlisted in Theodoric's navy, having been

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[74] *Dig*. 14.1.1.16, 14.1.1.20-22 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *RSL*, 2.8, 2.13 (Ashburner, 2 and 59-61). One of the belt buckles on the Yassi Ada shipwreck was small, so it probably belonged to a young boy. See Bass and van Doorninck Jr. *Yassi Ada*, 295.

[75] *RSL* 2.8 (Ashburner, 2 and 59).

[76] Just. *Inst.* 4.7.2 (*CJC* 1.50); *Dig*. 9.4.19.2 (*CJC* 1.166); *Dig*. 14.1.1, 14.1.1.4, 14.1.1.16, 14.1.1.19-22 (*CJC* 1.218-9).

[77] *Dig*. 9.4.19.2 (*CJC* 1.166); *Dig*. 14.1.1.20 (*CJC* 1.219); *Dig*. 47.2.42 (*CJC* 1.818).

[78] Just. *Inst.* 4.7.1-2 (*CJC* 1.50); *Dig.* 14.1.1, 14.1.1.19-22 (*CJC* 1.218-9).

[79] *Dig*. 9.4.19.2 (*CJC* 1.166): 'Si servus tuus navem exercuerit eiusque vicarius et idem nauta in eadem nave damnum dederit, perinde in te actio danda est ac si is exercitor liber et hic vicarius servus eius esset, ut de peculio servi tui ad noxam dedere vicarium damneris: ut tamen, si servi tui iussu vel sciente et patiente eo damnum vicarius dederit, noxalis actio servi tui nomine esse debeat. Idemque sit etiam, si nautam facere iusserit'.

[80] *Dig*. 4.9.7 (*CJC* 1.102): 'Debet exercitor omnium nautarum suorum, sive liberi sint sive servi, factum praestare: nec immerito factum eorum praestat, cum ipse eos suo periculo adhibuerit.'

[81] *Dig*. 47.5.1.5 (*CJC* 1.825).

bought or hired from their masters for the purpose.[82] One would presume that there was also a strong contingent of slaves in the eastern navy as well.

An interesting reference to slaves is made in the maritime legislation in a chapter relating to deliberations regarding the jettison of goods at sea.[83] Slaves are mentioned as items to be valued for their worth alongside the rest of the goods on board. Those slaves who were not being carried for sale were worth more than those who were. Personal slaves would often have accompanied their masters on sea voyages, and sometimes escorted money lent as a maritime loan. This particular chapter of the maritime law likely refers to these types of slaves. Yet some of the slaves on ships who were not for sale were working members of the crew, and such legislation could also relate to them. The reference to slaves as goods is a stark reminder that whether they were men, women or children, they were still seen as property in this period.

Runaway slaves may also have found employment—and escape—on sailing vessels and in maritime centres. Given their status as property, it is not surprising that slaves fled from their masters on occasion. Many of these runaways must have headed straight for ports and maritime centres; harbour-masters were given the authority to arrest and detain fugitive slaves arriving into, or attempting to leave from, their ports.[84] Indeed, there is an array of material linking runaways to maritime establishments, such as taverns and brothels, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[85] Not all slaves would have run from their masters' homes and estates; some of the fugitives in maritime centres may actually have fled the arduous working conditions on ships.[86] Yet, at the same time, slaves would have bonded easily with sailors and other members of the maritime crowd, many of whom were also from the lower classes. Like slaves, sailors were no strangers to hard work and they often had little choice but to work in gruelling and dangerous conditions. Sailors also had to work side by side with men from a range of different classes and backgrounds in

[82] Cassiod., *Variae* 5.16 (*MGH* 12.148-9).
[83] *RSL* 3.9 (Ashburner, 16-7 and 87-91).
[84] *Dig.* 11.4.4 (*CJC* 1.185): 'Limenarchae et stationarii fugitivos deprehensos recte in custodiam retinent'.
[85] See Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 221-3.
[86] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 223.

order to ensure that every voyage they undertook was a successful one. Most fugitive slaves would have felt at home amongst the maritime community, whether they were in maritime centres or on ships at sea.

The Allure and Camaraderie of the Sea

Many slave and freeborn sailors may have enjoyed the camaraderie of shipboard life. One only need look to Homer's *Odyssey* to see that, despite all the trials and tribulations of sea travel, it could be a comradely adventure.[87] Synesius records that the peasant sailors who manned the ship on which he sailed from Egypt spent their time jesting with one another. There was a strong sense of fellowship amongst Synesius' crew, at least while they were in calm seas.[88] This aspect of the seafaring community should not be underestimated. Men of the maritime community faced the same physical and mental challenges, and relied heavily on one another when they were at sea. This created a necessary bond and a sense of solidarity on sailing vessels. Several other sources refer to the congenial atmosphere on ships and wherever sailors congregated. In the fifth century, Philostorgius tells how Arius was able to corrupt the minds of sailors, travellers and other simple-minded folk with songs and music that they could play and sing together.[89] A fourth-century mosaic from Carthage shows two sailing vessels on either side of a throned Venus, with sailors dancing and playing flutes.[90] Similar musical instruments have been found on shipwrecks of this period.[91] Libanius refers to sailors who spent their leisure time—at sea and in port—drinking together to excess.[92] In a political oration, Themistius

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[87] Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. S. Lombardo (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000).

[88] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640b).

[89] Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.2 (*PG* 65.465-6). English trans. in Philostorgius, *Church History*, 2.2, trans. P.R. Amidon, S.J. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 16: '"Ἄρειον ... ᾄσματά τε ναυτικὰ καὶ ἐπιμύλια καὶ ὁδοιπορικὰ γράψαι, καὶ τοιαῦθ'ἕτερα συντιθέντα, εἰς μελῳδίας ἐντεῖναι, ἅς ἐνόμιζεν ἑκάστοις ἁρμόζειν, διὰ τῆς ἐν ταῖς μελῳδίαις ἡδονῆς ἐκκλέπτων πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν ἀσέβειαν τοὺς ἀμαθεστέρους τῶν ἀνθρώπων.'

[90] Grossmann, *Marine Craft*, 26 (Figure 43).

[91] One example is the *Port Vendres A* shipwreck from France, which sunk in the early fifth century. See Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 329-30.

[92] Libanius, *Progymnasmata, Comparationes,* 4.9 in *Libanius's Progymnasmata. Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, text and trans. C.A. Gibson (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 344-5: 'πλωτῆρες δὲ τὰ πολλὰ ἀργοὶ κεῖνται, τοῦτο μὲν χειμῶνος καὶ πάλιν ἐν καπηλείοις καὶ καπνῷ, τοῦτο δὲ θέρους, ἡνίκα ἂν εὐτυχῶσιν. ἤν γὰρ ἐξ οὐρίων φέρωνται, κάθηνται ἐπὶ τῶν καταστρωμάτων πίνοντες συνεχῶς καὶ ἐσθίοντες ἔξω τοῦ μετρίου'.

also mentions the tendency of sailors to carouse when they were in fair seas.[93] Despite the hardships of sea travel, ships could clearly be convivial and cohesive environments.

The solidarity that existed amongst men who sailed for a living was not just a shipboard phenomenon. Sailors and other sea travellers had shared concerns, interests and experiences. Whether they were at sea or in port, they shared a bond and a sense of identity despite their different origins and beliefs. The sense of community that could exist between sailors and traders of various cultures is captured in an evocative passage from a Tamil epic, which describes the port city of Puhar in southern India; 'At the harbour were to be seen sailors from many lands, but to all appearances they lived as one community'.[94] Augustine of Hippo would be a little more sceptical of the reasons for this communal atmosphere. In a sermon on greed, he remonstrated that sea-merchants who sailed to India and other remote lands had no need of acquiring the language of the locals, because the language of avarice was universal.[95]

Horden and Purcell suggest that to gain an understanding of travel and communications in the ancient and medieval Mediterranean, one needs 'to empathize with those who held that any journey, *this* journey, had among its genuinely possible destinations the inferno'.[96] Acknowledging and empathising with this mindset is also necessary in order to understand the maritime community and the sense of camaraderie that existed amongst its members. Maritime legislation highlights a large number and variety of maritime risks, including fire, piracy, collision at sea or at anchor, storms, rough seas and shipwreck.[97] These were financial risks for the men who funded maritime ventures, but they were far more tangible for the sailors who undertook sea voyages. For the sailors and merchants who sailed on

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[93] Themistius, Or. 15.195b-c (Dindorf, 239). English trans. in Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 249.

[94] *Silappadikaram* translation in T. Power, *The Red Sea from Byzantium to the Caliphate AD 500-1000* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 56.

[95] Augustine, *Sermo* 164.3.5 (*PL* 38.897): 'Naviga trans mare, quaere terras quas ignoras. Merces in Indiam deportandae sunt: non nosti linguam Indorum, sed intelligibilis videtur sermo avaritiae.'

[96] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 444.

[97] See *RSL* 3.16-17, 27-44 (Ashburner, 21-2, 27-37, 96-7, and 105-17). Many of these same risks are also mentioned in the civil legislation.

trading vessels, the dangers of the sea did not only equate to a loss of profit or wages, but potentially to the loss of their lives. As Libanius perceptively notes, mariners sailed from every harbour with death by their side, knowing their only hope of salvation was the frail timber on which they were carried.[98] It was not only on merchant vessels that the threat of disaster or death existed. Several sources record the disasters that could befall warships and their crews, including being driven into the hands of the enemy by rough seas.[99] A letter in Cassiodorus' collection highlights the prevalence of death amongst the crew of naval vessels, lamenting that twenty-one recruits needed to be replaced due to their inconvenient deaths.[100] It seems Phalaecus the poet was right when he reflected that rarely was a man found on the sea with grey hair; few sailors of this period would have lived to old age.[101]

Still, the hardships of life at sea should not be overstated. Nor should we presume that all sailors were forced into service on ships. The solidarity and congeniality of the sailing community made maritime life bearable for many men and drew others in. In addition, there was—and still is—an allure to the sea that many non-mariners simply cannot fathom. Sailing was a chosen profession for some; a profession requiring skill and courage. For men with a love of the sea, finding work as a sailor would have been highly preferable to employment on land, despite the hardships. In his military manual, Vegetius devotes sixteen chapters to naval matters, and six of these relate to the art of navigation.[102] To be a captain, helmsman or navigator required substantial skill, and mariners with expertise in these roles would have been highly sought after.[103] Vegetius stresses the value of skilled mariners; those who had

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[98] Libanius, *Progymnasmata, Comparationes* 4.4 (Gibson, 342-3): 'οἱ πλωτῆρες δὲ ἐπειδὰν λύσαντες παραμείψωσι τῶν λιμένων τὰ στόματα, πλησίον ἔχοντες τὸν θάνατον πλέουσιν εἰς λεπτὴν ὁρῶντες σωτηρίας ἐλπίδα τὰ ξύλα ἐφ᾽ὧν φέρονται.'

[99] Examples include Vegetius, *Mil.* 4.38 (Lang, 154-5); Procop. *Goth.* 7.6.22-6, 7.7.4-7, 7.18.5-6, 7.28.1-3, and 7.30.9-12 in *Procopius, History of the Wars*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. H.B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library 173 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 204-7, 302-3, 392-5, and 408-9.

[100] Cassiod. *Variae* 4.15 (*MGH* 12.121): 'Illustris et magnifici viri comitis patrimonii suggestione comperimus dromonarios viginti et unum de constituto numero mortis incommodo fuisse subtractos.'

[101] *Anth. Gr.* 7.650 (Paton, 2.346-7): 'φεῦγε θαλάσσια ἔργα, βοῶν δ᾽ ἐπιβάλλευ ἐχέτλῃ, εἴ τί τοι ἡδὺ μακρῆς πείρατ᾽ ἰδεῖν βιοτῆς: ἠπείρῳ γὰρ ἔνεστι μακρὸς βίος: εἰν ἁλὶ δ᾽ οὔ πως εὐμαρὲς εἰς πολιὴν ἀνδρὸς ἰδεῖν κεφαλήν'.

[102] Vegetius, *Mil.* 4.31-46 (Lang, 150-65). Chapters 31-33 deal with the navy, 34-37 with shipbuilding, 38-43 with the art of navigation, and 44-46 with naval warfare.

[103] Pryor, *Shipping and Seafaring*, 482-3.

acquired knowledge of winds, tides and coastal topography, and with the ability to read the weather and skies.[104] Such men respected the sea and its rhythms. Themistius highlights the navigational prowess, strength of character and commanding spirit that could be found in the most skilled helmsmen.[105] Synesius talks of employing sailors skilled in the art of navigation in a letter written to a friend.[106] Procopius also mentions a man named Demetrius, a former sailor who had been appointed governor of Naples. Demetrius' promotion was based on the navigational skills which he had displayed under the command of the general Belisarius.[107]

Of course, there were also men who became involved in maritime trade in order to increase or make their fortune. These were usually shipowners and merchants, but the profits of a successful maritime venture could extend to other members of a ship's crew as well. In a profit-sharing scenario, each crew member was entitled to a fixed portion of the ship's earnings.[108] There were also family-owned and operated merchant vessels like the one depicted in a miracle of Saint Artemios, which was owned and manned by George of Rhodes and his two sons.[109] George's sons sailed the family vessel between their home port and Constantinople whenever their father stayed in the capital. Presumably, each of these family members earned a pre-arranged share of the profits of their trading activities. We do not know how profitable a family business like this could become. However, since George's sons had to keep the business afloat while their father waited in Constantinople, it is unlikely that the family had acquired an immense fortune in maritime trade. Nevertheless, small-scale trading ships and their crews could still have made a decent living on the sea. The working conditions for the average merchant or sailor were also probably more agreeable on these more intimate, family-run vessels.

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[104] Vegetius, *Mil.* 4.38 and 40-3 (Lang, 154-62).

[105] Themistius, *Or.* 15.194d-195d (Dindorf, 238-40). English trans. in Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 249-500.

[106] Synesius, *Ep.* 41 (*EG* 655): ''Εμισθωσάμην σοι ναῦν ἀνθρώπων εὐγενῶν καὶ πλεόντων τὴν θάλατταν μετὰ πλείονος τέχνης ἢ τύχης'.

[107] Procop. *Goth.* 7.6.20 (Dewing, 4.202-5).

[108] *RSL* 2.1-7 (Ashburner, 1 and 57) lists the profit shares that went to each of the crew members.

[109] *Miracles of St Artemios*, 35 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 184-9).

Merchants and shippers could be taxed quite heavily on private goods, but there were still profits to be made from maritime trade for those willing to accept its risks. In the late first or second century, Juvenal asked what motivated merchants to face immense hardships and perils at sea. His answer was money. Despite its dangers, sea travel and trade could make a man's fortune.[110] Ancient literature is full of accounts of shippers and merchants who made or lost their fortunes at sea, and similar opportunities continued to exist in Late Antiquity. In the *Lausiac History*, for example, Palladius records the fortune left to two sons by their sea-merchant father.[111] Amantius, a merchant and letter-carrier to the aristocratic Gallo-Roman bishop Sidonius Apollinarius, also amassed great wealth through trading activities (and via his shrewdly acquired social, religious and business contacts).[112]

Several laws reflect the ability of merchants, shippers and sailors to make a substantial profit in maritime commerce, much to the state's chagrin. Legislation criticises men who were in the business of maritime trade simply to make a profit, and those who invested in ships in order to avoid public duties.[113] The law also condemns sailors and merchants who demanded increased compensation for the risks involved in their commercial services.[114] Despite the avaricious nature attributed to mariners in this last law, the risks of sea travel were real and they were the reason that high rates of interest could be asked on maritime loans.[115] Sailors and merchants had to contend with a long list of dangers at sea, but even when they survived a journey, they frequently had to prove that they were innocent of sabotage

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[110] Juvenal, *Satires* 14.285-90, in *Juvenal, The Sixteen Satires*, trans. P. Green (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 2004).

[111] Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 15.1-2 (*PG* 34.1037-8). For an English translation, refer to 14.1-2 in *Palladius, The Lausiac History*, trans. W.K. Lowther Clarke (London: The MacMillan Company, 1918), 67-8.

[112] See A.E. Jones, *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul: Strategies and Opportunities for the Non-Elite* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 101-3.

[113] *Dig*. 50.6.6.8-9 (*CJC* 1.901).

[114] *Nov. Just.* 122 (*CJC* 3.592). These mariners were demanding higher wages: '"Εγνωμεν ὡς μετὰ τὴν παίδευσιν τὴν κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν τοῦ δεσπότου θεοῦ γενομένην οἱ τὰς πραγματείας καὶ τὰς μεθοδείας μετερχόμενοι καὶ οἱ διαφόρων τεχνῶν καὶ οἱ περὶ τὴν γῆν ἐργάται, ἔτι γε μὴν καὶ οἱ ναῦται, ὀφείλοντες μᾶλλον καλλίονες γενέσθαι, εἰς πλεονεξίαν δεδώκασι, καὶ διπλασίονας καὶ τριπλασίονας τιμάς τε καὶ μισθοὺς παρὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν ἐπιζητοῦσι.'.

[115] Refer to *Nov. Just*. 106 (*CJC* 3.507-10) and 110 (*CJC*, 3.520-1); *Cod. Just.* 4.33 (*CJC* 2.173); *RSL* 3.16-17 (Ashburner, 21-3 and 96-7). These laws demonstrate the ongoing importance of, and issues relating to, maritime loans in Justinian's time and the following centuries.

or insurance fraud.[116] These men were often expected to make good any property lost at sea, as in the case of several merchants mentioned by John Moschus, who were imprisoned by their creditors after failed maritime trading ventures.[117] Yet despite these risks and hardships, there were some men who would have revelled in a life at sea. For these seafarers, the opportunity to be an integral part of a close-knit community, to spend much of their lives outdoors, to be out of the eye of the authorities, to earn a basic living, or perhaps even to make their fortune, would have been well worth the risks.

The Ethnicity of Late Antique Mariners: Egyptians and Syrians in the Extant Sources

There are two ethnic groups that dominate the extant sources on maritime trade; Egyptians and Syrians. The focus on these two broadly defined groups has been at the expense of seafarers from other regions and backgrounds who were also active in this period. Overall evidence would suggest that the maritime community as a whole was a mixed group; a composite of people hailing from a variety of both urban and rural regions, and of various cultural affiliations. Egyptian sailors, in particular, appear to dominate the world of maritime trade because the ships carrying grain and other state-sponsored commodities have attracted the most historical interest. From the time of the inauguration of Constantinople, the majority of grain for the eastern capital was shipped from Egypt via Alexandria.[118] Grain and other commodities like wine and olive oil were also exported from Syria and Palestine to Constantinople and other eastern cities.[119] There is no doubt that the shipment of grain and other

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[116] Refer to Chapter 2, footnotes 54-5.

[117] John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* 186 (*PG* 87/3.3061-4) and 189 (*PG* 87/3.3067-70).

[118] Haas, *Alexandria*, 41-2; Mango, *Development of Constantinople,* 120-1. Mango estimates the number of Egyptian grain ships landing in Constantinople each year to be between 2400 and 3600. *Notitia*, 237 (Matthews, 92-3) mentions two of the Alexandrian granaries in Constantinople, *Horrea Alexandrina* and *Horrea Theodosiana,* both located in Region 9 near the Theodosian Harbour. Also see *Expositio* 8.228-30 (trans. Woodman, *Expositio*, 11 and 34-5); McCormick, *Origins*, 86-7; Rautman, *Daily Life*, 76.

[119] *Expositio*, 6.118-49 (trans. Woodman, 6-8 and 30-2); Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 462, in *Philostratus, Lives of Sophists and Eunapius, Lives of Philosophers*, trans. W. Cave Wright, Loeb Classical Library 134 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 382-3. Also see the collection of papers in Decker and Kingsley's, *Economy and Exchange*. In particular, S. Kingsley and M. Decker, 'New Rome, New Theories on Inter-Regional Exchange: East Mediterranean Economy in Late Antiquity', 1-27; S. Kingsley, 'The Economic Impact of the Palestinian Wine Trade in Late Antiquity', 44-68; and M. Decker, 'Food for an Empire: Wine and Oil Production in North Syria', 69-86.

staples throughout the Mediterranean was a sizable enterprise, conducted chiefly by Egyptian ships. Haas estimates that 220,000 tons of grain were moved each year from Alexandria to Constantinople alone.[120] The transport of the *annona* was of the utmost importance to the imperial and civic authorities, and to the overall economy of the empire. Thus, it is not surprising that Egyptian ships and seafarers dominate the extant sources from an economic and legislative perspective.[121] The men who were involved in state shipping appear more often in the legal sources than their private counterparts. However, until the compilation of the maritime laws, even state shippers rarely warranted mention until their activities negatively impacted on the fisc.[122] The sailors of the Alexandrian grain fleet also feature in Church histories dealing with the religious controversies of the fifth century.[123] These ecclesiastical accounts have further increased the visibility of Alexandrian sailors of the grain fleet in the historical record.

The large shipments involved in the carriage of the *annona* to Constantinople from cities in Egypt, North Africa and Syria encouraged non-*annona* traffic and trade into all of these cities.[124] State and private commerce coexisted harmoniously, with the shipping routes and networks that serviced state-sponsored traffic also proving advantageous to private shippers.[125] Large harbour facilities were not always created to cater solely for state-subsidised maritime traffic. McCormick cites Antioch's port of Seleucia and the port of Caesarea in Palestine as examples of large harbour installations constructed to cater for both state and private shipping.[126] Magdalino says that the southern harbours of Julian and Theodosius in Constantinople were also built primarily to handle maritime traffic in goods other than grain.[127] As a general rule, scholarship has concentrated heavily both on the long-

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[120] Haas, *Alexandria*, 41-2.
[121] McCormick, *Origins*, 87.
[122] Sarris, *Merchants, Trade, and Commerce*, 14.
[123] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 53, 68, 74, 105 and 115.
[124] McCormick, *Origins*, 91-2; Sarris, *Economics, Trade, and Feudalism*, 32-3.
[125] B. Ward-Perkins, 'Specialisation, Trade, and Prosperity: An Overview of the Economy of the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean' in Decker and Kingsley, *Economy and Exchange*, 174; Sarris, *Economics, Trade, and Feudalism*, 33.
[126] McCormick, *Origins*, 86-7. *Expositio* 6.123-5 (Woodman, 7 and 31) also refers to 'fiscales species et privatas' moving through Seleucia to Antioch.
[127] Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 212. Magdalino suggests that building materials could have been one of the main products arriving into these harbours.

distance maritime trade that serviced the state and army, and the trade in elite luxury items; what Horden and Purcell refer to as 'glamorous high commerce'.[128] Smaller-scale merchant ships and the people who manned them are not as well documented in our primary sources as those transporting the *annona* and elite goods. The journeys and business ventures undertaken by smaller-scale merchants often appear to have been more unpredictable and less structured. As a result, scholars rarely credit private merchants, sailors and shippers with being the 'fundamental ingredient in the social and economic history of the Mediterranean' that they actually were.[129]

It is perhaps on smaller-scale, private vessels that we should expect to find evidence of men from a variety of different backgrounds. We should also seek mariners who were not part of the 'glamorous high commerce' of the seas in a range of sources—written, visual, and archaeological. McCormick provides an exhaustive analysis of individual and small groups of sea travellers who appear in written travel accounts from the mid seventh to ninth centuries.[130] Unfortunately, individual private merchants and sailors only became highly visible in the sources after the cessation of the large grain shipments from Egypt in the seventh century. Yet it would be rash to assume that this was because these seafarers and traders did not exist earlier. Apart from the legislation, the limited evidence that we have of Late Antique seafarers who were engaged in non-state travel or trade is largely anecdotal. McCormick warns historians to be careful of making assumptions when using anecdotal evidence of sea travellers, as it is not always clear whether this evidence exists because it is typical or atypical for its day.[131] We cannot always be sure if a source has survived by chance or choice. Thus, the surviving anecdotal evidence may only provide an incomplete or unrepresentative picture of the identities and ethnicities of mariners. In many instances, the extant sources and archaeology only hint at the geographic or ethnic backgrounds of ships and their crews.[132] However,

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[128] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 144, 150, and 365.

[129] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 140-4. Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 368-9 also states that the number of shipwrecks found in the Mediterranean demonstrates just how extensive and important small-scale commerce was.

[130] McCormick, *Origins*, 799-810.

[131] McCormick, *Origins*, 125-6.

[132] McCormick, *Origins*, 430.

to ignore these hints, anecdotes, and other accounts entirely would be to assign a homogeneity to shipboard crews and travellers that the broad range of evidence does not corroborate.

The idea that members of the maritime community came from a variety of backgrounds does not diminish the significance of Egyptian sailors in the Late Roman maritime realm. Egyptians clearly played an important role in trading activity, yet it is important to recognise that not all sailors were Alexandrians of the state-sponsored fleet. An array of commercial goods, including wine, papyrus and linen were exported from Alexandria.[133] Haas stresses that many of the goods carried on board ships departing from Alexandrian ports were not of Egyptian origin; Alexandria was simply the primary transit point for the long-distance trade of various items.[134] The *Expositio* records an abundance of spices and other luxury goods from distant lands that were traded through this emporium.[135] Egyptian ports like Berenike also functioned as important trading centres well into the sixth century. Archaeological evidence confirms that items were being exported from, and imported into, the Red Sea port of Berenike from a variety of regions, including Gaul, Spain, Africa, Southern Arabia, the Persian Gulf, India, Sri Lanka and more.[136] Egyptian sailors and merchants were clearly active over a wide geographical area; as were the sailors and merchants from these other territories with whom they came into contact.

Scattered references to Egyptian ships and sailors who were not involved in the carriage of the *annona* exist in a variety of sources. Archaeological excavations of the western section of the Theodosian Harbour have unearthed large numbers of amphorae from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean.[137] These amphorae were used for a variety of goods, not only grain, and suggest the presence of a range of

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[133] Haas, *Alexandria*, 43; and *Expositio*, 8.220 (Woodman, 10 and 34).

[134] Haas, *Alexandria*, 35-6. Haas lists grain, wine, papyrus, glass, linen, foodstuffs and luxury goods–such as spices, perfumes, exotic candies, medicine, drugs, precious stones, gems and metal goods–as items which were traded in and out of Alexandria during the Late Antique period.

[135] *Expositio,* 8.207-10 (Woodman, 10 and 34); Haas, *Alexandria*, 43.

[136] S.E. Sidebotham, 'Archaeological Evidence for Ships and Harbor Facilities at Berenike (Red Sea Coast), Egypt', in Hohlfelder, *The Maritime World of Ancient Rome*, 305 and 317; Power, *Red Sea*, 20-1 and 41. Based on archaeological evidence, Power concludes that trading between Egyptian ports, such as Berenike, and ports in the Indian Ocean region actually increased in the Late Roman period.

[137] Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 34.

Egyptian merchants in Constantinople. Mark the Deacon mentions the numerous Egyptian wine merchants who frequented the Gazan port of Maiuma in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.[138] Synesius talks of numerous vessels from Alexandria which were safely anchored in the harbour of Azarium. Presumably, at least some of these ships were carrying private goods.[139] In the early seventh century, Saint Willibald—a smuggler who regularly gained passage on merchant vessels—easily found an Egyptian ship travelling in the late autumn/early winter months from Naples to Ephesus (via southern Italy and a number of islands in the Ionian and Aegean Seas).[140]

Archaeological evidence also confirms a sizable contingent of Syrian sailors and traders visiting eastern and western ports. As noted, amphorae found in the Theodosian Harbour include a number from the eastern Mediterranean region, including many of Syrian and Palestinian origin from the fourth to sixth centuries.[141] The recent excavation of the Late Roman/Early Byzantine harbour town at modern Küçükçekmece near Istanbul has yielded pottery from Syria.[142] Shipwreck finds also indicate that traders with Syrian origins were travelling widely during this period. The *Iskandil Burnu*, a late sixth-century ship located in southern Turkey, contained wine amphorae of Palestinian origin.[143] The *Favaritx*, dated by excavators to between 450 and 600, and discovered off the coast of the Balearic Island of Menorca, was of either Syrian or Egyptian origin, based on bronzes and pottery on board.[144] An early seventh-century wreck discovered off the coast of France, known as the *Saint Gervais B*, had a cargo of goods mainly from Western regions, along with a Gazan amphora and pottery with Greek graffiti. Parker sees this shipwreck as evidence that most western commerce was in the hands of Jewish or Syrian traders from the fifth

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[138] Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry* 58, in Marci Diaconi, *Vita Porphyrii Episcopi Gazensis*, ed. Societas Philologae Bonnensis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1895), 49. English trans. in G.F. Hill, *Marcus Diaconus, The Life of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 68.

[139] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 643a-b).

[140] See McCormick, *Origins*, 130-1.

[141] Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 34.

[142] J. Pinkowski, 'After Being Stricken by Drought, Istanbul Yields Ancient Treasure', *The New York Times*, January 23rd 2012 on http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/24/science/istanbul-yields-a-treasure-trove-in-ancient-bathonea.html?pagewanted=1&_r=5.

[143] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 217.

[144] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 176; S.J. Keay, *Late Roman Amphorae in the Western Mediterranean. A Typology and Economic Study: The Catalan Evidence*, vol. 2, BAR International Series 196 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1984), 654.

century.[145] The prevalence of Syrian merchants in Mediterranean commerce has long been accepted. In summarising the travel and trade links between the East and West prior to the eleventh century, J.P.A. van der Vin states that Jews and Syrians had a monopoly on the trade of eastern goods in the Early Medieval period. He describes 'colonies of these Levantine merchants in all the large towns around the Mediterranean Sea'.[146]

There is no doubt that Syrians played a role in the trade of goods throughout the eastern and western Mediterranean during the fourth to eighth centuries. There is a range of written evidence for Syrian traders and sailors that corroborates their presence in the archaeological record. The *Expositio* is largely believed to have been written by a Syrian merchant, probably from Antioch, Seleucia, or one of the major cities of Syria-Phoenicia or Syria-Palestina.[147] The anonymous author praises the plenitude of a number of cities in this region and their ability to support themselves through commerce. He lists exports from the region such as wine, linen cloth, purple dye, grapes, olives and grain.[148] According to the author of the *Expositio*, many Syrian cities sent their products to Seleucia and Antioch, from where they continued on to other parts of the world.[149] There are a number of other casual references in the written sources to Syrian sailors and merchants. Synesius refers to the Jewish captain of his ship as 'the Syrian',[150] and Procopius mentions a Syrian man named Antiochus who conducted a thriving shipping business out of Naples.[151] The smuggler Willibald was easily able to find passage on ships heading in and out of Syrian ports, such as Antarados (modern Tartus) and Tyre.[152] Nevertheless, we should be cautious of overstating the role of Syrians in maritime trade in this period.

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[145] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 372-3.

[146] J.P.A. van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople. Ancient Monuments and Old Traditions in Medieval Travellers' Tales*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1980), 4-5.

[147] T. Grüll, 'Expositio totius mundi et gentium. A Peculiar Work on the Commerce of Roman Empire from the Mid-Fourth Century – Compiled by a Syrian Textile Dealer?' in *Studies in Economic and Social History of the Ancient Near East in Memory of Péter Vargyas*, ed. Z. Csabai (Budapest: University of Pécs, L'Harmattan Budapest, 2014), 634.

[148] *Expositio,* 6.105-66 (Woodman, 6-8 and 30-2).

[149] *Expositio,* 6.120-2 (Laodicia), 6.122-5 (Seleucia), 6.129-33 (Ascalon and Gaza) (Woodman, 7 and 30-1).

[150] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 643a-b): 'ὁ δὲ Σύρος'.

[151] Procop. *Goth.* 5.8.21 (Dewing, 3.74-5).

[152] See McCormick, *Origins*, 133-4.

McCormick casts doubt on the actual numbers of Syrian traders that existed, and suggests they were not 'the archetypal merchants' that earlier sources have made them out to be.[153] Despite his earlier comments regarding the ubiquity of Syrian merchants, van der Vin says that the term 'Syrian' seems to have been employed by Western sources as a general moniker for anyone who was from the East.[154]

The Cosmopolitan Nature of the Late Antique Maritime Realm

The maritime world of Late Antiquity was far more cosmopolitan than an Egyptian and Syrian monopoly on trade would suggest. The provenance of objects such as amphorae, pottery and lamps located in the Theodosian Harbour excavations demonstrate that ships were sailing into Constantinople from an array of ports throughout North Africa, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Greece, the Aegean islands and Northern Europe.[155] A single merchant ship alone could carry amphorae of different origins. The ship recorded as YK22 in the Yenikapı excavations, for example, was carrying amphorae from a range of regions, suggesting that the crew had visited various ports before finally sailing into Constantinople.[156] The crews manning the ships entering Constantinople's ports may also have hailed from a number of different locales. Indeed, the primary harbours of a city like Constantinople acted as international meeting points, with ships from diverse regions docking side by side as a matter of course.[157]

A linguistically and culturally diverse group of sailors and merchants were drawn to Constantinople's harbours. At the docks and in the marketplaces, one would have been surrounded by Greek, Latin, Germanic, Armenian, Aramaic, and Coptic speakers.[158] Athanaric certainly witnessed an influx of culturally diverse peoples into Constantinople when he visited in the late fourth century.[159] Yet the situation in

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[153] McCormick, *Origins*, 106-7 (n. 100 and 125-6).
[154] Van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece*, 4.
[155] Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 183-4.
[156] M.A. Polat, 'Yenikapı Shipwrecks Found with Their Cargoes', in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 379-98.
[157] In relation to Constantinople and the Theodosian harbour, see A. Toksoy, 'Faith in Yenikapi' in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 Year*, 234 and van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople,* 4.
[158] Rautman, *Daily Life*, 85.
[159] Jordanes, *Getica* 28.143 (*MGH* 5.95).

Constantinople was not unique for the Mediterranean region. Port officials in Rome were warned to expect men of different nationalities to sail into their harbours.[160] Horden and Purcell stress that maritime communities have always been predominantly cosmopolitan environments and ships' crews heterogeneous in origin.[161] Although it is generally one dominant state or group providing 'the nominal foundation or character' of a seaborne community, 'cases in which an exclusive ethnic composition is found are not usual'.[162] Egyptians and Syrians act as the nominal ethnic groups in the period under study and, in many ways, were the backbone of the maritime commercial system of Late Antiquity. However, these groups only form part of the overall composition of the seafaring community in this period.

According to the sixth-century travelling merchant, Cosmas Indicopleustes, all nations traded in Roman currency 'from one extremity of the earth to the other'.[163] This may be an exaggeration, but there were eastern Roman traders in cities from the Far East to Western Europe and Africa, and sailors and merchants from these regions made their presence felt in eastern Roman ports. From a trading perspective, one of the areas of greatest significance to Constantinople, and the eastern empire as a whole, was the Black Sea region. There were a number of important Black Sea ports, including Sinope (on the northern coast of Turkey), Cherson (Sevastopol in southern Ukraine), Tomis (Constanța), and Odessos (Varna in modern Bulgaria). Underwater archaeologists have located several well-preserved shipwrecks dated to between the fourth and sixth centuries, in the anoxic waters of the Black Sea. These wrecks were discovered close to the shoreline at Sinope and along the maritime trade routes linking Sinope with Constantinople and Cherson in the north.[164] Sources such as Menander the Guardsman mention the fast merchant ships that regularly plied the maritime routes between Constantinople, Sinope and Cherson.[165] In conjunction with ceramics located in terrestrial

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[160] Cassiod. *Variae* 7.23 (*MGH* 12.215).
[161] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 377 and 396.
[162] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 396.
[163] Cosmas Indicopleustes 2.148, in *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, trans. J.W. McCrindle (London: Hakluyt Society, 1897), 73.
[164] Ballard and Ward, *Deep-Water Archaeological Survey*, 2-3.
[165] Menander the Guardsman, fr.19.1 in *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, trans. R.C. Blockley (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1985), 171-2.

excavations, Black Sea shipwrecks confirm the ongoing and lucrative maritime trade that existed throughout the Black Sea region until at least the seventh century. A fifth-century shipwreck recorded as YK35 in the Yenikapı excavations was carrying amphorae from Sinope on its final voyage into Constantinople. This ship had other Black Sea amphorae on board as well, including a type associated with the region now covered by modern Romania (perhaps originating in the port of Tomis).[166] The cargo on the Yassi Ada shipwreck also included lamps and pottery items of the types commonly found in Black Sea and Thracian ports.[167]

Both Procopius and Agathias mention several Black Sea peoples who engaged in trade with the Byzantines. One of these groups was from Lazica on the eastern shore of the Black Sea in modern Georgia. Apparently the men of this civilised nation were very much at home on the sea and were successful sea-traders who had traded with the Romans for centuries.[168] Procopius says that the city of Petra in the south of Lazica was actually built by Justinian in an effort to control the maritime commerce that had, until then, been the preserve of the Lazi.[169] Agathias also mentions the eastern Black Sea town of Phasis in Lazica (now Poti in modern Georgia) and talks of the large merchant ships that could regularly be found at anchor in the town's harbour.[170] Procopius demonstrates knowledge of the seas and currents in this same region as well, describing the difficulties of successfully navigating the waters surrounding the entrance to the Phasis river.[171] Lazica features prominently in the works of Procopius and Agathias due to its role in the so-called Lazic War between the Byzantines and Persians in the sixth century. Both powers desired control of this strategic land, with its access to the Black Sea on the one hand, and access to the Caspian Sea via the Caucasus Mountains on the other. There were other important cities and ports along the Black Sea coastline that regularly engaged in maritime trade with Byzantium. These cities and regions do not always feature as prominently

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[166] U. Kocabaş, 'The Yenikapı Byzantine-Era Shipwrecks, Istanbul, Turkey: A Preliminary Report and Inventory of the 27 Wrecks Studied by Istanbul University', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 44, 1 (2015), 23-5.

[167] Bass and van Doorninck Jr., *Yassi Ada*, 317-9; Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 454-5; van Alfen, *New Light*, 189-213.

[168] Agathias, *Histories*, 3.5.3 (Keydell, 88-9). English trans. in Frendo, *Agathias*, 72; Procop. *Pers.* 2.15.4-5 (Dewing, 1.386-7).

[169] Procop. *Pers.* 2.15.10-11 (Dewing, 1.388-9).

[170] Agathias, *Histories*, 3.21.1-5 (Keydell, 111). English trans. in Frendo, *Agathias*, 91.

[171] Procop. *Goth.* 8.2.6-9 (Dewing, 5.62-5).

in histories simply because they were not the site, or cause, of great wars. Yet merchant ships and their crews sailed to and from all of these Black Sea ports, adding to the considerable mix of cultures that comprised the maritime community of the greater eastern region.

The sources also attest to ships, sailors and merchants from Greece and the islands of the Aegean who were plying the seas of Late Antiquity. Many of the Aegean islands, such as Chios, Rhodes and Crete acted as important stops on the primary trade routes between Constantinople and other major port cities. Wine and other goods were also produced and exported from many of these islands.[172] Fifth to seventh-century shipwrecks like the *Delphinion*, *Ayios Stephanos* and *Thasos A* were found with their cargoes of amphorae in the vicinity of the islands of Chios and Thasos, demonstrating that trade continued to flourish throughout this entire region.[173] One of the merchants mentioned in the Miracles of Saint Artemios was a man named Euporos from Chios who regularly sailed to and from his homeland to the eastern capital for business.[174] Other miracles tell of shipowners, sailors and merchants such as George and Theodore, who frequently travelled from Rhodes to Constantinople.[175] Euporos, George and Theodore may not have been actual historical figures; however, this is beside the point. The author of these hagiographical accounts would not have chosen backgrounds for his characters that were unbelievable to his readers. There is also epigraphic evidence from islands of the Aegean confirming the importance and presence of a maritime milieu in this general region. Fourth and fifth-century inscriptions on the island of Thasos, for example, personally name ships, shipowners and shipmasters.[176]

Mainland cities of Greece, such as Thessalonike and Athens, were situated along important trade routes and were themselves commercial centres.[177] One of the

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[172] Rautman, *Daily Life*, 103.
[173] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 63, 161 and 423.
[174] *Miracles of St Artemios,* 5 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 84-7).
[175] *Miracles of St Artemios,* 9 and 35 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 92-5 and 184-9).
[176] Examples include IG XII, 8 581-585 in *Inscriptiones Graecae. Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae*, Volume XII, *Inscriptiones Insularum Maris Aegaei Praeter Delum*, Part VIII *Inscriptiones insularum Maris Thracici*, ed. Carolus Fredrich (Berlin, Georgium Reimerum, 1909).
[177] Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 183.

inscriptions from Thasos names a ship and its owners from Thessalonike; one of whom appears to have been an important member of the city's merchant guild.[178] The Miracles of Saint Demetrius attest to the strength of Thessalonike's maritime trading links. When the city was besieged by Slavs and Avars throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, merchants and ship captains were easily persuaded to send their grain to Thessalonike by sea.[179] There were also smaller merchantmen visiting the city's ports. One example is the sailing vessel on which Mark the Deacon found passage from Ascalon in the late fourth century.[180] He was also able to secure a return trip from Thessalonike to Ascalon as soon as he needed it. Thessalonike is often remembered as one of the primary administrative and religious centres of the eastern Roman empire, but of course it was also a large, wealthy port city. Strategically located to welcome land traffic from the north and maritime traffic from the Black Sea, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Italy and the West, Thessalonike would have had a truly cosmopolitan, maritime atmosphere. Small, interesting finds from the city, such as a collection of game pieces made from fish vertebrae, demonstrate just how comprehensively the sea permeated everyday life there.[181]

Timothy Gregory claims that, apart from Thessalonike, the majority of Greece was 'a cultural and economic backwater' by Late Antiquity.[182] It is difficult to believe that a city like Athens did not continue to have either cultural or economic significance. Athens was, after all, the home of the woman who married Theodosius II and, as such, it must have retained at least some of its former cultural cachet.[183] From a trading perspective, Athens clearly still played a part in the world of Late Antiquity,

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[178] IG XII, 8 581: 'εὔπλεα τῷ Ἡρακλῇ τῷ εὐτυχῇ τῷ Θεσσαλονεικεῖ τῷ Ἐπικτήτου καὶ Ζωΐλου. Ζωΐλῳ ἀρχικερδενπόρῳ εὐτυχῶς'.

[179] A.E. Laiou, 'Exchange and Trade, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries', in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.E. Laiou (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 701.

[180] Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry* 6 (Societas Philologae Bonnensis, 6-7). English trans. in Hill, *Marcus Diaconus,* 9-10.

[181] Catalogue Item 236 in D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi, *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 2002), 208.

[182] T.E. Gregory, 'The Survival of Paganism in Christian Greece: A Critical Essay', *The American Journal of Philology,* 107, 2 (1986), 235. Many parts of Greece were slow to adopt Christianity, but this should not be construed as culturally backwards.

[183] Aelia Eudocia was not the last Byzantine empress to hail from Athens either. Notably, Irene (empress to Leo IV) was also from Athens.

albeit a reduced one. Based on her analysis of pottery finds and their distribution, Joanita Vroom confirms that Athens continued to engage in trade over a large area between the fourth and ninth centuries; from Gaza to southern Italy.[184] The Athenian clothing and shoe merchant mentioned by Synesius in a letter of 402, travelled from Athens for business regularly; Synesius mentions that his brother had bought items from this same merchant in the previous year. He also highlights the quality of the Athenian merchant's goods.[185]

Other sources also mention Athenian merchants and sailors who continued to travel throughout the Mediterranean region well into this period. One example is the Athenian captain who sailed his ship into the port of Piraeus with the young philosopher Eunapius on board. Eunapius reports that representatives from each of the Athenian philosophical schools waited at the port for merchant ships to arrive, as budding philosophers could often be found on these vessels. Interestingly, the captain of Eunapius' ship was a good friend of the well-known philosopher, Prohaeresius, whose house the captain took the young philosopher to.[186] In discussing the persistence of paganism in Athens, Trombley notes signs of its tenacity all along the well-travelled routes from the port of Piraeus into the city of Athens itself.[187] It should be remembered that large numbers of sailors and merchants were also making their way along these routes alongside philosophers and other travellers. The overall evidence demonstrates that there was still commercial activity occurring in and around the port of Athens; with that trading activity came continued cultural exchange.

Western sailors and merchants were also sailing across the Mediterranean to port cities of the eastern empire and vice versa. Cassiodorus mentions eastern sailors with unstable characters and quick tempers who were entering western Roman

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[184] J. Vroom, 'Four Centers of Trade in the Byzantine Empire: A First Comparson of Butrint, Athens, Ephesus and Tarsus' (paper presented at *Trade in Byzantium*, The Third International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Koç University, Istanbul, June 24-27 2013). In her presentation, Vroom noted that Athens, Butrint and Ephesus were still part of the same commercial/trading network in the seventh to ninth centuries.

[185] Synesius, *Ep*. 52 (*EG* 662).

[186] Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 485 (trans. Cave Wright, 478-9).

[187] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 283.

ports.[188] Officials in eastern harbours were no doubt making the same judgements of western sailors. In another letter, Cassiodorus describes the busy and convivial harbour life in Portus, with ships and sailors entering the harbour from a diversity of provinces and foreign shores.[189] Ships travelling between the East and West would not have been rare. Indeed, many shipwrecks found in western waters from this period were of eastern origin. A sixth-century ship originating on the island of Proconnesus in the Sea of Marmara sunk at Marzamemi near Sicily. The ship was carrying pre-fabricated marble, probably to be used for an ecclesiastical building in either Italy or North Africa.[190] Traders and sailors from Proconnesus transported marble to cities in the West, North Africa, the Black Sea and to other regions in Asia Minor. The shipwreck known as the *Grazel B* was a merchant ship which sunk off the coast of France in the first half of the seventh century. The owner and crew were from Gaul, but the vessel was carrying over one hundred coins, mostly from Constantinople's mints. As such, it is likely that the crew sailed from the eastern capital on their final voyage.[191] The *Pantano Longarini* shipwreck, located in the waters near Syracuse, also sunk early in the seventh century. This sailing vessel reportedly had a Greek name carved on a name-board attached to the hull, and thus one can assume that the ship hailed from an eastern shore.[192]

Likewise, there were ships entering eastern Roman ports carrying goods obtained from Italy, North Africa and Gaul.[193] The wreck of the *Grazel B*, with its hoard of coins from Constantinople, is one example.[194] The author of the Miracles of Saint Artemios records a ship with a Gallic crew that sailed into Constantinople.[195] Several centuries

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[188] Cassiod. *Variae* 7.23 (*MGH* 12.215): '... quapropter arte placandi sunt qui mores afferunt simillimos ventis, quorum nisi prius animi temperentur, in contemptum maximum nativa facilitate prosiliunt'.

[189] Cassiod. *Variae* 7.9 (*MGH* 12.208): '… illic veligerum mare peregrinos populos cum diversa provinciarum merce transmittit et inter tot spectacula dulcium rerum commodum tuum est venientes evasisse periculum'.

[190] A. Karagianni, 'The Harbour of Proconnesus in Greco-Roman and Early Byzantine Times: The Marble Trade, a Source of Financial and Cultural Development', *The European Archaeologist,* 36 (2011), 17-22; G. Kapitan, 'The Church Wreck Off Marzamemi', *Archaeology*, 22 (1969), 125-7 and 133.

[191] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 205.

[192] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 303.

[193] As previously mentioned, the Yenikapı excavations of the Theodosian Harbour have yielded a large number of items from the fourth to seventh centuries from North Africa and Western Europe. See Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 183-4.

[194] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 205.

[195] *Miracles of St Artemios,* 27 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 152-5).

earlier, Libanius referred to the large numbers of western trading ships that entered the port of Seleucia.[196] Africa was an important link in the supply of grain to Rome and Constantinople, and thus it should be no surprise that African mariners travelled long distances to eastern ports. From the fourth century, private shipments from Africa began to make their way east alongside the larger shipments of state-sponsored grain.[197] African shippers are often mentioned in legislation related to the carriage of the *annona* in the *Codex Theodosianus*.[198] McCormick points out that state shippers (*navicularii*) from the West all but disappear from the sixth-century legal sources. Yet ships from African shores continued to travel eastward, as demonstrated by the grain shipments leaving Carthage for Constantinople in the early seventh century, when Heraclius was able to stall them.[199]

Procopius mentions shipmasters from Italy and Libya who were sailing into Constantinople in the sixth century. These were the sailors who Procopius says were most oppressed by Justinian's customs levies on foreign ships.[200] Vessels travelling between western and eastern shores would certainly have been seen as 'foreign' once they reached their distant destinations. Yet this does not mean that all of the sailors and traders travelling on these vessels were alien to the inhabitants of the port cities they visited. There were a number of eastern sea-traders who settled in the West where they managed successful shipping businesses, regularly trading and maintaining links with the eastern empire. Procopius mentions two such men; one living in Syracuse, who he had known as a child in Caesarea; and another from Syria, who conducted a trading and shipping business from Naples.[201] There would have been a number of western traders also living in the East under similar arrangements.

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[196] Libanius, *Or.* 11.263-4, in Libanii, *Opera*, vol. 1, part 2: *Orationes VI-XI*, ed. R. Foerster (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903), 531. English trans. in A.F. Norman, *Antioch as a Centre of Hellenic Culture as Observed by Libanius*, Translated Texts for Historians 34 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 61-2.

[197] McCormick, *Origins*, 91-2 and 112.

[198] Examples include: *Cod. Theo.* 11.1.13 (*CJR* 1.573-4), 11.28.8 (*CJR* 1.619), 13.5.10, 13.5.12, 13.5.14, 13.5.24 (*CJR* 1.750-3), 13.5.37-8 (*CJR* 1.756-7), 13.6.7, and 13.9.2-3 (*CJR* 1.760-2). Many other laws which relate to shippers in general were also promulgated in Carthage.

[199] McCormick, *Origins*, 102-4. McCormick provides a lengthy discussion of the reduction in Western shipping and the increase in Eastern based shipping during this period.

[200] Procop. *Anec.* 25.7-10 (Dewing, 294-5).

[201] Procop. *Vand.* 3.14.7 (Dewing, 2.126-9); Procop. *Goth.* 5.8.21 (Dewing, 3.74-5).

Eastern Roman traders could also be found living away from home in non-Roman regions. Philostorgius records that there were enough Romans travelling to ports in the kingdom of Himyar (modern Yemen) to warrant the building of Christian churches there by the fifth century. One of these churches was built close to the permanent Roman trading centre in the port city of Aden (or Adane).[202] This was the port where most sailors from Roman or Byzantine territories would land upon entering the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and it clearly maintained a stable Roman trading population. Theophanes mentions another community of eastern Romans living on the island of Iotabe, at the junction of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba.[203] These Roman sea-traders dealt predominantly in cargoes from India and its surrounds. Iotabe also served as a profitable Roman customs station at least through to Justinian's reign.[204]

Greek and Roman trading activity in the Indian Ocean had been ongoing for centuries and, after a short decline, Indo-Roman trade seems to have flourished again from the fourth century.[205] Tomber highlights a range of Late Roman archaeological finds in ports throughout India, including coins and amphorae.[206] Numerous objects from Berenike and nearby Shenshef show that these particular Roman ports maintained 'ongoing commercial contacts' with regions throughout the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and Aegean.[207] Indeed, Tomber notes an increase in infrastructure in Berenike, which demonstrates the concerted Roman investment in commerce in this overall region during the fourth to seventh

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[202] Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.4 (*PG* 65.481-4). Also see Philostorgius, *Church History* (trans. Amidon, 40) and R. Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade. From Pots to Pepper* (London: Duckworth, 2008), 100-1. On page 168, Tomber notes other active sites in the Indian Ocean region which were thriving centres of Christianity, including Aila, Berenike, Aksum and Adulis.

[203] Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 5990, in *Theophanis. Chronographia*, vols 1 and 2, ed. C. de Boor, (New York: George Olms Hildesheim, 1980), 141. English trans. in C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-613* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 216-7.

[204] P. Mayerson, 'The Island of *Iotabe* in the Byzantine Sources: A Reprise', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 287 (1992), 1-3. There are other cities in the Gulf of Aqaba with strong evidence of Roman trading links. One example is the city of Aila where amphorae from Gaza and Egypt and fineware from all over the Mediterranean have been found. Amphorae from Aila have also been located in various Red Sea, Arabian Sea and Byzantine-Mediterranean ports. See Power, *Red Sea*, 28-30 and Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 161-8.

[205] Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 161-70; Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 7-8, 12, and 21.

[206] Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 165-7.

[207] Sidebotham, *Archaeological Evidence*, 310 and 317; Power, *Red Sea*, 38-40 and 45-6.

centuries.[208] Several Late Antique authors also recorded accounts of their own voyages to India and other nearby regions.[209] These texts remind us that commercial contacts also had a human side; ongoing human contacts and interactions accompanied those of a commercial nature.

Clearly, eastern Roman sailors and merchants were moving throughout a vast maritime network during this period. This network gave them access to different ports, introduced them to various customs, cultures and religions, and encouraged fraternisation with their contemporaries (Roman and non-Roman alike). At the same time, 'foreign' traders could also be found in eastern Roman ports.[210] Throughout Late Antiquity, the influence of the eastern Roman empire steadily increased, and this opened up maritime networks and routes in the East that had previously been far less accessible.[211] Regional networks of maritime commerce began to connect and overlap with one another, creating a global maritime network that extended well beyond the confines of the Mediterranean.[212] The ports and cities within this vast network came to have both a regional and global significance.[213] Dark stresses that the contacts enabled by maritime networks were not only commercial and diplomatic, but also cultural and religious.[214] The sailors and merchants who were an integral part of this extensive system became exposed to an array of cultural and religious ideas, and were themselves of differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds.[215] To simply assume that all of these men were Egyptian or Syrian would be to lose sense of the true diversity and cosmopolitan nature of the maritime community.

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[208] Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 64-5 and 164-7.

[209] As previously noted, Cosmas Indicopleustes and the author of the *Expositio Totius Mundi Et Gentium* both mention trading with India. Also see J.D.M. Derrett, 'The Theban Scholasticus and Malabar in c. 355-60', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 82, 1 (1962), 21-31.

[210] Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 153. Tomber highlights the presence of graffiti in Roman ports that clearly demonstrates the presence of non-Roman traders and sailors.

[211] Power, *Red Sea*, 20-1 and 41.

[212] See K.R. Dark, 'Globalizing Late Antiquity: Models, Metaphors and the Realities of Long-Distance Trade and Diplomacy', in *Incipient Globalization? Long-Distance Contacts in the Sixth Century*, ed. A. Harris (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 3-14 (especially 4-9). Dark provides an excellent discussion of the 'globalizing' impacts of long-distance trade, travel and communication during Late Antiquity.

[213] Power, *Red Sea*, 58-9; Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 17.

[214] Dark, *Globalizing Late Antiquity*, 8.

[215] Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 152. Tomber notes that, in reference to Roman traders in Indian Ocean regions, she uses the term 'Roman' as 'an umbrella term for different ethnic groups who resided within the Empire'.

Summary

The overall character of the maritime community, the nature of life at sea, and the manner in which shipboard micro-societies functioned were all factors influencing the way that sailors and merchants interacted with, and integrated into, general society whenever they were in port. Members of maritime society belonged to a variety of social classes and hailed from different regions and backgrounds. Despite their differences, mariners had collective interests and concerns when they were at sea. They could not help but carry their mindset, sense of solidarity, and distinctive maritime sub-culture with them when they disembarked from their vessels. The ships servicing the *annona* and those involved in high commerce have dominated our sources and coloured our perception of the men involved in maritime commerce during Late Antiquity. Yet we should be aware that the state-sponsored vessels of the *annona*, and the Alexandrians on them, were not the only ships, sailors and merchants plying the seas. Maritime trade in this period was decidedly global in nature. Harbours and port cities acted as cosmopolitan centres where mariners of different cultures, origins and backgrounds intermingled. These mariners were an integral component of coastal cities, even if our sources have relegated them to the fringes of society.

Chapter 3. Perception Versus Reality: The Maritime Community of Outsiders

Introduction

The various opinions and perceptions of the maritime community held by their contemporaries are examined in this chapter. No matter how impartial a source may intend or claim to be, traces of the author's perception, bias, or agenda generally remain. Yet this is no reason to discount these sources. Contemporary and cultural perceptions of mariners are crucial to our understanding of their role in the wider community, and their overall impact on everyday life and society. Sailors and merchants were generally seen as outsiders. This had a direct impact on how they were treated and recorded in their own time, and on the manner in which they have been remembered for posterity. Indeed, the maritime element of society and its sub-culture have been all but ignored in modern scholarship. This chapter attempts to utilise, and ultimately penetrate, the contemporary and cultural bias regarding sailors, sea-merchants and other members of the maritime realm, in order to demonstrate that they were more commonplace, and thus more influential, than the sources would have us believe.[1]

Greedy, Corrupt Merchants and Rowdy, Thieving Sailors: Traditional Literary Topoi?

In the late fourth century, Ambrose of Milan made his views on merchants and maritime commerce very clear:

> God did not make the sea to be sailed over … The sea is given to supply you with fish to eat, not for you to endanger yourself upon it; use it for purposes of food, not for purposes of commerce. But how insatiable is the greed of merchants! The sea itself gives way to them, the ocean cannot endure their restlessness. The element is wearied with the merchants who plough their paths across it, to and fro,

[1] An article based on this thesis chapter has been published by the author. See Wade, *Lock Up Your Valuables*, 47-75.

> continually. The waves themselves are not so restless as these men; the winds themselves are not so violent as their desires. The winds have periods of rest, but the merchants' lust for gain is never given a holiday. The storm at times is still, but the merchants' voyagings never cease.[2]

Ambrose's words reflect a traditional literary topos that had existed for centuries; one that painted merchants and traders as greedy and dishonest. In his *progymnasmata,* Libanius made use of this traditional formula as well. He says avarice draws men to the sea and that, quite simply, seafaring corrupts men.[3] In his didactic text, Libanius also highlights another literary motif regarding mariners and seafaring; the corrupting powers of the sea could lead not only to greed, but to laziness and dissipation.[4]

These passages from Ambrose and Libanius are but two examples of the many works that utilise traditional literary topoi regarding sea-merchants and sailors. Bishop Fulgentius of Africa, writing in the late fifth or early sixth centuries, provides us with a more positive view of sailors and merchants. In one of his sermons, Fulgentius exclaims:

> O how lovely the beach looks when it's filled with merchandise and it bustles with businessmen! Bundles of different clothing are pulled from the ships, countless people delight at the sailors' cheerful singing, and the rich man dances in the sand.[5]

Fulgentius' words are certainly more optimistic than those of Ambrose or Libanius; however, it is not as contrasting an opinion as it might seem. Here, Fulgentius highlights the products that maritime trade made available to the inhabitants of cities

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[2] Ambrose, *De Elia* 19.70-1 (*PL* 14.722-23). English trans. by H. Dudden in Meijer and van Nijf, *Trade, Transport and Society*, 20.

[3] Libanius, *Progymnasmata, Comparationes* 4.2 and 4.6 (Gibson, 342-3): 'ναυτιλίαν δὲ καὶ τὸ πλεῖν εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸν βίον ἡ πλεονεξια. τὸ γὰρ δὴ πλεῖν αὐτοὺς ἔρως τοῦ πλείονος ἠνάγκαζε καὶ τοῦ τολμᾶν' (4.2) and 'ναυτιλία δὲ ἀδίκους' (4.6).

[4] Libanius, *Progymnasmata, Comparationes* 4.9 (Gibson, 344): 'πλωτῆρες δὲ τὰ πολλὰ ἀργοὶ κεῖνται, τοῦτο μὲν χειμῶνος καὶ πάλιν ἐν καπηλείοις καὶ καπνῷ, τοῦτο δὲ θέρους, ἡνικα ἂν εὐτυχῶσιν. ἤν γὰρ ἐξ οὐρίων φέρωνται, κάθηνται ἐπὶ τῶν καταστρωμάτων πίνοντες συνεχῶς καὶ ἐσθίοντες ἔξω τοῦ μετρίου'.

[5] Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Sermon* 38 (*PL* 65.901). English trans. in McCormick, *Origins*, 84.

and towns. This was one of the most favourable aspects of maritime commerce and its benefits were indisputable during this period. Even Libanius, in seemingly stark contrast to his earlier view of seafarers as corrupt and dissolute, enthuses over the goods brought into Antioch as a result of maritime trade.[6] Yet Fulgentius also points to the wealth that merchants acquired from seaborne trade, and the picture he paints is one of rich merchants dancing and rubbing their hands together in greed. The genre of literature in which authors like Libanius and Fulgentius were writing influenced the extent to which they adhered to traditional literary topoi. However, appreciation of the benefits of maritime trade does not equate to respect for the men involved in that trade, regardless of genre. Libanius says the reason that merchants flocked to the port of Antioch was that they could quickly and easily sell their goods there.[7] Like Fulgentius, Libanius highlights that merchants were most interested in making a profit.

Writers may have adhered to well established literary themes when discussing sailors and sea-merchants, yet there is no reason to believe that they, and their contemporaries, did not actually think of seafarers in these ways. A writer's choice to use literary topoi informs us of popular, contemporary perceptions and attitudes towards the sea, sailors and sea-merchants. Purcell notes that, throughout history, people have always had 'the strongest of opinions about the sea'.[8] This is also true of the men who lived, worked and regularly travelled over it. Intense and often emotional responses to the sea and seafarers provide insight into popular thought and cultural history, and should not always be seen as mere literary formulae.[9] Such perceptions may have been strongly influenced by long cultural traditions, but this in itself made them more steadfast. The literary constructions used by many of our sources actually record the non-mariner's experience with, and perception of, the maritime world. They document the alienation of the seafaring community from the

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[6] Libanius, *Or.* 11.260-5 (Foerster, 529-32). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 61-2.

[7] Libanius, *Or.* 11.264 (Foerster, 531). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 62: 'τοιγαροῦν ἅπασα πανταχόθεν ὁλκὰς ἀνάγεται τὰ πανταχόθεν ἄγουσα, Λιβύης, Εὐρώπης, Ἀσίας, νήσων, ἠπείρων, καὶ τῶν ἑκασταχοῦ καλλίστων τὸ κάλλιστον δεῦρο κομίζεται τῆς εἰς τὴν πρᾶσιν ὀξύτητος γνώμας ἐμπόρων δεῦρο καλούσης καὶ γῆν ἅπασαν δι᾽αὐτῆς καρπούμεθα.'

[8] Purcell, *Tide, Beach, and Backwash*, 91.

[9] Purcell, *Tide, Beach, and Backwash*, 93.

general population, and highlight the threats that both the sea and seafarers were seen to pose to contemporary society.

Many writers considered merchants and other mariners as a threat to morality. In fact, there were those who saw the commercial activities of these men as an affront to the gods. According to Libanius, merchants sailed into cities everywhere, acquiring wealth by showing contempt for the gods, giving false oaths, and deliberately deceiving and misleading.[10] Pitarakis' research shows that, in this period, many people considered marketplaces the 'privileged residence of demons'.[11] The idea that merchants consorted with demons and were disrespectful toward the gods was not a new one. Indeed, one of the patron deities of merchants was Mercury (or Hermes), a god associated with deceit and guile.[12] Mercury continued to be favoured in the Late Antique period. Several sources mention Christians and non-Christians who could not refrain from calling on him for help, both on land and at sea.[13] Many of Libanius' Christian contemporaries also saw the activities of merchants as morally objectionable and contemptuous toward their god. Bishop Valerian of Cimiez, for example, talks of all mariners as perfidious men out to make their fortune, and suggests that no sailor would ever have set foot on a ship if not for greed.[14] Similarly, Gregory of Nazianzus warns of the unhealthy love of riches that made navigators brave the wintry seas.[15] Ambrose clearly believed that merchants and sailors were not using the sea for the purposes that his god intended; a sentiment echoed by John Chrysostom.[16] Christian bishops also sermonised on the commercial activities that regularly accompanied the celebrations of saints' and

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[10] Libanius, *Progymnasmata, Comparationes* 4.7 (Gibson, 344-5): 'τοῖς δέ γε ἐμπόροις ἐν ταῖς ἐπιορκίαις τὰ ὄντα αὔξεται καὶ ἡ τέχνη πρὸς τὸ πλουτεῖν τὸ καταφρονεῖν τῶν θεῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν πόλιν πλέουσι τοῦτο τὸ κακὸν ἐργαζόμενοι, ψευδόμενοι, παράγοντες, παρακρουόμενοι'.

[11] Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 211.

[12] Mercury was also the god of Roman fishermen, see T.H. Corcoran, 'Roman Fishermen', *The Classical World,* 56, 4 (1963), 102.

[13] Gregory of Tours, *Vitae patrum* 17.5 (*PL* 71.1083); Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 62.7, in S. Benko, *The Virgin Goddess. Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 37. Augustine says that his parishioners called on Mercury and other gods in times of need.

[14] Valerian of Cimiez, *Homilia* 20.7 (*PL* 52.754).

[15] *Anth. Gr.* 8.209 (Paton, 2.490-1): 'χρυσὸς ἄπληστον κύμασι χειμερίοις ὤλεσε ναυσιβάτην·'.

[16] Regarding Ambrose, refer to Chapter 3, footnote 2; For an example of John Chrysostom's sentiments, see *Homily in Epistolam ad Philippenses* 5 (*PG* 62.262): '"Εδωκέ σοι θάλατταν, ἵνα πλέῃς, ἵνα μὴ κάμνῃς ὁδοιπορῶν, οὐχ ἵνα περιεργάζῃ αὐτῆς τα βάθη, καὶ λίθους καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα ἐκεῖθεν ἀναφέρῃς, οὐδ'ἵνα ἔργου τοῦτο ποιῇ.'

martyrs' feast days, remonstrating that the pursuit of profit was incompatible with the religious sentiment of these events.[17]

It would seem that Late Antique clergymen tried to instill a sense of disdain for commerce and its profits in their congregations—lecturing as they did on the moral dangers of trade and the duplicity and corruption of those involved in it.[18] Many extant sermons showcase the oratorical skills of the preachers who gave them. In discussing merchants, sailors and commerce in general, they adhere to literary conventions and traditions, and are often full of dramatisation and exaggeration. This was clearly a subject that many preachers felt strongly about. Yet the Christian Church's view on maritime trade could be inconsistent. Some of the same men who voiced their opinions on the evils of commerce also saw its benefits; in particular, that maritime trade supplied cities with many of the necessities of life. In the fourth Homily of his *Hexameron*, Basil of Caesarea notes the virtues of the sea and, in doing so, praises the flow of information and products that moved across it by means of merchants and other mariners.[19] Ambrose too, in his similar treatise on creation, highlights the merits of the sea as the means by which goods and people could be moved long distances.[20] Of course, many Christian writers were actually highlighting the virtues of the sea because they saw it as God's creation. Theodoret of Cyrus, for example, writes of the sea, rivers and natural springs as proof of God's providence.[21] Thus, these men could appreciate the beauty and value of the sea, whilst still condemning those who used it for their own personal profit.

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[17] See J. Leemans, W. Mayer, P. Allen and B. Dehandschutter, *'Let Us Die That We May Live'. Greek Homilies on Christian Martyrs from Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria (c. AD 350-AD 450)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 19 for a discussion with examples.

[18] See McCormick, *Origins*, 12 and 84-5 for a discussion of Christian clergymen who lectured against the greed of merchants.

[19] Basil, *Hexameron*, *Hom.* 4.7 (*PG* 29.93-4): 'Καλὴ δὲ καὶ ἄλλως παρὰ Θεῷ, ὅτι περισφίγγει τὰς νήσους, ὁμοῦ μὲν κόσμον αὐταῖς, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ ἀσφάλειαν παρεχομένη δι᾽ἑαυτης; ἔπειτα καὶ ὅτι τὰς πλεῖστον ἀλλήλων διεστώσας ἠπείρους συνάπτει δι᾽ἑαυτῆς, ἀκώλυτον τοῖς ναυτιλλομένοις τὴν ἐπιμιξίαν παρεχομένη; δι᾽ὧν καὶ ἱστορίας τῶν ἀγνοουμένων χαρίζεται, καὶ πλούτου πρόξενος ἐμπόροις γίνεται, καὶ τὰς τοῦ βίου χρείας ἐπανορθοῦται ῥᾳδίως, ἐξαγωγὴν μὲν των περιττῶν τοῖς εὐθηνουμένοις παρεχομένη, ἐπανόρθωσιν δὲ τοῦ λείποντος χαριζομένη τοῖς ἐνδεέσι.'

[20] Ambrose, *Hexameron* 3.5.22 (*PL* 14.165): 'Bonum igitur mare ... invectio commeatuum, quo sibi distantes populi copulantur ... subsidium in necessitatibus ... separatorum conjunctio, itineris compendium, transfugium laborautium …'. Augustine also talks of mariners as aides to God. See Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.30 (*PL* 34.57): '… quae ministerium quoddam exhibent operanti Deo, sicut ... gubernatio'.

[21] Theodoret, *De Providentia, Or.* 2 (*PG* 83.575-88).

Priests who were involved in trade seem to have been largely frowned upon by the Church (unless their profits were used for charitable purposes). There is legislation banning clerics from engaging in any form of commerce.[22] There are, however, instances of clerics who were heavily involved in maritime trade; John the Almsgiver—and the Church of Alexandria as a whole when he was its patriarch—is a prominent and well-known example.[23] This shows that the evils of maritime commerce, and the Church's involvement in it, were not matters on which all ecclesiastics agreed. It was also forbidden for members of the Christian clergy to finance maritime loans. Yet, as Oikonomides points out, the Church 'prohibited this practice by ecclesiastics with such insistence that one is forced to raise questions'.[24] Likewise, the fact that some priests and bishops felt the need to reiterate and overstate the greed and corruption of traders and trading activities also raises questions. The message that these preachers were trying to deliver must have been falling on deaf ears; clerics and parishioners alike remained heavily involved in commerce and the pursuit of profit, despite the Church's best efforts to discourage this.[25] There was also very little that preachers could do to stop the everyday interactions between their parishioners, merchants and other mariners—particularly in trading centres and at markets and fairs. The positive disposition of some in the clergy towards maritime trading activities does not change the fact that the Christian Church, as a rule, looked unfavourably on commerce; or rather, on the moral dangers of commerce. Indeed, the majority of the extant homilies suggest that there

[22] An example is *Nov. Val.* 35.4 (*CJR* 2.143). This novel from 452 states that clerics were not to engage in trade, and if they did, they were subject to the civil laws. They also lost their clerical privileges.

[23] See Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 36-7 and 291-2 for evidence of the involvement of the Church of Alexandria and Egyptian monasteries and clergy in river-borne trade of the *annona*. See M.M. Mango, 'Beyond the Amphora: Non-Ceramic Evidence for Late Antique Industry and Trade', in Decker and Kingsley, *Economy and Exchange*, 87-106 for a thorough discussion of the extensive trading interests of the Church throughout the Mediterranean by the seventh century.

[24] Oikonomides, *Entrepreneurs*, 149.

[25] For the vast wealth accumulated by many merchants associated with the Church, see D. Pieri, 'Marchands orientaux dans l'économique occidentale de l'Antiquité tardive', in *Vivre, produire et échanger: reflets méditerranéens. Mélanges offerts à Bernard Liou*, Archéologie et Histoire Romaine 8, eds. L. Rivet and M. Sciallano (Montagnac: Editions Monique Mergoil, 2002), 123-32 and D. Pieri, *Le commerce du vin oriental à l'époque byzantine (V-VII siècles): le témoignage des amphores en Gaule*, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 174 (Beirut: Institute Français du Proche-Orient, 2005), 157-61.

were many ecclesiastics who viewed the pursuit of profit as entirely incompatible with their faith.[26]

The civil legislation from this period mentions the fraudulent practices of sea-merchants and sailors on several occasions. This suggests that the perception of them as greedy and dishonest was not just literary embellishment or fear-mongering by the clergy and elite. To an extent, the law codes reflect the preconceptions of imperial and ecclesiastical authorities, and elite society. Yet laws are not made, nor retained, unless they have some contemporary relevance and bear witness to actual practices of the day. As such, the legislation dealing with the dishonest activities of merchants and mariners must have had some basis in reality. A law recorded in the *Codex Theodosianus* from 417 refers to the fraudulent practices of shippers involved in the grain trade.[27] A number of laws relating to the transportation and storage of the *annona* demonstrate that this entire business was open to corruption by prefects and shippers alike.[28] Pairs of sculpted hands, located near granaries and marketplaces, acted as reminders to merchants who were tempted to cheat the imperial authorities. The authors of the *Parasteseis Syntomoi Chronikai* report that since the time of Valentinian there had been an official standard measure for grain (*modios*) in the marketplace of Constantinople. The sculpted 'hands' were placed near a grain measure to signify the part of the body that would be removed as punishment for falsifying the weight of grain being sold.[29] Fraudulent practice must

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[26] In practice, however, the acquisition of wealth by ecclesiastics continued, and this wealth was certainly not always used for charitable purposes. For a discussion of the concept of 'holy wealth', see K. Parry, '"What can the Pearl of a King do?" The Idea of Holy Wealth in Byzantium', in *Holy Wealth: Accounting for This World and The Next in Religious Belief and Practice. Festschrift for John R. Hinnells*, eds. A. Hintz and A. Williams (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 193-210. For the Christian debate about greed, profit and the accumulation of wealth, see P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle. Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550* AD (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[27] *Cod. Theo.* 14.4.9 (*CJR* 1.782).

[28] Examples include: *Cod. Theo.* 11.1.13 (*CJR* 1.573-4); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.36-8 (*CJR* 1.756-7); *Cod. Theo.* 13.7.1-2 (*CJR* 1.760); *Cod. Just.* 4.40.3-4 (*CJC* 2.178); *Cod. Just.* 11.2 (*CJC* 2.428); *Cod. Just.* 11.4 (*CJC* 2.429); and *Cod. Just.* 11.23.1 (*CJC* 2.434).

[29] *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 12, in *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, trans. and intro. J. Herrin and A. Cameron (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 72-5 and 188-9. The editors note that a pair of stone hands similar to those mentioned in the *Parastaseis* were located near the Forum of Theodosius in Constantinople; *Patria* 2.51 and 2.97 (trans. Berger, 84-7 and 118-21). See Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 410-11 and Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 217 for a discussion of grain measures and the sources which mention sculpted hands. Pitarakis also discusses the issues that arise when attempting to pinpoint the exact location/s of such sculptures and measures in Constantinople.

have been commonplace amongst private merchants in the marketplaces as well. Pitarakis' studies of apotropaic devices and symbols have led her to consider fraud as one of the chief concerns of those who frequented the market areas of large cities.[30]

One of the common accusations made of merchant shippers involved in the carriage of the *annona* was that they were abandoning their agreed shipping routes and destinations. Under the pretext of adverse weather conditions, these men were allegedly increasing their profits by offloading their goods and spending lengthy stays in remote ports.[31] Several of Theodoric's letters make the same complaint of western merchants.[32] This must have been a relatively common practice amongst merchant shippers involved in the carriage of goods for the state. That these men were considered untrustworthy in their dealings with the authorities is clearly demonstrated in the laws relating to the loss of cargo during storms or shipwreck events. In order to be compensated for their losses, shipmasters had to prove that their cargo or entire ship had been lost in a storm through no fault of their own.[33] Indeed, the presumption appears to have been guilt, rather than innocence. If the entire crew of a vessel perished along with their ship, the families of the shipmaster and sailors could even be interrogated in court.[34] This betrays an extreme reluctance on behalf of the authorities to compensate those affected by shipwreck or to believe that they were innocent of negligence or fraud. It became necessary for legislation in *Rhodian Sea Law* to specify that vessels could be wrecked as the result of the negligence of a captain, crew or merchant, but also through events that were out of their control, such as storm, fire or piracy.[35] For the authorities to have such a deep distrust of mariners, there must have been a sufficient number of them who were

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[30] Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 400 and 416-26.

[31] *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.33 (*CJR* 1.755); *Cod. Just.* 4.40.3 (*CJC* 2.178); *Cod. Just.* 11.2.5-6 (*CJC* 2.428).

[32] Cassiod. *Variae* 1.35 (*MGH* 12.33-4) and 5.35 (*MGH* 12.162-3).

[33] *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.1-6 (*CJR* 1.760-3) = *Cod. Just.* 11.5.2-3, 5-6 (*CJC* 2.429-30). These laws date from 372 to 412 and they were proclaimed throughout the empire (Beirut, Africa, Trier, Constantinople, Milan and Ravenna).In regards to the torture of sailors as witnesses, refer to *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.2 (*CJR* 1.761): 'Si quando causatio est de impetu procellarum, medium ex his nautis numerum navicularius exhibeat quaestioni, quos eum in navi pro modo capacitatis constat habuisse, quo eorum tormentis plenior veritas possit inquiri'.

[34] *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.3.1 (*CJR* 1.761) = *Cod. Just.* 11.5.3 (*CJC* 2.429).

[35] *RSL* 3.10 (Ashburner, 17-8 and 91), 3.27-8 (Ashburner, 27-8 and 105-7), and 3.38 (Ashburner, 32-3 and 112).

acting dishonestly in their dealings with the state, including defaulting on contracts, and using shipwreck events as an excuse for doing so.

Contracts with imperial and administrative authorities were not the only agreements that men involved in maritime trade had trouble keeping. Several chapters in *Rhodian Sea Law* deal with breaches of contract by sea-merchants and captains. One of these laws stresses that goods or money should only be deposited with a trustworthy man, and always in front of witnesses, to avoid being swindled.[36] Other maritime laws suggest that captains were prone to acting wrongfully in their dealings with the merchants hiring their ships.[37] Books 4, 14 and 47 of Justinian's *Digesta* are devoted to actions that could be taken against unscrupulous shipowners, captains and sailors.[38] It would seem that there was a strong possibility of being defrauded by a captain or merchant, unless those using their services chose the ship they boarded carefully and kept their wits about them. Yet if captains and merchants had written more about themselves, our impression of their business ethics might be more nuanced. Amongst the members of the trading community itself, a good reputation would have been an asset. A good name would have circulated through the community by word of mouth almost as quickly as a bad one.[39]

Several edicts and laws from this period deal with the black market trade and other illicit activities of men involved in maritime commerce. These activities include the transport and exchange of counterfeit money on ships,[40] general trade in illicit goods,[41] the black market trade of goods in order to avoid state taxes and other payments,[42] and a range of other activities considered detrimental to the public welfare or state purse.[43] A serious allegation made of traders and sailors was the

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[36] *RSL* 3.12 (Ashburner, 19 and 93).
[37] *RSL* 3.18-9 (Ashburner, 22-3 and 97-8).
[38] *Dig.* 4.9.1 (*CJC* 1.101); *Dig.* 14.1 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *Dig.* 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825).
[39] See T.T. Terpstra, *Trading Communities in the Roman World. A Micro-Economic and Institutional Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 23-6 for a discussion of the importance of maintaining a good reputation amongst fellow traders, particularly within trading communities.
[40] *Cod. Theo.* 9.23 (*CJR* 1.475).
[41] One example is *Cod. Theo. 7*.16.3 (*CJR* 1.343).
[42] Examples include *Nov. Val.* 24 (*CJR* 2.117-8); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.33 (*CJR* 1.755) = *Cod. Just.* 11.2.5 (*CJC* 2.428).
[43] Examples include *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.34 (*CJR* 1.756); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.26 (*CJR* 1.753); *Cod. Just.* 11.2.2 (*CJC* 2.428); *Cod. Just.* 4.40.2-4 (*CJC* 2.178).

furnishing of non-Romans, often the enemy, with all manner of goods—including gold, food and wine. Sea-merchants could avoid taxes in this way, but it would have been a lucrative trade in its own right. Depending on a man's status, he could be punished for this crime either by the loss of his cargo and possessions, his freedom or his life.[44] A sixth-century Novel of Justinian sums up the overall view of traders and sailors in the legislation. It states:

> … in spite of the punishment inflicted by our Lord God, persons engaged in trade … and sailors, when they should lead better lives, have devoted themselves to the acquisition of gain ...[45]

In the eyes of the law, it would certainly seem that sailors, shippers, and merchants were avaricious and unscrupulous men.

Nevertheless, sailors and sea-merchants could themselves be the targets of greed and fraudulent activity. In regards to shipmasters servicing the state, laws warn against the bribery, extortion or hindrance of these men whenever they were in port, and there were harsh penalties for those found guilty of doing so.[46] A law promulgated in Constantinople in 420 states the necessity for private shipmasters and merchants to declare the destination of their ships and goods, and to officially register that they had not suffered any violence or extortion whilst at port.[47] Another law in the *Codex Theodosianus* mentions that officials in Constantinople had been mistreating and extorting money from merchants without the knowledge of the city

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[44] *Cod. Just.* 4.41 (*CJC* 2.178-9); *Cod. Just.* 4.63.2 and 4.63.6 (*CJC* 2.188); *Const. Leo* 63 (trans. Scott, *Civil Law*, 17.260-1). In the Constitution of Leo, it is considered highly likely that the sailors on a merchant ship were the ones responsible for illegal trading activity.

[45] *Nov. Just.* 122 (*CJC* 3.592). English trans. in Scott, *Civil Law*, 17.80. These men were all demanding higher wages: '"Εγνωμεν ὡς μετὰ τὴν παίδευσιν τὴν κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν τοῦ δεσπότου θεοῦ γενομένην οἱ τὰς πραγματείας καὶ τὰς μεθοδείας μετερχόμενοι καὶ οἱ διαφόρων τεχνῶν καὶ οἱ περὶ τὴν γῆν ἐργάται, ἔτι γε μὴν καὶ οἱ ναῦται, ὀφείλοντες μᾶλλον καλλίονες γενέσθαι, εἰς πλεονεξίαν δεδώκασι, καὶ διπλασίονας καὶ τριπλασίονας τιμάς τε καὶ μισθοὺς παρὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν συνήθειαν ἐπιζητοῦσι.'.

[46] Examples include *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.5 (*CJR* 1.748); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.9 (*CJR* 1.749); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.17 (*CJR* 1.752); *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.29-31 (*CJR* 1.754-5); *Dig.* 48.12.2.1 (*CJC* 1.858).

[47] *Cod. Theo.* 7.16.3 (*CJR* 1.343): '... et quaecumque naves ex quolibet portu seu litore dimittuntur, nullam concussionem vel damna sustineant. gestis apud defensorem locorum praesente protectore seu duciano, qui dispositus est, sub hac observatione confectis, ut, et ad quas partes navigaturi sunt et quod nullam concussionem pertulerunt, apud acta deponant: quorum authenticum nauclerus sive mercator habebit scheda apud defensorem manente.'

prefect.[48] There is also legislation recording the corruption of agents sent from Constantinople to coastal districts and provincial ports. These men were stealing goods and intimidating shippers and others involved in the transport and storage of imperial supplies.[49] Likewise, Cassiodorus claims that some customs and harbour officials were corrupt. He warns these officials; 'Do not grasp at more than the lawful dues; for the greedy hand closes a harbour, and extortion is as much dreaded by mariners as adverse winds'.[50]

The other popular topos regarding the maritime crowd, particularly common sailors, was that they were rowdy troublemakers; lazy and feckless men who were prone to disorderly behaviour. Again, a perusal of the civil and maritime legislation suggests that there was some truth to this stereotype. According to the laws, theft, fighting and a general lack of discipline were common problems in the maritime community. Theft appears to have been rife on ships and in the types of leisure establishments patronised by seafarers. Robberies were committed by sailors, ship captains and shipowners—both individually and as groups.[51] John Moschus records an interesting anecdote of a gem-cutter who found passage on a sailing vessel. The crew learned of the man's valuable cargo, and plotted together to throw him overboard and steal his gems.[52] This story reflects the deeply entrenched view of sailors as unprincipled rogues and petty thieves.

Laws strongly encouraged passengers and merchants to deposit their valuables with the captain of a ship, otherwise they were considered legally responsible for any loss of goods themselves.[53] On the well-documented Yassi Ada shipwreck, coins and other valuables were found stored together, suggesting that these items had been

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[48] *Cod. Theo.* 1.10.4 (*CJR* 1.45): '... Comperimus inconsulto praefecto urbis ac penitus ignorante raptos ad supplicium mercatores corporalibus affectos iniuriis, gravis insuper multae acerbitate nudatos.'

[49] *Cod. Theo.* 6.29.8-12 (*CJR* 1.292-4).

[50] Cassiod. *Variae* 7.9 (*MGH* 12.208): '... Tu copiam facis, dum ingredientes iuste tractaveris. avara manus portum claudit et cum digitos attrahit, navium simul vela concludit. merito enim illa mercatores cuncti refugiunt, quae sibi dispendiosa esse cognoscunt. quapropter adversus ibi ventus est immoderata praesumptio: nam placidum mare damnat, qui undas cupiditatis exaggerat'. English trans. in T. Hodgkin, *The Letters of Cassiodorus* (London: Henry Frowde, 1886), 327.

[51] Examples include *Dig.* 4.9 (*CJC* 1.101-2); *Dig.* 14.1 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *Dig.* 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825); *RSL* 3.1-3, 3.8, 3.13, 3.18, and 3.48 (Ashburner, 10-12, 15, 20, 23, 37-8, 77-86, 94, 97, and 124).

[52] John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* 203 (*PG* 87/3.3093-4).

[53] *RSL* 2.14-15 (Ashburner, 3 and 62-3); *RSL* 3.13 (Ashburner, 19-20 and 94).

entrusted to the ship's captain or a designated member of the crew.[54] Yet even this measure did not ensure the security of passenger or merchant goods. One sea law deals with the situation where a captain might rob merchants or passengers who had deposited their valuables with him, denying receipt of the goods.[55] Other laws refer to men in positions of authority on ships who directed their crews to steal from merchants, passengers and even other vessels.[56] *Digesta* 4.9.1.1 relates to valuables entrusted to sailors, and stresses that sailors had a tendency to commit theft and to conspire with other thieves.[57] When a robbery occurred on a ship, the captain, sailors and passengers had to swear on oath that they had not been involved.[58]

It is clear from all of this legislation that sailors as a whole were regarded as common thieves. This overall perception may well have reflected the preconceived notions of society in general; however, these laws also demonstrate that illicit activities like theft and fraud were relatively commonplace amongst the maritime crowd. The fact that there is an edict in *Digesta* that deals with sailors who had stolen property, only to then have it stolen from them, shows that theft was particularly prevalent in the maritime community.[59] According to Ashburner, the temptation to steal would have been too much for many sailors:

> … the merchant service was manned to a great extent by pirates who were getting too old for that honourable calling. There must always have been some danger that the temptation of a large booty would revive the habits of youth.[60]

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[54] Bass and van Doorninck Jr. *Yassi Ada*, 92.

[55] *RSL* 3.14 (Ashburner, 20 and 94-5): 'ἐάν τις δεξάμενος παραθήκην ἀρνήσηται αὐτὴν καὶ μαρτυρηθῇ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐὰν ἐν καιρῷ εὑρεθῇ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ὀμόσαντι ἢ ἐγγράφως ἀποταξαμένῳ, διπλῆν ταύτην ἀποδώσει, τῆς δὲ ἐπιορκίας τὴν τιμωρίαν ὑπομενέτω'.

[56] *RSL* 3.2-3 (Ashburner, 11-12 and 79-81); *RSL* 3.8 (Ashburner, 15 and 85-6).

[57] *Dig*. 4.9.1.1 (*CJC* 1.101). Also see the rest of *Dig*. 4.9.1 (*CJC* 1.101-2); *Dig*. 14.1 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *Dig*. 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825).

[58] *RSL* 2.15 (Ashburner, 3 and 62): 'ὁ ναύκληρος καὶ οἱ ἐπιβάται καὶ οἱ ναῦται ὁμοῦ ἐμπλέοντες ὅρκον εὐαγγελίων παρεχέτωσαν.'

[59] *Dig*. 4.9.4 (*CJC* 1.102): 'Sed et ipsi nautae furti actio competit, cuius sit periculo, nisi si ipse subripiat et postea ab eo subripiatur, aut alio subripiente ipse nauta solvendo non sit.'

[60] Ashburner, *RSL*, cclxii.

It is interesting to note that in several edicts of Justinian's *Digesta* that relate to the theft of property, the law lumps together shipmasters, tavern-keepers, inn-keepers and stable-owners. All of these proprietors are accused of choosing employees of unsatisfactory character.[61] The legal association of shipowners with these other proprietors suggests that it was the same calibre of person who gained employment with all of them. Inns, taverns and other places of public entertainment were considered places of ill repute, and sailors and merchants were no strangers to them when they were on shore. Their familiarity with leisure venues would certainly have enhanced their reputation as rowdy troublemakers.

In addition to theft and fraud, fighting and a general lack of discipline were real problems in the maritime community.[62] In *Rhodian Sea Law*, there are provisions for sailors and merchants who were injured or murdered by one of their fellow mariners during a fight. Many of these altercations were fist fights, but sailors also used weapons like axes and stones. Common injuries sustained in these brawls included blinding as a result of eye-gouging, and scrotal hernia caused by kicks to the groin.[63] In fact, many of the men who visited Saint Artemios at the Church of the Forerunner in Constantinople were seeking a cure for the latter condition. Although the professions of all of the men seeking cures from Artemios are unknown, there were definitely sailors, merchants, shipbuilders and dockworkers amongst them.[64] The hernias suffered by these men could have been the result of injury or infection, but it is certainly possible that some of these were injuries sustained in brawls at the docks, or in taverns and other places of ill repute.[65]

There is evidence of the involvement of sailors and other seafarers in violent episodes of civil and religious unrest in cities such as Constantinople and Alexandria. Sailors were clearly willing to become involved in altercations and disturbances when

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[61] See for example: *Dig.* 4.9.1 and 4.9.7 (*CJC* 1.101-2); *Dig.* 14.1 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *Dig.* 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825); Just. *Inst.* 4.5.3 (*CJC* 1.47).

[62] See for example: *RSL* 3.2-3 (Ashburner, 11-2 and 79-81); *RSL* 3.5-8 (Ashburner, 13-5 and 83-6); *Dig.* 4.9.4 and 4.9.7.2 (*CJC* 1.102); 14.1.1.2 (*CJC* 1.218).

[63] *RSL* 3.5-7 (Ashburner, 13-5 and 83-5).

[64] The following miracles all contain men working in maritime professions: *Miracles of St Artemios,* 5, 6, 9, 14, 27, 32, and 35 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 84-95, 102-3, 152-5, 164-75, and 184-9).

[65] Some hernias would have been caused by heavy lifting and other similar activities at the docks or on ships.

they were onshore, and their participation in religious disputes was often recorded with distaste by ecclesiastical historians. In fact, several writers use sailors and their ilk to discredit their ecclesiastical opponents. Palladius, for example, stresses the dishonour that came to John Chrysostom's opponent Theophilus of Alexandria when the only support he could muster in Constantinople were crowds of Alexandrian sailors who were in port.[66] It would seem that reputations were easily and irrevocably tarnished by association with the unsavoury characters of the maritime realm.[67]

Ships Loaded with a Cornucopia of Goods: Positive Perceptions of Sailors and Sea-Merchants?

Much of the evidence examined so far shows that contemporary sources were openly hostile, disdainful or at best mildly sympathetic towards sailors and sea-merchants throughout the period under study. Mariners were rarely portrayed in a favourable manner, even in the legislative sources. In fact, the legislation highlights that mariners as an entire group, and not just those of a more delinquent nature, were treated as second-rate citizens by the authorities.[68] But not all sailors and merchants were brawlers, thieves and swindlers who lied and cheated their way through life. Indeed, they may be infrequent in the sources, but positive references to seafarers do exist.

The raft of privileges and benefits that were granted to shippers involved in state-sponsored commerce might seem to suggest imperial partiality towards these men; however, the authorities had clear motives for providing such dispensations.[69] Rather than showing favouritism, these laws simply show how important maritime commerce was to the economy and the extent to which the state relied on the services of shippers and traders. Nevertheless, there are several laws that hint at a more promising attitude towards sailors and merchants. One example is a chapter

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[66] Palladius, *Dialogus* 8 (*PG* 47.26). Also see Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.15 (*PG* 67.707-12) for a record of the events. Similarly, the supporters of some of the key figures at the Council of Ephesus in 431 were used to discredit opponents. The Council of Ephesus is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
[67] The involvement of sailors and other mariners in disputes and riots is discussed in substantial detail in Chapter 6.
[68] The torture of sailors and sea-captains as witnesses is a good example. Refer to Chapter 2, footnotes 54-5, and Chapter 3, footnotes 33-34.
[69] Examples include all of *Cod. Theo.* 13.5 (*CJR* 1.747-57) and *Dig.* 50.6 (*CJC* 1.901-2).

in the maritime legislation dealing with the hiring of ships by merchants. The law highlights the need for merchants to be astute when choosing ships to carry their goods. Merchants are told to look for seaworthy ships manned by able seamen who were energetic, alert and smart.[70] The rest of the sea laws make it seem as though competent, dynamic sailors were few and far between; yet this particular law recognises their existence. Numerous civil laws place the onus on shipowners to appoint men of honest character on their ships, which suggests that there were competent, reputable sailors available.[71] It has already been mentioned that sailing was a skilled profession, and it was certainly recognised as such by some authors. Writers like Vegetius and Themistius—both writing for different purposes and in different genres—highlight the skill and fortitude possessed by professional sailors with a good reputation.[72]

Sailors, sea-merchants and seafaring activities in general are depicted in a relatively flattering light in poetry. Poets wrote about sailors and the seafaring life in a romantic fashion, utilising their knowledge of sailors and the maritime realm to enhance their literary renown. In the *Greek Anthology*, there are numerous epigrams from the fifth and sixth centuries relating to life and death at sea. Paulus Silentiarius provides an example in which he paints an idyllic picture of the sea and seafarers:

> Now the heart-entrancing spring in all the beauty of her meadows opens the closed folds of her bosom to the Zephyrs; now the ship slides down the wooden rollers, pulled from the beach into the deep. Go forth fearlessly, ye sailors, your sails strutting with the wind, to the gentle task of loading the merchandise ye gain by barter.[73]

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[70] *RSL* 3.11 (Ashburner, 18-9 and 92): '... ναύτας τοὺς ἀρκοῦντας ναυτικοὺς γοργοὺς γρηγοροῦντας ...'.

[71] Just. *Inst.* 4.5.3 (*CJC* 1.47); *Dig.* 4.9.1.3-4 and *Dig.* 4.9.7 (*CJC* 1.101-2); *Dig.* 14.1, 14.1.1.2, 14.1.1.5 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *Dig.* 47.5.1.5 (*CJC* 1.825).

[72] Refer to Chapter 2, footnotes 102-105. Also see Pryor, *Shipping and Seafaring*, 482-3.

[73] *Anth. Gr.* 10.15 (Paton, 4.10-13): '"Ηδη μὲν ζεφύροισι μεμυκότα κόλπον ἀνοίγει εἴαρος εὐλείμων θελξινόοιο χάρις· ἄρτι δὲ δουρατέοισιν ἐπωλίσθησε κυλίνδροις ὁλκὰς ἀπ' ἠϊόνων ἐς βυθὸν ἑλκομένη. λαίφεα κυρτώσαντες ἀταρβέες ἕξιτε, ναῦται, πρηὺν ἀμοιβαίης φόρτον ἐς ἐμπορίης. πιστὸς νηυσὶ Πρίηπος, ἐπεὶ Θέτιν εὔχομαι εἶναι ἡμετέρου πατρὸς ξεινοδόκον Βρομίου.' Other similar epigrams from this same period by men such as Agathias and Theaetetus Scholasticus include *Anth. Gr.* 10.14 (Paton, 4.10-1) and *Anth. Gr.* 10.16 (Paton, 4.12-3).

Poets may have romanticised sailing—as is apt for their chosen genre—yet many also adhered to traditional literary topoi regarding the sea and the men who sailed it. Julianus, writing in the sixth century, is a good example. He admonishes a merchant sailor as follows: 'It was not the sea which was thy end, and the gales, but insatiable love of that commerce which turned thee mad'.[74]

Poets of this period did observe classical literary traditions, yet they also highlighted several truths about the difficulty of sailing and the dangerous nature of the sea. Their view of sailors and merchants was far more sympathetic than many of their contemporaries who were writing in other genres. Poets portrayed sailors and merchants as simpler men with less guile, often hapless victims of the weather, Fortune, or other forces outside of their control.[75] They talk of the fear, hope, sea and storms that were a part of every sailor's life, and of the short lives many mariners were doomed to lead.[76] Poets of this period capture the superstitious nature of mariners—an inevitable outcome of their naturally imposed isolation at sea, and the tangible risks that they faced daily. Another of Cassiodorus' letters support this. The text describes the joy felt by seafarers sailing into large harbours, and their relief at having survived any long voyage at sea.[77] In their poetic manner, many verses and epigrams convey a sense of what it was that caused sailors and other mariners to be so different from—and so misunderstood by—their land-locked contemporaries.

Given the dangerous nature of sea travel, it would be fair to consider many mariners courageous. By all accounts, life at sea was not for the faint-hearted. Poets impress upon their readers that braving the elements was an inevitable part of a sailor's life; mariners could only pray to be spared the worst that the sea, winds and rocks were able to inflict upon them.[78] The depiction of sailors in poetry as courageous men

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[74] *Anth. Gr.* 7.586 (Paton, 2.314-5): 'Οὔτι σε πόντος ὄλεσσε καὶ οὐ πνείοντες ἀῆται, ἀλλ'ἀκόρητος ἔρως φοιτάδος ἐμπορίης'.

[75] Examples include: *Anth. Gr.* 6.70 (Paton, 1.336-7); *Anth. Gr.* 7.582 (Paton, 2.312-3); *Anth. Gr.* 7.584 (Paton, 2.312-3); *Anth. Gr.* 15.10 (Paton, 5.116-7).

[76] *Anth. Gr.* 6.70 (Paton, 1.336-7): 'πάντα δ' ἀπειπάμενος, φόβον, ἐλπίδα, πόντον, ἀέλλας, πιστὸν ὑπὲρ γαίης ἴχνιον ἠδρασάμην'; *Anth. Gr.* 7.650 (Paton, 2.346-7): 'φεῦγε θαλάσσια ἔργα, βοῶν δ' ἐπιβάλλευ ἐχέτλῃ, εἴ τί τοι ἡδὺ μακρῆς πείρατ' ἰδεῖν βιοτῆς; ἠπείρῳ γὰρ ἔνεστι μακρὸς βίος; εἰν ἁλὶ δ' οὔ πως εὐμαρὲς εἰς πολιὴν ἀνδρὸς ἰδεῖν κεφαλήν'.

[77] Cassiod. *Variae* 7.9 (*MGH* 12.208).

[78] Examples include: *Anth. Gr.* 6.70 (Paton, 1.336-7); *Anth. Gr.* 7.293 (2.159); *Anth. Gr.* 7.582 and 7.584 (2.312-3); *Anth. Gr.* 15.10 (5.116-7).

battling against the odds certainly enhances the romantic aspect of these works, but it is not only in poetry that we encounter brave and intrepid sailors. Histories also occasionally include stories of sailors who were both courageous and commendable. One such reference is in *Chronicon Paschale*, and it tells of a merchant sailor who happened to be at port in Constantinople during the Persian and Avar siege of 626. The sailor chose to help protect the city by using his ship against the enemy's siege towers. He was highly commended by city officials for doing so.[79] A similar episode is recorded by Agathias, regarding merchant sailors who were in the port of Phasis during the Lazic wars. These sailors allowed their ships to be used against the enemy, and Agathias says that the more courageous and adventurous of them also engaged in the fighting.[80]

On occasion, seafarers are also mentioned in a good light in church histories and hagiography—although, unsurprisingly, it is only Christian mariners who are portrayed as virtuous. This is exemplified in Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, where the author records a story of the Jewish people of Crete adopting Christianity. In this anecdote, Socrates writes of large numbers of Jews throwing themselves from a cliff, only to be saved by the Christian fishermen and merchants who happened to be in nearby waters.[81] Saints lives also mention good Christian men of the maritime community. The captain in the *Life of St Matrona*, who was charged with bringing a group of unchaperoned women to Constantinople from Berytus, is one such man. When the captain was asked 'to preserve them with all care and humility', he ensured that the female followers of Matrona were carried safely across the sea.[82] The merchants, sailors, shipowners, shipbuilders and dockworkers who were blessed with cures by Saint Artemios in Constantinople are also mostly depicted as hardworking and god-fearing men.[83] These sources demonstrate that worthy and respectable mariners existed throughout this period, although they usually only warranted mention if their behaviour was befitting of a Christian narrative.

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[79] *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 13, year 15 (Dindorf, 720). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, 174.
[80] Agathias, *Histories*, 3.21.3-5 (Keydell, 111). English trans. in Frendo, *Agathias*, 91.
[81] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.38 (*PG* 67.825-8).
[82] *Life of St. Matrona of Perge* 31, trans. J. Featherstone, in *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation,* ed. A-M. Talbot (Washington D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 2006), 47-8.
[83] Refer to Chapter 3, footnote 64.

In all these stories, the fact that mariners were Christian was enough for them to behave well and exhibit virtuous qualities. Yet, an episode in the *Life of Porphyry* highlights that being Christian was not always enough; one had to be orthodox in order to ensure God's favour. The notion of orthodox was, of course, dependent on the period in question, and the author of a hagiography or history. In the episode from Porphyry's life, Mark the Deacon records a voyage from Constantinople to Rhodes where their ship was hit by a powerful storm. According to the author, the storm promptly ended when the bishop converted the shipowner from his heretical Arian faith.[84] This is but one of several similar stories set on sailing vessels, where conversions at sea resulted in the cessation of storms. Although these types of accounts provide us with some positive perceptions of mariners, it should be remembered that they were written by partisan sources. If we are to believe these authors, the only virtuous members of the maritime community were orthodox Christian men. Regardless, there is still value in hagiographical accounts of maritime men. Mariners are often incidental to the main plot of these stories; they exist to provide a realistic, contemporary background to the tale as a whole. As such, there is no obvious reason to discredit the general impression we are given of them. The fact that conversions at sea were a relatively common theme in hagiography is interesting in itself. The sea was certainly used as an allegorical concept in ecclesiastical writing, but perhaps it was also an environment where contemporaries expected to find a good number of heathens.[85]

Sailors and sea-merchants are generally only recorded by chance or in order to provide ancillary information to a larger story or chronicle. It is remarkable how little the men of the maritime community are mentioned at all—particularly in

[84] Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry* 55-7 (Societas Philologae Bonnensis, 47-9); *Mark the Deacon, Life of St. Porphyry of Gaza*, trans. C. Rapp, in *Medieval Hagiography. An Anthology,* ed. T. Head (New York: Routledge, 2001), 68.

[85] For the maritime setting of many hagiographical scenes, refer to M.E. Mullett, 'In Peril on the Sea: Travel Genres and the Unexpected', in Macrides, *Travel in the Byzantine World*, 262-7. For the idea that hagiography records the continuing need to explain supernatural forces with non-Christian modes of explanation, see M. Dal Santo and P. Booth, 'Conclusion: An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity', in *An Age of Saints? Power, Conflict and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, eds. P. Sarris, M. Dal Santo, and P. Booth (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 210.

contemporary sources that talk of the beauty of the sea and the wonders of maritime trade. Procopius paints a picture of Constantinople as a tranquil trading city:

> Besides the city's other blessings the sea is set most beautifully all about it, forming curving bays, contracting into narrow straits, and spreading into a great open sea; and thus it makes the city exceptionally beautiful, and offers the quiet shelter of harbours to navigators, thereby abundantly providing the city with the necessities of life and making it rich in all useful things.[86]

He also describes various churches opening onto marketplaces or trading piers, giving the overall impression of Constantinople as an idyllic imperial city where commerce and religion existed harmoniously.[87] In the above passage, Procopius manages to accentuate the products of trade without mentioning merchants. The only sailors he notes are the skilled navigators who steered ships into harbour. In another passage, Procopius speaks of sailors conversing with those promenading onshore at a deepwater anchorage near the baths of Arcadius.[88] This is quite the picturesque scene, conjuring images of pleasant conversations between the leisured inhabitants of Constantinople and cultured sailors drifting past in their vessels. Yet this is unlikely to have been a common scene at the city's ports and anchorages; the region in which these baths were located housed the Great Palace and other royal or noble residences.[89] This was not a commercial or built-up area, and it is unlikely that the vessels using this anchorage were merchant ships manned by the average sailor. These sailing vessels, if not leisure craft, would have carried elite visitors to the city.

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[86] Procop. *Aed.* 1.5.2 (Dewing, 56-7): 'Πρὸς τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ἐν καλῷ τίθεται ἀμφ' αὐτὸ μάλιστα, ἐγκολπουμένη τε καὶ εἰς πορθμοὺς ξυναγομένη καὶ χεομένη ἐς πέλαγος μέγα, ταύτῃ τε τὴν πόλιν εὐπρόσωπόν τε διαφερόντων ἐργαζομένη καὶ σκέπας λιμένων ἡσύχιον τοῖς ναυτιλλομένοις παρεχομένη, τά τε εἰς τὴν δίαιταν εὔπορον καὶ τὰ ἐς τὴν χρείαν εὐδαίμονα.'

[87] Procop. *Aed.* 1.4.25-8 (Dewing, 54-5); 1.8.1-14 (Dewing, 68-73); and 1.11.18-22 (Dewing, 92-5).

[88] Procop. *Aed.* 1.11.1-4 (Dewing, 86-9): 'ταύτην ἡ θάλασσα περιρρεῖ ἀτρεμὴς ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ περιχεομένη τῷ ῥείθρῳ, ποταμοῦ τρόπον ἐκ Πόντου ἰοῦσα; ὥστε καὶ προσδιαλέγονται τοῖς περιπλέουσιν οἱ τοὺς περιπάτους ποιούμενοι. ἡ γὰρ θάλασσα κατατείνουσα μὲν ἐς ἄβυσσον μέχρι ἐς τῆς αὐλῆς τὴν κρηπῖδα πλώιμος ἐνταῦθα ταῖς ναυσὶ γίνεται, τῆς δὲ γαλήνης τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι τοὺς ἑκατέρωθι ὄντας ἐπιμίγνυσιν ἐς τοὺς διαλόγους ἀλλήλοις.'

[89] *Notitia* 230 (Matthews, 86-7). Also see Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 210. Magdalino notes that the harbours of the Bosporan shoreline seem to only have serviced the great imperial and religious houses.

Procopius' *Buildings* provides an official picture of Constantinople as a trading city, with no mention of any of the drawbacks of a large, international entrepôt or its ignominious maritime leisure culture. Likewise, in Libanius' oration on Antioch, he describes the river, lake and sea ports in glowing terms.[90] Libanius manages to highlight the abundant maritime and river-borne trade enjoyed by the city, whilst almost entirely omitting the involvement of sailors, traders and dockworkers. It is as if the products of trade were transported and unloaded at the city's docks without their intervention:

> ... the river acts as host for the convoy of lake-borne goods as well as of its own, and brings them into the centre of the city, setting down the freight at everyone's doorstep for women and children to clear the cargo.[91]

Contrast this with Libanius' description of maritime trading cities other than his own:

> There are those who take joy in their power to gaze over the surface of the sea, to see the merchant ships plying their trade and to hear the bosun's orders. Yet it is responsible for as much sorrow as joy … The greatest cause of misfortune is that a seaport town must necessarily be full of nautical vulgarity, base clamour, ribald cries and all the rest which can defile and destroy the morals of towns. It will receive sailors who put in from abroad, and will itself have its complement of sailors. Then, the defect of the part spreads throughout the whole population.[92]

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[90] Libanius, *Or.* 11.260-5 (Foerster, 529-32). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 61-2.

[91] Libanius, *Or.* 11.261 (Foerster, 529-30). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 61: '… ἔπειτα ἀντ' ἀμφοῖν ὁ ποταμὸς καθίσταται μετὰ τῶν οἰκείων τὴν διὰ τῆς λίμνης πομπὴν δεχόμενός τε καὶ φέρων εἰς μέσην τὴν πόλιν καὶ πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν ἑκάστοις τὰ φορτία ποιῶν; ὥστε γυναιξὶ καὶ παισὶν ἐξαιρεῖσθαι τὸν γόμον ἐξεῖναι.'

[92] Libanius, *Or.* 11.37-8 (Foerster, 448-9). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 14: 'ἔπειθ' οἷς δοκεῖ πρὸς εὐφροσύνην τελεῖν τὸ βλέπειν ἐξεῖναι πρὸς νῶτα θαλάσσης καὶ φερομένας ὁλκάδας καὶ κελευσμάτων ἀκούειν, τοῦτο οὐ πλείους εὐφροσύνας ἤ δυσθυμίας προξενεῖ, ὅταν ἐλαυνόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων τὸ κλυδώνιον ... τὸ δὲ μέγιστον εἰς ζημίαν, πόλιν γὰρ ἐπιθαλαττίδιον ναυτικῆς ἀπειροκαλίας ἀνάγκη γέμειν θορύβων τε ἀνελευθέρων καὶ φωνῶν βωμολόχων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἅ λυμαίνεσθαι καὶ διαφθείρειν ἤθη πόλεων ἰσχύει; τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἔξωθεν καταπλέοντας δέξεται, τοὺς δὲ αὐτὴ πλέοντας παρέξεται.'

Without specifically naming other port cities or towns, one can assume that Constantinople, Alexandria and Athens were foremost in Libanius' mind when he wrote this passage. Despite Libanius' declarations, some of this same ignoble maritime culture must also have existed in his beloved Antioch—at the very least in the suburbs of the port of Seleucia. After all, in the same oration, Libanius says that more trading vessels visited Antioch's harbour than the ports of any other city.[93]

When Christian writers spoke of the sea as proof of divine providence, and of commerce as God's gift to mankind, they also glossed over the crucial role played by merchants and sailors in maritime trade and communication.[94] Even those who were more positively disposed towards sea-merchants and sailors ultimately depicted them as the recipients of God's beneficence. They highlighted the ease with which mariners conducted their trade, and the abundance of products that they carried into cities as a result of divine will.[95] The sea, the goods carried across it, and the communication it enabled between people of distant lands were all clearly seen to be part of God's divine plan. However, the sailors and merchants who were responsible for the day-to-day operation of maritime commerce were rarely seen in this way by their contemporaries. It seems that many of our sources preferred to imagine that maritime trade could go on unhindered, without the need for sailors and sea-merchants to facilitate it.

Ignoring the Outsider: A Notable Absence of Sailors and Merchants in the Sources

As previously noted, there are few sources that mention the presence of sailors and sea-merchants in urban centres in any detail. Legislation is perhaps our most fruitful source; yet, as we have seen, shippers and traders are not mentioned as much as might be expected for a group so integral to the economy. The codification of the sea laws in the eighth century highlights the fact that the civil legislation had become

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[93] Libanius, *Or.* 11.264 (Foerster, 531). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 62: 'πλεῖστα δὴ τῶν ὑπὲρ πελάγους ἁπλωθέντων ἱστίων λιμένων οὗτος συνέστειλε.'
[94] Refer to Chapter 3, footnotes 19-21.
[95] Examples include: Ambrose, *De Elia* 70-1 (*PL* 14.722-23); Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Sermon* 38 (*PL* 65.901); Basil, *Hexameron*, *Hom.* 4.7 (*PG* 29.93-4); Ambrose, *Hexameron* 3.5.22, (*PL* 14.165).

grossly inadequate in regards to maritime activity before this time.[96] Nonetheless, the inclusion of maritime matters at all accentuates the absence of mariners in many other sources. Mariners do surface in a variety of other texts; however, these are mostly incidental, casual or even accidental references. It is rare to find a sailor or sea-merchant as the subject of any written work. That sailors and other mariners existed is not in doubt; there were obviously crews manning the ships that transported wealthy and prominent travellers, letters and products to their destinations. Yet when our sources record the travels and activities of the elite, they seldom mention those responsible for transporting them. Sailors and other mariners are, to a large extent, absent from the written history of Late Antiquity.

Prominent scholars such as Magdalino and McCormick have noted this absence. They highlight that only a small number of merchants, sailors and even shipowners are mentioned by name in the Late Antique period.[97] McCormick argues that the lack of written sources mentioning traders in general has resulted in the modern misconception that early European commerce was an industry run by only a handful of merchants.[98] Clearly, such extensive networks of trade and communication could not have been run by so few. The lack of textual evidence of sailors, sea-merchants, and their trading activities is further highlighted by archaeological finds. The city of Olympos in Lycia in south-western Turkey provides an interesting case study to illustrate this. There is no textual evidence of trade in Olympos during the Late Antique period when the city was a bishopric; yet, the archaeological evidence demonstrates that the city conducted flourishing trading activities from the fifth to seventh centuries. A river meandered through the centre of the town to the sea, and excavations have located inscriptions and graffiti depicting sailing vessels, as well as a number of amphorae, scales, coins and weights. There are also architectural

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[96] Sarris, *Merchants, Trade, and Commerce*, 21-2.

[97] Magdalino, *Merchant of Constantinople*, 182; McCormick, *Origins*, 237. McCormick notes that the presence of sailors and sea-merchants is generally only implied in written sources, since these sources were only concerned with the travels of more elite passengers.

[98] McCormick, *Origins*, 12-5; McCormick, *Byzantium on the Move*, 5-6 notes that the study of all communications (not only textual references to ship movements) has made it possible 'to discern hitherto invisible instances of movement'. This, in turn, confirms that the meagre numbers of commercial vessels and sea journeys recorded in the textual sources are 'typical of a much larger, unobserved universe of shipping'. Also see Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods,* 209-10.

remains of inns that would have catered for long-distance travellers.[99] Olympos is just one example of a coastal port city where recent archaeological finds draw attention to the scarcity of written evidence of trade and traders.

There are several reasons why the people involved in maritime trade were considered unpalatable to the elite society responsible for recording history. It has already been noted that commerce was generally considered a lowly and disreputable profession and, as such, was rarely mentioned.[100] There was also a propensity for those in the sailing community to retain maritime superstitions and practices, including the continued support of traditional maritime deities.[101] In addition to the Church's perception of trade as immoral, this tendency may have led the ecclesiastical and imperial powers to view maritime sub-culture as a corrupting influence on society. Sailors and sea-merchants were heavily involved in the lower or under-class leisure culture that existed in large cities of the time. They were often seen as rowdy troublemakers who became embroiled in episodes of unrest in urban centres.[102] None of these actions would have endeared the men of the maritime community to the upper echelons of society or the Church—particularly to those elites living in imperial, ecclesiastical or administrative centres with reputations to maintain.

Magdalino notes that much of the extant textual evidence set in Constantinople was written for the inhabitants and those already familiar with the city. It was not written with the intention of imparting knowledge about the city to anyone who was not already well-informed. Magdalino stresses that many descriptions of Constantinople are intentionally rhetorical and allusive, often serving only to eulogise the city.[103] As such, we should not expect to see too many references to lower-class or maritime sub-culture. Procopius' descriptions of Constantinople's sheltered harbours and beautiful sea-enveloped setting—with their noticeable absence of sailors, sea-

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[99] B. Yelda Olcay Uçkan, 'Trade in Olympos', in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 489-501.
[100] Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods,* 209-10.
[101] This is the subject of Chapter 4. Also see Wade, *Sailors, Merchants, and Maritime Cults.*
[102] The involvement of maritime society in lower-class leisure culture and episodes of unrest in urban centres are the subjects of Chapters 5 and 6.
[103] Magdalino, *Byzantium = Constantinople*, 45.

merchants and ignoble leisure culture—are good illustrations of this.[104] Local attitudes to sailors and merchants may seldom have been recorded in the surviving sources; however, advice on the character of the locals themselves, and the reception that mariners could expect in different port cities, was sometimes contained in navigation manuals.[105] The inhabitants of a city like Constantinople may not have seen any practical reason to record their own attitudes to seafarers, but sailors and merchants certainly saw the value in being prepared before they sailed into any port; whether it was a lukewarm or hostile reception they were likely to receive, or a hospitable one.

On any given voyage, sea-merchants, captains, and their crews visited a number of ports and anchorages.[106] Maritime life was not static and the very nature of their employment ensured that sailors and sea-traders were regular travellers. This transience is an important aspect of maritime society and its culture even today, influencing the way that sailors behave and how they are viewed by others. For a variety of reasons, maritime sub-culture is unconventional. Regular mariners are different to the permanent inhabitants of cities; they are outsiders. During Late Antiquity, sailors and sea-traders were often not permanent residents in the port cities they frequented. The perception of sailors, sea-merchants and other mariners as outsiders during this period is important. It partially explains why these men were regularly ignored or treated with disdain. Many contemporary historians and writers would simply have seen no reason to highlight the presence of outsiders in their cities.

Several scholars have questioned what it was that made someone a Byzantine insider or outsider.[107] It is not my intention to attempt to define or redefine the characteristics of an outsider during the Late Roman or Early Byzantine periods.

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[104] Refer to Chapter 3, footnotes 86 to 88.

[105] Albani, *Maps - Naval Handbooks*, 42.

[106] The movements of a ship and its crew were dependent on a variety of factors including the seasons, weather, currents, the type of goods being carried and the personal choice of the captain. See Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 140-2; and Westerdahl, *Maritime Cultural Landscape*, 747.

[107] See the following works for further reading on the concept of the outsider in this general period: Smythe, *Strangers to Themselves*; Magdalino, *Byzantium = Constantinople*, 43-54; Smythe, *Insiders and Outsiders*, 67-80. Smythe provides a useful summary of key scholarship on the topic of Byzantine outsiders.

Suffice to say that outsiders were those who did not entirely belong and were not fully accepted by general society. Smythe's assertion that the markers distinguishing insiders from outsiders are cultural and symbolic constructs is important. He says:

> … to be an outsider has nothing to do with what one has done, has nothing to do with what one thinks; it has everything to do with how one is labeled by surrounding society.[108]

This concept is pertinent to the discussion of sailors and traders as outsiders. Social attitudes towards these men were strongly influenced by contemporary interactions between mariners and non-mariners in trading centres. Yet the perception of sailors and merchants was also heavily influenced by cultural traditions. Traditional attitudes towards trade and seafaring among the Roman elite were negative; senators were officially banned from engaging in commercial activities, and Republican and Imperial sources show a general 'upper-class contempt for traders and sailors'.[109] Such negative attitudes became entrenched in Late Roman thought and the people involved in maritime commerce continued to be labelled as they had been for centuries.

Merchants and sailors earned their living on the sea, which made them even more suspect. Purcell notes that there is a long cultural history of associating the sea with the erosion of good order in society. It was the sea that isolated people from their homelands, caused populations to intermingle, and transported large numbers of migrants and strangers to cities and towns to which they did not belong.[110] The sea itself was also seen as a dangerous and threatening environment. Mariners acknowledged the treacherous nature of the sea and adopted ritual behaviours to avert any danger.[111] In contrast, many non-mariners kept their distance from the sea wherever possible, maintaining a strong spiritual fear of it. This is exemplified in

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[108] Smythe, *Insiders and Outsiders*, 73.

[109] Meijer and van Nijf, *Trade, Transport and Society*, 15-8. These authors have collated sources on Roman elite attitudes to commerce, all of which discuss the senatorial restrictions on trading activities. The sources include: Livy 21.63.3-4; Paulus, *Opinions*, 5.28a3; Cicero, *II Against Verres* 5.45-6 and 167, *II Against Verres* 4.8, *On Duties* I.150-2 and *Letters to his Friends* 16.9.4; Tacitus, *Annals* 4.13.2.

[110] Purcell, *Tide, Beach, and Backwash*, 93.

[111] Westerdahl, *Maritime Cultural Landscape*, 751.

Procopius' account of Belisarius' soldiers, men proven to be brave in battle on land, who had no shame in admitting their fear and trepidation at the thought of fighting at sea. Procopius says that these soldiers did not feel they could engage in battle against two enemies at once; the Vandals and the sea.[112]

The coastline was seen by many people as a natural boundary between the land and sea and, as a result, it was attributed with mystical significance.[113] Those who traversed this boundary on a regular basis were often considered reckless, desperate or suspect. The non-mariner's fear of the dangers associated with crossing the boundary between land and water was somewhat vindicated when the deadly plague travelled across the sea in the sixth century, spreading like wildfire through maritime centres, and then inland via river and land trade routes.[114] Sailors and merchants could hardly be blamed for the devastating effects of the plague. However, contemporary accounts recognised that the disease was transmitted on ships, and large numbers of sailors died at sea before they—and their deadly cargo—even reached their final destinations.[115] In some instances, a specific ship and its crew were blamed for the arrival of the disease into an individual city or region.[116] The plague brought disorder and social upheaval to much of the Roman world in the sixth century; it did not go unnoticed that crews of merchant ships had

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[112] Procop. *Vand.*, 3.14.1-2 (Dewing, 2.124-7).

[113] B. Ford, 'Coastal Archaeology', in Ford et al., *The Oxford Handbook of Maritime Archaeology*, 763.

[114] R. Sallares, 'Ecology, Evolution, and Epidemiology of Plague', in *Plague and the End of Antiquity. The Pandemic of 541-750*, ed. L.K. Little (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 263-6. Sallares discusses the dissemination of the plague in the Late Antique and Medieval periods via the sea; L.K. Little, 'Life and Afterlife of the First Plague Endemic', in Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 3-4. Also see D. Stathakopoulos, 'Crime and Punishment: The Plague in the Byzantine Empire, 541-749', in Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 99-118 for a discussion of the plague's 'itinerary' in reported episodes of the epidemic from the sixth to eighth centuries. Stathakopoulos also discusses the Late Antique theories that existed regarding the causes/s of each epidemic.

[115] Some sixth-century sources on the plague are: Procop. *Pers.* 2.22 (Dewing, 1.450-65); Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 4.29 (Bidez and Parmentier, 177-9); Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, 9.22 (*PL* 71.503-4). These sources suggest that the disease always arrived by sea and then spread from the coast to inland regions. See Sallares, *Ecology, Evolution, and Epidemiology*, 263-5; M. McCormick, 'Toward a Molecular History of the Justinianic Pandemic', in Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 310-1.

[116] For example, Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, 9.22 (*PL* 71.503) who writes about the outbreak of the plague in Marseille, spread by a Spanish ship and its crew.

carried the deadly disease throughout the Mediterranean and into urban centres from where it spread.[117]

There was a variety of basic and luxury goods carried by sailors and merchants into ports and, unlike the plague, most of these items sustained rather than extinguished life. The uncontaminated products of maritime trade were always gladly received, even if the men who carried them were not. Yet the seaborne transportation of the plague on tainted merchant ships and the ensuing devastation highlights the loss of order that the sea and seafarers were capable of bringing into port cities. As non-conformists and outsiders, sailors and merchants posed a further threat to social order, unencumbered as they were by many of the social norms constraining the permanent residents of cities and towns. James makes a pertinent point regarding social control and power when she says that social power rests on the ability of the ruling elite to organise and control people, resources and territories. She reasons that social control is maintained through the establishment and management of legal and social norms.[118] Sailors and travelling merchants were not always able to be controlled in the same manner as those who were permanently resident in any one particular location; and this potentially made them a threat. Mariners were ultimately men of the sea and were not always restricted by the laws of the land. This is encapsulated in the words of Antoninus Pius in a second century law retained in Justinian's *Digesta*. The emperor states:

> I am master of the world, but the law of the sea must be judged by the sea law of the Rhodians where our own law does not conflict with it.[119]

The itinerant nature of many sailors and merchants enabled them to sometimes sneak around, or under, the law. An edict from *Digesta* highlights the lack of accountability that could result from the impermanence of travelling traders and

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[117] See P. Sarris, 'Bubonic Plague in Byzantium: The Evidence of Non-Literary Sources', in Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 124-32. Sarris discusses both the impacts of the plague on the Byzantine empire, and the scholarship and debate that exists regarding the extent of such impacts; McCormick, *Toward a Molecular History*, 310-1.

[118] James, *Empresses and Power*, 6-7.

[119] *Dig*. 14.2.9 (*CJC* 1.221). English trans. in Watson, *Digest of Justinian*, 1.421: 'ἐγὼ μὲν τοῦ κόσμου κύριος, ὁ δὲ νόμος τῆς θαλάσσης. τῷ νόμῳ τῶν Ῥοδίων κρινέσθω τῷ ναυτικῷ, ἐν οἷς μήτις τῶν ἡμετέρων αὐτῷ νόμος ἐναντιοῦται.'

sailors. The law relates to the instances in which a man could sue or defend a suit made against him, and uses the activities of itinerant traders as its example. The edict notes how difficult it was for a man to defend himself, and presumably to have legal action taken against him, when he travelled regularly by land or sea.[120] Mariners were subject to the laws of the sea and land, but the above example shows that there were grey areas between maritime and civil law. It was into these grey areas that itinerant seafarers were sometimes able to slip during Late Antiquity.

It is difficult to know exactly how the members of the maritime community viewed themselves as a group, but it would be fair to assume that many of them saw themselves as outsiders. To a certain extent, this was the result of their treatment by others. Yet these men generally were different to the permanent inhabitants of the cities and towns they visited. When they arrived into a port, many sailors and traders must have headed for the busy, high-density coastal neighbourhoods where other foreigners and misfits congregated; regions where most members of the elite or upper echelons of society did not dare to tread.[121] In these maritime and lower-class neighbourhoods, sailors, merchants, and the men and women who consorted with them were the 'insiders'.

The attitude of Late Antique writers towards members of the maritime community has had a lasting effect on the way that sailors and merchants have been considered in scholarship. Maritime sub-culture may have been on the fringes of society but its impact on everyday life should not be ignored. The social and commercial activities and interactions that kept maritime trading cities running at a grass-roots level are important aspects of the history of these centres. Although the lower-class, maritime, and commercial elements of trading cities may not be as glamorous or spellbinding as their monumental counterparts, they are nevertheless just as significant. The failure to view an important centre like Constantinople as a maritime entrepôt has limited the sociological questions asked by historians of the extant sources. Historians may simply have presupposed the presence of sailors and sea-merchants on the ships that carried goods and elite passengers into the major ports of this period. Nevertheless, the question needs to be asked as to where sailors and other

[120] *Dig.* 5.1.19.2 (*CJC* 1.104).
[121] Matthews, *Notitia,* 114-5.

mariners went once their ships reached port; when they crossed the imaginary border between sea and land.[122] Indeed, the social impacts that the men of maritime trade had on the culture of coastal cities needs to be examined in more detail.

Summary

Sailors, sea-merchants and other members of the maritime realm were portrayed by their contemporaries in a variety of ways; according to literary formulae, cultural and historical traditions, prevailing moral and religious convictions, popular thought, and everyday experience. Although contemporary perceptions and attitudes towards maritime society should be treated with caution, they should not be ignored. They provide insight into the role and place of maritime sub-culture in society, and tell of the perceived threat to social order posed by sailors and merchants. The men of the maritime community were largely seen as outsiders. Mariners were alienated from mainstream culture and society whilst simultaneously being an integral part of it. Many of their contemporaries must have been in a quandary. They approved of the benefits of maritime trade, understood its importance to the economy, and valued the virtues of a sea that they believed was part of an overall divine plan. Yet contemporary writers disapproved of the men involved in maritime commerce and what they saw as its moral and physical dangers. As a result, sailors and merchants have largely been omitted from the history of Late Antiquity. This, in turn, has created a lasting and false impression that there were only small and inconsequential groups of sailors and merchants involved in commercial activities during this period. Yet maritime trade was an extensive, lucrative and vibrant business. The captains, sailors, shipowners and merchants who facilitated it were a crucial element of society, and their presence was guaranteed in port cities all over the eastern Mediterranean.

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[122] Magdalino, *Merchant of Constantinople*, 182-4 is an exception. He questions the lack of evidence for Constantinople-based merchants in the sources (as compared to merchants from other regions). Magdalino says that the contextual documentation which would enable scholars to estimate the normality of Constantinople-based merchants as a distinct social type in the city does not exist; however, he also stresses that an 'absence of evidence is not evidence of absence' (184). Magdalino believes that the increased evidence for merchants based in Constantinople after the seventh century reflects 'the growing importance of Constantinople-based long-distance maritime trade in the seventh century' (185).

Chapter 4. Superstition: Religion, Ritual, and Belief in the Maritime Community

Introduction

Although many early Christian writers viewed the sea as part of God's overarching plan, it was not only the Christian god that sailors and other seafarers prayed to before, after and during their voyages. Sailors played an appreciable role in the spread of Christianity, which has led to the overriding presumption that maritime trade was dominated by Christians. Yet there has been little scholarship on the social practices, rituals and beliefs of Late Antique maritime society. Scholarship that deals with seafaring customs in Byzantium generally focuses on evidence from the middle of the seventh century, which is—as should be expected—predominantly Christian in nature.[1] This chapter explores evidence of Christian, Jewish and pagan superstitions, rituals, beliefs and customs in the maritime community.[2] It is proposed that the everyday risks of seafaring made sailors and other mariners more superstitious than most, and thus more willing to hedge their bets concerning religion. Many seafaring rituals were Christianised, but Graeco-Roman maritime beliefs and cults continued to be practiced and preserved through to the seventh century. Traditional apotropaic symbols retained their relevance both at sea and in the marketplaces. Alongside Mary, the new Christian Lady of the Sea, female deities like Isis and Athena also continued to play a special role as patrons of sailors and sea-merchants.[3]

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[1] General examples include: McCormick, *Origins*; Rautman, *Daily Life*; Y. Vitaliotis, 'Sea, Faith, and Beliefs', in Zafiropoulou, *Journeys on the Seas*, 88-91.

[2] The terms 'non-Christian' and 'pagan' will be used throughout this chapter to denote a range of non-Christian, traditional and local religious beliefs (often polytheist, but not always). See K. Demarsin, '"Paganism" in Late Antiquity: Thematic Studies', in *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism*, eds. L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 3 for a discussion of the debate in scholarship regarding the nomenclature used for non-Christians. Demarsin concludes that the choice of term is largely irrelevant for his chapter, as it is also for mine.

[3] An article based on sections of this thesis chapter has been published by the author. See Wade, *Sailors, Merchants, and Maritime Cults*, 269-87.

In Late Antiquity, the dangers of sea travel were many; sailors and sea-merchants had to deal with natural phenomena like storms, winds, currents and rough seas, as well as man-made hazards such as fire, theft, piracy and collisions at sea. The sea was one of the most feared, dangerous and unknown environments.[4] Seafarers knew they were at the mercy of the elements whenever they undertook a voyage. Throughout Antiquity, mariners invoked maritime deities to protect themselves. Deities like Isis, Priapus, the Dioscuri, Poseidon, Aphrodite and Athena all had maritime roles, and were popular amongst sailors and other sea travellers.[5] The worship of these gods at sea was not exclusive. Although individual deities may have been favoured by a particular shipowner, captain, merchant or crew, appeals made to one deity did not prevent a supplicant—or his fellow crew members—from praying or offering votives to other deities as well. Given the dangerous and unpredictable nature of the sea, the more gods who were looking out for a ship and its crew, the better their chances of survival may have seemed. Church leaders like Augustine of Hippo mention Christian churchgoers who chose to dismiss his god in times of need, calling upon traditional deities for help instead.[6] Christian sailors would also have invoked other gods to protect them. There were few greater and more immediate needs than that of being delivered from an impending shipwreck. No doubt many sailors continued to believe that there could never be too many divine beings on their side.

With the dangers of sea travel in mind, it is highly unlikely that sailors and sea-merchants were among the first to discard all of the existing beliefs, rituals and deities that had kept mariners safe for centuries. It is implausible that all non-Christian maritime customs and rituals—many of which were inextricably linked to traditional Graeco-Roman beliefs—would simply have been jettisoned when

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[4] J.R. Steffy, *Wooden Ship Building and the Interpretation of Shipwrecks* (London: Texas A & M University Press, 1994), 8. Steffy notes that this was one of the reasons that shipbuilders were cautious and why shipbuilding techniques evolved so slowly from ancient to early modern times.

[5] During Late Antiquity, sources refer to these deities by their Greek or Roman names, such as Poseidon or Neptune; Aphrodite or Venus; Athena or Minerva.

[6] Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 62.7 (trans. Benko, 37). Also see MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 121; and Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 69. Cameron notes that as late as 692, the Council in Trullo was condemning pagan practices, especially amongst those who identified as Christians.

Christianity became the Roman state religion. Scholars have demonstrated convincingly that pagan beliefs and practices continued throughout the East until at least the seventh century.[7] This is despite the repeated attempts of emperors to eradicate all signs of paganism.[8] A novel of Theodosius II promulgated in Constantinople in 438 acknowledges that pagans were persistent; many refused to give up their ancestral religions regardless of the punishment threatened or inflicted upon them.[9] Men and women clearly continued to harbour non-Christian religious beliefs even in cultural and administrative centres like Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Athens.[10] There were even prominent city officials who were conspicuously non-Christian; from the highly respected Themistius in the late fourth century, through to those targeted by Justinian's persecutions in the sixth century.[11]

Some of these non-Christians attracted the attention of the authorities, yet many more would have gone undetected. Libanius and Procopius say that people simply pretended to be Christian in order to avoid falling foul of the state. They also imply that many were able to get away with this deception.[12] For visitors to urban centres, including sailors and itinerant merchants, this deception must have been that much easier. John Chrysostom notes that Christians and non-Christians were indistinguishable when they were in the marketplaces and other everyday urban

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[7] A. Cameron, 'Christian Conversion in Late Antiquity: Some Issues' in *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 3-22; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 222-46; Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 10-13, 20, 69-70 and 141-4; MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2.

[8] Harl, *Sacrifice and Pagan Belief*, 7; S. Corcoran, 'From Unholy Madness to Right-mindedness: Or How to Legislate for Religious Conformity from Decius to Justinian', in Papaconstantinou, *Conversion in Late Antiquity*, 67-94; D. Hunt, 'Christianising the Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Code', in Harries and Wood, *The Theodosian Code*, 143-4 and 157; Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 143-4; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 2.

[9] *Nov. Theo.* 3.8 (*CJR* 2.9-10): '… Quos non promulgatarum legum mille terrores, non denuntiati exilii poena conpescunt, ut, si emendari non possint, mole saltem criminum et inluvie victimarum discerent abstinere …'.

[10] Harl, *Sacrifice and Pagan Belief,* 15-9 and 23-4; M. Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past. Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 70-2; Macmullen, *Christianity and Paganism,* 146; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion,* vol. 1, 292-5, 316 and 322; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion,* vol. 2, 52.

[11] Harl, *Sacrifice and Pagan Belief*, 23; Maas, *John Lydus*, 70-1. Those targeted by Justinian's persecutions included men who held, or had recently held, a number of important administrative positions. They include Asclepiodatus the Eparch, Macedonius the Referendarius, and Thomas the Quaestor.

[12] Libanius, *Or.* 30.28 (Norman, *Selected Orations,* 2.124-7); Procop. *Anec.* 11.25-32 (Dewing, 136-9).

settings.[13] Of course, it is obvious that individual belief in Graeco-Roman deities did not simply disappear overnight when Christianity became the state religion.[14] Widespread conversion did not mean an entire and instant abandonment of traditional deities and practices.[15] As highlighted by Averil Cameron:

> … there was no one moment at which the empire became 'Christian'. Rather, we must imagine a complex process or processes, unevenly spread and taking far longer than many have supposed in the past.[16]

Although scholarship now largely accepts that non-Christian beliefs persisted throughout the Late Antique period, it is still widely unchallenged that the vast majority of sailors were devoutly Christian. Yet non-Christian beliefs and practices would have endured easily on ships, naturally isolated as they were at sea. MacMullen observes that the least formally structured non-Christian religious behaviours and those 'most remote from the eye of authority' were the most tenacious.[17] Sauer highlights that, in the archaeological record, the more obvious signs of late pagan practice are found in natural places of worship—including rural sanctuaries, sacred springs and other naturally occurring phenomena or landscapes. Unlike most temples, these locations were often remote and

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[13] John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaeum* 4.7 (*PG* 57.48): 'Διά τοι τοῦτο οὐκ ἐν ἀγορᾷ, οὐκ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ δυνατὸν ειδέναι ταχέως, τίς μὲν ὁ πιστὸς, τίς δὲ ὁ μὴ πιστὸς …' ('Ideoque nec in foro, nec in ecclesia potest distingui fidelis a non fideli …').

[14] Bowes, *Private Worship*, 222; E. Sauer, *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World* (Stroud: Templus Publishing Ltd, 2003), 111; V. Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 28-9; L. Foschia, 'Shifting Pagan and Christian Cult Places in Late Antiquity: From Monumentalization to Cryptocult and Vice Versa,' in *SOMA 2001. Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of Postgraduate Resarchers. The University of Liverpool, 23-25 February 2001*, eds. G. Muskett, A. Koltsida and M. Georgiadis (Oxford 2002), 105-111.

[15] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 236 discusses how long it can take for non-Christian beliefs to disappear completely in what appear to be fully integrated Christian communities in modern times. Bell uses the example of a Christian village in Ghana where magic and local gods still retain their place, despite the Christian 'conversion' of the village in the sixteenth century. Cameron, *Christian Conversion in Late Antiquity*, 16-7 discusses the 'processes and techniques of conversion' to Christianity during Late Antiquity; and Sauer, *Archaeology of Religious Hatred,* 111 notes 'If a radical government came to power and declared all except one of the UK's major religions illegal, surely nobody would assume that the adherents of all other religions would just quietly and without force abandon their places of worship out of opportunism or a longing for change.'

[16] Cameron, *Christian Conversion in Late Antiquity*, 7.

[17] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 76.

indestructible.[18] As a result, these natural environments continued to attract non-Christian cult and 'gave people a sense of being connected with the landscape and the divine forces thought to inhabit it'.[19] In the aforementioned novel of 438, Theodosius called it arrogance on the part of non-Christians and heretics to refuse to see the Christian god as the sole force behind the waters of the sea, the movement of the stars and all other aspects of the natural world.[20] Clearly, in Theodosius' time, quite a few people still saw their old deities in these natural elements.[21]

The sea was one of the most powerful forces of nature and it is without doubt that religion played an important role in seagoing life in Late Antiquity. Sailing vessels were remote and isolated environments while at sea, even when they stayed relatively close to the coast. Sailors had always felt the need to be connected with the sea and to placate the forces that controlled it. Geographical features of sea voyages were often venerated as well, including natural harbours, reefs, river mouths, sources of fresh water like springs and lakes, and other nautical landmarks.[22] The rituals and behaviours of sailors were primarily aimed at averting the dangers of the sea and the natural elements.[23] Away from the prying eyes of the authorities and non-mariners—who did not understand the reality of life at sea—shipboard micro-societies continued to practice a variety of maritime rituals, behaviours and beliefs; all in relative safety and harmony. Synesius captures this sentiment in the account of his voyage from Egypt to Cyrene. Those on board were a motley crew with a variety of religious inclinations and deities to call upon when they encountered rough seas. In a time-honoured maritime custom—when faced with impending shipwreck—everyone on the ship placed a gold object or similar item

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[18] Sauer, *Archaeology of Religious Hatred*, 132 and 142; E.W. Sauer, 'Religious Rituals at Springs in the Late Antique and Early Medieval World', in *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism*, eds. L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 506. Sauer notes that 'the only weapons against pagan veneration of springs, rivers, lakes, the sea, mountains, the sun, moon or astral phenomena, were attempts to persuade, threaten or coerce worshippers to desist from such "superstition"'.

[19] Sauer, *Archaeology of Religious Hatred,* 132. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 42 also notes that many of the deities who survived in popular imagination were those seen to control the forces of nature.

[20] *Nov. Theo.* 3.1 (*CJR* 2.7).

[21] Dal Santo and Booth, *Conclusion: An Age of Saints*, 209-10. These authors state that Late Antique Christians were 'far less credulous than their leaders would often admit' and it was possible for people 'to attribute to an alleged "miracle" or display of supernatural power an entirely different, even profane, aetiology …'.

[22] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 438-40.

[23] Westerdahl, *Maritime Cultural Landscape*, 751.

around their neck as payment for burial. Despite their religious differences, those on the vessel passed their time amiably when the weather and seas were calm.[24] No-one was bothered by anyone else's religious beliefs.

Much like local cults in rural areas, many of the non-Christian rituals performed at sea would have become so ingrained in maritime custom that sailors considered them essential to their livelihood, and not at all antithetical to the Christian faith. That said, given the harsh realities of life—and possible death—at sea, it is unlikely that the existence of non-Christian beliefs on ships would have caused a problem for most Christian sailors anyway. On vessels at sea, particularly ones faced with impending doom, many would have found comfort in both traditional and Christian maritime deities and rituals. In a discourse against pagans, John Chrysostom says that, by his day, Christianity had successfully spread to the marketplaces, islands, ship basins, ships, seas and harbours of the whole world.[25] Christianity certainly had infiltrated these environments by the fourth century; yet John Chrysostom steadfastly ignores the fact that there were still non-Christian beliefs and rituals practiced in those marketplaces and harbours, on the islands, and on the ships sailing the seas of Late Antiquity.

The idea that the sailing community was overwhelmingly dominated by Christians by the mid to late fourth century can largely be attributed to contemporary Christian writers and preachers. Remarks like the ones made by John Chrysostom have been accepted unreservedly for centuries. Christian sailors are, of course, the ones we hear about most often in the predominantly Christian literary sources that have survived; however, these sources have a clear religious agenda.[26] Libanius, in contrast, talks of the grain shipped from Egypt as a gift to all Romans from their traditional gods. As a non-Christian contemporary of Chrysostom, Libanius argues that the production and transportation of grain was ensured by the maintenance of

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[24] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640-2).

[25] John Chrysostom, *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles quod Christus sit Deus* 2 (*PG* 48.814): 'Οὐκ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ταῦτα ἐξῆλθε τὰ κατορθώματα, καὶ εἰς κώμας, καὶ εἰς χώρας, καὶ εἰς νήσους καὶ ὅρμους καὶ ἐπίνεια' and 9 (*PG* 48.826): ' Τοῦτον πανταχοῦ χορεύοντα ἴδοι τις ἄν ... ἐν ἀγοραῖς ... ἐν θαλάττῃ καὶ πλοίοις καὶ νήσοις'.

[26] Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 70; MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism,* 3-5. Cameron, *Christian Conversion in Late Antiquity*, 8 suggests that we should never expect to find neutral or reliable accounts of the number of people converted to Christianity in Christian writing.

traditional cults in both Egypt and other parts of the Mediterranean.[27] The Hellenic philosopher Damascius notes that the locals of Canopus, near Alexandria, enlisted the help of Isis to keep their harbour fit for navigation in the late fifth century. When her cult statue was destroyed by the Christian authorities, the locals reportedly had great difficulty keeping the harbour navigable for the vessels that sailed in and out of the satellite town.[28] These sources show that not everyone viewed the maritime milieu of Late Antiquity as being dominated by Christians, or as entirely Christian in sentiment. Jews and pagans of this period saw things in a very different light.

The men of the Alexandrian grain fleet are the most prominent group of sailors mentioned in the extant Christian literary sources. Fifth-century Church histories record the presence of sailors of the grain fleet in Constantinople and other major centres. These histories refer to the moral and physical support that mariners gave to the presiding Alexandrian patriarchs while they were away from Egyptian shores.[29] Some shippers also provided political support to patriarchs. On one occasion in 336, Athanasius was accused of attempting to stop the supply of grain from Alexandria to Constantinople.[30] Whether or not this accusation was true, it certainly gives the impression that the Alexandrian patriarch wielded considerable power over the men of the imperial grain fleet.[31] However, the shipowners of the *annona* were themselves a powerful class in Alexandria. Their relationship with the patriarch would have been mutually beneficial, both from a political and financial perspective. By the early seventh century, the Alexandrian Church owned some of the ships transporting grain and other items from Egyptian shores.[32] By this time, one can safely assume that the majority of sailors manning Church-owned grain vessels were Christian; yet, in the fifth century, the situation was not so clear-cut.

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[27] Libanius, *Or.* 30.33-6 (Norman, *Selected Orations,* 2.128-33).

[28] Damascius, *Isid.* 3.53B, in *Damascius, The Philosophical History: Text with Translation and Notes*, trans. P. Athanassiadi (Athens: Apamea Cultural Association, 1999), 151.

[29] Examples include: Palladius, *Dialogus* 8 (*PG* 47.26); Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 5.1, in *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor. Church and War in Late Antiquity*, trans. G. Greatrex (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 175; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.15 (*PG* 67.709-10); Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.17 (*PG* 67.1557-60).

[30] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.35 (*PG* 67.169-72).

[31] Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 81 (*PG* 25.793-4). This source also reports that Athanasius enlisted the assistance of shippers to carry letters and information across the seas.

[32] See G.R. Monks, 'The Church of Alexandria and the City's Economic Life in the Sixth Century', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 355-7; Hollerich, *Alexandrian Bishops*, 197-9.

Even if it was, the religious affiliations of Alexandrians within the grain fleet should not automatically be seen as representative of all other sailors and shippers.

When the research clearly demonstrates that traditional ideas and beliefs persisted in terrestrial communities as late as the sixth and seventh centuries, it is logical to assume that the situation was the same in the maritime community.[33] It is true that much of the surviving evidence for continued pagan practice is for rural areas; however, these areas do include the countryside around Constantinople and Alexandria. Evidence from other coastal regions and cities exists as well.[34] Sarris stresses that resistance and hostility to the Church, its representatives and its enforced belief systems, led to tension and a sense of detachment from Christian practices amongst the peasantry. He highlights that, as a result, the Christianisation of rural communities would have been 'a far more haphazard, piecemeal, and gradual process than is commonly supposed'.[35] Maritime micro-societies and the maritime community as a whole would have been no different. The Christianisation of any sub-culture or community was a slow process, particularly when age-old beliefs continued to be seen as advantageous in dealing with the everyday realities of life—whether in the fields, the ports or at sea.

Comparisons between peasant and maritime communities aside, it is worth noting that the evidence from rural areas is not entirely irrelevant to a study of the maritime community. People living in rural areas constituted a high percentage of the overall population, and men from these regions often sought seasonal work as dockworkers

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[33] However, many scholars seem to have assumed that the vast majority of sailors were Christian by the early Late Antique period. Examples include Gregory, *Vox Populi*; Haas, *Alexandria*, 59; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol.1, 184 and 192.

[34] Trombley *Hellenic Religion*, vol.2, 76-95. Trombley cites Callinicus' *Life of Hypatius* as evidence of the survival of pagan cults in rural Bithynia and other areas around Constantinople, including Chalcedon; N. Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1-5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 18 also speaks of pagan cult in Constantinople and surrounding regions. For further discussion, see Bowersock, *Mosaics as History*, 113-4 and 117; Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 10-13, 20, 69-70 and 141-4; F.R. Trombley, 'Paganism in the Greek World at the End of Antiquity: The Case of Rural Anatolia and Greece', *The Harvard Theological Review,* 78, 3/4 (1985), 329-32. Further evidence of continued pagan practice in coastal cities such as Constantinople and Alexandria is presented later in this chapter.

[35] P. Sarris, 'Restless Peasants and Scornful Lords: Lay Hostility to Holy Men and the Church in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', in Sarris et al., *An Age of Saints* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 1-10.

and sailors.[36] The young peasants who manned Synesius' ship from Alexandria to Cyrene are a prominent example of this.[37] Many of the local and seasonal workers who found employment in Constantinople's dockyards and on local ships would have hailed from the surrounding countryside. Constantinople's neighbouring regions, including the suburbs close to the city walls, were still largely non-Christian at least as late as the mid fifth century.[38]

In his commendation of Valens for building the aqueduct that supplied water to Constantinople, Themistius praises the emperor for enabling the Thracian water nymphs to enter the city.[39] Presumably, there were many men and women in Constantinople's hinterland who worshipped these nymphs; in the coastal city of Burgas (in modern Bulgaria), coins continued to be dedicated to the Thracian water nymphs of the *Aquae Calidae* until the sixth century.[40] Callinicus' *Life of Hypatius* also records a number of cult practices, including sacrifice, that flourished in the Thracian countryside in the fifth century, only a short distance from Constantinople's coastal suburb of Chalcedon.[41] Indeed, when the monk Hypatius complained to the Archbishop of Chalcedon about ongoing pagan practices in his area, he was dismissed and told not to worry about them.[42] The extant ecclesiastical sources for this period are dominated by men like John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nazianzus, who had little tolerance for any practices they considered un-Christian. As such, it has been easy to assume that their reactions to paganism were the norm. The Archbishop of Chalcedon's more tolerant reaction to local pagan practices suggests

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[36] See MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism,* 152-3 for a discussion of rural versus urban populations. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 89 talks of the many men from the countryside who were needed to work on boats sailing the Nile.

[37] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640): 'ναυτῶν δὲ ὄντων δυοκαίδεκα τῶν πάντων ... τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ἀγελαῖοι γεωργοί, πέρυσιν οὔπω κώπης ἡμμένοι.'

[38] Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 18-9.

[39] Themistius, *Or.* 11.151c-d (Dindorf, 179-80).

[40] E. Sauer, *Coins, Cult and Cultural Identity: Augustan Coins, Hot Springs and the Early Roman Baths at Bourbonne-les-Bains* (Leicester: School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester, 2005), 114; B. Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 248.

[41] Callinicus, *Vita Hypatii*, in *Callinicos, Vie d'Hypatios. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, ed. and trans. G.J.M. Bartelink, Sources Chrétiennes, 177 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971). Also see Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 76-96 for a detailed discussion of Callinicus' *Vita Hypatii* and the evidence contained therein of non-Christian cults and practices in the fifth century. Hypatius lived as a monk in both rural Thrace (northwest of Constantinople) and in Bithynia near Chalcedon.

[42] *Vita Hypatii* 33 (trans. Bartelink, 214-8).

that there were local church leaders who chose to live in harmony with the popular non-Christian religious activity in their areas.[43]

It should also be noted that in Alexandria and the rest of Egypt there was a definite non-Christian presence throughout Late Antiquity. The depiction of sailors in ecclesiastical histories might suggest otherwise, but it is highly unlikely that the majority of men boarding vessels from Alexandria were Christian during this period. After all, this was the city described by a fourth-century travelling merchant as one imbued with reverence for traditional Egyptian and Graeco-Roman gods, and full of altars 'glowing with fire and piled high with sacrifices and incense'.[44] Such reverence would not have been stamped out easily or quickly. Several Church histories suggest that there were crowds of pagans in Alexandria, especially throughout the fourth century.[45] Averil Cameron sees Alexandria as 'a stronghold of paganism', where unrest was common due to the religious diversity of the city's increasing population in the fifth and sixth centuries.[46] Haas stresses that Alexandria's urban setting was both diverse and cosmopolitan, with ongoing intercourse between Christians, Jews and pagans, despite the religious tension visible in the sources.[47] The religious and imperial elite may have attempted to segregate religious groups, yet in reality the everyday social and commercial interactions between ordinary men and women broke down these barriers.[48] Elite society also tried to suppress any beliefs that differed from their own, but there was very little they could do. Religious diversity was a fact of life.

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[43] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion,* vol. 2, 83-5.

[44] *Expositio* 7-8 (trans. Woodman, 9-11 and 32-5).

[45] Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 55-9 (*PG* 25.760-4); Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.* 11.22-23, in *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia. Books 10 and 11*, trans. P.R. Amidon, S.J. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79-82; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.3 and 5.16 (*PG* 67.381-8 and 603-6); Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.10 and 7.15 (*PG* 67.1131-6 and 1451-8). These same sources record the substantial public outrage that occurred when the Alexandrian Sarapeion was destroyed at the end of the fourth century. Also see Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 472 (trans. Cave Wright, 418-21).

[46] Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 20.

[47] Haas, *Alexandria,* 11-2. See also Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 278-89 for a discussion of the Christianisation of Egypt in general.

[48] G. Fowden, 'Varieties of Religious Community', in Bowersock et al., *Interpreting Late Antiquity*, 97.

Mark the Deacon narrates that, when the emperor Arcadius was asked to order the destruction of all traditional temples in the coastal city of Gaza, he was in two minds. As much as Arcadius abhorred the worship of non-Christian deities, he was reluctant to antagonise the citizens of Gaza for fear of losing the substantial public revenue generated by the thriving trading city and its port.[49] This shows pragmatism on behalf of the emperor and an awareness of the everyday commercial and religious realities of life in regions far from the capital.[50] Such pragmatism and awareness of diversity are generally concealed from view by the religious concerns of our Christian sources. This is typically the case in the legislation as well.[51] There are several laws that attest to a more pragmatic approach to religious diversity, particularly in situations where the public welfare was at stake. This is exemplified in a late fourth-century law from Constantinople, which records that, in order to keep the supply of grain and other goods flowing, the guild of shipmasters had to be filled by ex-administrators, decurions, senators and veteran shipmasters.[52] Until at least the early fifth century, a good majority of the men in these prominent positions were not Christian.[53] Thus, at this time, the guild of shipmasters must have contained men who were not of the Christian faith. Another law from Constantinople in 438 deals with the many Jews, Samaritans, heretics, and pagans that still existed throughout the East. In this law, men employed in imperial and public service were to maintain their compulsory duties regardless of their religion, so as to avoid any negative impact on the public welfare.[54] The supply of grain was of the utmost importance, and it is likely that this

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[49] Mark the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry* 41 (Societas Philologae Bonnensis, 36-7): 'ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀκούσας ἐδυσχέραινεν εἰπών; Οἶδα ὅτι ἡ πόλις ἐκείνη κατείδωλός ἐστιν, ἀλλ'εὐγνωμονεῖ περὶ τὴν εἰσορὰν τῶν δημοσίων πολλὰ συντελοῦσα. ἐὰν οὖν αἰφνιδιάσωμεν αὐτοὺς τῷ φόβῳ, φυγῇ χρήσονται καὶ ἀπόλλομεν τοσοῦτον κανόνα.'; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 275. The city of Gaza and its port of Maiuma were separate Church sees, but they were one city from an administrative perspective, and for taxation purposes. Although Constantine had split Gaza and Maiuma, this decision was reversed under Julian (and remained so). Thus, Gaza and Maiuma shared in the substantial maritime and trading revenue that came into the city via the port.

[50] Corcoran, *From Unholy Madness*, 85-6 believes that the *Life of Porphyry* 'is probably more sixth-century invention than fifth-century reportage, although perhaps reflecting widely-held perceptions'.

[51] Anti-pagan legislation was aimed both at suppressing paganism and demonstrating that it only persisted in small pockets of resistance throughout the empire; however, the laws actually betrayed the tenacity of paganism. See Harl, *Sacrifice and Pagan Belief*, 7 for a summary of anti-pagan legislation from the late fourth to mid sixth centuries.

[52] *Cod. Theo.* 13.5.14.4 (*CJR* 1.751).

[53] One example of a prominent non-Christian senator is Themistius. Importantly, he was also Urban Prefect of Constantinople. See J. Vanderspoel, 'A Tale of Two Cities. Themistius on Rome and Constantinople', in Grig and Kelly, *Two Romes*, 223-4; Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 44-5.

[54] *Nov. Theo.* 3.6 (*CJR* 2.9): 'Et quoniam decet imperatoriam maiestatem ea provisione cuncta conplecti, ut in nullo publica laedatur utilitas, curiales omnium civitatum nec non cohortalinos,

is one of the services protected by this law. By the mid fifth century, clearly not all men in the public service, including shipmasters, were Christian. There is certainly no reason, therefore, to assume that only Christian sailors were admitted onto ships servicing the state.

The example of Gaza demonstrates that the populations of coastal trading cities throughout the empire were by no means largely Christian. Despite the hagiographical purpose of Mark the Deacon's *Life of Porphyry*, it shows that the total number of Christians in the city of Gaza, its port, and hinterland was still only a small percentage of the overall population (even after Porphyry's successful fifth-century conversions).[55] Even if there were more Christians in Gaza's port than in the city and its hinterland, their numbers were still low. Gaza is a good example of the religious diversity that could, and certainly did, exist in many coastal regions during this period. Despite the religious conflict depicted in Mark the Deacon's account, the different communities in the city, port and hinterland must have interacted regularly and with relative success. The city would not otherwise have managed to maintain the profitable, thriving status that it did. One has to wonder how many other ports and coastal trading cities—without corresponding hagiographical accounts—were in a similar religious situation in Late Antiquity.[56]

There is a variety of evidence from other parts of the empire showing that not only did people of different religions learn to work together, but they also lived side by side. In his catalogue of Late Antique art, Kurt Weitzmann discusses workshops that produced objects for both Christian and non-Christian customers. On occasion, members of the same family commissioned objects of both types; as evidenced by burial sites containing distinctly Christian and pagan religious items belonging to

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onerosis quin etiam militiae seu diversis officiis facultatum et personalium munerum obligatos, suis ordinibus, cuiuscumque sectae sint, inhaerere censemus, ne videamur hominibus execrandis contumelioso ambitu inmunitatis beneficium praestitisse, quos volumus huius constitutionis auctoritate damnari.'

[55] Rapp, *Mark the Deacon*, 54. Rapp notes that by 403, Porphyry had increased the number of converts to Christianity in Gaza, but 'even then, Christianity still represented a minority of little over four percent of the total population of Gaza'; B. Caseau, 'Sacred Landscapes', in Bowersock et al., *Interpreting Late Antiquity*, 32; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 227-8.

[56] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 234 suggests that the process of Christianisation was slower in Gaza than other major cities; however, it is difficult to believe that Gaza was a complete anomaly during this period.

different members of the same family.[57] In his account of a fourth-century riot between Christians and pagans in Alexandria, Socrates mentions friends and relatives (siblings, parents and children) who were on different sides of the religious divide.[58] Everyday life during this period was clearly not as comprehensively Christian in nature, nor as religiously segregrated, as most of the surviving sources have chosen to portray it.

Averil Cameron reminds us that after the death of Constantine I, Christians and pagans were still competing for supremacy. It was in the interests of the Church that Christian writers overstated the success of Christianity while downplaying the evidence for the strength and persistence of paganism.[59] It is also public worship that dominates the textual sources, rather than private and less overt acts of devotion. Kim Bowes observes that scholarship to date has focused on the evidence of public worship in capital cities of the empire at the expense of the personal and private. Thus, the history of this period 'has been the history of an ascendant, imperially sponsored Christian public'.[60] Trombley notices an emphasis in the legislation on the eradication of public sacrifice and other public expressions of paganism. He suggests that private practices were allowed to continue largely unhindered.[61] MacMullen highlights that much of the existing evidence of the unconverted masses has survived only by accident. These men and women:

> had no prominent visible community … no access to great images or altars, gathered in no crowds for their various festivals, (and) persisted without the means of openly expressing their religion.[62]

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[57] Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, Introduction, 25-6.

[58] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.2 (*PG* 67.380-1): 'Τότε δὲ, οἷα ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις φιλεῖ γίνεσθαι, οὐδὲ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων ἀπέσχοντο; ἀλλὰ καὶ φίλος φίλον ἔπληξε, καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν, καὶ γονεῖς παῖδας, καὶ ἀλλήλων πρὸς φόνον ὥρμησαν.'

[59] Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 13; Cameron, *Christian Conversion in Late Antiquity*, 8-10.

[60] Bowes, *Private Worship*, 61-2.

[61] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion,* vol. 1, 5 and 24. See also B. Croke and J. Harries, *Religious Conflict in Fourth-Century Rome* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1982), 25; Maas, *John Lydus*, 69-70; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion,* vol. 2, 52; and Trombley, *Paganism in the Greek World*, 335-9. In the sixth century, Justinian began to target those engaged in private non-Christian sacrifice and other practices.

[62] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 61.

The destruction of temples and other cult sites undoubtedly led many to grow disillusioned with their traditional gods. Yet large numbers of people still saw the benefits in praying to their traditional deities, particularly in small communities and in natural environments where the presence of a god must have seemed all the more potent.[63] For the most part, this is not captured in our literary sources.

The religious claims of the extant textual sources have strongly influenced current thought and scholarship.[64] Using epigraphic evidence from Africa, MacMullen demonstrates that inscriptions provide a very different view of the religious environment in the fifth century than the one obtained from written accounts. In the epigraphy, traditional Graeco-Roman religious subjects, deities and sentiments far outweigh Christian ones.[65] In recent decades, scholars have begun to examine a broader range of evidence, and new enquiries are proving that religious sentiment was not the same 'on the ground' as it was in the churches, residences and palaces of the elite. Unfortunately, sailors, sea-merchants and other mariners have largely slipped through the cracks of this recent scholarship. The religious sentiments of the maritime community should not be determined by the beliefs and interests of the elite. Although the religious diversity of sailors and sea-merchants has largely gone unnoticed, it should be of interest to historians. After all, unlike members of remote rural communities, sailors and sea-merchants carried their beliefs and practices with them into ports all over the Mediterranean.

The 'Christianisation' of Maritime Beliefs, Rituals and Life at Sea

When John Chrysostom highlighted the presence of Christianity in commercial and maritime environments like ships, marketplaces and harbours, he did so with reason.[66] It was largely through these environments that new beliefs and ideas spread, and the diffusion of Christianity throughout the Roman world was no

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[63] Sauer, *Archaeology of Religious Hatred*, 132 and 142. Also see Trombley, *Paganism in the Greek World*, 339 for a discussion of the persistence of pagan practices as part of village life. He highlights that such practices and rituals 'functioned as the symbol and instrument of the community's solidarity'.

[64] Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 69; Cameron, *Christian Conversion in Late Antiquity*, 10.

[65] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism,* 5 and 10-11.

[66] John Chrysostom, *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles quod Christus sit Deus* 2 (*PG* 48.814) and 9 (*PG* 48.826).

exception. A range of literary references to Christian sailors has already been highlighted. There is also archaeological evidence confirming that many sailors carried Christian objects, ideas and practices with them on their voyages. The anchors, lamps and amphorae inscribed with crosses and other Christian symbols discovered in Istanbul must have belonged to Christian mariners using the city's ports from the fourth to seventh centuries.[67] Fourth and fifth-century epigraphic evidence of Christian sentiment amongst both locals and sailors has also been found in several of the Aegean islands, including Melos, Euboia, Rhodes, Thasos and Delos.[68]

Bass and van Doorninck located several objects on the seventh-century Yassi Ada shipwreck with a cross or other Christian symbol inscribed on them—including lamps, an incense burner and weighing implements.[69] These authors suggest that the incense burner may have been utilised for an on-board religious ritual, with some of the lamps used as votive offerings at shrines along the ship's route.[70] Lamps had been used for dedicatory purposes for centuries, and ones like those on the Yassi Ada shipwreck were being offered by non-Christians at shrines and other cult locations in this period as well. One such area is the bath complex, cave and natural spring known as the Fountain of the Lamps in Corinth. Votives and deposits were placed at the site by Christians and pagans alike as late as the end of the sixth century.[71] Lamps and other items left at this popular cult site contain graffiti

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[67] Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 years.* Catalogue items include Y57, Y68 and Y20 from the Theodosian Harbour and Ü13 and Ü25 from the port region of Scutari (Üsküdar).

[68] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 184 and 329-31. For Thasos, one example is IG XII, 8 582: '✠ εὔπλοια τῷ Ποσειδ[ῶνι] [κ]ạὶ τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ τῷ ṛ-— — — — — — Πεγασω(?)'. For Delos, an example is ID 2585 (SEG 34.789) in P. Bruneau and P. Fraisse, 'Pressoirs Déliens', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 108, 2 (1984), 726 and 729.

[69] Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 189, 202-4, 211-8, and 267; Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 454-5.

[70] Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 189 and 267. See Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 176, 205, 270-1, 319, 329-30, and 455 for other shipwrecks carrying used lamps, censers and a variety of possible ritual objects. Such ships include: *Plemmirio A* (fourth or fifth century); *Port Vendres A* (early fifth century); *Yassi Ada B* (late fourth/early fifth century); *Port Miou* (early fifth century); *Mateille A* (early fifth century); *Favaritx* (fifth or sixth century); and *Grazel B* (seventh century).

[71] R.M. Rothaus, 'Nymphs and Angels', in *Corinth, the First City of Greece: An Urban History of Late Antique Cult and Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 126-30; MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 61; A. Lazaridou, ed., *Transition to Christianity. Art of Late Antiquity 3rd-7th Century AD* (New York: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, 2011), 153, Catalogue item 121 (from the fourth/early fifth century).

petitioning Christian angels and Graeco-Roman nymphs, both of which were thought to inhabit the sacred springs there.[72]

Similar Christian and non-Christian spirits continued to be worshipped at a range of sites centred around natural bodies of water, including springs, lakes, rivers and the sea. In addition to lamps, coins were also commonly used as votive offerings to aquatic deities and nymphs.[73] The continued popularity of aquatic sites for purposes of worship highlights the powerful and ethereal qualities attributed to natural bodies of water. Sauer views the votive deposits located at springs as 'a mirror of religious vibrancy and diversity' in this period.[74] Although many of these sites were rededicated to Christian saints during Late Antiquity, the sources indicate that veneration of their traditional deities also continued.[75] In a letter to Augustine of Hippo at the end of the fourth century, Publicola asks whether Christians should even drink from fountains and wells, or use baths in places where sacrifice was offered and pagan activity still occurred.[76] The River Nile provides another interesting

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[72] Rothaus, *Nymphs and Angels*, 128-9.

[73] Refer to Chapter 4, footnote 40 for the coins dedicated to the nymphs of the Aquae Calidae in Thrace. Other examples include sixth-century coins found on the riverbank of the River Liri at Minturnae where there was a statue of a nymph: I. Houghtalin 'Roman Coins from the River Liri III', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 145 (1984), 67-9 and 78; B.W. Frier and A. Parker, 'Roman Coins from the River Liri', *Numismatic Chronicle*, 10 (1970), 89; S.D. Ruegg, 'The Underwater Excavation in the Garigliano River: Final Report 1982. The Roman Port and Bridge at Minturnae, Italy', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 12, 3 (1983), 209. Coins dated to the early fifth century have also been located at the spring in the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath: J. Gerrard, 'A Possible Late Roman Silver "Hoard" from Bath', *Britannia* XXXVI (2005), 371-2. A hoard of coins was discovered in a niche for a statue in the bath and fountain complex in Corinth (at the 'Fountain of the Lamps' site). These coins were all dated between 527 and 565: J.A. Dengate, 'Coin Hoards from the Gymnasium Area at Corinth', *Hesperia*, 50, 2 (1981), 175-6. Also see Sauer, *Religious Rituals at Springs*, 505-50.

[74] Sauer, *Religious Rituals and Springs*, 516.

[75] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism,* 145. Two examples included by MacMullen are: John Chrysostom, *De Pseudoprophetis et Falsis Doctoribus* (*PG* 59.561) which mentions torches being lit and lamps hung around streams and springs, and Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.3 (*PG* 67.939-42) which refers to shrines of the Archangel Michael. Michael used sacred waters to heal his patrons, and one of his shrines was near the sea in Constantinople. Also see Sauer, *Archaeology of Religious Hatred*, 142 and Sauer, *Religious Rituals at Springs*, 505-50.

[76] Augustine, *Ep.* 46.14-5 (*PL* 33.183). English trans. in R. Teske, S.J., *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century. Letters 1-99*, ed. J.E. Rotelle, O.S.A (New York: New City Press: 2001), 185: 'Si licet de fonte bibere, vel de puteo ubi de sacrificio aliquid missum est? Si de puteo qui in templo est, et desertum factum est debet christianus bibere? Si in templo quo colitur idolum, puteus ibi sit vel fons, et nihil ibi factum sit in eodem puteo vel fonte, si debet haurire aquam inde christianus, et bibere? Si christianus debet in balneis lavare, vel in thermis, in quibus sacrificatur simulacris? Si christianus debet in balneis, quibus in die festo suo Pagani loti sunt, lavare, sive cum ipsis, sive sine ipsis?' Similar questions were being asked by Christian preachers several centuries earlier as well. See Tertullian, *De Idololatria*, in *Tertullianus, De Idololatria. Critical Text, Translation and Commentary*, trans. and comm. J.H. Waszink and J.C.M. van Winden (Leiden: Brill, 1987).

example. This life-sustaining waterway was important to the people living around it and to all those in the empire who were fed by its produce, regardless of their beliefs.[77] Libanius captures this in his description of the seasonal flooding of the Nile and the sacrifices and feasts that were maintained in its honour.[78] A sixth-century papyrus from Antinoe in Egypt contains a hymn to the Nile and suggests that there was still a touch of ambiguity to the river's veneration at this time. In the incantation, the river is addressed as the traditional river deity, yet an invocation to Christ at the end of the prayer also gives it a Christian flavour.[79] Graffiti on the island of Prote also shows that there was a hint of religious ambiguity in the dedications made by sailors during this period.[80] Converted sailors certainly would have retained some of their pre-Christian maritime beliefs and practices.

Various maritime rituals were appropriated by Christian sailors from their pagan counterparts. Many of the supplications made by Christian seafarers at the start and end of every voyage, and at times of trouble at sea, were similar to those made by non-Christian mariners; the prayers were just addressed differently. Before embarking on a ship to Constantinople, Gregory of Nazianzus prayed for God to send him an angel who would travel by his side, guide and protect him.[81] Comparable requests for divine aid had been made by seafarers for centuries. Procopius and Evagrius record that when the flagship of Belisarius' army was preparing to sail for Carthage in 533, the bishop Epiphanius blessed the ship with

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[77] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 205-40.

[78] Libanius, *Or*. 30.35 (Norman, *Selected Orations,* 2.130-33): 'Οὐ τοίνυν τῇ Ῥώμῃ μόνον ἐφυλάχθη τὸ θύειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ τοῦ Σαράπιδος τῇ πολλῇ τε καὶ μεγάλῃ καὶ πλῆθος κεκτημένῃ νεῶν, δι' ὧν κοινὴν ἁπάντων ἀνθρώπων ποιεῖ τὴν τῆς Αἰγύπτου φοράν. αὐτὴ δὲ ἔργον τοῦ Νείλου, τὸν Νεῖλον δὲ ἑστιᾷ ἀναβαίνειν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρούρας πείθουσα, ὧν οὐ ποιουμένων ὅτε τε χρὴ καὶ παρ' ὧν, οὐδ' ἂν αὐτὸς ἐθελήσειεν.'

[79] Maguire, *Good Life*, 250 contains a translation of the text.

[80] Examples include IG V, 1 1554: '☩εὔπ<λ>οια πολ[ίῳ] ... ΚΥΠ …' in *Inscriptiones Graecae. Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae*, Volume V, *Inscriptiones Laconiae, Messeniae, Arcadiae*, Part I, ed. W. Kolbe (Berlin, Georgium Reimerum, 1913) and SEG 11.1008: '☩Μνίσθιτι Κ(ύρι)ε. Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς νικᾷ' in Hondius, J.J.E, 'SEG 11-1005-1024a. Prote, Tituli rupestres', *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, eds. A. Chaniotis, T. Corsten, N. Papazarkadas and R.A Tybout (Leiden: Brill, 1950). Also see D. Feissel and A. Philippidis-Braat, 'Inventaires en vue d'un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance, III: Inscriptions du Péloponnèse (à l'exception de Mistra), *Travaux et Memoires*, 9 (1985), 373.

[81] Greg. Naz. *Carm*. 2.1.3 (*Itinerarium Constantinopolitanum*) (*PG* 37.1020-1). English trans. in B.E. Daley, S.J., *Gregory of Nazianzus* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 169: 'ὦ Θεοῦ Λόγε ... Ἀλλά μοί τιν' ἀγγέλων πέμποις ὁδηγὸν, δεξιὸν παραστάτην ...'.

his prayers for the safety and success of the expedition.[82] Many of Epiphanius' non-Christian forebears had sanctified ships preparing for battle in similar rituals. Procopius mentions a shrine that the Carthaginians had set up by the seashore to a holy man named Cyprian. Sailors were clearly venerating this shrine when they sailed to and from Carthage, with mariners naming local weather phenomena after the holy man and burning lamps in his honour.[83] Prayers and religious symbols were also inscribed by seafarers on rocks or other natural objects at the shoreline. This practice continued amongst Christian sailors and can be seen in the crosses and Christograms inscribed on quarry rocks on the island of Proconnesus in the Sea of Marmara.[84] Inscriptions often requested fair sailing (εὔπλοια) for a vessel and its crew, passengers and cargo. Epigraphic evidence from Thasos in the Aegean demonstrates that these supplications remained common amongst Christians and non-Christians alike.[85]

In Antiquity, sailors practiced a range of acts to protect themselves and their vessels from danger. Illustrations, names of deities and apotropaic eyes were carved, painted or attached to the hulls of ships. Coins were placed under the mast-steps of sailing vessels, and amulets and votive objects were carried for protection.[86] Christian sailors maintained the same types of practices and behaviours. In addition to the inscription of Christian symbols on portable items and natural objects, crosses or other Christian symbols were carved or painted on the hulls of their ships. Amulets

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[82] Procop. *Vand.* 3.12.1-2 (Dewing, 2.110-1); Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 4.16 (Bidez and Parmentier, 166). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 216.

[83] Procop. *Vand.* 3.21.17-23 (Dewing, 2.180-3): 'καὶ αὐτῷ νεών τινα λόγου πολλοῦ ἄξιον πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ἱδρυσάμενοι παρὰ τὴν τῆς θαλάσσης ἠιόνα τά τε ἄλλα ἐξοσιοῦνται καὶ ἄγουσιν ἑορτὴν ἣν δὴ Κυπριανὰ καλοῦσι, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸν χειμῶνα οἱ ναῦται, οὗπερ ἐγὼ ἀρτίως ἐμνήσθην, ὁμωνύμως τῇ πανηγύρει προσαγορεύειν εἰώθασιν'.

[84] Karagianni, *Harbour of Proconnesus*, 20.

[85] IG XII, 8 582 (refers to the ships, *Poseidon* and *Asklepios*), see Chapter 4, footnote 68; IG XII, 8 584 (*Demeter* and *Sarapis*): 'εὔπ[λοια τῇ Δή] μητρι κ[αὶ τῷ] Σεράπι κα[ὶ ναυκλήρῳ(?)] …' ; IG XII, 8 585 (*Artemis*) : 'εὔπλοιά σοι, Ἄρτεμι, ναυκλήρου Εὐτύχου Μυτιληναίου, προναυκλήρου Τυχικοῦ, κυβερνήτου Ἰουκούνδου.' See P. Bernard and F. Salviat, 'Inscriptions De Thasos', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique,* 86 (1962), 609-11 and Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 183-4 and 329-31. On pages 183-4, Trombley discusses εὔπλοια or fair sailing formulae which utilised pre-Christian formulae, sometimes with a cross added to them. Several of these inscriptions can be dated to as late as the fifth century. Trombley suggests that some of the ships named in these inscriptions had pagan owners or backers.

[86] Casson, *Ships and Seamanship*, 132, 354-9 (and Figures 119, 125, 129, 130 and 132); D.N. Carlson, 'Seeing the Sea: Ships' Eyes in Classical Greece', *Hesperia*, 78 (2009), 347-65; D.N. Carlson, 'Mast-Step Coins among the Romans', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 36, 2 (2007), 317-24.

and votives were worn or carried by Christian mariners and other sea travellers.[87] Maguire stresses that the function of amulets and other charms remained the same regardless of the religious beliefs of the owner; they were carried to protect a person from all harm, thus ensuring their safety, health and prosperity.[88] Any symbols, names and pictures attached to the hull or mast of a ship also served a similar purpose. Sailors knew that they were dependent on the sea, winds and other natural phenomena for their personal safety and the survival of their ships. Fear and reverence for these natural forces did not change with religion, nor did the risks of sea travel abate if a mariner converted to Christianity.

The sea acted as a conduit for the transmission of spiritual beliefs. Religion and the sea were inextricably linked. This relationship is clear in the number of places of worship that were immediately visible to ships entering harbours. There are many examples of monumental statues and temples that overlooked the great harbours of Antiquity. The great shrine of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima is one example; the temple stood over the city's harbour and had grand staircases leading to and from the water. The shrine could be seen by those entering the port and from ships far out to sea.[89] Geoffrey Rickman notes that temples like that of Caesarea Maritima are 'reminders of the enduring importance of religion in sea-going life and of the striking monumentality and image-making possible in harbor areas'.[90] When the religious structures in and near harbour areas of Roman cities became increasingly Christian in orientation, this did not change. The temple at Caesarea Maritima and its harbours underwent reconstruction during the sixth century and the shrine appears to have been replaced by a Christian church.[91] The church would have been seen as an emblem of faith and place of worship to many of the sailors who approached the city after this time, just as the temple had been before it. The

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[87] See Vitaliotis, *Sea, Faith, and Beliefs*, 90-1; K. Raveh and S.A. Kingsley, 'The Status of Dor in Late Antiquity: A Maritime Perspective', *The Biblical Archaeologist* (1991), 54 (4), 202.
[88] H. Maguire, 'Personal Adornment: Glory, Vainglory, and Insecurity' in Lazaridou, *Transition to Christianity*), 44.
[89] L.C. Kahn, 'King Herod's Temple of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima', in *Caesarea Maritima. A Retrospective after Two Millennia*, eds. A. Holum and K.G. Raban (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 131-4 and 145.
[90] G. Rickman, 'Ports, Ships, and Power in the Roman World', in Hohlfelder, *The Maritime World of Ancient Rome*, 15.
[91] Kahn, *King Herod's Temple*, 134; J. Patrich, *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Caesarea Maritima* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99 and 102-5.

structure also continued to function as an imperial symbol; only now it had become a Christian imperial symbol.

Christian churches erected at the entrances to city harbours, or close to the shoreline where they were clearly visible from the sea, acted as visual reminders of the new imperially sanctioned Roman religion. These structures functioned as impressive indicators of the prominence of Christianity in coastal cities. There is little doubt that many sailors visited coastal churches as places of devotion when they were on shore (even those mariners who were not wholeheartedly Christian). Such churches and shrines demonstrate the image promoted by the ruling and ecclesiastical elite for their cities and towns. One needs look no further than Constantinople for a striking example of a coastal city with a Christian imperial profile that was on display to all who approached by sea. To this day, Justinian's reconstructed version of Hagia Sophia is visible to those approaching the city via the Asian shoreline or from the Bosporus. The great church alone was a breathtaking declaration of Constantinople's Christian and imperial status. Yet there were numerous other churches and sanctuaries built close to the shoreline in the eastern capital as well. The Martyrium of Saint Menas–a patron of pilgrims and merchants–was on the city's northeastern shore. According to the *Patria*, this church was originally a sanctuary of Poseidon.[92] Procopius' *Buildings* describes Constantinople as a city on the water, her shoreline garlanded by shrines and churches.[93] Some of these places of worship, such as the shrine of the martyr Anthimus, were so close to the water that they were caressed by the gentle waves of the surrounding seas.[94] Procopius also records that

[92] *Patria* 1.13 (trans. Berger, 8-9): 'Ποσειδῶνος δὲ τέμενος πρὸς τῇ θαλάττῃ ἀνήγειρεν, ἔνθα νῦν ὁ τοῦ μάρτυρος Μηνᾶ οἶκος διακεκόσμηται.' Also see *Patria* 1.51 and 3.2 (trans. Berger, 30-1 and 140-1); *Notitia* 233 (Mathews, 89); and A.P. Kazhdan and N.P. Ševčenko, 'Menas' in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2, ed. A.P. Kazhdan (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1339.

[93] Examples of coastal shrines and sanctuaries in Constantinople that are mentioned by Procopius include the Church of Eirene (Hagia Eirene), the Church of the Virgin at Blachernae and the Shrines of Saints Panteleemon, Lawrence, Nicholas and Priscus. See Procop. *Aed.* 1.5.1 (Dewing, 56-7), 1.6.1-4 and 1.7.1-2 (Dewing, 60-5), and 1.9.11 (Dewing, 76-9).

[94] Procop. *Aed.* 1.6.9-12 (Dewing, 64-5): 'Τοῦ δὲ κόλπου ἐπὶ θάτερα μαρτύριον οἰκοδομησάμενος βασιλεὺς οὐ πρότερον ὂν ἀνέθηκεν Ἀνθίμῳ μάρτυρι παρ' αὐτὴν μάλιστα τὴν τοῦ κόλπου ἠϊόνα. καὶ τὰ μὲν κράσπεδα τοῦ ἱεροῦ πραϋνομένῃ ἐπικλυζόμενα τῇ τῆς θαλάσσης ἐπιρροῇ τὸ εὔχαρι ἐπιεικῶς ἔχει. οὐ γὰρ ξὺν θορύβῳ τὸ κλυδώνιον ἐπανεστηκὸς εἶτα εἰς τοὺς ἐκείνῃ λίθους ἀράσσεται, οὐδὲ μεγάλα τὸ κῦμα ἠχῆσαν, οἷά γε τὰ θαλάττια, καὶ σχιζόμενον ἀποκρίνεται εἰς εἶδος ἁφρῶδες, ἀλλὰ πρόεισι μὲν προσηνές, σιωπηλὸν δὲ ὂν ἐπιψαύει τῆς γῆς, ἀναστρέφει δὲ μόνον.'

one of the churches dedicated to the Archangel Michael had its own beach market and stone quay.[95]

Despite the large number of churches listed by Procopius in Constantinople in the sixth century, the *Notitia* records the presence of far fewer Christian buildings a century earlier. The *Notitia* mentions a total of between twelve and fourteen churches in the city at that time, suggesting that Constantinople had a less conspicuous Christian appearance in the early fifth century.[96] It was certainly between these two periods that Constantinople presented a more Christian façade to outsiders, including those who arrived into the city by sea. Procopius attributes much of this church building and image-making to Justinian; however, the process of 'Christianising' the city had undoubtedly begun prior to his reign. Nevertheless, Justinian did construct or repair a large number of buildings in Constantinople, including a number of Christian places of worship, many of which have survived to this day. Magdalino notes that the area around the Harbour of Julian was significantly redeveloped during the second half of the sixth century, when a good deal of maritime trade was re-directed from the city's northern to southern harbours. In the same period, several churches close to the Harbour of Julian were either built or restored.[97] Several sources note the proximity of the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus and other sanctuaries to the Harbour of Julian.[98] A statue of the emperor Julian himself stood in the middle of this harbour until around 534, when it was replaced by a cross.[99] Certainly by the middle of the sixth century, ships approaching Constantinople from any direction would have been confronted with the image of a thoroughly Christian imperial and maritime metropolis.

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[95] Procop. *Aed.* 1.8.2-14 (Dewing, 70-3): 'πετρῶν ἐμβολῇ τὴν ἐκείνῃ ἀκτὴν εἴσω περιελίξας ἐς σκέπας λιμένος, τὴν τῆς θαλάττης ἠϊόνα ἐς μεταμόρφωσιν ἀγορᾶς ἤνεγκεν. ἡσύχιος γὰρ ὑπεράγαν ἐνταῦθα ἡ θάλασσα οὖσα τῇ γῇ ἐπικοινοῦται συναλλαγάς. ταῖς τε ἀκάτοις οἱ τῶν ἐμπόρων θαλάσσιοι παρὰ τὴν ἐμβολὴν τῶν πετρῶν ὁρμισάμενοι συμβάλλονται τοῖς ἐγγείοις ἀπὸ τῶν καταστρωμάτων τὰ ἐμπολήματα. αὐλὴ μετὰ τὴν παραλίαν ἀγορὰν τοῦ νεὼ πρόκειται.'

[96] *Notitia* 242-3 (Matthews, 97-9). There are fourteen churches noted in the Summary of the *Notitia*, but only twelve are mentioned in the separate Region entries.

[97] Magdalino, *Medieval Constantinople,* 21-2.

[98] The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus was only 300 metres from the Harbour of Julian. *Patria* 3.39 (trans. Berger, 162-3) records that the church was built at the site of a small harbour. Also see van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 275 and 288.

[99] Malalas, *Chron.* 18.82 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 284).

The prominent harbour locations of places of worship–in both Roman and non-Roman ports–reminded sailors and merchants of the religion that enjoyed imperial Roman approval. In the Black Sea port of Tomis, a fifth-century Christian church stood at the mouth of the city's harbour, welcoming all travellers by sea.[100] According to Zachariah of Mytilene, there was a shrine to the Theotokos just inside the harbour at Berytus.[101] On the Aegean island of Paros, a sixth-century church was situated near the harbour of Paroikia. A Constantinopolitan official visiting Paros in the tenth century records that the church was only a short distance from the harbour and still visible despite being dilapidated in his day.[102] The impressive sixth-century basilica that stood in the centre of the western harbour area of Corinth is another example. It was a striking symbol of Roman imperial–and Christian–authority, and would have been seen by all those who entered the busy port.[103] Churches in the northern Red Sea region confirm the presence of Christian sailors and merchants in non-Roman port cities in the fifth century, and such sanctuaries enabled Roman Christians to worship away from home.[104] They were also expressions of diplomacy and political will. Philostorgius records that a Roman embassy under the emperor Constantius requested permission from the Himyarite king to build a Christian church in his lands; both for the use of Romans who travelled there and for any locals who wished to convert to Christianity. Philostorgius says that Constantius' ultimate goals were to convert the Himyarites to Christianity and to encourage trading activity between the two states.[105] Nevertheless, the diplomatic function of these churches does not

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[100] Canarache, *Archaeological Museum*, 11.

[101] Zachariah, *Vita Severi* 63, in *Two Early Lives of Severos, Patriarch of Antioch*, trans. S. Brock and B. Fitzgerald (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 58.

[102] *Life of St Theoktitse of Lesbos* 5-6, trans. A.C. Hero, in *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation,* ed. A-M. Talbot (Washington D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 2006), 103. The church is the Cathedral of the Panagia Ekatonpiliani/Katapoliani. For a description of the church as it can be seen today, see P. Hetherington, *The Greek Islands. Guide to the Byzantine and Medieval Buildings and their Art* (London: Quiller Press, 2001), 234-6. Hetherington notes that, despite earlier claims, the architecture suggests that the cathedral was constructed in the sixth century.

[103] W. Caraher, 'The Ambivalent Landscape of Christian Corinth: The Archaeology of Place, Theology, and Politics in a Late Antique City', in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, eds. S.J. Friesen, S.A. James and D.N. Schowalter (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 144-53. Caraher says that such monumental ecclesiastical buildings demonstrate imperial investment in a region, rather than any substantial increase in size of the Christian population. Also refer to W.R. Caraher, 'Epigraphy, Liturgy, and Imperial Policy on the Justinianic Isthmus', in *Bridge of the Untiring Sea: The Corinthian Isthmus from Prehistory to Late Antiquity*, Hesperia Supplement 48, eds. E.R. Gebhard and T.E. Gregory (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies, 2015), 327-340.

[104] Power, *Red Sea,* 27.

[105] Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.4 (*PG* 65.481-4). Also see Philostorgius, *Church History* (trans. Amidon, 40).

diminish their significance as places of worship for travelling Roman sailors and merchants.

Archaeological evidence from Constantinople shows that smaller shrines and churches were often placed in areas easily accessible to those entering and leaving the city. Shrines situated near the city's gates and sea walls enabled access to places of worship from the harbours and jetties along both the northern and southern coastlines.[106] The Gate of Eugenius in the north-east of Constantinople was in close proximity to both the Prosphorion and Neorion Harbours, and a number of other quays.[107] Van Millingen highlights that Hagia Sophia was easily reached from this gate, so perhaps some mariners were visiting the great church as soon as they arrived into the city.[108] As a rule, however, it would have been the smaller, more discreet places of worship that were visited by the average sailor and merchant, both in the eastern capital and other coastal cities and towns.

Sailors and merchants also needed spiritual support when they were at sea. Various Christian maritime saints came to act as patrons for seafarers and these divinised beings could be called upon both on land and at sea. The devotion of seafarers to maritime saints was not a new phenomenon. Christian saints became very popular amongst seafarers for the same reasons that maritime deities had always been worshipped; they assumed protective roles similar to those of the old maritime gods. The worship of maritime saints is an excellent example of the way in which centuries-old maritime traditions could be adapted to suit the new Christian worldview. Of course, the veneration of saints and martyrs was not limited to the maritime realm. In his extensive discussion of the cults of saints and martyrs, MacMullen says that the growth in these cults coincided with the increase in conversions to Christianity. MacMullen says that converts to Christianity:

> … found themselves without gods … conversion and the repudiation of their old patrons and rescuers among the divine ranks had left an emptiness, a loneliness in times of trouble, not comfortably to be filled

[106] Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 196, 227-9, and 249.
[107] *Notitia* 232-4 (Matthews, 104-7); Procop. *Aed.* 1.11.24-7 (Dewing, 94-7).
[108] Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 227.

by the Power preached from urban pulpits.[109]

It was in response to this new-found emptiness that the cults of saints and martyrs gained such traction. Contemporaries were certainly aware that the worship of Christian saints was akin to that of Graeco-Roman deities. Several Christian commentators noted the similarity in rites and votive offerings across religions.[110] On ships at sea—a considerable distance from urban church pulpits—Christian sailors must have felt the loneliness of the loss of their traditional gods even more so than their non-maritime contemporaries. The sea was unrelenting, and sailors needed someone to pray and offer votives to on every single voyage.

There were sailors who continued to venerate traditional maritime deities whilst at sea, but others replaced these gods with the Christian saints who they believed had their best interests at heart. Nicholas of Sion was one such saint. The sixth-century monk Nicholas was originally popular in ports along the Lycian coastline in southern Asia Minor where he was said to be able to calm local winds. His popularity spread throughout the Mediterranean, carried on ships sailing the Lycian coastline to and from Constantinople and Alexandria, and then to ports further afield.[111] Nicholas became known as a holy man who could aid seafarers by controlling sea-winds, just as his pagan counterparts had been wont to do.[112] Phocas of Sinope was also known to assist seamen in storms. Hailing from the Black Sea region, this saint was particularly favoured by seafarers sailing these waters, and he too became popular further afield. According to Asterius of Amasea, Phocas was eulogised by sailors in seas and harbours everywhere.[113] Isidore also became a patron of seafarers, and

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[109] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 120-1.

[110] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 115-6 and 121-2.

[111] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 184; Vitaliotis, *Sea, Faith, and Beliefs*, 90-1.

[112] *Vita Nicolai Sionitae*, 30-2 and 35-8 in *Hagios Nikolaos der Heilige Nikolaos in der Griechischen Kirche*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. G. Anrich (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 25-32. English trans. in I. Ševčenko and N. Patterson Ševčenko, *The Life of St Nicholas of Sion* (Brookline: Hellenic College Press, 1984), 50-7 and 63-7. Refer to Ševčenko and Ševčenko, 13-4 for a discussion of the blurring of the lives of Saints Nicholas of Sion and Nicholas of Myra by later Byzantine historiographers.

[113] Asterius of Amasea, *Hom. IX in S. Phocam* (*PG* 40.309): 'Ναῦται δὲ καὶ πλωτῆρες οἱ πανταχοῦ, οὐχ οἱ τὸν Εὔξεινον διαπλέοντες Πόντον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ τὸν Ἀδρίαν τέμνοντες, καὶ ὑπὲρ Αἰγαίου φερόμενοι, καὶ ὅσοι τὸν Ὠκεανὸν πλέουσι τὸν Ἑσπέριον, καὶ τοῖς Ἑῴοις κόλποις ἐνθαλαττεύουσι, τὰ συνήθη κελεύσματα, οἷς τοῦ πλοῦ τὸν πόνον προσαναπαύουσιν, εἰς καινὴν τοῦ μάρτυρος μετέβαλον εὐφημίαν …'. English trans. in C. Datema, *Asterius of Amasea. Homilies I-XIV. Text, Introduction, and Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 125. Also see Vitaliotis, *Sea, Faith, and Beliefs*, 90-1 for a discussion of the importance of votive offerings in the veneration of Phocas and Nicholas.

his shrine on the island of Chios became a popular site for pilgrims and sailors. Pilgrim tokens depicting Phocas and Isidore highlight their seafaring roles, with miniature ships becoming a recognisable feature of their iconography.[114] Divine beings with the ability to calm winds and waves had always been of particular appeal to mariners, who had to regularly deal with these unpredictable and dangerous elements. There were also other saints and holy men who were not afraid to visit mariners and travellers when they were at sea. When a Rhodian shipowner and sailor called George could no longer wait in Constantinople to be cured by Saint Artemios, he was told not to give up hope, as the saint regularly visited the faithful at sea.[115] On another sailor's voyage from Constantinople to Gaul, Artemios appeared on the ship in the likeness of the ship's captain. The other sailors on board were overjoyed; they believed that the saint's presence on their ship symbolised good fortune and fair sailing.[116]

One of the most popular Christian figures revered by sailors, merchants and other seafarers was the Virgin Mary. Mary was adored by people from all walks of life, but it is her role as a protector of seafarers that is of most relevance in this discussion. In the Akathistos Hymn—probably written in Constantinople in the late fifth or early sixth century—Mary is the ship for those who seek salvation, and a 'haven for the seafarers of life'.[117] Proclus of Constantinople refers to Mary as a ship, a harbour and even as the sea itself.[118] Proclus writes of Mary's influence over land and sea, and of her role in protecting travellers:

> See how both the earth and the sea serve as the Virgin's escorts: the one spreading forth her waves calmly beneath the ships, the other

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[114] G. Vikan, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), 7-8, 20-1 (see Figures 7 and 8 for the pilgrim token of Phocas and the token stamp of Isidore).

[115] For George the Rhodian's story, see *Miracles of St Artemios* 35 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 184-9). For miracles in which Saint Artemios visited sailors at sea, see *Miracles* 5, 14 and 27 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 84-7, 102-3 and 152-5). *Miracles* 39 and 40 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 200-11) record the saint visiting a man on the island of Plateia in north-western Greece, with all concerned assuming the saint had sailed to the island.

[116] *Miracles of St Artemios*, 27 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 152-5).

[117] *Akathistos Hymn* 17, in *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, ed. and trans. L.M. Peltomaa (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 14-5. This particular address to Mary is 'χαῖρε, ὁλκὰς τῶν θελόντων σωθῆναι. χαῖρε, λιμὴν τῶν τοῦ βίου πλωτήρων.' Also see B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2006), 14-16.

[118] Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 133.

conducting the steps of travelers on their way unhindered.[119]

Seafaring imagery became very popular in the language of Christianity; however, the use of such language to describe Mary was not just rhetoric. She became a well-known protector of sailors with mariners leaving votive offerings to her in thanks for successful voyages, just as they had to other sea goddesses for centuries.[120] The Theotokos was seen as the guardian of Constantinople, much like the city's Tyche, and it was largely from the eastern capital that her religious and cultural power emanated.[121] Mary's role in protecting Constantinople and its surrounding waters was cemented during the Avar siege of 626, when legend has it that she intervened in a Slavic naval attack on the city, sinking a number of boats in the Golden Horn near Blachernai.[122] Similarly, when Heraclius sailed from Africa to Constantinople in 610 to re-take the city, he was accompanied by the Theotokos herself. According to Theophanes, Heraclius had placed the Virgin's image on the mast of his ship.[123]

The cult of Mary was heavily influenced by the cults of other important goddesses of the contemporary Graeco-Roman world into which it was born.[124] Indeed, Mary had

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[119] Proclus, *Homil.* 1, 8-10 (Constas, 136-7): 'ἰδοὺ γὰρ γῆ καὶ θάλαττα δορυφορεῖ τῇ παρθένῳ, ἥ μὲν τὰ νῶτα ταῖς ὁλκάσιν γαληνῶς ὑφαπλώσασα, ἥ δὲ τὰ ἴχνη τῶν βαδιζόντων ἀκωλύτως παραπέμπουσα.'

[120] R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Ancient World* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 272.

[121] *Akathistos Hymn, Prooemium* 2 (Peltomaa, 3): 'Τῇ ὑπερμάχῳ στρατηγῷ τὰ νικητήρια ὡς λυτρωθεῖσα τῶν δεινῶν εὐχαριστήρια ἀναγράφω σοι ἡ πόλις σου, θεοτόκε.'; J. Herrin, 'The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium', *Past and Present,* 169 (2000), 14; S. MacCormack, 'Roma, Constantinopolis, the Emperor, and His Genius', *The Classical Quarterly, New Series,* 25, 1 (1975), 149; Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 12-7; M. Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 66.

[122] *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 14, year 16 (Dindorf, 724). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, 178-9; A. Cameron, 'Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium', *Past and Present,* 84 (1979), 5-6; B.V. Pentcheva, 'The Supernatural Protector of Constantinople: The Virgin and her Icons in the Tradition of the Avar Siege', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26 (2002), 4-11; P. Speck, 'The Virgin's Help for Constantinople', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 27 (2003), 267-8; Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 37 and 62. The legend tells that Mary appeared on the city walls and engaged in battle with the enemy.

[123] Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 6102 (de Boor, 298). English trans. in Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes*, 427: ''Ηράκλειος ἀπὸ Ἀφρικῆς φέρων πλοῖα καστελλωμένα, ἔχοντα ἐν τοῖς καταρτίοις κιβώτια καὶ εἰκόνας τῆς Θεομήτορος …'. Also see W. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 113; Caseau, *Sacred Landscapes*, 44; Pentcheva, *Supernatural Protector of Constantinople*, 15-6; Speck, *Virgin's Help for Constantinople*, 266-7; Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 38. Speck and Pentcheva note that sources other than Theophanes state that the image of the Virgin was on Heraclius' ship, not specifically on the mast.

[124] Benko, *Virgin Goddess*; Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 122; Witt, *Isis*, 273-8. See Peltomaa, *Image of the Virgin Mary* for a different view. In pages 122-3, Peltomaa betrays a strong desire to remove any Graeco-Roman or pagan influence from the development of Christianity or the rise of the cult of

much in common with popular female deities of the maritime world, including Isis whom she eventually displaced as the 'Lady of the Sea'. The cult of Mary spread rapidly throughout the Mediterranean—as the cult of Isis had done centuries earlier—largely thanks to sailors and merchants who carried their devotion with them on their voyages. Stephen Benko believes that the rapid growth in Mary's cult can be attributed to her resemblance to popular pagan goddesses. Indeed, the iconography of Mary has striking similarities to the iconography of several Graeco-Roman goddesses.[125] Mary was given many of the same titles as her Graeco-Roman counterparts; she became the mistress of land and sea, the all-holy virgin, and the mother of grain, to name only a few of her adopted appellations.[126] Sites which originally housed the shrines of traditional deities were also re-used as places of Marian worship. Rites and festivals devoted to goddesses continue to this day under the auspices of the Virgin.[127] The association of Mary with traditional goddesses was noted by Nestorius in the fifth century, and many of his contemporaries also saw the similarities.[128] Mary's identification with both the great goddesses of Antiquity and local female deities made it easy for worshippers to transfer their allegiance to her. In the maritime realm, Mary became a protectress of seafarers known as the 'Star of the Sea', and eventually dethroned each of the popular goddesses who had fulfilled the same role for centuries.[129] Nevertheless, many traditional maritime deities were in no hurry to abandon their place on the decks of ships. In fact, there is substantial evidence to show that some deities

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Mary. Given that Christianity developed in the cultural context of the Graeco-Roman world, Peltomaa's arguments are unconvincing.

[125] Benko, *Virgin Goddess*, 212, 264 and 268; Witt, *Isis*, 278.

[126] Benko, *Virgin Goddess*, 216; Rubin, *Mother of God*, 67; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 158-60; Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 133.

[127] Benko, *Virgin Goddess*, 213 and 216; Witt, *Isis*, 274-7. One example of a rite or festival provided by Witt is the Feast of the Dormition (or Koemesis) at Castoria in Greece. This festival includes a procession of the icon of the Panagia, which is then transported over water to a nearby chapel where it is exposed for eight days under a tree before being returned home. These events mirror the festival of Isis at Philae. Indeed, one of Mary's adopted titles was 'Mary of Philae' and Mary of Philae was addressed in texts using identical formulae to that of Isis of Philae. See Rubin, *Mother of God*, 41-2.

[128] Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople,* 133, n.8; Witt, *Isis*, 276; Benko, *Virgin Goddess*, 257. There was a long history of dispute regarding Artemis' prominence over Mary in Ephesus, and Benko notes that when Mary was being proclaimed 'Theotokos' at the Council of Ephesus, the locals would have seen little difference between the two divinities. Also see Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity*, 33 and V. Limberis, 'The Council of Ephesos. The Demise of the See of Ephesos and the Rise of the Cult of the Theotokos', in *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to its Archaeology, Religion and Culture*, ed. H. Koester (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 321-40.

[129] Rubin, *Mother of God*, 178-9, 350 and 357.

continued to be revered by sailors and other travellers well into the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

Graeco-Roman Deities and Customs on Ships and in Ports

Trombley astutely observes that nomadic workers on the land were difficult to convert to Christianity due to their 'migratory habits';[130] it was simply impossible for monks to follow them around to ensure they were not engaging in outlawed practices. It was surely the same for the men who lived and worked at sea. Ships and sailors were constantly on the move, and it would have been impossible for the authorities to police shipboard activities. It is also unlikely that many port officials were interested in the religious orientation of the sailors arriving into their ports. In a study of ethnic and religious hostility in Early Modern port cities, Barrington Moore demonstrates that maritime trading centres actually promote greater ethnic and religious tolerance. Using the example of a Dutch buyer and a Muslim shipowner at the ports of Amsterdam, Barrington Moore stresses that both men:

> … are interested in one thing and only one, the price of the cargo … The bargaining process strips away and defines as irrelevant to their concerns, the color of the crew's skin and their religion.[131]

Port officials and local merchants in Late Antiquity would have been driven by the same financial interests and concerns, and thus were unlikely to be bothered by a sailor's ethnicity or religion; their primary interest was in the goods that a sailor or merchant carried with him into port.[132] Take for example Procopius' criticism of the greed of Justinian's port officials and customs officers; their job was to maximise the profits made on shipping entering and leaving Constantinople, not to police the religious orientation of the crews on board.[133]

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[130] Trombley, *Paganism in the Greek World*, 348.
[131] B. Moore, Jr., 'Ethnic and Religious Hostilities in Early Modern Port Cities', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 14, 4 (2001), 689.
[132] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 23-4.
[133] Procop. *Anec.* 25.4-10 (Dewing, 290-5).

Numerous laws in the *Codex Theodosianus* show that there were government officials throughout the empire who were either non-Christians themselves, or willing to overlook the religious practices of others.[134] Tertullus, Urban Prefect of Rome, was still offering public sacrifice to the Dioscuri at their temple in Ostia in the late fourth century, when his city's grain supply was threatened by adverse weather and raging seas.[135] Clearly, these popular maritime gods were still considered potent enough to calm the winds and seas at that time, allowing the all-important grain ships to enter Rome and refill the public granaries. The continued maritime popularity of the Dioscuri is confirmed by their prominent position in a residential mosaic from Ostia, dated to the fifth century.[136] Prominent statesmen like Themistius were still able to remain openly non-Christian in the late fourth century in Rome and Constantinople. During his career, Themistius acted as Urban Prefect of Constantinople, wielding considerable power in the city. Part of his role as prefect would have included supervising and regulating merchant activity.[137] It would be fair to assume that Themistius and Tertullus—and their staff and others like them—were not turning away non-Christian sailors and merchants from the ports of Constantinople and Rome. Nor would many of their successors. In 580, Sebastianus, Urban Prefect of Constantinople, was accused of consorting with pagans when he acquitted men who had supposedly conducted non-Christian practices in the city.[138] These few examples suggest that despite the changing religious climate and increased intolerance towards non-Christians over the course of time, there were always port officials and local merchants willing to ignore the religious inclinations of the shippers who carried goods into their cities.

There is a range of evidence demonstrating that the sailors and merchants who sailed into Constantinople and other Roman port cities continued to harbour traditional beliefs. Alongside objects containing Christian symbolism, many non-Christian finds have also been discovered in the excavations of Istanbul's port areas.

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[134] Examples include *Cod. Theo.* 16.5.46 (Ravenna) (*CJR* 1.870); *Cod. Theo.* 16.10.4 and 16.10.10 (Milan), 16.10.11 (Aquileia), 16.10.12-13 (Constantinople), 16.10.19.3 (Rome) (*CJR* 1.898-903).
[135] Amm. Marc., *History* 19.10, in *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Later Roman Empire (AD 354-378),* trans. W. Hamilton and intro. A. Wallace-Hadrill (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1986), 177-8.
[136] Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 65.
[137] Themistius, *Or.* 17 and *Or.* 34 (trans. Heather and Moncur, 299-304 and 310-33). Also see the commentary by Heather and Moncur on 298-9 and 304-10 regarding Themistius' prefecture.
[138] Maas, *John Lydus*, 73.

Examples include lamps, relief sculpture, icon fragments, lead plaques with figures and inscriptions, and steelyard weights of the goddess Athena.[139] The variety of non-Christian objects found in the excavations shows that paganism continued to exert its influence in Constantinople's maritime neighbourhoods well into the Byzantine period.[140] Archaeological evidence of non-Christian seafarers visiting the Harbour of Theodosius is particularly interesting. The large granaries and other facilities located nearby suggest that this port serviced grain ships and other merchant vessels from Alexandria.[141] Alexandrian sailors have generally been viewed as unequivocally Christian during this period, and yet the archaeological evidence would tend to suggest otherwise.[142]

Theodoret records that the demolition of the Sarapeion in Alexandria abolished paganism throughout the whole world and led to the destruction of pagan temples and shrines both on land and at sea.[143] Theodoret's claim may be an exaggeration, but it does recognise that devotion to Graeco-Roman gods still existed in both terrestrial and maritime settings. Christianity had undoubtedly become the dominant religion in Alexandria a century after the demise of the Sarapeion; yet, as Trombley notes, 'many villages even within walking distance of Alexandria were only nominally Christian' by the end of the fifth century.[144] Not far from Alexandria, at the ports of Canopus and Menouthis, there was a complex of traditional shrines that Rufinus confirms were extremely popular in his day.[145] Cyril of Alexandria went to great lengths to expel the very popular Isis of Menouthis from these same ports.[146] Despite

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[139] Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 years.* Catalogue items from the Theodosian Harbour and port region of Scutari (Üsküdar) include Y9, Y36, Ü14, Ü15, Ü24 and Ü25 (pottery lamps with non-Christian iconography), Y43 (an amulet-like lead plaque covered with inscriptions and figures), Y58 (a pottery sherd depicting a Nike), Y61 (a ceramic sherd depicting a non-Christian temple and bust), and Y18 (an Athena steelyard/counterpoise weight). Weights of Athena will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

[140] Toksoy, *Faith in Yenikapi*, 230-1.

[141] Refer to Figure 1. *Notitia* 236-7 (Matthews, 92-3); Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 19-20; Magdalino, *Maritime Neighborhoods*, 211; Mango, *Commercial Map*, 192-3.

[142] Refer to Introduction, footnote 50. Examples include Gregory, *Vox Populi*; Haas, *Alexandria*, 59; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 184 and 192.

[143] Theodoret, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.22 (*PG* 82.1247): '... Οὕτω δὴ πανταχῶ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης τὰ τῶν εἰδώλων κατελύθη τεμένη'.

[144] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 207.

[145] Rufinus, *Hist. Eccl.* 11.26 (trans. Amidon, 84-5). Rufinus was writing in the early fifth century.

[146] P. Athanassiadi, 'Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 113 (1993), 15; MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 124; D. Montserrat, 'Pilgrimage to the Shrine of SS Cyrus and John at Menouthis in Late Antiquity', in

Cyril's efforts, the cult of Isis persisted in this region, with several sources noting that her temple enjoyed a Mediterranean-wide reputation until its idols and other sacred objects were destroyed by the authorities at the end of the fifth century.[147] Isis' shrine at Menouthis was one of healing, but according to inscriptions from Ostia, she was also a favourite of seafarers.[148] Before Cyril intervened, sailors would have passed Isis of Menouthis' shrine when sailing in and out of Alexandria. It is easy to imagine some of them making a quick prayer of thanks or supplication to her as they sailed by. Synesius' account of his voyage to Cyrene also highlights a number of traditional shrines near Alexandria that were still important landmarks for mariners in his day. These include the Temple of Poseidon and the Tomb of Osiris.[149] It is worth reiterating here that the crew and passengers on Synesius' ship—who numbered well over fifty—were not predominantly Christian.[150] Traditional riverine cults also remained popular along the Nile River.[151] In the *Life of Shenoute,* a local pagan priest named Kronos owned a fleet of riverboats and thus presumably conducted merchant activity on the river in addition to his priestly duties.[152] There were many seagoing and river vessels sailing to and from Alexandria and her nearby ports. Clearly not all of the men on these vessels, or in these ports, were Christian.

There were pockets of non-Christian sailors, merchants and coastal dwellers all over the Mediterranean. When the Hellenic philosophers Isidore and Damascius travelled

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Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt, ed. D. Frankfurter (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 257-9; Witt, *Isis*, 186.

[147] Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 471 (trans. Cave Wright, 418-21); Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 17-38 (trans. Brock and Fitzgerald, 39-47); Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 7-19.

[148] VS403 ('Εἴσιδι Φαρίᾳ, Εἴσιν τὴν ἐν Μενουθὶ, ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας, τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, αὐτοκράτορος, Ἀντωνείνου …') and 556a ('Τὸ ξόανον τοῦ, ἁγιοτάτου, θεοῦ Σαράπιδος, [σ]ὺν τῇ Ἴσιδι [τῇ ἐ]ν Μενουθι ...') in L. Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 202 and 258.

[149] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640): '… ὅστις πρῶτον μὲν ἐπειδὴ τὸν παρ'ὑμῖν τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος νεὼν περιεκάμψαμεν, ἄρας ὅλοις ἱστίος ἡξίου πλεῖν εὐθὺ Ταφοσίριδος …'.

[150] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG*. 640-5). On several occasions, Synesius refers to the religious affiliations of the crew and passengers of his ship, as well as the deities they called upon whilst at sea.

[151] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 211-3. Trombley makes an interesting point that although there may have been converts to Christianity in the villages along the Nile prior to the sixth-seventh centuries, there is no evidence at all to suggest that traditional cults like those of Isis, Pan-Min, and Kronos-Petbe vanished at the same time. Also see Trombley, *Paganism in the Greek World*, 346.

[152] See Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 216-7 (Besa, *Life of Shenoute*, 46.11-14 and 46.31-35). For a full discussion of the *Life of Shenoute*, see Trombley, 207-19. For an English translation see Besa, *The Life of Shenoute*, trans. D.N. Bell (Collegeville, Minnesota: Cistercian Studies, 1983). It should also be noted that there is abundant evidence for Christian boat-owners who engaged in merchant activity along the Nile. See Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 36-7.

from Alexandria to Athens in the late fifth century, they clearly had no trouble finding merchant ships to transport them. The philosophers may have had shipping contacts, but their non-Christian beliefs clearly did not pose a problem for the sailors who transported them. Damascius records that there were strong, welcoming pagan communities in a number of coastal locations.[153] Indeed, a range of literary evidence confirms that several large Palestinian and Near Eastern coastal trading cities, including Ascalon and Berytus, had substantial and influential non-Christian populations well into this period.[154] The overt presence of non-Christian elements in a Roman city like Berytus is quite striking, given its important administrative and legal role. The elite in Berytus is usually credited with the preservation of traditional pagan beliefs and practices; however, it would seem that there were non-Christians at all levels of society. According to the *Life of Matrona*, Berytus was a city overrun by heathens.[155] A demon who visited Matrona referred to the city as its mistress and as a most hospitable place.[156] Linda Jones Hall calls Late Antique Berytus a city 'marked by a unique blend of Phoenician identity, persistent paganism, and a changeable class structure'.[157]

Non-Christian practices certainly prevailed in Berytus' harbour. Zachariah notes that when the pagan Chrysaorios hired a ship to sail from the city in the late fifth century, he consulted astrologers and appealed to the gods to ensure fair sailing conditions. Chrysaorios gave instructions for the ship to leave at the astrologers' predicted time.[158] Clearly, the shipmaster was content to sail from the city's port under the auspices of traditional deities. After the earthquake of 551, which destroyed much of Berytus, John Barbucallus wrote a poignant epigram warning mariners to avoid the

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[153] Damascius, *Isid*. 8.133-8.144D (trans. Athanassiadi, 297-317). The cities that welcomed the philosophers include Gaza, Ephesus, Athens and the island of Samos.

[154] See Trombley *Hellenic Religion*, vol.1, 197 and Trombley *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 30-1 and 44. For Berytus, refer to Zachariah, *Vita Severi* (trans. Brock and Fitzgerald) and L. Jones Hall, 'Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in Late Antique Berytus, City of the Roman Law Schools', in ed. L. Jones Hall, *Confrontation in Late Antiquity: Imperial Presentation and Regional Adaptation* (Cambridge: Orchard Academic, 2003), 167-81.

[155] *Life of St. Matrona of Perge* 18-22 (trans. Featherstone, in Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 37-41).

[156] *Life of St. Matrona of Perge* 17 (trans. Featherstone, in Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 36-7).

[157] Jones Hall, *Ethnicity, Religion, and Class*, 167-8. Jones Hall also notes that a similar situation existed in other important Roman Phoenician cities like Tyre, Sidon and Heliopolis.

[158] Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 101 (trans. Brock and Fitzgerald, 73-4).

city's harbour. The poet cautioned that the harbour had been abandoned by Poseidon and the hospitable gods, who were no longer there to watch over ships entering its waters.[159] Whether or not John Barbucallus himself believed in these deities, this epigram perfectly captures the superstitious nature of mariners sailing the waters of Late Antiquity. Pagan sacrifice was also still being conducted prior to voyages undertaken from Antioch's port. When Libanius complained about the sons of prominent men leaving the city to avoid civic duty, he noted that these young men were approaching merchants in the city's port to enquire as to their prospects in Rome. Once they had secured passage on a merchant vessel, these young men sacrificed to the gods to ensure the safety of their journeys.[160] Thus, even in the port of Antioch—a city renowned for its Christian sentiment—there was substantial and overt non-Christian religious activity going on.[161]

There is also evidence in other port cities of Graeco-Roman cults remaining in favour. In the large harbourside building which housed the agora of Tomis, various shops sold imported goods, anchors, weights and other shipboard items. In one of these rooms, a bust of Hermes—patron of merchants and commerce—was found. Another storeroom had an inscription over the door with the name Hermes, and in another, a statuette of Herakles was excavated. This harbour-front complex was built in the fourth century, but it was still in use until the fifth century when all of these items were preserved in-situ as the result of an earthquake.[162] On the opposite side

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[159] *Anth. Gr.* 9.427 (Paton, 3.236-7): 'Ναυτίλε, μὴ στήσῃς δρόμον ὁλκάδος εἵνεκ' ἐμεῖο· λαίφεα μὴ λύσῃς· χέρσον ὁρᾷς λιμένα. τύμβος ὅλη γενόμην· ἕτερον δ' ἐς ἀπενθέα χῶρον δουπήσεις κώπῃ νηὸς ἐπερχομένης. τοῦτο Ποσειδάωνι φίλον, ξενίοις τε θεοῖσιν· χαίρεθ' ἁλιπλανέες, χαίρεθ' ὁδοιπλανέες.'

[160] Libanius, *Or.* 48.28-9 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 2.446-7): 'οἱ δὲ εἰς τὸν λιμένα κατέβησαν εἰδότων, παραινούντων, παρακαλούντων, ἐπαινούντων, ἴσως τι καὶ προστιθέντων ἀργύριον τῷ παρὰ τῶν γονέων. εἶτ' ἐρωτῶσι τοὺς ἐπαναπλέοντας τῶν ἐμπόρων εἰ τῶν λαμπόντων εἰσίν, εἰ τῶν εὐδοκιμούντων, εἰ φίλοι γεγόνασί σφισιν οἱ τὴν Ῥώμην ἄγοντες, εἰ δι' ἐκείνων αὐτοῖς ἀρχαὶ πλησίον. κἂν ἀκούσωσί τι τοιοῦτον οἷον βούλοιντ' ἄν, εὐθυμία <καὶ> κρότος καὶ γεγόνασιν ἡδίους. κἂν ᾖ δῆλον αὐτοῖς, ὡς οὓς ἔχουσιν ἐν τῇ βουλῇ παῖδας, ὑπ' ἐκείνοις ἔσονται καὶ θεραπεύσουσιν υἱεῖς πατέρων τοῖς αὐτῶν πατράσι δεδουλευκότων, θύουσι τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ συγχαίρουσιν αὐτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς ἀπεσταλκόσι καὶ τοῖς ἀπεσταλμένοις καὶ λέγουσι δὴ σαφῶς ὡς ἐπανήξουσι τῇ βουλῇ φοβεροί.'

[161] J.L. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4. Maxwell notes that in Chrysostom's time, there were vibrant Jewish and pagan communities living alongside the Christians in Antioch and its surrounds.

[162] Canarache, *Mosaic-Floored Edifice*, 7-8. Canarache suggests that the inscription referring to Hermes could be the name of the shopowner or the god. Either way, it suggests a non-Christian shopowner/s.

of the Roman world, we read of a Gallo-Roman who boarded a crowded ship bound for Italy from Gaul in the sixth century. Gregory of Tours records that the man was the only Christian on the ship. In a storm at sea, all of the people on board invoked their own gods, including Minerva, Mercury and Venus.[163] Further east, in towns like Patras in the north-western Peloponnese, epigraphic evidence from the fourth century suggests that Christians were in the minority, both in the seaport and the town's hinterland.[164] There is certainly epigraphic evidence from this region to suggest that this was no longer the case by the sixth century;[165] however, Trombley notes that there were some coastal regions of Greece, particularly in the Peloponnese, that may have maintained substantial non-Christian populations well into the ninth and tenth centuries.[166]

Mariners regularly visited islands on their travels. Most sea journeys would have involved at least one island stopover, and ships on medium to long-haul voyages would have stopped at several island ports along their way. Islands of the Aegean, Ionian and eastern Mediterranean Seas were important nodes in the vast maritime network of Late Antiquity. Nearly all merchant ships travelling throughout the eastern empire had to cross these waters.[167] Several of the island cities and towns in this region were slow to adopt Christianity, and mariners would have come into regular contact with such communities. Trombley has compiled epigraphic evidence from a number of islands, including Melos (Milos), Kerkyra (modern Corfu) and Rhodes,

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[163] Gregory of Tours, *Vitae patrum* 17.5 (*PL* 71.1083).

[164] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 329-30. Trombley refers to a funerary inscription from Patras, *CIG* 4 9298, which addresses 'those who are Christians and fear God' ('Χριστιανοὶ ὄν[τ]ες καὶ τὸν [θ]εὸν [φο]βούμενοι').

[165] See, for example, the Christian funerary inscriptions in Feissel and Philippidis-Braat, *Inventaires en vue d'un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance*, 267-395.

[166] Trombley, *Paganism in the Greek World*, 347-9. Trombley's examples include Maina (in the southern Peloponnese) whose inhabitants were not converted to Christianity until the late ninth century (according to *De administrando imperio*, 236); the harbour and Spartan hinterland of Hierax which, according to the tenth-century historian Joseph Genesios (82-3), had its own pagan inhabitants; and the *Vita Niconis* (*BHG* 366) which mentions pagan villages in the southern Pelopponese. However, Anagnostakis and Kaldellis raise concerns about the reliability of the tenth-century sources dealing with this region of Greece. See I. Anagnostakis and A. Kaldellis, 'The Textual Sources for the Peloponnese, A.D. 582-959: Their Creative Engagement with Ancient Literature', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 54 (2014), 105-135.

[167] Themistius, *Or.* 1.6d-7a (Dindorf, 7). English trans. in Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 83-4: 'οὐκ εὔχεται ναύκληρος οὐδε ἔμπορος τὸν Χαλκιδικὸν πορθμὸν εὔδιον εἶναι—πόσοι γὰρ αὐτον ἤ πλέουσιν ἤ θεῶνται; —ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον καὶ τὸν Αἰγαῖον καὶ τὸν Ἰόνιον, οὕς πᾶσαι τέμνουσιν αἱ φορτίδες.'

and he demonstrates the tenacity of Graeco-Roman beliefs amongst some of their inhabitants.[168]

Inscriptions made by shipowners, shipmasters and other mariners have been found in Aliki on the island of Thasos. Many of these inscriptions confirm the persistence of non-Christian sentiments amongst the maritime community, and include details of vessels named after traditional deities, and supplications to the gods for favourable voyages.[169] Inscriptions and graffiti in the bay of Grammata on the island of Syros (a bay that was accessible only by sea) also show that sailors continued to make requests to the gods for fair sailing when they rested at anchorages like this.[170] Such areas were never, or rarely ever, under the direct gaze of the authorities, and thus traditional maritime practices and customs could survive easily in them. These smaller nodes in the larger maritime network of Late Antiquity acted as important refuges for ships and sailors, regardless of their spiritual orientation. Sailors and merchants are often credited with helping to spread Christianity across the seas, to islands, and to remote coastal communities. Yet sailors and merchants also helped to preserve interest in traditional Graeco-Roman gods in these same environments.

The continued contemporary observance of traditional Graeco-Roman maritime rituals and practices may also be recorded in Late Antique poetry. Numerous fifth and sixth-century epigrams, written by men like Agathias, Paulus Silentiarius,

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[168] Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 329-30. Trombley records inscriptions from Melos that were written by first-generation Christians in the fourth century (refer to Trombley n.237). He provides an English translation of an inscription of the fifth-century bishop, Jovian, who talks of his sacking of the altars and temples in his community in Palaiopolis on Kerkyra (refer to Trombley n.240). Presumably these temples were still in use at this time. Trombley also points to a number of pagan inscriptions, including one in a church (formerly a temple) at Lindos in Rhodes, where pagan priests were still making dedications in the fourth century (refer to Trombley n.242).

[169] Refer to Chapter 2, footnote 176, and Chapter 4, footnotes 68 and 85 for the text of inscriptions IG XII,8 581-5.

[170] Examples include IG XII,5 712,22: '[πα]ρ[ὰ] τῷ θεῷ ἐμνήσθη [Α]ἴλ. Φλαβι[α]νὸς πλ[έ]ων ἐν τ[ῇ] — — — — — — — [κ]αὶ————————— εὔπλοια'; IG XII,5 712,25: 'εὔπλοια τῷ φιλοσεράπι τῷ(?) Ἰουλιανῷ Ἀρτεμισίου Μειλησίω'; IG XII,5 712,26: 'εὔ[π]λοια τῷ(?) Ἡρακλει Μειλησίῳ τῷ Θεοπόμπου''; IG XII,5 712,28: 'εὔπλοια σοι Εὐτύχη'; IG XII,5 712,29: 'εὔπλοια Ὀκτ[α]υ(ίᾳ)(?) Τύχει(?)'; IG XII,5 712,31: 'Ἀσκληπιὲ μέγα [σῶσον Εὐ]τύχη …. ἁγν[ά]ς'; IG XII,5 712,33: 'εὐχ[α]ριστοῦ[μ]εν τῷ [Ἀσκ]ληπιῷ οἱ ἐν τῷ Μειλη- <σιακῷ>(?) [πλοίῳ Ἡρα]κλείδ[ης — —] εὔπλοια σοι————————'; IG XII,5 712,27 and 30. All of these inscriptions are from *Inscriptiones Graecae. Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae*, Volume XII, *Inscriptiones Insularum Maris Aegaei Praeter Delum*, Part V *Inscriptiones Cycladum,* part 1, ed. F. Hiller de Gaertringen (Berlin, Georgium Reimerum, 1903). See pages 197-201 of this volume for the further information on these inscriptions and graffiti, including the Greek text, drawings, the location of the inscriptions and graffiti, and their dating.

Theaetetus, Julianus the Prefect and Macedonius the Consul exhort mariners to take courage and to trust their maritime gods. Epigrams record practices such as sailors making small sacrifices to deities like Priapus,[171] fishermen dedicating their nets and other fishing implements to nymphs and gods like Hermes,[172] merchants offering their ships to Poseidon,[173] and mariners avoiding contemporary harbours abandoned by the gods of the sea.[174] The importance of Fortune's favour for ships and their crews is also captured in epigrams of this period.[175] Epigraphic evidence already presented in this chapter confirms that some of these maritime customs were indeed contemporary practices, including the dedication of ships to Poseidon, and the association of Hermes with fishermen and merchants.[176] Maritime imagery became popular across a range of genres, but there was more to this than literary or artistic flourish. The adoption of maritime themes and the recording of traditional maritime practices also reflected a contemporary reality. In the fifth and sixth centuries, when poets were writing of maritime superstitions and rituals, many captains and sailors were still practicing these same rituals and petitioning their traditional deities for the safety of their vessels and voyages.

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[171] Examples include *Anth. Gr.* 10.14: 'θάρσει, ναυτιλίης ἐμπείραμε, κἂν παρὰ Σύρτιν, κἂν παρὰ Σικελικὴν ποντοπορῆς κροκάλην· μοῦνον ἐνορμίταο παραὶ βωμοῖσι Πριήπουἢ σκάρον ἢ βῶκας φλέξον ἐρευθομένους', 10.15: '… λαίφεα κυρτώσαντες ἀταρβέες ἕξιτε, ναῦται, πρηὺν ἀμοιβαίης φόρτον ἐς ἐμπορίης. πιστὸς νηυσὶ Πρίηπος, ἐπεὶ Θέτιν εὔχομαι εἶναιἡμετέρου πατρὸς ξεινοδόκον Βρομίου' and 10.16: 'ναυτίλε, ποντομέδοντι καὶ ὁρμοδοτῆρι Πριήπωτευθίδος ἢ τρίγλης ἀνθεμόεσσαν ἴτυν, ἢ σκάρον αὐδήεντα παραὶ βωμοῖσι πυρώσας, ἄτρομος Ἰονίου τέρμα θαλασσοπόρει' (Paton, 4.10-13).

[172] *Anth. Gr.* 6.25: 'Κεκμηὼς χρονίῃ πεπονηκότα δίκτυα θήρῃἄνθετο ταῖς Νύμφαις ταῦτα γέρων Κινύρης … εἰ δ' ὀλίγου δώρου τελέθει δόσις, οὐ τόδε, Νύμφαι, μέμψις, ἐπεὶ Κινύρου ταῦθ' ὅλος ἔσκε βίος', 6.29: ''Ερμείῃ Βαίτων ἁλινηχέος ὄργανα τέχνηςἄνθετο, δειμαίνων γήραος ἀδρανίην· ἄγκυραν, γυρόν τε λίθον, σπυρίδας θ' ἅμα φελλῷ, ἄγκιστρον, κώπην, καὶ λίνα καὶ δόνακας' and 6.27-8 (Paton, 1.310-13).

[173] *Anth. Gr.* 6.69: 'Νῆα Ποσειδάωνι πολύπλανος ἄνθετο Κράντας, ἔμπεδον ἐς νηοῦ πέζαν ἐρεισάμενος …' and 6.70: 'Νῆά σοι, ὦ πόντου βασιλεῦ καὶ κοίρανε γαίης, ἀντίθεμαι Κράντας, μηκέτι τεγγομένην, νῆα, πολυπλανέων ἀνέμων πτερόν, ἧς ἔπι δειλὸςπολλάκις ὠϊσάμην εἰσελάαν Ἀΐδῃ …' (Paton, 1.336-7).

[174] *Anth. Gr.* 9.427 (Paton, 3.236-7). Refer to Chapter 4, footnote 159 for the Greek text of this epigram which refers to the contemporary destruction of the harbour of Berytus by an earthquake in 551.

[175] *Anth. Gr.* 7.584: 'πλῶε, Μαλειάων ἄκρα φυλασσόμενος· αἰεὶ δ' εὐπλοίην μεθέποις φίλος· ἢν δέ τι ῥέξῃἄλλο Τύχη, τούτων ἀντιάσαις χαρίτων' (Paton, 2.312-3).

[176] Refer to Chapter 4, footnote 68 for an inscription dedicating a ship to Poseidon, and Chapter 4, footnote 162 for an inscription and bust of Hermes in a merchant's store in the port of Tomis.

Female Deities and their Special Place in the Hearts of Sailors and Merchants: Isis, Tyche and Athena

Female deities, in particular, stood firm in port areas, coastal neighbourhoods and on the decks of Roman ships. The Virgin Mary became the new Lady of the Sea, both to Christian mariners and non-mariners alike. Nevertheless, it took considerable time for Mary to comprehensively displace many of the Graeco-Roman maritime goddesses who survived in the hearts and minds of sailors and merchants. Isis, the all-powerful mistress of navigation,[177] was one of the deities still being invoked by sailors well into the sixth century. As Isis Pelagia (Isis of the Sea), she had guided ships into Roman ports and protected the grain trade for centuries.[178] As such, those involved in maritime activity would have been loath to give up her protection, and Isis did indeed prove a difficult goddess to dethrone. Eventually—and not coincidentally—followers of Isis were able to identify her with Mary, who became capable of everything that Isis had traditionally been able to do. Isis Pelagia's standard iconography has the goddess standing on the deck of a ship, in lieu of the mast, with her mantle billowing around her as the sail (see Figures 4 and 6). It was on the mast of his ship that Heraclius supposedly placed the icon of the Theotokos when he sailed towards Constantinople in the early seventh century.[179] By this time, Isis' role at the mast and on the decks of Roman ships had perhaps finally been superseded, but until then, she survived both on land and at sea.

There is good evidence from the fourth and fifth centuries of the continued worship of Isis in places like Aphrodisias in Caria, Alexandria, Philae and in other parts of Egypt.[180] Isis was also openly worshipped in the streets of Rome at the end of the fourth century. Her festivals were publicly documented in the Roman Calendar of

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[177] T.A. Brady, *Sarapis and Isis - Collected Essays* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1978), 7-8 and 43.

[178] P. Bruneau, 'Isis Pelagia à Délos', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 85 (1961), 435-46. Bruneau uses the term 'Isis of the Sea' for all Isis' various incarnations as a maritime goddess (including Isis *Pelagia*, Isis *Euploia*, Isis *Pharia*, and Isis *Fortuna*).

[179] Refer to Chapter 4, footnote 123.

[180] For evidence of surviving Isiac cult, see Athanassiadi, *Persecution and Response*, 13-15; R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1981), 120; Haas, *Alexandria*, 149 and 327; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 12, 15, and 137; Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 11-5 and 220-231; R. Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 128; Witt, *Isis*, 62, 94, and 242.

Figure 4 (top). Relief of Isis Pelagia from Delos. Delos A3187 (Image taken from P. Bruneau, 'Isis Pelagia à Délos', *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 85 (1961), 437).

Figures 5 and 6 (bottom). Coin of Antoninus Pius from Alexandria (Image taken from E.R. Williams, 'Isis Pelagia and a Roman Marble Matrix from the Athenian Agora', *Hesperia*, 54, 2 (1985), Plate 22c).

354, and in inscriptions, on coins and in the writing of men like Claudian.[181] A temple of Isis at the port of Ostia was restored by the Roman emperors Valens, Gratian and Valentinian in 376. The man in charge of the temple restoration was the prefect of the *annona*, who was also responsible for Rome's corn supply that year.[182] Clearly, Isis was still seen to watch over the fleet of ships transporting grain into Rome's ports at that stage. As such, it is implausible that by the late fourth century all of the shipowners, masters and crews of the *annona* would have turned their backs on Isis and her non-Christian counterparts. The cult of Isis was still visible everywhere.[183] Even in the subsequent decades, when all trace of official sanction for Isis had disappeared, her maritime cult persisted. The powerful maritime goddess remained popular on Roman ships and in ports for quite some time.

The complex of shrines to Isis and other Egyptian gods that survived until the late fifth century at Canopus and Menouthis near Alexandria are another good example of Isis' continued popularity in coastal and maritime contexts.[184] When Cyril of Alexandria attempted to rid this area of Isis' influence, he rededicated the shrine of Isis at Menouthis to two Christian saints. The shrine continued to act as a landmark for ships sailing to and from Alexandria after its appropriation as a Christian site. Reginald Witt argues that Cyril intended for the shrine to act as a visible declaration of the triumph of Christianity over Isis and the pagan gods in this region.[185] Isis had always filled a maritime role in Canopus, protecting the town's harbour and all of the

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[181] A. Alföldi, *A Festival of Isis in Rome under the Christian Emperors of the IVth Century* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1937); Claudian, *On the Fourth Consulship of the Emperor Honorius*, 8.570-80 in *Claudian. Panegyric on Probinus and Olybrius, Against Rufinus 1 and 2, War against Gildo, Against Eutropius 1 and 2, Fescennine Verses on the Marriage of Honorius, Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria, Panegyrics on the Third and Fourth Consulships of Honorius, Panegyric on the Consulship of Manlius, On Stilicho's Consulship 1*, trans. M. Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library 135 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), 328-9; Salzmann, *On Roman Time*, 77-8 and 170-2; Turcan, *Cults*, 128; VS434, 436, 447, 450, and 457 (Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum*, 212, 215-6 and 218); Witt, *Isis*, 149.

[182] VS562 (Vidman, *Sylloge inscriptionum*, 260); Witt, *Isis*, 180.

[183] For a discussion of the diffusion of Isis cult throughout the world from the fourth century BCE to the fourth century CE and the fact that, in the latter half of this period, it was somewhat contemporaneous with the diffusion of Christianity, see R.A. Wortham, 'Urban Networks, Deregulated Religious Markets, Cultural Continuity and the Diffusion of Isis Cult', *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion,* 18/2 (2006), 103-4 and 19. Wortham notes the presence of sanctuaries or shrines to Isis in sites ranging from Britain, Spain, Africa, Italy and Gaul, to Greece, the Balkans, and throughout Asia Minor.

[184] Refer to Chapter 4, footnotes 145-47.

[185] Witt, *Isis,* 186.

vessels entering it.[186] Haas believes that the cult statue of Isis safeguarded by the locals—until its destruction by the authorities at the end of the fifth century—was actually that of Isis Pelagia.[187] Isis was also still worshipped at the temple of Philae until Justinian had it closed down.[188] Philae was a substantial distance from the sea, but there was an annual celebration held there that involved the carriage of an image of Isis across the Nile on a boat. This celebration is relevant to the discussion of maritime practices as it is widely recognised as one of the major forerunners of the *Isidis Navigium* or πλοιαφέσια.[189] The *Isidis Navigium* was a Graeco-Roman festival that launched the sailing season each year by dedicating a symbolic ship to Isis, the mistress of navigation and inventor of the sail.[190] It is in the survival of this sailing festival that we see the most evidence of the enduring popularity of the maritime Isis.

In his *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius describes the *Isidis Navigium* as a festival of great fanfare.[191] Sallustius' revised version of Apuleius' novel was produced in Rome and Constantinople in the late fourth century, and Fulgentius of North Africa also refers to it as a work that was widely available in the late fifth century.[192] The *Metamorphoses* and its description of the sailing festival in Corinth were clearly still popular during this period. The *Isidis Navigium* is also depicted on commemorative coins that can be dated until at least the late fourth century. By this period, the sailing festival had become linked to the annual public vows of the emperor, and a series of coins were minted in Rome to celebrate it. The first series of these 'Festival of Isis' coins had imperial busts on the obverse and were minted until 380, showing that they were imperially sanctioned by Christian emperors. Subsequent issues of the

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[186] Dam. *Isid*. 3.53B (trans. Athanassiadi, 151).

[187] Haas, *Alexandria*, 329, n.118.

[188] Procop. *Pers*. 1.19.35-7 (Dewing, 1.186-9); Marinus, *Vita Procli*, 19 in *Marini, Vita Procli*, ed. J.F. Boissonade (Leipzig: Weigel, 1814), 16; Trombley, *Hellenic Relligion*, vol. 1, 314-5; Trombley, *Hellenic Relligion*, vol. 2, 225-231; Witt, *Isis*, 62.

[189] Witt, *Isis*, 62 and 165-6. Other sailing festivals held on Delos (where Isis Pelagia was very popular) would almost certainly have influenced the *Isidis Navigium* as well. See N. Robertson, *Festivals and Legends: The Formation of Greek Cities in the Light of the Public Ritual* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 120-30 and Turcan, *Cults,* 82.

[190] For Isis' maritime appellations, see Isidorus, *Hymn I*, in *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis*, trans. V.F. Vanderlip (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972), 17-9.

[191] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.7-17, in *Apuleius, Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass), vol. 2, Books 7-11*, ed. and trans. J.A. Hanson, Loeb Classical Library 453 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 250-69.

[192] Alföldi, *Festival of Isis*, 46; G. Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius. Apuleius and the Second Sophistic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 233; Fulgentius, *Mythologiae* 3.6, in *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, trans. L.G. Whitbread (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1971), 88-90.

coins had either the bust of Isis or Sarapis in place of the Roman emperor.[193] The vast majority of these commemorative coins depict either the *Isidis Navigium* or Isis Pelagia herself on the reverse.[194] The inclusion of the festival in the extant Codex-Calendar of 354 shows that it was still an official Roman celebration at this time, and its depiction on the coins confirms that it was state-sanctioned for at least another quarter of a century. It would appear that the sailing festival was removed from the official calendar around the same time as the imperial issue of the coins stopped.[195] However, the *Isidis Navigium* and Isis Pelagia continued to be commemorated on coins after 380, suggesting that the maritime festival and goddess remained popular despite their lack of imperial support. Of course, the removal of a festival from the official calendar does not signify that it was no longer celebrated. It is likely that the sailing festival of Isis remained popular with many people, including those who were most personally reliant on a successful sailing season each year. Indeed, many of the extant festival coins have been pierced, suggesting that they were worn or used as amulets or votives by sailors, sea travellers, and other festival-goers.[196]

There are a number of other references to the *Isidis Navigium* which demonstrate that it continued to be a popular festival in a variety of locations. In his late fourth or early fifth-century military manual, Vegetius refers to Isis' sailing festival as a contemporary event. Vegetius was widely travelled, and says that the festival was celebrated with annual games and public spectacles in many cities.[197] Ausonius confirms that the festival was still celebrated in Rome in his day.[198] In the late fifth-century work, *Mythologiae*, Fulgentius comments on his patron's personal knowledge of contemporary Egyptian worship of the ceremonial sailing vessel of

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[193] Alföldi, *Festival of Isis*, 11-7 and 25-30; Turcan, *Cults*, 123; Witt, *Isis*, 241.

[194] See the catalogue of coins in Alföldi, *Festival of Isis.*

[195] Salzmann, *On Roman Time*, 170 and 240-5.

[196] Alföldi, *Festival of Isis*, 25-30 and 46. See also S.A. Takacs, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 124; and Witt, *Isis*, 241. Takacs notes that the deities depicted on these coins may have been abstractions to some people, but for others they still held religious meaning. For all, these deities symbolised well-being, plenitude and stability for the empire.

[197] Veg. *Mil.* 4.39 (Lang, 158): 'Post natalem vero, ut ita dicam, navigationis, qui sollemni certamine publicoque spectaculo multarum urbium celebratur ... '.

[198] Ausonius, *Eclogue* 23.23-4 (*De feriis Romanis*), in *Ausonius, Vol. 1, Books 1-17*, trans. H.G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library 96 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 198-9: '… adiciam cultus peregrinaque sacra deorum, natalem Herculeum vel ratis Isiacae …'.

Isis.[199] This comment could be a reference either to the *Isidis Navigium* or to the celebration practiced at Philae. Isis' role in navigation was certainly well known in the sixth century. In a letter attributed to King Theodoric, Cassiodorus comfortably credits the goddess with the invention of the sail and the gift of swift sailing to the Romans.[200] John Lydus, writing in Constantinople in the mid-sixth century, also mentions the festival of Isis (πλοιαφέσια) as a traditional celebration to launch the sailing season each year. He refers to the festival as still popular in his day, noting that it was aptly held in honour of Isis, the goddess who was able to control the nature of the seas.[201] The fact that John Lydus, a civil servant under a Christian administration, was even aware of the contemporary popularity of this festival shows that it was still practiced by sailors in the sixth century; perhaps even by mariners who docked in the ports of the imperial capital itself.

The Tyche or Fortune of prominent coastal cities like Constantinople and Alexandria also retained an important maritime role throughout this period. Scholars are divided as to the religious aspects of a city's Tyche throughout Late Antiquity; however, the fact remains that, in the fourth century, these civic protectors were deities. This would not have changed overnight. As Benjamin Isaac points out, it is wrong to view a Tyche as the simple personification of a city.[202] To see a civic Tyche as such, even after Christianity had become the dominant religion, is to ignore the ways that ancient and early Medieval society perceived and understood abstract ideas. What modern scholars often see as a simple abstraction, earlier viewers saw as something more concrete, with magical or divine powers.[203] For centuries, a city's Tyche had been its guardian deity whose focus was the wellbeing, prosperity and safety of her city.[204] This is reflected in the iconography of the civic Tyche. Her attributes vary depending

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[199] Fulgentius, *Mythologiae* 1.20 (trans. Whitbread, 61): '… as you certainly know for a fact, the Egyptians worship the barge of Isis'.

[200] Cassiod. *Variae* 5.17 (*MGH* 12.153).

[201] John Lydus, *Liber de Mensibus* 4.45, ed. R. Wuensch (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898), 101: 'Τῇ πρὸ τριῶν Νωνῶν Μαρτίων ὁ πλοῦς τῆς Ἴσιδος ἐπετελεῖτο, ὅν ἔτι καὶ νῦν τελοῦντες καλοῦσι πλοιαφέσια. ἡ δὲ Ἴσις τῇ Αἰγυπτίων φωνῇ παλαιὰ σημαίνεται, τουτέστιν ἡ σελήνη. καὶ προσηκόντως αὐτήν, ὡς ἐλέγομεν, τῇ φύσει τῶν ὑδάτων ἐφεστάναι'.

[202] B. Isaac, 'Roman Victory Displayed: Symbols, Allegories, Personifications', in *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, eds. E.A. Friedland, Y.Z. Eliav and S. Herbert (Dudley, MA: Leuven, 2008), 580.

[203] Isaac, *Roman Victory Displayed*, 575-7.

[204] See P.F.B.J. Broucke, 'Tyche and the Fortune of Cities in the Greek and Roman World', *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* (1994), 34-49 for a comprehensive discussion of these civic deities.

on the city she represents, but there are several standard iconographical features that identity a city's Fortune. Tyche wears a mural crown or grain measure on her head, holds a cornucopia and is draped in a long gown. In coastal cities, Tyche's role was often centred around the protection of maritime trade and defence against maritime invasion. As such, the Tyche of maritime centres also holds a rudder or has a foot resting on the prow of a ship.[205]

A city's Tyche was also the focal point around which people of different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds could rally.[206] These were crucial aspects of Tyche's nature, even after Christianity took a firm hold on the Roman empire. During the reign of Anastasius, the rudder or boat that formed part of the cult statue of the Tyche of Constantinople was allowed to deteriorate. Zonaras records that, as a result, Tyche took her revenge by stopping the annual grain ships from reaching Constantinople. The famine that ensued only ended when the cult statue was restored.[207] As late as the sixth century, Isis was still associated with Tyche in various parts of the empire. This is illustrated by a sixth-century ivory relief from Alexandria depicting the conflated Isis-Tyche (see Figure 7).[208] The important maritime and civic role played by this goddess is clear in the ivory relief. Isis-Tyche wears a grain measure as a crown, and holds several symbols that represent the good fortune granted to her city; one of which is a merchant vessel, demonstrating her role in the protection of Alexandria's maritime trade.

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[205] Broucke, *Tyche and the Fortune of Cities*, 35-49 (see Figure 19 on page 38); Limberis, *Divine Heiress,* 125; C.C. Vermeule, *The Goddess Roma in the Art of the Roman Empire* (London: Spink,1959), 50 and 86. See *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 8, 2 (Zurich: Artemis and Winkler Verlag, 1997), 84-109 for a variety of images of Tyche/Fortune.

[206] Broucke, *Tyche and the Fortune of Cities*, 44.

[207] Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* 14.4, in *Ioannis Zonarae, Epitome Historiarum*, vol. 3, ed. L. Dindorf (Leipzig: Teubner,1870), 263-4. On this statue, see L. Lavan, 'Political Talismans? Residual 'Pagan' Statues in Late Antique Public Space', in *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism*, Late Antique Archaeology 7, eds. L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 452-3. Lavan notes that the prominent statue of Tyche that stood in Constantinople's city centre continued to enjoy ceremonial honours on the anniversary of the inauguration of the city. These ceremonial honours were largely unaffected by Christianisation until the late sixth century. See Malalas, *Chron*. 13.8 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 175).

[208] Haas, *Alexandria*, 133. The ivory relief is now in the Aachen cathedral in Germany. Isis-Tyche wears a modius as a crown and holds a cornucopia surmounted by a temple of Horus and a merchant vessel. She is surrounded by dancers, musicians and a figure of Pan. Broucke, *Tyche and the Fortune of Cities*, 38-9 notes the association of Isis and Tyche in Alexandria from Hellenistic times to the late fourth century.

Figure 7. Sixth-century ivory relief of Isis-Tyche from Alexandria, now in the Aachen Cathedral (Image taken from C. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity. Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 133).

Another tutelary goddess who retained her prominence in Late Antiquity is Athena. This female deity acted as a guardian to her home city of Athens and, in a slightly different role, she also continued to protect Constantinople after the city's foundation in the fourth century. The role that Athena (and her Roman counterpart Minerva) had in commercial and maritime affairs is not always highlighted in scholarship; yet,

throughout Antiquity, Athena/Minerva had a place in markets and wherever commercial transactions were conducted.[209] The goddess' continued place in commercial environments is best exemplified by her famous statue in the Forum of Constantine in Constantinople.[210] This statue–and others depicting Athena–are discussed in detail later in this chapter, since it is likely that these prominent sculptures acted as prototypes for everyday items used by merchants and traders.

Steelyard, or counterpoise, weights in the guise of Athena/Minerva—with the head of Medusa on her breastplate—became very popular in the Late Antique period, and have been found at a range of sites. These weights were not recycled objects; they were manufactured and distributed from the fifth to seventh centuries and, as portable items, were used regularly by land and sea-merchants alike.[211] In his catalogue of extant Late Antique steelyard weights, Norbert Franken records 162 weights in the shape of busts. Seventy-four of these depict empresses, and sixty-one portray Athena.[212] The find location of many of the Athena weights is unknown; however, most of those that do have either a secure or suspected provenance are part of shipwreck finds or from coastal areas.[213] The large percentage of the overall extant weights depicting Athena demonstrate that this goddess maintained her place in fora and on ships throughout Late Antiquity. Steelyard weights of this period have

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[209] A. Shearer, *Athene - Image and Energy* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 11 and 78. Shearer notes that in Rome itself, one of Athena/Minerva's roles was the protection of commerce. Throughout this chapter, any discussion of Athena in the Late Antique period will refer to the syncretised Athena/Minerva.

[210] Refer to Chapter 4, footnotes 239-42 for sources on the statue of Athena in the Forum of Constantine.

[211] Earlier scholars generally assumed that the Athena weights were manufactured and utilised in the period prior to the fourth century. The discovery of the weight on the Yassi Ada shipwreck and detailed analysis of other extant weights overturned this assumption. For a good discussion of the weights as fifth-seventh century items, see Eliot, *Bronze Counterpoise of Athena*, 163-70 and Franken, *Aequipondia*, 93-4. Also see Y. Meriçboyu and S. Atasoy, *Büst Şeklinde Kantar Ağırlıkları. Steelyard Weights in the Form of Busts. Archaeological Museum of Istanbul* (Istanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 1983), 21. Also see McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 47 and 55. McClanan suggests that the weights may even have been manufactured until the late seventh or eighth centuries.

[212] Franken, *Aequipondia*, 83-114. There are also several Athena weights not included in Franken's catalogue. Examples include one found in the Yenikapı excavations of the Theodosian Harbour (see Catalogue Item Y18 in Kangal and Pekin, *Istanbul: 8000 Years*) and another currently held in the Musuem of Kos (see Catalogue Item 23 in Papanikola-Bakirtzi, *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, 75).

[213] Franken, *Aequipondia*, 86-7. There is also the weight found at the site of the Theodosian Harbour which is not included in Franken's catalogue (refer to previous footnote). Also see Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 224 and 228-9. These authors note that the steelyard and weight of Athena on the Yassi Ada wreck are of the type used for routine maritime commercial transactions, particularly for the weighing of heavy cargo.

been discussed extensively in scholarship. However, the steelyard weights of Athena have been treated by many scholars as uncomfortably 'pagan' items in a Christian world. With the exception of Pitarakis, scholarship has focused heavily on the contemporaneous empress weights, which are much easier to contextualise in the world of Late Antiquity.[214] Yet these small items depicting a Graeco-Roman deity provide a window into the everyday commercial transactions that were being conducted during this period and, as such, they (and the scholarship on them to date) deserve special consideration.

Despite evidence to the contrary, there are scholars who prefer to view the Athena weights as items from an earlier period. James, for example, sees the weights as objects that could only have been manufactured and used prior to the fourth century, before Christianity became the official Roman religion.[215] Other researchers seem intent on providing a Christian or purely secular context to these weights, despite their depiction of a well-known Graeco-Roman deity.[216] McClanan accepts the late dating of these items and acknowledges their popularity in the Late Antique period, but seeks a secular context to explain their existence.[217] She searches for possible meanings that a pagan goddess could have to the Christian merchants whom she assumes were using these weights.[218] The late manufacture of these items does pose a conundrum if it is accepted that all merchants had cast away their traditional superstitions and beliefs by the early fourth century. Yet when we consider that, by the end of Late Antiquity, not all merchants and seafarers had abandoned their

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[214] For example, Herrin, *Imperial Feminine in Byzantium*, 9 says that Athena was only occasionally depicted on Late Antique weights, and claims that 'the overriding association of correct weight is with an imperial feminine'; James, *Empresses and Power*, 115 states that after the third century, 'imperial personages are virtually the only image found on these weights', despite the large number of extant weights depicting Athena. McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 4-5 also says that the empress weights were the more favoured item for everyday commercial transactions. Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 419-22 and Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 221 is the exception. She says that it is no accident that Athena (the goddess of wisdom, justice and crafts) features as the second most prevalent figure on these Late Antique weights.

[215] James, *Empresses and Power*, 115-7.

[216] Interestingly, Eliot, *Bronze Counterpoise of Athena*, 163-70 provides clear evidence that the Athena weights were manufactured and used later than earlier scholars had believed, but he does not offer any explanation as to the popularity of these weights.

[217] McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 29-64.

[218] McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 50 and 55-8.

traditional deities, nor had many sculptures and other objects been divested of their apotropaic qualities, these small, everyday weights are actually not out of context.[219]

In order to safely consign the Athena weights to the Christian eastern empire of Late Antiquity, some historians seek to explain them in non-Hellenic terms—even suggesting that the weights do not depict Athena at all.[220] Both McClanan and James suggest that the Athena weights may in fact symbolise an imperial female or the Tyche of Rome or Constantinople.[221] McClanan highlights instances from earlier periods where empresses were represented as deified imperial figures. However, at the same time, she notes that Athena/Minerva had never been a goddess regularly appropriated by empresses. As such, it is unclear as to why McClanan believes that Athena would suddenly have become so in the early Byzantine period. Supported by scholars like Ronald Mellor and Cornelius Vermeule, McClanan also highlights similarities between the imagery of Roma and Athena, ultimately suggesting that the figure represented on the weights is a conflation of the empress and the personification of Rome in the guise of a secular Athena.[222] These historians use the depiction of Roma on gems as important evidence of the similarities between the iconography of Roma and Athena. Yet gems were personal items, and they were not widely circulated or common after the early imperial period.[223] Thus, they are not indicative of widely-recognised iconography of Roma. Importantly, Vermeule

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[219] See Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 212-4 and 217-23 for a discussion of religious and apotropaic symbols and motifs on weighing implements, amphorae and other commercial items. Pitarakis also discusses the apotropaic qualities of statues and other monuments in the marketplace. See Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 421-2 for a discussion of the particular apotropaic qualities of Athena and her steelyard weights. Pitarakis notes that Athena herself was seen to have apotropaic powers and in the case of two of her steelyard weights, Christian symbols or inscriptions were added to further enhance Athena's power.

[220] In addition, Franken, *Aequipondia*, 87 speculates that the weights could have been manufactured in the West, despite much evidence to the contrary. This is presumably because it is easier to imagine such 'pagan-inspired' items originating in the West than it is in the 'Christian' East. McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 33 thinks that this could help to explain idiosyncratic differences between the empress and Athena weights.

[221] James, *Empresses and Power*, 142; McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 50-2 and 58. McClanan also notes that some previous scholars, such as E.B. Thomas, had suggested that these weights symbolised Tyche or Sophia (Wisdom).

[222] McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights,* 50-2 and 57. Also see R. Mellor, *ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΗ. The Worship of the Goddess Roma in the Greek World* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1975), 29-30, 35-6, 65-71 and 129-31; and Vermeule, *Goddess Roma*, 75 and 85. Also see MacCormack, *Roma, Constantinopolis, the Emperor*, 147-9 for a discussion of the linking of Roma and Constantinopolis to the imperial office.

[223] Mellor, *ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΗ*, 6; Vermeule, *Goddess Roma*, 85.

stresses that although modern viewers see striking similarities in the imagery of goddesses like Athena and Roma, there were precise definitions and formulae employed in the representation of deities in the ancient world. These definitions made each deity quite distinct to contemporary viewers.[224]

In contrast, Pitarakis recognises the weights as a representation of the goddess Athena. Yet she too suggests a 'probable allusion' to Roma in an effort to explain the prominence of the Athena weights in the Late Antique world of commerce.[225] This type of theory is not surprising. When seen as a personification or abstraction, any deity can be made to seem more agreeable to a Christian regime. If the weights of Athena represent a secular or Christian concept, then they become far less of a conundrum. Indeed, the goddess Athena herself is visualised by many as a secular concept or personification during Late Antiquity; one symbolising wisdom, fairness, honesty and good measure.[226] In their comprehensive study of Athena in Antiquity, Susan Deacy and Alexandra Villing note that the goddess survived 'as an allegorical and ethical concept' within Christianity.[227] This may have been the case by the seventh century, but Athena/Minerva was still a living Graeco-Roman goddess to many people before that time. She was the perfect figure to watch over commercial transactions conducted by merchants, many of whom would still have seen her as a goddess.[228]

To date, historians have largely dismissed the depiction of traditional deities in the fifth to seventh centuries as 'no longer objects of veneration but art objects owned by a humanistically oriented intelligentsia'.[229] This theory does not explain the continued popularity of steelyard weights depicting a goddess. These were mass-

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[224] Vermeule, *Goddess Roma*, 75.

[225] Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium,* 421-2.

[226] Asal, *Commerce in Istanbul*, 189; McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights*, 57.

[227] S. Deacy and A. Villing, 'Athena Past and Present: An Introduction', in *Athena in the Classical World*, eds. S. Deacy and A. Villing (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 4.

[228] Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 422. Pitarakis talks of the importance of 'divine protection' in the marketplace and relates this to the Athena steelyard weights. Pitarakis recognises Athena as a deity, yet she still seems to allocate her a purely non-pagan meaning or context in this period. It should be remembered that not all of those using the marketplaces in the fifth to early seventh centuries would have seen Athena in a Christian (or even secular) light. The divine protection Athena offered must have been decidedly non-Christian in character to some merchants of the time.

[229] Weitzmann, *Age of Spirituality*, 20. Weitzmann is only one of many examples.

produced items used by non-elite merchants as part of their everyday business transactions; not objects created for the consumption of the classically educated elite. In the late fifth century, Fulgentius recounted various classical tales presenting Athena/Minerva as the goddess of wisdom, and the Gorgon Medusa on her breast as a symbol of fear.[230] These were no doubt popular stories, yet the majority of merchants would not have been well versed in the classics, nor would they have seen these myths in an intellectual or antiquarian light.[231] The continued use of the Athena weights cannot simply be explained away by a love of, or tolerant attitude toward, the classical past. Nor should it be assumed that the men using these weights did not know who was represented on them. As Athena or Minerva, she was still a widely recognised goddess in this period. When we consider that non-Christian beliefs persisted into the seventh century, it should not come as a surprise that steelyard weights of Athena may have had a non-Christian meaning to some of the men and women who used them.

The weights of Athena include several of the standard iconographical features that had been associated with the goddess for centuries (see Figures 12 and 13).[232] In Fulgentius' literary description of Athena/Minerva, he notes her key attributes as the Gorgon on her breast, and her helmet and plume.[233] The surviving weights generally show the owl-eyed goddess wearing her signature Corinthian-style crested helmet with thick, curly hair underneath, a chiton (or peplos), and a breastplate or aegis with the face of Medusa. There are also snakes, associated with the Gorgon, depicted on the goddess' breast. The four steelyard weights shown in Figures 8 to 11 highlight these typical features and the variations that existed between weights. C.W.J. Eliot conducted a comprehensive study of the stylistic similarities and differences in several of the extant weights, noting a clear stylistic deterioration corresponding with

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[230] Fulgentius, *Mythologiae* 1.21, 2.1, 2.6, 2.11, 3.1, and 3.7 (trans. Whitbread, 61-2, 65, 71, 75-6, 82-3, and 91).

[231] One of the places that the imagery of traditional deities, including Athena, would have been regularly seen by common people was in the theatre. Refer to Chapter 5 for a discussion of the depiction of Classical myths and stories in the theatre.

[232] There are numerous examples of statues from Classical Greece through to the Late Roman period that depict Athena in a similar manner to the weights. See examples in Deacy and Villing, *Athena in the Classical World,* 434-5 (and Plates 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, and 20). Also see Figure 13.

[233] Fulgentius, *Mythologiae* 2.1 (trans. Whitbread, 65).

Figure 8 (top left). Weight from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, provenance unconfirmed. Catalogue Item 61.112 in http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search and CB28 in Franken, *Aequipondia*; Figure 9 (top right). Weight from Anemurium. Plate 26 in Eliot, *Bronze Counterpoise of Athena* and CB29 in Franken, *Aequipondia*; Figure 10 (bottom left). Weight from Yenikapı excavations, Catalogue Item Y18 in Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 years*; Figure 11 (bottom right). Weight from the Yassi Ada shipwreck. Figure 10.16 in Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 217 and CB39 in Franken, *Aequipondia*.

the period in which they were manufactured.[234] Franken too records an increasing simplification of form in the Athena weights—to the point that details such as the aegis become almost unrecognisable in the later weights.[235] However, despite this overall simplification and loss of detail, the essence of Athena's iconography is retained, even on the later weights like those in Figures 10 and 11. This makes sense; there were many who knew and loved the goddess Athena in the early fifth century, but she must have had fewer worshippers by the seventh century. Although still widely recognised as a deity, understanding of the individual aspects of her iconography would no longer have been universal. Interestingly, the overall quality of the weights did not diminish with time. Bass and van Doorninck record that the Athena weight and scale found on the seventh-century Yassi Ada shipwreck were actually the finest of the weighing implements on board.[236]

Despite an increasing lack of knowledge of the individual characteristics of Athena's iconography, the merchants using her steelyard weights were no doubt still aware of whom they depicted. Many of the traders visiting Constantinople would have known that the figure on the steelyard weights was the same as the famous statue of Athena in the Forum of Constantine. Historians from the fourth to thirteenth centuries recorded the presence of prominent statues of Athena in various locations throughout Constantinople, including the statue of Pallas Athena (known as the Palladium) reputed to have been placed under Constantine's porphyry column when he founded the city.[237] The idea that the Palladium had been transferred to Constantinople from Rome may only have been a foundation myth, yet the thought

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[234] Eliot, *Bronze Counterpoise of Athena*, 167-9. Eliot points out that the weights produced in the fourth or fifth centuries (represented by the Metropolitan Museum of Art weight shown in Figure 8) are more detailed than those manufactured later. He suggests that the weight from Anemurium (Figure 9) can be dated to the sixth century, based on an overall decline in quality and weakness of design. Eliot does note, however, that the weight from Anemurium demonstrates a greater understanding of the details and tradition behind Athena's aegis than some of the earlier weights. Of the Yassi Ada weight (Figure 10), one of the last of the series and dated to either the late sixth or early seventh century, Eliot says 'with its lack of understanding of the details of the aegis and the severe stylization of the face, it openly betrays the distance that separates it from its prototype'. Eliot also stresses that some of the variations in the quality of the weights could simply be the result of the different craftsmen and workshops that produced them.

[235] Franken, *Aequipondia*, 93-4.

[236] Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 314.

[237] Procop. *Goth*. 5.15.9-14 (Dewing, 3.150-3). Procopius mentions a statue of Athena in the Temple of Fortuna (Tyche) in Constantinople along with an engraved copy of the statue of Pallas Athena (the Palladium).

that it was under the column was of great significance to those who frequented this busy forum.[238] The bronze statue of Athena that stood near the Senate House in the Forum of Constantine was also clearly an important landmark in the city. Zosimus records that this statue and another of Zeus survived a fire in the fifth century. Some in the city saw this omen as proof that Athena and Zeus would always protect Constantinople.[239] Before its destruction at the hands of a drunken mob in the early thirteenth century, the colossal statue of Athena stood for approximately eight hundred years in the Forum of Constantine.[240] Sources that mention the statue in the marketplace describe it in substantial detail, including the goddess' helmet, and the Gorgon and snakes about her neck.[241] Niketas Choniates' description is particularly detailed, noting Medusa on Athena's breast; the aegis; her long, slender neck; her soulful eyes; and the conspicuous plume on her helmet.[242] These were also the most obvious features of the goddess depicted on the steelyard weights (see Figures 12 and 13). Given that the colossal statue of Athena had watched over the activities of the central forum in Constantinople since the fifth century, it is highly probable that the steelyard weights were modelled on it.[243] At the very least, the merchants, customers and all others who came into contact with the Athena weights must have known that they depicted this particular goddess of the marketplace.[244]

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[238] C. Ando, 'The Palladium and the Pentateuch: Towards a Sacred Topography of the Later Roman Empire', *Phoenix,* 55, 3/4 (2001), 404; G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), 14-37; Grig and Kelly, *Introduction. From Rome to Constantinople*, 4; G. Fowden, 'Constantine's Porphyry Column: The Earliest Literary Allusion', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 81 (1991), 120-1. For examples of historians who mention the Palladium, see Malalas, *Chron.* 13.7 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 173-4); Zosimus, *NH*, 2.30 (Mendelssohn, 87-8); *Patria* 2.45 (trans. Berger, 78-9).

[239] Zosimus, *NH*, 5.24.7-8 (Mendelssohn, 246). English trans. in R.T. Ridley, *Zosimus, New History* (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006), 112.

[240] Niketas Choniates, *Annals* 559-60, in *O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H.J. Magoulias (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 305-6.

[241] Bassett, *Urban Image*, 188-92. Bassett discusses the Athena statue and the sources that describe it. On pages 188-9, Bassett includes translations of passages from Constantine the Rhodian, 150-63 and Kedrenos, I,565.

[242] Niketas Choniates, *Annals* 559-60 (trans. Magoulias, 305-6). Additional sources mentioning the statue of Athena in the Forum of Constantine include Arethas, *Schol. Arist. Or.* 50T, III (see Bassett, *Urban Image*,188); *Parastaseis*, 39 (trans. Herrin and Cameron, 104-7); and *Patria* 2.3 (trans. Berger, 50-1).

[243] In a recently published work, Brigitte Pitarakis also makes this suggestion. See Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 221.

[244] Lavan, *Political Talismans*, 439, 443 and 448. Lavan notes that Christian attempts to alter the meaning or usage of statues in public places (such as those of Minerva/Athena and Tyche) had little impact before the sixth century.

Athena was also still inextricably linked to her home city of Athens. The cultural significance of Athens may have decreased significantly since its heyday, yet it remained a city with frequent travellers and trading ships arriving into its ports. At least one colossal statue of Athena was still on display in Athens in the late fifth century, when Marinus tells us it was removed from the Parthenon by Christians.[245] The statue in the Parthenon wore a helmet, snake-trimmed aegis, and had a Gorgon's head on its breast. Ann Shearer notes that there had always been two colossal statues of Athena in the city; one thirty-foot statue of Athena Promachos on the Acropolis, which could be seen by ships approaching by sea; and the other, even larger one, inside the Parthenon.[246] Julianus of Egypt wrote of one of these armoured statues of Athena when he asked in the sixth century, 'Why Trito-born, dost thou put on armour in the middle of the city? Poseidon has yielded to thee'.[247] Evidence would suggest that the monumental statue of Athena Promachos on the Acropolis was the very one that was moved to the Forum of Constantine in Constantinople, sometime in the fifth century.[248] Despite the removal of this famous statue of the city's patroness, the worship of Athena and other traditional gods was still flourishing in Athens in the late fourth and fifth centuries. Zosimus talks of customary public sacrifices made to the goddess at the Parthenon in the late fourth century, and her temple was clearly still functioning as an active cult centre when the Neoplatonist Proclus arrived at its gates in 430.[249] Legend also has it that Athena protected the city from King Alaric's assault in the late fourth century. In this story—clearly still believable to many in Zosimus' time— the city's beloved goddess appeared on the city walls in the likeness of her armoured statue and scared off the attackers.[250]

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[245] Marinus, *Vita Procli*, 30 (Boissonade, 24). See also A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora, Volume XXIV, Late Antiquity: A.D. 267-700* (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies, 1988), 58.

[246] Shearer, *Athene,* 7-8.

[247] *Anth. Gr.* 16.157 (Paton, 5.252-3): 'Τίπτε, Τριτογένεια, κορύσσεαι ἄστεϊ μέσσῳ; εἶξε Ποσειδάων·'.

[248] R.J.H. Jenkins, 'The Bronze Athena at Byzantium', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 67 (1947), 31-3; B. Lundgreen, 'A Methodological Enquiry: The Great Bronze Athena by Pheidias', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997), 190 and 195; Frantz, *Athenian Agora*, 20 and 76-7. Frantz notes that the statue could not have been moved from the Athenian Acropolis until after 410 and suggests that it may have not been moved until as late as c.465-70.

[249] Zosimus, *NH*, 4.18.2-3 (Mendelssohn, 173): 'Νεστόριος ... εἰκόνα τοῦ ἥρωος ἐν οἴκῳ μικρῷ δημιουργήσας ὑπέθηκε τῷ ἐν Παρθενῶνι καθιδρυμένῳ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ἀγάλματι, τελῶν δὲ τῇ θεῷ τὰ συνήθη κατὰ ταὐτὸν καὶ τῷ ἥρωι τὰ ἐγνωσμένα οἱ κατὰ θεσμὸν ἔπραττε …'; Marinus, *Vita Procli*, 10 (Boissonade, 8-9).

[250] Zosimus, *NH*, 5.6 (Mendelssohn, 222-3): 'ἐπιὼν Ἀλλάριχος πανστρατιᾷ τῇ πόλει τὸ μὲν τεῖχος ἑώρα περινοστοῦσαν τὴν πρόμαχον Ἀθηνᾶν, ὡς ἔστιν αὐτὴν ὁρᾶν ἐν τοῖς ἀγάλμασιν,

The traditional mid-summer procession known as the Panathenaia was also celebrated in Athens in the fifth century. This procession had a distinctly maritime character, with a wooden statue of Athena carried in her sacred sailing vessel along the main thoroughfare of the city to the Acropolis.[251] An inscription dated to 410 and dedicated to a man who funded the procession reads 'Plutarchos … who thrice sailed the sacred ship and moored it at the temple of Athena'.[252] Himerius' late fourth-century description of the procession demonstrates that the Panathenaia was a popular non-Christian festival of great pomp, and that it was imbued with maritime imagery.[253] During Late Antiquity, there appears to have been a relatively harmonious coexistence between Christians and pagans in Athens.[254] As such, travellers, sailors and merchants of different religious affiliations and beliefs would have been welcomed into the city's ports during this time. Just as travellers to Constantinople would have been familiar with the goddess who watched over the Forum of Constantine, so too would visitors to Athens have been well aware of the city's patroness, Athena. Indeed, many sea travellers may even have carried weights fashioned in her likeness on their ships.

The eighth-century *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* mentions another relevant statue in the Hippodrome of Constantinople. The author says he was told that the statue represented the fifth-century empress Verina. In contrast, the majority of

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ὡπλισμένην καὶ οἷον τοῖς ἐπιοῦσιν ἀνθίστασθαι μέλλουσαν'; Frantz, *Athenian Agora*, 51-2; A.R. Brown, 'Banditry or Catastrophe?: History, Archaeology, and Barbarian Raids on Roman Greece', in *Romans, Barbarians, and the Transformation of the Roman World*, eds. R.W. Mathisen and D. Shanzer (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 90.

[251] A. Frantz, 'From Paganism to Christianity in the Temples of Athens', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 19 (1965), 193; Frantz, *Athenian Agora*, 20; N. Robertson, 'Athena's Shrines and Festivals', in *Worshipping Athena. Panathenaia and Parthenon*, ed. J. Neils (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 27-31 and 56-65. Also see Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 18-20 for a discussion of the evidence of the continuation of the Panathenaia into at least the late fifth century.

[252] IG II^2, 3818 in *Inscriptiones Graecae. Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae*, Volume II^2, *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno Posteriores*, Part III*, Dedicationes, Titulos Honorarios, Titulos Sacros, Titulos Sepulcrales Continens,* part 1, ed. J. Kirchner (Chicago, Ares Publishers Inc., 1974): 'δῆμος <'Ε>ρεχθῆος βασιλῆ<α> λόγων ἀνέθηκεν Πλούταρχον σταθερῆς ἕρμα σαοφροσύνης· ὃς καὶ τρὶς ποτὶ νηὸν Ἀθηναίης ἐπέλασσεν ναῦν ἐλάσας ἱερήν, πλοῦτον ὅλον προχέας.' For an English translation, refer to Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 1, 18.

[253] Himerius, *Or.* 47.12-6, in *Man and the Word. The Orations of Himerius*, trans. R.J. Penella (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 257-8.

[254] Frantz, *From Paganism to Christianity*, 191-2 and 197.

people in Constantinople apparently believed that the statue was, in fact, Athena.[255] McClanan uses this particular extract to bolster her argument that the Athena steelyard weights are likely to have represented an empress. McClanan says that statues of the goddess and empress must have been easily confused during this period, suggesting '"empress-looking" and "Athena-looking" were not such distinct categories of visual representation at the time'.[256] McClanan applies this same logic to the steelyard weights, suggesting that those using them would simply have seen

Figures 12 and 13. The Athena steelyard weight from the Yassi Ada shipwreck (figure 10.16 in Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 217) and a 2nd century statue of Athena from Perge, which is currently held in the Antalya Museum, Turkey (photo taken by the author). As can be seen clearly, both objects share similar iconography.

[255] *Parastaseis*, 61 (trans. Herrin and Cameron, 139); *Patria* 2.78 (trans. Berger, 102-3).

[256] McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights,* 58. Also see L. James, 'Who's That Girl? Personifications of the Byzantine Empress', in *Through a Glass Brightly. Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology Presented to David Buckton*, ed. C. Entwistle (Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2003), 53.

them as symbols of the empress and her imperial authority.[257] The flaw in this argument is that the iconography of the empress and Athena steelyard weights is strikingly different. The Athena weights demonstrate the clear iconographical features of Athena/Minerva as she had been known—and would continue to be known—for centuries.[258] If these weights had been manufactured in an earlier period and re-used in the fifth to seventh centuries, then the idea that they became largely representative of imperial authority would be reasonable. Yet they were manufactured simultaneously with the empress weights during Late Antiquity. It is unlikely that two distinct sets of weights would be created in order to symbolise the same notion of imperial authority, particularly when one set clearly adopted the iconography of a recognised traditional deity. The story from the *Parastaseis* actually suggests that most people believed the statue in the Hippodrome was the goddess Athena, despite any official version of the statue's iconography.[259]

During the period of their popularity, it is improbable that the steelyard weights of Athena were seen by contemporaries as depicting anyone other than the goddess herself or her Roman counterpart Minerva. The iconography of the weights is clear and contemporary viewers certainly had no shortage of images of Athena/Minerva to compare them to.[260] It is possible that these weights were not officially sanctioned by the imperial authorities.[261] As unofficial weights, they could still have been used by a range of merchants—particularly those who conducted the majority of their

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[257] McClanan, *Early Byzantine Steelyard Weights,* 58.

[258] See *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 2 (Zurich: Artemis and Winkler Verlag, 1984), 706-815 for a variety of images of Athena and Athena/Minerva. Many of the later depictions of Athena and Athena/Minerva are strikingly similar to the figure on the steelyard weights.

[259] G. Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire: Etudes sur le Recueil des Patria* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), 38-9. Dagron notes the importance of oral tradition in the transmission of cultural heritage in Constantinople's history. He uses the story of the statue of Verina (or Athena) as an example of the tenacity of this tradition. Dagron's *Constantinople Imaginaire* as a whole is helpful in understanding the nature of Constantinople's historiographic tradition, particularly from the sixth century.

[260] To a modern viewer, the iconography of Athena/Minerva, Roma and Tyche may seem similar, but there were still clear definitions and formulae that distinguished these deities/personfications in Late Antiquity. This was a period not so far removed from the Classical and Graeco-Roman world as our own. See Vermeule, *Goddess Roma*, 75 and Isaac, *Roman Victory Displayed*, 575-7 for the reminder that modern viewers should be careful not to project modern conceptions of the symbolic and allegorical character of deities and 'personifications' onto those living in this period and earlier.

[261] Franken suspects that at least some of the weights of this period were manufactured in non-authorised workshops. See Franken, *Aequipondia*, 91.

business at sea and in portside contexts. In the Late Antique period, Christian and non-Christian merchants were conducting their business side by side. Many of these traders would have appreciated that the goddess of wisdom, honesty and good measure still had a role to play in everyday commercial transactions. This does not necessarily imply that the only merchants who carried these weights were non-Christian. Several of the Athena weights contain Christian inscriptions that were added after their manufacture, suggesting that it was Christian merchants who eventually came to own them.[262]

The fact that these weights may have been owned by Christian and non-Christian merchants alike does not detract from their apotropaic function. Indeed, the inscriptions or crosses on some of the weights must have been added by Christian owners expressly for that purpose. Most importantly, the face of a Gorgon had always been a popular apotropaic symbol, especially in marketplaces and wherever trade was conducted. The *Parastaseis* includes several examples of Gorgon sculptures that were located in Constantinople. The Gorgon remained a common apotropaic motif—whether on its own or on the breastplate of the goddess Athena—and it was certainly a recognisable symbol.[263] James notes that stories about non-Christian statues and other sculptures demonstrate the widespread belief that these types of objects contained protective powers that could be harnessed.[264] It is certainly possible that this was the sentiment held by the Christian merchants and traders who inscribed Christian symbols and text on their Athena weights. Still, Cyril Mango reminds us that statues and other objects depicting non-Christian deities remained an essential part of Hellenic rites and beliefs, and that paganism continued

[262] The weight shown in Figure 8 (Catalogue item 61.112 from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and CB28 in Franken, *Aequipondia*) bears the inscription, 'ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟΗΘ (Ε) Ι'. All of the details of the weight are sharply defined except for the inscription, suggesting that it was added to the weight after it was manufactured. The weight shown in Figure 11 (Figure 10.16 in Bass and van Doorninck Jr, *Yassi Ada*, 217 and CB39 in Franken, *Aequipondia*) was found on the Yassi Ada shipwreck. This weight has a cross and the inscription 'ΓΕΟΡΓΙΟΥ ΠΡΕΣΒΥ / ΤΕΡΟΥ ΝΑΥΚΛΕΡΟΥ'. There is another weight currently in the Virginia Museum of Arts which has a cross deeply incised into it (and the cross is not likely to have been engraved on the weight at the time of manufacture). This weight is listed as Catalogue item 83 in A. Gonosova and C. Kondoleon, *Art of Late Rome and Byzantium in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* (Richmond, VA: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1994), 242-5.

[263] *Parastaseis*, 44a and 78 (trans. Herrin and Cameron, 120-1 and 158-9); *Patria* 2.28 and 2.46 (trans. Berger, 66-9 and 80-1); Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 220-3; Shearer, *Athene*, 68-9.

[264] L. James, '"Pray Not to Fall into Temptation and be on Your Guard": Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople', *Gesta*, 35, 1 (1996), 17.

into the early seventh century.[265] This should be kept in mind. The fact that the steelyard weights of Athena were contemporary objects of trade in the fifth to seventh centuries—rather than items from the ancient past—indicates that they were made with their own contemporary commercial, protective and non-Christian purposes in mind.

Objects such as steelyard weights of Athena should not be seen as a reflection of past beliefs. They reflect the culture and beliefs that existed in marketplaces and on trading ships in the period in which they were manufactured and used.[266] These types of objects should not be dismissed as throwbacks to the Classical past. Nor is there any need to assume that the only possible explanation for them is that the characters they portrayed had become entirely Christianised or secularised. The evidence presented here demonstrates that Athena was still considered a deity to many people throughout the Mediterranean world. I propose that the small, everyday weights of Athena had not been cleansed of all non-Christian meaning during Late Antiquity. Instead, they are one further piece of evidence of the perseverance of traditional beliefs amongst merchants, sailors and their kind. It was perhaps partly to curb the use of distinctly non-Christian weights like these that Justinian imposed laws regarding the use of official weights and measures throughout the empire, and increased the Church's involvement in the maintenance and storage of weights.[267] In the early seventh century, the patriarch of Alexandria also had to prohibit the use of any weights, measures or balances that did not conform to official standards.[268] At this time, weights depicting the goddess Athena were still being carried by merchants throughout the eastern empire. These 'non-standard' items must certainly have been on the list of weights to be outlawed. Non-Christian deities like Athena

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[265] C. Mango, 'Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963), 55.

[266] Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 225. Pitarakis stresses that the material culture of the marketplace should be seen as a reflection of the 'system of beliefs' in society at the time.

[267] N. Balaska and N. Selenti, 'On the Trade Routes', in Zafiropoulou, *Journeys on the Seas*, 58; S. Bendall, *Byzantine Weights. An Introduction* (London: Lennox Gallery, 1996), 11. Also see Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 211 who notes that the proper use of weights and measures was part of 'God's law'. The use of weights deemed offensive to a Christian sensibility would thus have been seen as non-conformist.

[268] Bendall, *Byzantine Weights*, 11. See Pitarakis, 'Byzantine Marketplace' in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 211-213 for a discussion of the religious importance of weights and measures.

and Isis were tenacious. The ecclesiastical and imperial authorities may have tried to banish them from their traditional temples and shrines, but their popularity lived on. There were those in elite circles who preserved Hellenic beliefs until the end of Late Antiquity; however, the survival of deities like Athena (and Isis) was also due, in no small part, to the sailors and merchants who carried them into ports and marketplaces throughout the Roman empire.

The Jewish Seafaring Community

It would be remiss to exclude the Jewish community in any discussion of the maritime or commercial realm of Late Antiquity. Much like their pagan counterparts, Jewish sailors and shipowners are not mentioned in the extant sources as often as their Christian peers. As such, although evidence of their presence exists, it is relatively scant compared to that of Christian sailors and merchants. Haas notes that the Jewish and pagan communities were important elements of Late Antique Alexandrian society, and yet many of the extant sources ignore their presence.[269] There may have been religious tension between Christian, Jewish and pagan members of the maritime community in this period, but there was also everyday interaction, communication, cooperation and exchange.[270] Together, these groups made Late Antique maritime society what it was; a culturally and religiously diverse, cosmopolitan community. As a minority, the Jewish maritime and commercial community had always been required to cooperate with members of the more dominant religious groups in order to survive. The legal status of Jews was slowly eroded by Christian legislators, but Jewish shipowners, merchants and sailors still retained a crucial place in the new Christian world.[271] This is nowhere more obvious than in Myra's port of Andriake.

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[269] In regards to the social role of both the Jewish and pagan communities in Alexandria in Late Antiquity, see Haas, *Alexandria*, 8-10.

[270] Fowden, *Varieties of Religious Community*, 97; Haas, *Alexandria,* 11-2 and 51; G.G. Stroumsa, 'Jewish Survival in Late Antique Alexandria', in *Jews in Byzantium. Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. R. Bonfil, O. Irshai, G.G. Strouma, and R. Talgam (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 259-61. It is interesting to note that Stroumsa refers to 'Alexandrian multiculturalism' as 'more often myth than reality'.

[271] For the changing legal status of the Jewish community in the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, see S. Bowman, 'Jews in Byzantium', in *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Vol. 4 The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. S.T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1041-4, 1046 and 1048-9; A. Linder, 'The Legal Status of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire', in Bonfil et al., *Jews in Byzantium*, 149-218.

Alongside several Christian churches that have been excavated in the main harbour area of Andriake is a fifth-century Jewish synagogue.[272] The synagogue was built in close proximity to the town's main granary and at least one of the Christian churches. The excavators describe the location of these Jewish and Christian religious buildings as 'the heart of the harbour area … easily visible from the ancient harbour'.[273] Given the port's location as a halfway point between Alexandria and Constantinople, Myra would have been an important stop for many of the ships sailing this route. Although the excavators do not speculate as to the size of the Jewish community in Andriake and Myra during Late Antiquity, they postulate that it must have been a significantly influential group, based on the synagogue's prominent location.[274] Indeed, the Jewish community in Andriake must have been an accepted part of overall society in the port and its surrounds. The fact that the synagogue was erected in a position where it could be seen by ships entering the harbour would also suggest that there were substantial numbers of Jewish seafarers and traders who frequently visited the port.

Sarah Arenson's article *Medieval Jewish Seafaring Between East and West* discusses in detail the role of the Jewish community in maritime commerce throughout the Medieval period.[275] Arenson demonstrates that Jewish involvement in shipping, seafaring and maritime commerce (as opposed to general mercantile activity) reached its height in the ninth century, and that in the preceding centuries Jews played a leading role on the 'international commercial scene'.[276] Similarly, David Jacoby highlights both the wide variety and geographic range of Jewish commercial activities from the seventh century. Others claim that Jewish merchants largely monopolised private trade from around the fifth century.[277] The Jewish

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[272] N. Çevik, O. Çömezoğlu, H.S. Öztürk and I. Türkoğlu, 'A Unique Discovery in Lycia: The Ancient Synagogue at Andriake, Port of Myra', *Adalya*, 13 (2010), 337 and 348; T. Engin Akyürek, 'Andriake: The Port of Myra in Late Antiquity', in Magdalino and Necipoğlu, *Trade in Byzantium*, 476-7.

[273] Çevik et al., *Unique Discovery in Lycia*, 337; Engin Akyürek, *Andriake*, 465-87.

[274] Çevik et al., *Unique Discovery in Lycia*, 348.

[275] S. Arenson, 'Medieval Jewish Seafaring between East and West', *Mediterranean Historical Review,* 15, 1 (2000), 33-46.

[276] Arenson, *Medieval Jewish Seafaring*, 43.

[277] D. Jacoby, 'The Jews in the Byzantine Economy (Seventh to Mid-Fifteenth Century)', in Bonfil et al., *Jews in Byzantium*, 219-56; Van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople*, vol. 1, 4-5.

Radhanite merchants were also active over a vast region by at least the eighth century, with scholars noting that they made use of 'a chain of Jewish communities' from Western Europe to China as part of their trade.[278] It is likely that the commercial activity of the Radhanite merchants was a continuation of pre-Islamic trade conducted by Jewish traders.[279]

As is the case with other non-Christian shipowners and sailors, Jewish mariners are not highly visible in our Late Antique sources.[280] Thus, the overall significance of their place in the maritime sphere is quite difficult to corroborate. In the civil legislation, for example, Jews are mentioned on numerous occasions; however, rarely is this in regards to their role in maritime commerce. One imperial edict from 390 mentions Jewish shipmasters in Alexandria. This edict states that Jewish *navicularii* were not obliged to perform the compulsory public duties of other shipowners—most likely a reference to the task of transporting grain to Constantinople and Rome.[281] As Haas highlights, this is the only edict from a large group of laws pertaining to shipmasters in the *Codex Theodosianus* that mentions the involvement of Jewish shipmasters.[282] However, it should be noted that the religious beliefs of the men involved in maritime commerce are rarely mentioned in the legislation. This in itself is quite telling, and might suggest that the religious beliefs of the maritime community often had to be overlooked in the interests of public welfare. Thus, it is unlikely that the absence of Jewish shipmasters and traders in the laws is indicative of a lack of involvement in maritime commerce during the Late Antique period.

Jewish members of the maritime community are certainly recorded outside of the legislation, but their presence is not always clear. We have seen that there were a

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[278] M. Gil, 'The Radhanite Merchants and the Land of Radhan', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 17, 3 (1974), 299-303, 313-4, and 323. Gil also provides an extensive discussion of prior scholarship on Radhanite merchants.

[279] Gil, *Radhanite Merchants*, 314.

[280] Jacoby, *Jews in the Byzantine Economy*, 219-20. Jacoby also notes the paucity of sources on Jewish economic activities from the seventh to thirteenth centuries, so this is not only an issue for the Late Antique period.

[281] *Cod. Theo*. 13.5.18 (*CJR* 1.752): 'Iudaeorum corpus ac Samaritanum ad navicularium functionem non iure vocari cognoscitur; quidquid enim universo corpori videtur indici, nullam specialiter potest obligare personam …'.

[282] Haas, *Alexandria*, 116-7. Out of thirty-eight laws pertaining to shipmasters in general, this is the only one to single out Jewish shipmasters.

number of Syrians involved in maritime commerce during this period. Although Syrian merchants were by no means all Jewish, sources regularly conflate the two terms, even when there seems little reason to do so. Synesius derides the captain of his ill-fated voyage from Alexandria to Libya by referring to the man as both Jewish and Syrian; perhaps this was meant as a double insult.[283] In Parker's commentary on the *Saint Gervais B* shipwreck, he states that the eastern Mediterranean pottery on the wreck corresponds with other historical evidence to demonstrate that western commerce was in the hands of Jewish and Syrian merchants in Late Antiquity.[284] Yet the evidence from this shipwreck does not necessarily suggest the presence of a Jewish crew at all, even if the ship's origin was in Syria. There is, however, a variety of scattered textual and material evidence of Jewish involvement in Late Antique maritime commerce. From a textual perspective, examples include Gregory of Tours' story of a man who transported relics from Nice on a vessel owned and crewed by Jewish men;[285] Theophylact Simocatta's complaint that Jews had a monopoly on trade with peoples outside the Roman empire;[286] and the story of the wealthy Jewish trader from Constantinople who employed another Jewish man named Jacob as a travelling merchant to sail between large market ports for him.[287]

The above-mentioned letter of Synesius also provides important evidence of the Jewish element of the maritime community. Not only was the captain of Synesius' ship Jewish, but so were a large portion of his crew.[288] They were common sailors, not merchants, shipowners or shipmasters, and thus Synesius' letter provides refreshing evidence of these less documented maritime characters. The letter also details some of the religious observances practiced by Jewish mariners at sea, including the captain's refusal to work on the Sabbath until the point at which his ship

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[283] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640a-b and 643a).

[284] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 372-3. Also see van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople*, vol. 1, 4-5. As previously noted in Chapter 3, modern scholars often conflate Syrians with Jews when it comes to maritime trade.

[285] Gregory of Tours, *Gloria Confessorum*, 97 (*PL* 71.900). English trans. in R. Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours. Glory of the Confessors* 95, Translated Texts for Historians 5 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 73.

[286] Theophylact Simocatta, *Hist.* 5.7.5-10 (De Boor, 201-2). English trans. in M. and M. Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 141-2. Theophylact's assessment of Jewish traders is scathing.

[287] *Doctrina Jacobi nuper Baptizati*, trans. G. Dagron and V. Déroche, in 'Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VIIe siècle', *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 70-219.

[288] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640a-b).

was in grave danger.[289] The fact that the vessel sailed from an Alexandrian port also corroborates that there were private Jewish shippers who were plying their trade to and from the great Egyptian emporium.[290] In addition, there is archaeological evidence of Jewish mariners in this period. One item that attests to the presence of these men on sailing vessels is a cooking pot found on the sixth-century *Iskandil Burnu A* shipwreck. The lidded pot has been identified as a Jewish closed casserole dish that must have been on the ship for the use of a Jewish crew-member or passenger.[291] Items located in the excavations of the seaport of Berenike also highlight the ongoing trade in Jewish goods and the role of Jewish mariners in it. Relevant items from Berenike include storage vessels labelled as containing Jewish food, and potsherds with inscriptions in Hebrew and Aramaic.[292] Casual written sketches and small archaeological finds such as these hint at the presence of a relatively sizable Jewish seafaring community with contacts throughout the Mediterranean and beyond.

Arenson points out that Jewish neighbourhoods in maritime cities were generally near port and harbour areas, and she highlights the existence of important Jewish shipping cliques in cities like Alexandria, Constantinople and Caesarea Maritima.[293] Substantial Jewish communities existed in Thessalonike and Constantinople until the sixth century as well. Steven Bowman suggests that Jewish presence was always stronger in cities like these, which had 'strong polytheistic political and cultural centers'.[294] Haas notes that the Jewish quarter in Alexandria was centred around the city's eastern harbour, where the bulk of the city's private Mediterranean trade was conducted.[295] The presence of Jewish communities in these portside areas demonstrates that they were a part of, and exerted social influence on, the

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[289] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 641d-c); Arenson, *Medieval Jewish Seafaring*, 33.
[290] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 639d-640a); Haas, *Alexandria*, 117.
[291] Parker, *Ancient Shipwrecks*, 217; Arenson, *Medieval Jewish Seafaring*, 34.
[292] Power, *Red Sea*, 42, n. 78; R.S. Bagnall, C. Helms, and A.M.F.W. Verhoogt, *Documents from Berenike. Vol. 1. Greek Ostraca from the 1996-1998 Seasons* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 2000), items 99 and 109.
[293] Arenson, *Medieval Jewish Seafaring*, 35. Bowman, *Jews in Byzantium*, 1044 mentions that there was a corporation of Jewish *navicularii* living in one of Rome's neighbourhoods. These *navicularii* were involved in trade between North Africa and Rome.
[294] Bowman, *Jews in Byzantium*, 1047. Bowman suggests that pagans and Jews often banded together against their common threat, i.e. the Christian authorities.
[295] Haas, *Alexandria*, 117-8.

overall maritime milieu of Late Antiquity. The Jewish maritime and commercial community may have been a somewhat disenfranchised minority, but they were nevertheless an important part of the social makeup of port cities and towns all over the Mediterranean world.

The religious situation in Alexandria in the late fourth and early fifth centuries is relatively well-documented compared to other Late Antique cities. Just as there is evidence of a sizable pagan population in Alexandria during this period, there is also evidence of a substantial Jewish community. Large crowds of Jews were recorded by Socrates in Alexandria in the first half of the fifth century, when they were apparently driven from the city after causing a serious public disturbance. Socrates notes that the governor of Alexandria was particularly perturbed that the Jewish community might be expelled from the city, because it was such a large portion of the overall population.[296] No doubt the governor was concerned about the economic impact that the expulsion of so many Jews would have on the city. Haas details a range of evidence that clearly demonstrates that Alexandria's Jewish population survived this event and Jewish society maintained its integral role in the city.[297] Guy Stroumsa points out that the expulsion of a population in Antiquity was often symbolic, and only a community's leaders were actually expelled. He says that this might explain 'the puzzling fact of the Jews' constant reappearance on the scene in Alexandria after each "expulsion"'.[298] The number of Jews living in the city at the time of the Arab conquest of Egypt suggests that the size and wealth of their community had actually increased, rather than declined, during Late Antiquity.[299] The survival of Jewish communities in Alexandria, Constantinople and a myriad of other coastal cities and port regions was largely due to their crucial role in maritime trading activity. This trade was essential, as too were the Jewish men and women who were integral to it.

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[296] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.13 (*PG* 67.759-66): 'ὁ τοίνυν τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων ἔπαρχος Ὀρέστης, σφόδρα ἐπὶ τῷ γενομένῳ ἐχαλέπηνε: καὶ πένθος μέγα ἐτίθετο, τηλικαύτην πόλιν οὕτως ἄρδην τοσούτων ἐκκενωθῆναι ἀνθρώπων'.

[297] Haas, *Alexandria*, 126-7. Stroumsa, *Jewish Survival*, 267 also refers to the Jewish sector in fifth-century Alexandria as a 'highly visible community'.

[298] Stroumsa, *Jewish Survival*, 265.

[299] Power, *Red Sea*, 28; Stroumsa, *Jewish Survival*, 266-7.

Despite their different perspectives of the world, Jewish, Christian and pagan shippers, merchants and sailors had much in common.[300] There were shipowners who exerted substantial influence on the political landscape; however, for the most part, the majority of members in the maritime community occupied a similar place in the social landscape. Most non-mariners regarded members of the maritime community with a certain amount of suspicion. Due to the prevailing political and religious climate in Late Antiquity, mariners of the Jewish faith—or any mariner who was overtly non-Christian for that matter—might have been subjected to an even greater degree of prejudice than their Christian counterparts. Yet this would not always have been the case. The aforementioned law from 390 in the *Codex Theodosianus* singles out Jewish shipowners, but it hardly shows discrimination against them.[301] In fact, many Jewish shipowners would have welcomed this law, as it enabled them to concentrate on lucrative private trade as opposed to shipping grain for the state. Haas even suggests that the exemption granted to Jewish shipowners would have been seen by Christian shippers as unfair, only serving to increase resentment amongst the Christians, who had no choice but to transport state goods.[302]

The most common written sources dealing with Jewish maritime men are Christian ecclesiastical texts. Since these sources generally aim either to discredit Jews or to record their successful conversion to Christianity, they must be read with caution. In other texts, a greedy and unscrupulous reputation is applied to all merchants, not only those of the Jewish faith. It is difficult to determine whether Jewish merchants, sailors and other mariners were treated with any greater disdain than their non-Jewish contemporaries. To many of those in everyday society, these men were simply all of the same unsavoury ilk, regardless of their religion. Once again, Synesius' account of his voyage on the ship owned and captained by a Jewish man may provide historians with some insight into the contemporary social views regarding Jewish men of the sea. A non-Christian at the time of writing his letter, Synesius treated the Jewish captain with distrust and contempt. He wrote that the captain was debt-riddled, fraudulent and along with the other Jewish sailors on

[300] Haas, *Alexandria*, 51.
[301] *Cod. Theo*. 13.5.18 (*CJR* 1.752). See Chapter 4, footnote 271.
[302] Haas, *Alexandria*, 117-8.

board, 'fully convinced of the piety of sending to Hades as many Greeks as possible'.[303] Synesius did not have a great deal of respect for any of the sailors on the ship, but it was the Jewish captain to whom he was most unsympathetic. The captain is also the only crewmember whose religious beliefs are constantly reiterated throughout the letter. Much of the disdain that Synesius aimed at the captain is surely indicative of the harsh views held by general society towards those of the Jewish faith. However, it is important to recognise that Synesius' derisive views of the captain and his crew are also reflective of contemporary attitudes towards sailors and shippers in general. Had the captain been Christian or pagan, it is still likely that Synesius would have found something about him to criticise. Likewise, if the voyage had been a more successful one, perhaps Synesius would hardly have bothered to mention the captain's religious inclination at all.

Summary

It is largely accepted that maritime commerce in Late Antiquity was dominated by Christian shippers of the *annona*. This chapter argues that this is too narrow a view. There were merchants and sailors engaged in private trading activity, and they were a fundamental component of Late Antique maritime society. A variety of pagan and Jewish religious beliefs and maritime superstitions were retained by mariners throughout this period. Yet mariners involved in the transport of the *annona* have overshadowed those engaged in private trade and, as such, private traders have been somewhat ignored; as too have their superstitions, rituals and beliefs. Non-Christian beliefs and practices endured most doggedly in environments that were isolated or hidden from the critical gaze of imperial and ecclesiastical authorities. In Late Antiquity, few environments were more isolated and remote than ships at sea. Existing scholarship has generally overlooked the sea itself as an environment of cultic activity, but the sea is actually one of the most likely natural environments to have continued to attract both Christian and non-Christian worship and ritual

[303] Synesius, *Ep.* 4 (*EG* 640a-b): 'ὁ μὲν ναύκληρος ἐθανάτα κατάχρεως ὢν: ναυτῶν δὲ ὄντων δυοκαίδεκα τῶν πάντων (τρισκαιδέκατος γὰρ ὁ κυβερνήτης ἦν) ὑπὲρ ἥμισυ μὲν καὶ ὁ κυβερνήτης ἦσαν Ἰουδαῖου, γένος ἔκσπονδον καὶ εὐσεβεῖν ἀναπεπεισμένον ἤν ὅτι πλείστους ἄνδρας Ἕλληνας ἀποθανεῖν αἴτιοι γένωνται ...'; *EG* 641: '…μόνος Ἀμάραντος εὔθυμος ἦν, ὡς αὐτίκα περιγράψων τοὺς δανειστάς …'; and *EG* 642d-a for a description of the essential sailing equipment the captain had pawned or sold for cash.

practice. Faced with impending shipwreck or storms at sea, who would have refused the help of any deity who was willing to come to a ship's aid?

Christian churches at the entrances to ports and harbours and in maritime neighbourhoods illustrate the important relationship that existed between religion and the sea in Late Antiquity. These shrines were visited by sailors and sea-merchants, but they were also symbols of imperial and ecclesiastical will. Christianity became the dominant religion of the seas; however, Jewish merchants retained a prominent place in the global world of maritime commerce. Similarly, Graeco-Roman maritime deities were not universally cast aside by seafarers. A range of maritime customs were Christianised, including the transfer of adulation from Graeco-Roman maritime deities to seafaring saints and Mary. Yet this chapter demonstrates that non-Christian maritime beliefs and rituals continued alongside Christian ones on ships, in ports and anchorages, on islands, and in maritime neighbourhoods throughout the eastern Roman empire. Deities such as Poseidon, Hermes, Isis and Athena were favoured by the maritime crowd, and although their temples and shrines may not have survived, they lived on in the hearts and minds of their followers. The cult of Isis, in particular, persisted through her sailing festival, the *Isidis Navigium*. Late Antique steelyard weights of Athena also suggest that the goddess whose statue watched over the activities in Constantine's Forum in Constantinople, retained her role in the everyday world of maritime commerce. Athena's weights and other apotropaic symbols are a reflection of the diversity of contemporary culture and belief that existed in the Late Antique commercial and maritime realm.

Chapter 5. Sin: The (Anti-)Social Life of the Maritime Crowd and the Lower-Class Leisure Industry

Introduction

Members of the maritime community played a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of a lower (or under-class) leisure culture in coastal urban areas. This chapter investigates the social impacts of maritime society and lower-class leisure culture on harbour towns and port cities of the eastern Roman empire. The types of establishments that were frequented by mariners when they were in port are discussed, as too are the workers and other patrons of these venues. Such people included tavern keepers, bath attendants, barmaids, pimps, actors, actresses and prostitutes. Women filled many of these roles and, as such, were a crucial element of maritime and lower-class leisure culture. The availability of sexual services was a core component of the maritime leisure industry, and large entrepôts like Constantinople and Alexandria became natural centres for prostitution. The leisure industry and all its key components had a ubiquitous presence in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of both small port towns and large coastal metropolises. Yet this industry, its culture and main participants (including sailors, merchants and women) were not necessarily befitting of Christian and imperial ideals. As such, this pervasive sub-culture has largely been omitted from the history of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium.

The Maritime Leisure Industry: Rest, Relaxation and Recreation

Given the nature of sea travel, many mariners would have sought a little rest, relaxation and recreation whenever they arrived into port. Harbour towns and port cities—including those that were important administrative, imperial and ecclesiastical centres—regularly teemed with merchants, sailors, soldiers and other travellers; men who Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain aptly refer to as 'a large milling crowd of able-bodied, unattached males'.[1] Itinerant sailors and merchants often had time on their hands when they were in-between voyages. At the very least, these men were in need of a place to eat, drink and sleep whenever they disembarked

[1] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 204.

from their vessels. Many sailors would also have sought entertainment when in port, hoping to enjoy their time on land and to forget the hardships of a working life at sea. Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain note that:

> … in the minds of underclass laborers, recreational pleasures were as important as, if not more important than, the responsibilities of work, the dangers of overseas voyages, and the relentless pursuit of profit.[2]

The leisure industry that serviced these men was able to provide recreational activity in a variety of forms. Sailors, merchants and other travellers would have spent a considerable amount of time and wages in leisure establishments and marketplaces, indulging in drinking, eating, gambling and whoring to excess. Indeed, Libanius informs us that sailors spent their leisure time in taverns, and that maritime centres were full of the 'nautical vulgarity' and immorality that was a by-product of maritime trade.[3] Libanius' description may not be fair to all mariners, but he undoubtedly does capture the general atmosphere of many of the large port cities of his time.

The study by Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain includes an impressive collection of evidence for the existence of maritime leisure culture in coastal centres of the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods. These authors also discuss the types of establishments that maritime culture, or sub-culture, was centred around.[4] They make the important point that underclass leisure establishments like inns, taverns and brothels were ordinary features of Mediterranean harbours—just as were breakwaters, jetties, warehouses, shops and markets.[5] Yet leisure establishments have not survived as clearly in the historical record. In addition, scholars have not shown as much interest in lower-class premises or the culture that they sustained,

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[2] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 208.

[3] Libanius, *Progymnasmata, Comparationes* 4.9 (Gibson, 344-5): 'πλωτῆρες δὲ τὰ πολλὰ ἀργοὶ κεῖνται, τοῦτο μὲν χειμῶνος καὶ πάλιν ἐν καπηλείοις καὶ καπνῷ, τοῦτο δὲ θέρους, ἡνίκα ἄν εὐτυχῶσιν'; and Libanius, *Or.* 11.38 (Foerster, 449). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 14: 'τὸ δὲ μέγιστον εἰς ζημίαν, πόλιν γὰρ ἐπιθαλαττίδιον ναυτικῆς ἀπειροκαλίας ἀνάγκη γέμειν θορύβων τε ἀνελευθέρων καὶ φωνῶν βωμολόχων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἅ λυμαίνεσθαι καὶ διαφθείρειν ἤθη πόλεων ἰσχύει; τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἔξωθεν καταπλέοντας δέξεται, τοὺς δὲ αὐτὴ πλέοντας παρέξεται …'.

[4] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 197-242.

[5] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 208 and 220. The authorities may have hoped that sailors would sleep on their vessels whenever they were in port, but in reality, this would certainly not always have been the case. Refer to *RSL* 3.26 (Ashburner, 26-7 and 105).

as they have in other types of port facilities. Nevertheless, leisure establishments were essential elements of maritime centres and neighbourhoods, even in imperial cities like Constantinople. These places of business—no matter how sordid that business was—were of no less significance to the maritime character of coastal cities and towns than the harbours, docks, warehouses and fora for which they are better known.

It is in the same neighbourhoods that we should expect to find both maritime, commercial infrastructure, and seedy lower-class leisure establishments. These were high-density regions occupying a substantial space in the urban landscape; they were not only confined to the fringes or backstreets of commercial centres. Despite this, maritime and lower-class leisure establishments are rarely mentioned in the extant sources. In the *Patria*, we learn of one brothel built by Constantine in the Zeugma region of Constantinople. According to the *Patria*, this was the only brothel to exist in the city.[6] McGinn sensibly warns, 'the notion that this pragmatist emperor attempted to limit prostitution in his new capital to a single venue defies belief'.[7] The fifth-century *Notitia* further confirms the inadequacy of our primary sources on leisure facilities in the eastern capital. The *Notitia* does not mention *any* inns, taverns or brothels at all in Constantinople during this period. Yet the fact that these types of premises are not mentioned is to be expected; they were not the sort of places that the elite would have wished to draw attention to in their imperial city. However, it is without doubt that venues such as taverns and brothels existed in coastal cities of this period. The intentional omission of these facilities from official, administrative or ecclesiastical records did not simply make them or their ignominious culture disappear. Leisure and entertainment venues remained common features of the urban landscape throughout the empire.

Unfortunately, abundant archaeological evidence of leisure establishments does not exist to compensate for the paucity of literary information on them. Indeed, in the case of Constantinople, there is little left of the thriving lower-class leisure industry that existed during this period. Bryan Ward-Perkins talks of the particularly 'sketchy

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[6] *Patria* 2.65 (trans. Berger, 94-5).

[7] T. McGinn, 'Zoning Shame in the Roman City', in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, eds. C.A. Faraone and L. McClure (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 166.

nature' of the overall archaeological record of Late Antique Constantinople, where what little has survived is monumental in character. He notes the lack of archaeological evidence that exists even for structures like public baths, which are relatively well-documented in the literary sources—including the very large and infamous Baths of Zeuxippos.[8] Evidence of marketplaces does exist, but what remains is the monumental, not the everyday. One of the few cities with extant archaeological evidence of taverns, brothels and other similar venues is Pompeii. Yet, unlike Pompeii, Constantinople has slowly evolved into the modern city of Istanbul. In Constantinople, lower-class venues have been lost under centuries of development.

Even where the archaeological record is a little more intact, it is not always easy to identify leisure establishments. Toon Putzeys and Luke Lavan highlight that there is 'no consistent definition' for recognising buildings like taverns, bars or restaurants in excavations.[9] In his detailed study of prostitutes and brothels in the Roman world, McGinn notes that even in cities like Pompeii it is difficult to distinguish brothels and other lower-class establishments from standard residential structures.[10] Places of prostitution can be particularly difficult to discern because sexual services were regularly offered in taverns, shops, houses, baths, marketplaces and establishments originally (or officially) set up for the provision of other services.[11] An interesting example of this is mentioned in Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*. Socrates records that there were public bakeries in Rome to which taverns had been attached, and that travellers could satisfy their hunger, thirst and sexual appetites in these ancillary establishments.[12]

McGinn suggests that there are very few buildings in the entire Roman world that could be identified with complete certainty as purpose-built brothels.[13] The fact that

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[8] Ward-Perkins, *Old and New Rome Compared*, 56-7.

[9] T. Putzeys and L. Lavan, 'Commercial Space in Late Antiquity', in *Objects in Context, Objects in Use: Material Spatiality in Late Antiquity*, eds. L. Lavan, E. Swift and T. Putzeys (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 97-8.

[10] McGinn, *Economy of Prostitution*, 257.

[11] McGinn, *Economy of Prostitution*, 233-5; McGinn, *Zoning Shame*, 162-3; R. Flemming, 'Quae Corpore Quaestum Facit: The Sexual Economy of Female Prostitution in the Roman Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 89 (1999), 43; Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 218-9.

[12] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.18 (*PG* 67.609-12).

[13] McGinn, *Economy of Prostitution*, 233-5; McGinn, *Zoning Shame*, 162.

such establishments often blended in with their residential and commercial surrounds tells us much about their place in society. Brothels and other businesses offering sexual services needed to identify themselves so that their customers could find them, but they were still ordinary features of the urban landscape. They remained relatively understated so as not to attract too much official attention (as is still the case with these types of establishments in many cultures today).[14] In many cases, brothels and similar venues would have been recorded in official registers as standard houses or other residences. In fact, it is extremely likely that some of the four thousand, three hundred and eighty-eight houses, bathhouses, and even some of the bakeries listed in the *Notitia* also functioned as leisure establishments. Many of these venues would have played a crucial part in Constantinople's thriving leisure industry, regardless of the role assigned to them in official documents.[15]

Despite both the paucity and ambiguity of physical evidence of leisure establishments, a number of buildings that clearly functioned as taverns, inns, brothels and other similar establishments have been located in a variety of cities. Structures from earlier periods that have been unearthed in coastal locations like Pompeii, Ostia, Athens, Ascalon and on Delos reveal that leisure establishments were generally situated in high traffic areas; along or near the entry routes to cities, or close to market squares, arenas and major temple complexes.[16] In the Late Antique period, leisure venues similarly operated where the bulk of their customers could be found; near harbours and in busy neighbourhoods close to markets, shrines and other places of assembly.[17] According to an epigram by Leontius Scholasticus, this was certainly still the case in sixth-century Constantinople. The poem describes the ideal location of an inn situated between the Baths of Zeuxippos and the Hippodrome. Apparently, a traveller could visit the baths and the races in the morning, then find a hospitable welcome in the tavern close by, before heading out to enjoy the races again in the afternoon.[18] This superb location was also less than

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[14] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 219. The literary sources suggest that brothels were distinguished from ordinary houses only by a sign or lantern above their doors.

[15] Also see McGinn, *Zoning Shame*, 163.

[16] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 218. See Putzeys and Lavan, *Commercial Space*, 97-9 for a discussion of the strategic position of taverns, restaurants and bars in Late Antique contexts.

[17] In relation to the location of brothels in Constantinople, see McGinn, *Zoning Shame*, 166.

[18] *Anth. Gr. 9.650* (Paton, 3.360-1): ''Εν μὲν τῇ Ζεύξιππον ἔχω πέλας, ἡδὺ λοετρόν· ἐκ δ' ἑτέρης ἵππων χῶρον ἀεθλοφόρων. τούς ῥα θεησάμενος, καὶ τῷδ' ἔνι χρῶτα λοέσσας δεῦρο καὶ

a kilometre's walk from several of the city's main harbours.[19] The archaeological evidence to confirm the location of businesses like inns and taverns in Constantinople may not exist; however, Marlia Mango suggests that evidence from other Late Antique sites can provide an idea of the situation of commercial premises in the eastern capital. One example provided by Mango is the row of shops excavated in Sardis, adjacent to the city's main bath and gymnasium complex. Of the thirty Late Antique shops excavated in this complex, five were taverns of some description. Mango notes a similar mix of retail shops and taverns in a region between the upper and lower agora areas of Ephesus from this period.[20] It would seem that the serving of drinks and food (and potentially other services) was big business in the areas surrounding these popular and busy meeting places.

A crucial piece of archaeological evidence that attests to the ubiquity of taverns and other leisure establishments in eastern cities of Late Antiquity is a fifth-century mosaic from Daphne, near Antioch. The border of the Yakto (or Megalopsychia mosaic), currently on display in the Antakya Museum, shows scenes of everyday life on the streets of Antioch and its surrounding suburbs. The mosaic includes depictions of a number of leisure establishments, with retailers selling their goods, men drinking and eating at taverns, others playing dice at street-front tables, and travellers making their way along the streets.[21] A variety of game pieces have been found in a number of sites and contexts across the eastern empire, including in the excavations of the Theodosian Harbour in Istanbul.[22] These items confirm that the playing of dice, knuckle-bones, checkers and other games were popular activities in this period.[23] Game playing was clearly widespread in public houses, on city streets, and in port areas of this time. Legislation would also suggest that gambling on such

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ἄμπνευσον δαιτὶ παρ' ἡμετέρῃ· καί κε πάλιν σταδίοις ποτὶ δείελον ὥριος ἔλθοις, ἐγγύθεν ἐγγὺς ἰὼν γείτονος ἐκ θαλάμου.'

[19] The Harbour of Julian was the closest harbour to the inn, Hippodrome and the well-known public baths. It was considerably less than a kilometre away.

[20] Mango, *Commercial Map*, 194-5. Also refer to Figures 5 and 13 in Mango's article.

[21] Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, 181 (Figures 194 and 195); Putzeys and Lavan, *Commercial Space*, 106. For a description of the commercial activities depicted in the mosaic border, see Pitarakis, 'Daily Life at the Marketplace' in Morrisson, *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, 402-3 (and Figure 16 in Pitarakis).

[22] Pekin and Kangal, *Istanbul: 8000 years*, Catalogue items Y42, Y46, Y47, and Y49. For several other examples from sites outside of Constantinople, see Catalogue items 236-243 in Papanikola-Bakirtzi, *Everyday Life in Byzantium*, 208-11.

[23] Baran Çelik, *Daily Life in Yenikapi*, 220-3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, *Everyday Life*, 197.

games was a serious social issue in cities of the East. By Justinian's reign, several laws had been created in an attempt to ban gambling in both public and private contexts. Legislation promulgated in Constantinople in 529 records that men were suffering huge losses of money and property due to their gambling addictions.[24] Proprietors who allowed gambling to be conducted on their premises could face harsh penalties, including the confiscation of these same premises by the authorities.[25] The legislation also highlights another social, political and spiritual problem exacerbated by gambling; blasphemy. As a result of their losses and debts, many gamblers were committing the serious offence of publicly blaspheming against the Church and the imperial authorities.[26] A law from 546 records that even bishops and other clerics were regularly engaging in gambling activity, and the penalties meted out to ecclesiastics could be quite harsh.[27]

The Temple of Artemis in Constantinople was apparently converted into a gambling establishment in the late fourth century. According to Malalas, the temple was still a notorious gambling venue almost two centuries later, suggesting that this den of iniquity was not exactly inconspicuous.[28] Agathias also refers to gambling in several of his epigrams. Betting on games of chance was undoubtedly an activity that Agathias had witnessed on many occasions in sixth-century Constantinople, and he was well aware of its social consequences. The poet stresses the importance of imposing limits on oneself and practicing self-restraint when gambling, and he notes

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[24] *Cod. Just.* 3.43 (*CJC* 2.147-8).

[25] *Cod. Just.* 3.43.2 (*CJC* 2.147-8).

[26] *Cod. Just.* 3.43.1 (*CJC* 2.147): '… quidam enim ludentes nec ludum scientes, sed nominationem tantum, proprias substantias perdiderunt die noctuque ludendo in argento apparatu lapidum et auro. consequenter autem ex hac inordinatione blasphemare conantur et instrumenta conficiunt …'. Also see Malalas, *Chron.* 18.47 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 264): '… nor should gaming be allowed in any city, for some gamblers who had been discovered in Byzantion had been indulging themselves in dreadful blasphemies'. Another law, *Cod. Theo.* 9.4 (*CJR* 1.443) = *Cod. Just.* 9.7 (*CJC* 3.73), highlights that drinking could lead to the same expressions of discontent with the authorities: 'Si quis modestiae nescius et pudoris ignarus inprobo petulantique maledicto nomina nostra crediderit lacessenda ac temulentia turbulentus obtrectator temporum fuerit ... Unde integris omnibus ad nostram scientiam referatur, ut ex personis hominum dicta pensemus et, utrum praetermitti an exequi rite debeat, censeamus'.

[27] *Nov. Just.* 123.10 (*CJC* 3.602-3): 'Ἀπαγορεύομεν δὲ τοῖς ὁσιωτάτοις ἐπισκόποις καὶ πρεσβυτέροις καὶ διακόνοις καὶ ὑποδιακόνοις καὶ ἀναγνώσταις καὶ παντὶ ἄλλῳ οἱουδήποτε εὐαγοῦς τάγματος ἤ σχήματος καθεστῶτι ταβλίζειν ἢ τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα παιζόντων κοινωνοὺς ἢ θεωρητὰς γίνεσθαι ἢ εἰς οἱανδήποτε θέαν τοῦ θεωρῆσαι χάριν παραγίνεσθαι. εἰ δέ τις ἐξ αὐτῶν τοῦτο ἁμάρτοι, κελεύομεν τοῦτον ἐπὶ τρ῾εις ἐνιαυτοὺς ἀπὸ πάσης εὐαγοῦς ὑπηρεσίας κωλύεσθαι καὶ μοναστηρίῳ ἐμβάλλεσθαι.'

[28] Malalas, *Chron.* 13.39 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 187).

that those who were unable to do so were easily overcome by anger, violence and outbursts of profanity.[29] Several edicts retained in Justinian's *Digesta* confirm that gambling venues were often rough establishments where violence and other illicit activities were commonplace.[30] One of the miracles of Saint Artemios describes a group of men openly playing dice in Constantinople during the reign of Heraclius. At least one of the group was a known thief, and the neighbourhood in which the game was being played was a known hang-out for those of ignoble status.[31] A gaming machine from the sixth century has also been found near Constantinople's Hippodrome.[32] The Hippodrome was located in a very prominent part of the city, but it was also an area where one could expect to find numerous lowlifes at any given time.

The accumulated evidence demonstrates that gambling remained widespread throughout Late Antiquity, despite the attempts of the imperial authorities to ban it. As a popular pastime, gambling was one of the many activities that lower-class leisure establishments offered their patrons. Of course, where there was gambling, there was also drinking and other dissolution. The numerous drinking poems written by Agathias and his fifth and sixth-century peers attest to the presence of a strong drinking and leisure culture in some of the larger eastern cities.[33] According to Zachariah, student life in Berytus at the end of the fifth century involved much playing of dice, drinking and consorting with prostitutes.[34] These recreational pursuits could always be indulged in the lower-class leisure establishments that were so prolific in maritime centres like Berytus. A law from the late fourth century contained in the *Codex Theodosianus* also refers to student life, this time in Constantinople and

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[29] *Anth. Gr.* 9.767: '… μήτε δὲ νικήσας μεγαλίζεο, μήτ' ἀπολειφθεὶς ἄχνυσο, τὴν ὀλίγην μεμφόμενος βολίδα. καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ σμικροῖσι νόος διαφαίνεται ἀνδρός, καὶ κύβος ἀγγέλλει βένθος ἐχεφροσύνης …', 9.768: '…Παίγνια μὲν τάδε πάντα· Τύχης δ' ἑτερότροπος ὁρμὴ ταῖς ἀλόγοις ταύταις ἐμφέρεται βολίσιν· καὶ βροτέου βιότου σφαλερὸν μίμημα νοήσεις, νῦν μὲν ὑπερβάλλων, νῦν δ' ἀπολειπόμενος. αἰνέομεν δὴ κεῖνον, ὃς ἐν βιότῳ τε κύβῳ τε χάρματι καὶ λύπῃ μέτρον ἐφηρμόσατο.', and 9.769: 'Τοῖς μὲν πρηϋνόοις τάδε παίγνια, τοῖς δ' ἀκολάστοις λύσσα καὶ ἀμπλακίη καὶ πόνος αὐτόματος. ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ λέξῃς τι θεημάχον ὕστατος ἕρπων, μηδ' ἀναροιβδήσῃς ῥινοβόλῳ πατάγῳ. δεῖ γὰρ μήτε πονεῖν ἐν ἀθύρμασι, μήτε τι παίζειν ἐν σπουδῇ· καιρῷ δ' ἴσθι νέμειν τὸ πρέπον.' (Paton, 3.414-5).

[30] *Dig.* 11.5 (*CJC* 1.185).

[31] *Miracles of St Artemios*, 18 (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 116-19).

[32] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 122 (Figure 4.1).

[33] *Anth. Gr.* 11.54-11.64 (Paton, 4.96-103).

[34] Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 66 and 105 (trans. Brock and Fitzgerald, 60-1 and 75).

Rome. It notes the tendency of students to associate with undesirable characters, engage in scandalous behaviour, and to visit the common establishments that offered lowbrow entertainment, drinking, gambling and prostitution.[35]

Julian of Ascalon's architectural treatise from the sixth century deals with some of the common, but socially undesirable, types of establishments that existed during the Late Antique and Early Byzantine periods. Julian was an architect with hands-on experience in building design and construction and, as such, the document has a practical rather than a literary feel.[36] Julian's disquisition contains a set of building rules for the coastal city of Ascalon and other Palestinian cities; however, it was certainly inspired by Justinian's imperial court, and later circulated in the eastern capital—suggesting that it had more than just a limited regional relevance.[37] Julian's text suggests ways to reduce the disagreeable impacts that certain unsavoury venues had on cities and towns.[38] Clearly, these venues were having an effect on everyday life. The rules stipulate that tavern doors should never open directly opposite the doors of other dwellings, and benches and mattresses were only to be provided for clients within tavern buildings themselves; no drinking, reclining, game-playing, carousing or presumably love-making were to occur on the street.[39] Julian's treatise considers establishments offering prostitution, but he makes the point that brothels themselves were theoretically illegal in many areas.[40] As such, Julian treats purpose-built brothels sparingly, whilst unintentionally confirming that not only did these establishments exist, but that prostitution occurred in a number of other contexts as well, including in private houses, taverns and marketplaces.

Bathhouses were also prominent features of the urban landscape, and they often acted as sites of prostitution. In her article entitled 'Brothels, Baths, and Babes: Prostitution in the Byzantine Holy Land', Claudine Dauphin mentions a large number

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[35] *Cod. Theo.* 14.9.1 (*CJR* 1.786): '... qui turpem inhonestamque famam et consociationes, quas proximas putamus esse criminibus, aestiment fugiendas neve spectacula frequentius adeant aut adpetant vulgo intempestiva convivia ...'.

[36] B.S. Hakim, 'Julian of Ascalon's Treatise of Construction and Design Rules from Sixth-Century Palestine', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* 60/1 (2001), 21-2.

[37] Hakim, *Julian of Ascalon's Treatise*, 7-8 and 21-2.

[38] Hakim, *Julian of Ascalon's Treatise*, 10-3.

[39] Julian of Ascalon, *Hex*. 26. English trans. in Hakim, 12-3. There were similar rules for the doors of stables in *Hex*. 25.

[40] Julian of Ascalon, *Hex*. 27. English trans. in Hakim, 13.

of newborn infant bones that were discovered under a Late Antique bathhouse in Ascalon. Dauphin suspects that these children were the result of unwanted pregnancies by the prostitutes who worked in the bath. This theory was suggested by the site's excavators and based on analysis of the infant bones.[41] Not all scholars agree with this hypothesis,[42] yet bathhouses were known sites of prostitution. There is no valid evidence to refute the idea that this venue acted as a brothel or that the infant bones belonged to the offspring of female bath-workers. Certainly, the availability of sexual services in public bathhouses would account for at least some of the notoriety that these popular establishments attracted. The Baths of Zeuxippos in Constantinople had a particular reputation as a haunt for underclass elements, and it would be safe to assume that prostitutes also worked at this venue.[43]

Theatres and other establishments where mimes, pantomimes, and dancing shows ('profane theatre') were held were extremely popular. These venues were important features of the Late Antique urban environment.[44] Rautman describes theatrical

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[41] C. Dauphin, 'Brothels, Baths, and Babes: Prostitution in the Byzantine Holy Land', *Classics Ireland,* 3 (1996), 62-3.

[42] See M. Rose, 'Ashkelon's Dead Babies', *Archaeology* 50, 2 (1997), 12-3 for a brief summary of the scholarly debate on this site.

[43] The Baths of Zeuxippos in Constantinople were seen as a hang-out for ruffians. It was at these baths that Nestorius supposedly recruited a number of underclass elements as strong-arm support for his trip to the Council of Ephesus in 431. Refer to *Epistula Memnonis* 101, 12-4, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, tome 1: *Concilium Universale Ephesenum*, vol. 1, *Acta Graeca*, part 3, *Collectio Vaticana* 81-119, ed. E. Schwartz (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter De Gruyter, 1927), 46 = *ACO* 1.1.3. See also L. Duchesne, ed., *Early History of the Christian Church from its Foundation to the End of the Fifth Century*, vol. 3, trans. C. Jenkins (London: John Murray, 1924) 240-2; and Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 101 and 106. See P. Magdalino, 'Church, Bath and Diakonia in Medieval Constantinople', in *Church and People in Byzantium. Twentieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Manchester, 1986*, ed. R. Morris (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1990), 165-88 for a discussion of the change in organisation and character of public baths and bathing under the influence of Christianity.

[44] K. Neiiendam, *The Art of Acting in Antiquity, Iconographical Studies in Classical, Hellenistic and Byzantine Theatre* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1992), 94-127 (especially 125). Neiiendam calls mimes, pantomimes, and dancing shows 'profane theatre', noting that they were enjoyed in various venues including Hippodromes, theatres, marketplaces and a range of other makeshift environments in cities like Constantinople. For a history of pantomime and mime in the Roman period, see R.C. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 140-53. Also see A.R. Brown, 'Performance and Reception of Greek Tragedy in the Early Medieval Mediterranean', in *Intercultural Transmission in the Medieval Mediterranean*, eds. S.L. Hathaway and D.W. Kim (London: Continuum, 2012), 150-5 for a description of mime and pantomime and the evidence for the continuation of performances of tragedy in the fourth to sixth century period (including their popularity at festivals). Brown suggests that from the sixth century, theatrical performances were only able to continue at court or in large public venues in cities like Constantinople where there was imperial funding and approval for it. Yet the steady decrease in funding for theatrical performance would not have stopped profane theatre performances altogether; they would simply have gone further underground.

entertainment venues as frequented by 'socially marginal individuals', including foreigners and women.[45] The identification of actresses with prostitutes was commonplace during this period and, whether or not the association of these two professions was justified, it is clear that the theatre was seen as the haunt of loose men and women. This is best exemplified by Procopius' scathing attack on the empress Theodora, who he paints as a lascivious harlot with a theatrical past.[46] Procopius' description of the theatre and comic mime in Theodora's day is invaluable, regardless of whether his depiction of Theodora is factual or not.[47] It provides information on the types of entertainment offered in theatrical venues in Constantinople and other parts of the eastern empire. Procopius also enables his modern reader to gain a sense of the reputation that these venues had amongst both the fifth and sixth-century elite and *hoi polloi*. He chronicles the popularity of these places—with their indecorous and irreverent performances—whilst simultaneously capturing the disdain with which they were held by the elite.[48]

Indeed, it is the reputation of lower-class leisure establishments—and those who frequented them—that we read of most often in the surviving texts. It is often difficult to separate the reputation from the reality; however, much of the evidence already cited indicates that these places were seedy venues catering to a number of socially undesirable appetites. They were generally rowdy venues, popular with travellers and locals alike. Drunken brawls, gambling and sexual encounters were all common occurrences in these establishments, where 'the combination of fast food, cheap wine, easy conversation, and lowbrow entertainment drew people day and night'.[49] Entertainment and leisure venues were particularly scorned in ecclesiastical circles. Hagiographical texts refer to the excessive temptations posed by the taverns, brothels, theatres and entertainment complexes of big maritime cities like Constantinople and Alexandria. To men like Palladius and John Moschus, it was all

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[45] Rautman, *Daily Life,* 114.

[46] Procop. *Anec.* 9.1-28 (Dewing, 102-13).

[47] S. Tougher, 'Having Fun in Byzantium', in James, *A Companion to Byzantium*, 139.

[48] For a discussion of the popularity of the theatre in Late Antiquity, the different genres of performance enjoyed, and the theatre's various detractors, refer to B. Leyerle, 'The Late Antique Theater', in *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives. John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001), 13-41.

[49] Rautman, *Daily Life*, 104-5. Also see Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 31 and F. Stavroulaki, 'Byzantine Seaports', in Zafiropoulou, *Journeys on the Seas*, 29.

too easy to surrender to debauchery and impiety in these large cities, where prostitution, overindulgence, gambling and fighting were the norm.[50] Saints' lives and other religious texts do tend to exaggerate the moral risks posed by leisure establishments. Regardless, there is no doubt that antisocial and objectionable activities did occur in leisure and entertainment venues. The writers of the Jewish laws in the *Babylonian Talmud* also stress the moral hazards of Late Antique cities, suggesting that only the most truly devoted could remain chaste when visiting a large metropolis.[51]

Places of entertainment in large maritime centres would have been particularly busy environments, servicing 'a cosmopolitan clientele of residents, travellers, and pilgrims'.[52] As a rule, the entertainment industry in urban centres like Constantinople, Alexandria and Berytus is better documented than that of smaller coastal communities. Evidence from large maritime centres cannot simply be extrapolated to smaller harbour towns on the further edges of the empire; the substantial differences that existed between core coastal communities and those on the periphery must be taken into account when assessing their respective social environments.[53] Yet it is important to remember that smaller coastal cities and towns acted as important nodes in the overall maritime commercial network. Many of the same sailors and merchants visiting smaller ports were also travelling to the larger coastal metropolises. The behaviours of these men, their recreational pursuits, and the company they sought out would have been the same, regardless of the size and location of the towns they were visiting. Smaller coastal regions had their own flourishing leisure industries, and maritime and lower-class leisure culture would have determined the overriding character and reputation of many of the more modest trading towns. This was certainly the case for the maritime trading post of Byzantium,

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[50] Palladius, *Hist Laus*. 32 (*PG* 34.1091-4). English trans. in Lowther Clarke, Chapter 26, 106-7: 'Ἀπελθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν, τάχα καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ θείαν οἰκονομίαν, τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον, ἥλῳ τὸν ἧλον ἐξέκρουσεν. Περιέπεσεν γὰρ ἑκουσίως τῇ ἀδιαφορίᾳ, εἰς ὕστερον ἀκούσιον εὑράμενος σωτηρίαν. Παρέβαλεν γὰρ καὶ θεάτροις, καὶ ἱπποδρομίαις, καὶ τὰς διατριβὰς εἶχεν ἐν καπηλείοις. Οὕτως δὲ γαστριμαργῶν καὶ οἰνοφλυγῶν ἐνέπεσεν καὶ εἰς τὸν βόρβορον τῆς γυναικείας ἐπιθυμίας …'; and John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, 194 (*PG* 87/3.3075-8) which tells the story of a senior monk who warns a younger man of the evils of Alexandrian taverns.

[51] See Dauphin, *Brothels,* 48-9.

[52] Dauphin, *Brothels*, 49.

[53] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 209.

which—before it became the great commercial port of Constantinople—was viewed as the epitome of a harbour town. Athenaeus' description of the wasteful and debauched lives of the city's inhabitants, who spent their time in the marketplaces, taverns and by the waterside, is a good example.[54]

In many cases, maritime leisure establishments lent an unsavoury and dangerous air to trading towns. Statutes contained in *Rhodian Sea Law* note that numerous port towns were notorious for harbouring pirates and thieves.[55] The laws discuss the hazards of sailing into such ports, but captains and their crews would have had little choice but to find shelter in these places on occasion. Hagiographical texts also describe the menacing atmosphere of small port towns. In his *Lausiac History*, Palladius tells of the desperate characters who loitered in some of the less prominent Egyptian river-ports, and the trouble in which travellers could find themselves when sailing to large commercial hubs like Alexandria.[56] Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain suggest that it was the gender imbalance in maritime communities—where men overwhelmingly outnumbered women—and the transient nature of sailors and merchants that combined to create an aura of insecurity and low-level criminality in these areas.[57] These same factors influenced the atmosphere of maritime leisure establishments and neighbourhoods, and helped to cement their reputation as rough and sleazy precincts. Yet leisure establishments and their surrounds were not shunned by all, and remained popular in coastal cities of all sizes. Sailors, merchants, itinerant travellers and a range of locals were drawn to lower-class leisure establishments, not least for the variety of services they offered. Thus, a distinct lower-class leisure sub-culture developed around these venues and districts; a culture defined and kept alive by those who worked in and frequented such ignoble locales.

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[54] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 12, 526d-e (trans. Gulick in Meijer and van Nijf, *Trade, Transport and Society*, 14).

[55] *RSL* 3.4 (Ashburner, 13 and 83) and 3.15 (Ashburner, 20-1 and 95-6).

[56] Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 35.14-5 (trans. Lowther Clarke, 124-5). In this account, travellers who stopped at Niciopolis (between Memphis and Alexandria) became embroiled in disorderly behaviour and fought with the unruly and desperate locals of the town. As a result, one of their party was murdered, another maimed, and others thrown into a river and verbally threatened.

[57] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 218.

Social Misfits, Plebs, Itinerants and the Women of the Maritime and Lower-Class Leisure Industry

Mariners were a crucial component of onshore leisure culture in coastal cities, but there were also a number of other less transient characters who were equally as important. The remainder of this chapter considers other men and women who were active participants in the thriving leisure industry that existed in port cities and towns throughout the Mediterranean region. These non-mariners include prostitutes, pimps, actors and actresses, tavern and inn-keepers, barmaids, bathhouse attendants, and slaves. Alongside their regular customers (which included sailors and merchants), those who filled these roles helped to shape lower-class and maritime leisure culture in port cities and cultural centres throughout the Roman world. Many of the men and women involved in the maritime leisure industry were from the lower or under-classes of society themselves, although this was certainly not always the case.

As previously noted, young educated students and poets took an active part in the lower-class leisure culture of their cities. Alan Cameron has shown that some of the unruly youths who were supporters of the circus teams in this period were of the upper or middle classes.[58] These circus partisans also played their part in lower-class leisure culture, as did other upper-class men, including senators, who enjoyed the services offered by entertainment and leisure venues.[59] However, contemporary writers tended to depict all of the people who played an active role in the leisure industry—and in lower-class society in general—as one large, disreputable, and lowly bunch. Take for example Ammianus Marcellinus' description of the lower classes as one large indolent group who devoted their lives 'to drink, gambling, brothels, shows, and pleasure in general'.[60] Certainly, much of the evidence presented so far depicts leisure and entertainment venues as the seamy haunts of

[58] Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 75-77. Cameron highlights a number of sources which suggest that the partisans of the Blues and Greens were young men who engaged in a variety of rebellious and often socially unacceptable behaviours.
[59] The involvement of senators and other elite men with prostitutes in particular will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.
[60] Amm. Marc., *History* 28.4.28-9 (trans. Hamilton, 362).

gamblers, drunkards, loose women, criminals, slaves and other assorted lowlifes.[61] Yet some of these venues would also have acted as retreats for ordinary men and women who were in need of work, lodging, food or light entertainment.

The maritime leisure industry was part of a sub-culture that was popular among the masses, despite the fact that it generally ran counter to the mainstream elite. Our primary elite sources betray a lack of concern for the large numbers of ordinary men and women who both lived in and visited their cities and towns. Those who wrote about life in major urban centres rarely seemed to recognise the men and women of the lower classes as anything but a faceless or insignificant mob. In his reporting of the aftermath of the earthquake of 557 in Constantinople, Agathias demonstrates the segregation that existed between different levels of society in this period. The historian laments that, as a result of the natural disaster, honourable men and women were thrown into the streets and forced to intermingle with plebeians. He records that:

> Large numbers of women and not just the members of the lower classes but even persons of breeding and distinction roamed about and mingled freely with the men; the ordered structure of society with its due observance of decorum and respect for privilege and the proper distinctions of rank was thrown into wild confusion and trampled underfoot.[62]

Clearly, the upper classes could generally avoid any contact with the lower strata of society, if they chose to do so. As we have seen, Agathias' familiarity with leisure culture in Constantinople probably made him more *au fait* with the lower classes than most historians, yet his description encapsulates the status quo in cities like Constantinople. It also demonstrates the lack of sensitivity that the upper classes had for their plebeian contemporaries. Many writers simply did not consider the lower

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[61] Contemporary writers had always associated the lower elements of society with leisure establishments. Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 223 demonstrate that in earlier periods, tavern professionals were often amalgamated with sailors, gamblers, criminals, and slaves.

[62] Agathias, *Histories* 5.3.7 (Keydell, 167). English trans. in Frendo, *Agathias*, 138: 'γύναια δὲ πολλά, μὴ ὅτι τῶν ἡμεληµένων, ἀλλ'ἤδν που καὶ τῶν ἐντιµοτάτων, ξυνηλᾶτο τοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ ἀνεµίγνυτο; τάξις τε ΄΄πασα καὶ αἰδὼς καὶ ἡ τῶν γερῶν µεγαλαυχία καὶ ὅ τι ἐνθένδε ὑπερανέχον καὶ ἀποκεκριµένον, ἀνετετάρακτο ἐν τῷ τότε καὶ ἐπεπάτητο'.

classes to be an important element of society, hence the tendency to depict them all as a single indistinguishable mass of commoners and misfits.

The legislation of this period also betrays a general tendency to view those who worked in taverns, inns, stables (which were often attached to inns and taverns) and on ships as one group. Tavern and inn-keepers, stable-owners and shipmasters were all seen to commonly employ and entertain men and women of unsatisfactory and somewhat homogeneous character, including slaves.[63] No doubt ships and leisure establishments of this period catered to a range of criminal types—men and women who were able to blend in 'with milling crowds of underclass laborers and travelers while profiting from their proximity'.[64] Those involved in maritime trade and the hospitality industry may have done little to dispel their unsavoury reputation. As noted poetically, but succinctly, by Macedonius the Consul in the sixth century, tavern or inn-keepers (and presumably also shipmasters) were not concerned with the identity of their patrons, only that they could pay for the services they offered.[65] Bearing in mind that some of these services were illicit and others were deemed improper or immoral, it was perhaps in the best interests of the proprietors, workers and patrons of many of these establishments to remain relatively anonymous.

The presence of women and the provision of sexual services were two of the biggest attractions of leisure establishments in maritime cities and towns, and prostitution fell somewhere in between illicit and indecorous from the Late Roman period on. The transient nature of maritime communities, the gender imbalance in coastal neighbourhoods and towns, and the fact that there were many poor women in urban centres, created an environment where a leisure culture centred around prostitution could thrive. It is clear from the extant evidence that prostitution flourished in cities like Constantinople during this period. The women working in the leisure industry, including prostitutes and other female entertainers, were a central component of

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[63] Just. *Inst.* 4.5.3 (*CJC* 1.47); Just. *Inst.* 4.7.2 (*CJC* 1.50); *Dig.* 4.9.1 and 4.9.7 (*CJC* 1.101-2); *Dig.* 14.1 (*CJC* 1.218-9); *Dig.* 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825). In the eyes of the law, the proprietors of these types of establishments were regularly entrusted with the safekeeping of goods and property belonging to patrons and travellers.

[64] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 223.

[65] Macedonius speaks of an inn in Kibyra, in south-west Turkey. *Anth. Gr.* 9.648 (Paton, 3.358-9): 'Ἀστὸς ἐμοὶ καὶ ξεῖνος ἀεὶ φίλος· οὐ γὰρ ἐρευνᾷν τίς, πόθεν, ἠὲ τίνων, ἐστὶ φιλοξενίης.' ('Native alike and foreigner are ever dear to me, for it is not the business of hospitality to enquire who, whence, and whose son').

lower or under-class leisure culture. Women often brought together men from a range of professions, classes and walks of life; many of whom would otherwise have had very little contact with one another.[66] As noted, prostitutes were readily available in a number of venues and areas other than purpose-built brothels, including inns, taverns, bathhouses, theatres and marketplaces; all places of congregation. Prostitutes, or their representatives, would also have waited at the docks for ships arriving into port in order to lure potential customers to their places of business.[67] When Mary of Egypt approached a group of sailors in Alexandria who were preparing to disembark for Jerusalem, she certainly recognised them as prospective clients.[68] Sex workers, both female and male, attracted a variety of clients to their venues—from itinerant travellers, sailors and merchants, to working-class men, students, poets, rebellious youths, slaves and even men of the cloth. Males of the upper classes and those engaged in imperial service also consorted with prostitutes in lower-class venues.

That men of senatorial or other elite rank (and their sons) were using the services of prostitutes is clear from the legislation dealing with these sexual unions. McGinn lists a number of laws from this period that deal with marriage, adultery and the legitimacy of children.[69] The laws relate to prostitutes and a range of other women of low status. They clearly demonstrate that there were men of the upper classes who were regularly consorting with prostitutes, actresses and other ignoble women, and establishing relationships with them.[70] McGinn believes that, in the Roman period, the authorities took very little interest in prostitutes unless they threatened the prevailing social order. The primary ways in which they were able to do this were by marrying into the upper echelons of society, or claiming rights and property for

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[66] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 197. These authors note that in the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods, women in leisure establishments often acted as a 'conduit for communications' between men of various social classes.

[67] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 223. Many of the main literary sources for prostitution in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, such as Menander, Plautus, Terence, Alciphron, Lucian and Athenaeus, regularly associate prostitutes with merchants and sailors. McCormick, *Origins*, 425 notes simply that sailors and merchants did the expected things when their ships docked in port, 'for instance, they visited whores who specialized in seafaring men'.

[68] *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, 20, trans. M. Kouli, in Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 81. The first accounts of Mary's life were written in the sixth or seventh century.

[69] McGinn, *Legal Definition of Prostitute*, 73-116.

[70] Examples include: *Cod. Theo.* 4.6.3 (*CJR* 1.176) = *Cod. Just.* 5.27.1 (*CJC* 2.216); *Nov. Marc.* 4 (*CJR* 2.190-3); *Nov. Just.* 117.6 (*CJC* 3.555-6).

themselves or their offspring. For the Romans, it was 'important to determine with precision which women were available for casual sex and were accordingly denied, as potential partners in respectable unions, to men of status'.[71] The Late Antique legislation confirms the continued importance of maintaining social order in this respect, although there was some relaxation of the laws in the reigns of Justin and Justinian.[72] Opinions of the place of prostitutes in society changed with time, and the official authorities started to pay more attention to those engaged in sexual employment from the Late Roman period on. However, despite becoming increasingly morally objectionable to the state and Church, it is clear that prostitution did not cease to exist. Brothels themselves may have been illegal in some parts of the empire by the sixth century,[73] but this did not stop the practice of prostitution by any means. Nor did it deter well-respected men from taking advantage of the strong market for sexual services. Legislation contained in Justinian's *Digesta* records that income from brothels could form part of an inheritance, since brothels were run on the estates of many respectable men.[74]

According to John Malalas, the emperor Theodosius converted the temples of Artemis and Aphrodite in Constantinople into a gambling den and carriage-house for his praetorian prefect. Apparently, he also erected accommodation for prostitutes nearby.[75] This suggests that prostitutes were active in central areas of the city, condoned by the state, and visited by men in the administrative service of the emperor. Prostitution was a thriving business in Constantinople and other parts of the empire. Despite the moral objections held by early Christian emperors and the Church, prostitution was by no means outlawed. In fact, the first-century tax on the earnings of prostitutes continued to be collected until the late fifth century under Anastasius. This tax remained in place because of the substantial revenue it brought

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[71] McGinn, *Legal Definition of Prostitute*, 113.

[72] Justin and Justinian introduced legislation that relaxed some of these laws, allowing men of rank to marry a greater range of women and to legitimise their offspring. Refer to *Cod. Just.* 5.4.23 (*CJC* 2.196-7) and *Nov. Just*. 117.6 (*CJC* 3.555-6). Whether or not these laws allowed marriage between senators and prostitutes (as opposed to actresses and other lowly women) is not entirely clear. See McGinn, *Legal Definition*, 101-7 for a discussion of the scholarship on this issue.

[73] Julian of Ascalon, *Hex*. 27. English trans. in Hakim, *Julian of Ascalon's Treatise*, 13.

[74] *Dig*. 5.3.27.1 (*CJC* 1.116): 'Sed et pensiones, quae ex locationibus praediorum urbanorum perceptae sunt, venient, licet a lupanario perceptae sint: nam et in multorum honestorum virorum praediis lupanaria exercentur.'

[75] Malalas, *Chron*. 13.39 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 187).

the state.[76] Evagrius complained that male and female prostitution had only been allowed to continue with impunity because of the excessive income that it generated for the imperial coffers.[77] As noted by Evagrius, there were male prostitutes during this period as well. However, given the scant references to the prostitution of men and young boys in our sources, one can only assume that this practice either declined somewhat or simply went further underground at this time. By the sixth century, those who made use of male prostitutes would not have advertised this fact loudly. Agathias talks of the self-loathing that men who chose to engage in homosexual practice should feel.[78] More importantly, Justinian's *Institutes* dictate harsh penalties, including death, for men who had sexual relations with other males.[79]

That there were objections to any form of prostitution in this period is without question.[80] Apart from the hagiographical and ecclesiastical sources that speak of its temptations for young and otherwise pious men, there were also several fifth-century laws that attempted to curb its moral—if not financial—influence on society. This legislation particularly targeted pimps and others who forced those of humble status into prostitution.[81] Such laws should not be seen as strict attempts by the imperial authorities to rid cities like Constantinople of prostitutes, but rather as attempts to clean up a thriving industry. The legislation and the cessation of the tax on the earnings of prostitutes in the late fifth century had little impact on the numbers of prostitutes (or their procurers) in Constantinople and other parts of the empire. By

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[76] Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 3.39-40 (Bidez and Parmentier, 136-9). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 183-6; Procopius of Gaza, *Pan.* 13 (*PG* 87/3.2813-4). See Flemming, *Quae Corpore Quaestum Facit*, 54-5 and McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law*, 250-5 and 271-4 for discussion of the implementation of this tax and its continued collection until the late fifth century.

[77] Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 3.39 (Bidez and Parmentier, 136-9). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 183-6.

[78] *Anth. Gr.* 5.278 (Paton, 1.406-7): 'ἄρσενας εἰ σπεύσω φιλέειν ποτέ, μήτε τυχήσω μήτ' ἐπολισθήσω μείζοσιν ἀμπλακίαις. ἄρκια θηλυτέρων ἀλιτήματα· κεῖνα κομίσσω, καλλείψω δὲ νέους ἄφρονι Πιτταλάκῳ.' See R.C. McCail, 'The Erotic and Ascetic Poetry of Agathias Scholasticus', *Byzantion*, 41 (1971), 212-3 for a discussion of the reflection of contemporary views on sexuality in this epigram.

[79] Just. *Inst.* 4.18.4 (*CJC* 1.55): 'Item lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis, quae non solum temeratores alienarum nuptiarum gladio punit, sed etiam eos, qui cum masculis infandam libidinem exercere audent ... poenam autem eadem lex irrogat peccatoribus, si honesti sunt, publicationem partis dimidiae bonorum, si humiles, corporis coercitionem cum relegatione.'

[80] McGinn, *Zoning Shame*, 168-71.

[81] Examples include: *Cod. Theo.* 15.8.2 (*CJR* 1.825) = *Cod. Just.* 11.41.6 (*CJC* 2.438) and *Nov. Theo.* 18 (*CJR* 2.44).

the reign of Justinian, the prostitution of women and girls seems to have been more widespread than ever. This makes sense; there were greater numbers of immigrants, sailors, merchants and other travellers coming into the city than ever before. Procopius mentions hundreds of prostitutes working in the marketplaces and brothels of Constantinople.[82] A Novel of Justinian complains that pimps were prostituting females in brothels and houses all over the city and its suburbs, whereas previously their activity had been confined to the more remote neighbourhoods.[83] The same law laments that pimps carried on their business in other parts of the empire as well. Penalities prescribed included expulsion, a loss of status, and death.[84] As is the case with the earlier laws, Justinian primarily targets pimps and their procurement of young women, rather than prostitution itself. Thus, pimping is outlawed in Justinian's legislation, but women are simply urged not to fall into the temptation of prostitution. The inducement and deception of weak or unfortunate women and girls into the sexual service industry appear to be the main issues in the sixth-century legislation. It seems to be acknowledged (at least by the emperor, if not the Church) that prostitution itself would always exist due to the weakness of men.[85]

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[82] Procop. *Aed.* 1.9.1-5 (Dewing, 74-5): 'ὅμιλος ἦν ἐπὶ Βυζαντίου γυναίων ἐν μαστροπείῳ λελαγνευμένων οὐχ ἑκούσιον, ἀλλὰ βιαίαν τινὰ μισητίαν. τῆς γὰρ πενίας τῷ ὑπερβάλλοντι ὑπὸ πορνοβοσκῷ τρεφομέναις ἀεὶ καὶ καθ' ἑκάστην ἀκολασταίνειν ἐπάναγκες ἦν, ἀνδράσι τε ἀγνῶσι καὶ παραπεπτωκόσιν ἐξαπιναίως ἐσποδιοῦντο συνδυαζόμεναι. πορνοβοσκῶν γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ἦν ἐκ παλαιοῦ ἑταιρία πολλή, ἐπ' ἐργαστηρίου τὸ τῆς ἀκολασίας διαχειριζόντων ἐμπόλημα, ἔν τε τῷ δημοσίῳ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ὥραν ἀποδιδομένων τὴν ἀλλοτρίαν καὶ δουλαγωγούντων τὸ σῶφρον'; and Procop. *Anec.* 17.5 (Dewing, 198-9): 'πόρνας ἀμέλει πλέον ἢ πεντακοσίας ἀγείρασα ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέσῃ ἐς τριώβολον …'.

[83] *Nov. Just.* 14 (*CJC* 3.106).

[84] *Nov. Just.* 14 (*CJC* 3.106-8). It should be noted that not all pimps/procurers were men. Some tavern keepers were female, and the laws suggest that these tavern keepers pimped other women who were employed in their establishments. See *Dig.* 23.2.43.9 (*CJC* 1.332) and *Cod. Just.* 9.9.28(29) (*CJC* 2.376).

[85] *Nov. Just.* 14 (*CJC* 3.106-8): 'Θεσπίζομεν τοίνυν πάντας μὲν, καθ'ὅσον εἰσὶ δυνατοί, σωφροσύνην ἄγειν, ἥτις καὶ μόνη θεῷ μετὰ παρρησίας δυνατὴ καθέστηκεν ἀνθρώπων παραστῆσαι ψυχάς. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ πολλὰ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα, τὸ γοῦν σὺν τέχνῃ καὶ δόλῳ καὶ ἀνάγκῃ τινας εἰς τοιαύτην ἀσέλγειαν ἄγεσθαι πᾶσι κωλύομεν τρόποις. καὶ μηδενὶ παρρησίαν εἶναι πορνοβοσκεῖν καὶ ἐπ' οἰκήματος ἔχειν γυναῖκας, ἢ καὶ δημοσίᾳ προϊστᾶν ἐπ'ἀσελγείᾳ, ἢ ἀντ'ἄλλης τινὸς πραγματείας τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐμπορεύεσθαι, μηδὲ συγγραφὰς ἐπὶ τούτῳ λαμβάνειν μηδὲ ἐγγυητὰς ἀπαιτεῖν μηδὲ τοιοῦτόν τι πράττειν ὅπερ ἀναγκάζει τὰς ταλαιπώροθς καὶ ἀκούσας τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωφροσύνην καταισχύνειν, μηδὲ ἐλπίζειν ὡς ἔξεστι τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτοῖς ἐσθημάτων δόσει ἤ καὶ κοσμίων τυχὸν ἤ τροφαῖς δελεάζειν αὐτὰς εἰς τὸ καὶ ἀκούσας προσκαρτερεῖν ... Τὰς γὰρ δὴ γυναῖκας σωφρονεῖν μὲν βουλόμεθά τε καὶ εὐχόμεθα, μὴ μὴν ἀκούσας εἰς ἀσελγῆ βίον κατάγεσθαι μηδὲ ἀσεβεῖν ἀναγκάζεσθαι.'

Non-legislative sources dealing with Justinian's reign support the idea that it was the forcible corruption of women into sexual service that the emperor and his wife took most issue with. Malalas praises the empress Theodora for her role in banishing brothel-keepers from Constantinople, and setting free young women who had been forced into their service.[86] Procopius records that the imperial couple helped a large group of prostitutes who were working in the marketplace, providing them with the opportunity to lead a less sordid life. His official stance on the matter was that these women were compelled by procurers and their own poor circumstances to become a part of the sex industry, and that they willingly abandoned their licentious former lives with the assistance of the imperial couple.[87] Procopius' unofficial version of this episode differs markedly. Despite his acknowledgement that prostitutes in the marketplaces made barely enough to survive from the sale of their bodies, his *Secret History* says that many prostitutes preferred suicide to living in the convent established for them, and to forswearing their promiscuous and depraved ways.[88]

There is no evidence to suggest that Justinian and Theodora's laws and reforms reduced the numbers of prostitutes working in the imperial capital, or in other parts of the empire. The market for sexual services did not abate as time progressed, nor did fewer women become prostitutes—as evidenced by the Church's increasing denouncements. Dauphin argues that the puritanism of Christianity and Judaism in this period led to a sexual repression that was, in fact, responsible for an explosion in numbers of Byzantine prostitutes.[89] Certainly, when Agathias wrote of the deterioration of the army at the end of Justinian's reign, there seems to have been no shortage of prostitutes for soldiers to squander their wages on.[90] The steady influx of itinerant travellers of all types into maritime trading cities like Constantinople ensured a regular clientele for the women plying their trade in the open marketplaces, bathhouses, taverns, inns and brothels. With prostitutes at its core, maritime and lower-class leisure culture continued to thrive throughout the Late Antique period.

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[86] Malalas, *Chron.*, 18.24 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 255-6).
[87] Procop. *Aed.* 1.9.1-10 (Dewing, 74-7).
[88] Procop. *Anec.* 17.5 (Dewing, 198-9).
[89] Dauphin, *Brothels*, 71-2.
[90] Agathias, *Histories*, 5.14.4 (Keydell, 181). English trans. in Frendo, *Agathias*, 149. Agathias talks of soldier's squandering their wages on 'γυναῖκας ἀκόσμους'.

Prostitution was too widespread a problem for the imperial or ecclesiastical authorities to stamp it out entirely. There was a steady market for sexual services and, as noted by Judith Herrin, a lack of food drove many women to desperate ends.[91] A variety of sources make it clear that young girls were being induced into prostitution with the promise of food, clothing and lodging.[92] An anecdote from one of John Moschus' tales puts it plainly; when asked by a monk why she prostituted herself, a young woman answered simply that it was because she was hungry.[93] This anonymous woman spoke for a large percentage of impoverished women and girls who had little choice but to solicit to survive. Of course, many prostitutes would also have been slaves with no say in the matter at all. It was also for reasons of extreme poverty that many men sold their daughters, infants or slaves to pimps, or prostituted them themselves.[94] In spite of this, many writers from this period would have their readers believe that all women who became prostitutes had voluntarily chosen a life of sexual indulgence. Just as Procopius implied that the women working in the marketplaces would rather die than suppress their sexual urges—despite the fact that they were barely eking out a living working on the streets—many ecclesiastical writers asserted that carnal desire led women to a life of prostitution.[95] Even those women and girls who were drawn into the sexual service industry as a result of poverty or slavery were seen to have succumbed to their base desires and, as such, were deemed responsible for the corruption of their male customers.

Saints' lives often tell of reformed female prostitutes who had enjoyed their debauched former lives. It was during the Late Antique period that biographical

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[91] J. Herrin, 'In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach', in *Images of Women in Antiquity*, eds. A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (London: Routledge, 1993), 170.

[92] *Cod. Theo.* 15.8.2 (*CJR* 1.825) = *Cod. Just.* 11.41.6 (*CJC* 2.438); *Nov. Just.* 14 (*CJC* 3.106-8); Malalas, *Chron.*, 18.24 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 255-6); Procop. *Aed.* 1.9.1-10 (Dewing, 74-7); Procop. *Anec.* 17.5 (Dewing, 198-9); *Cod. Theo.* 3.3.1 (*CJR* 1.131); *Const. Sirm.* 5 (*CJR* 1.911). Sadly, although the laws recognised that some women and girls prostituted themselves because of extreme poverty, society dictated that this was no reason to excuse or pity these women. Refer to *Dig.* 23.2.43.5 (*CJC* 1.332).

[93] John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, 136 (*PG* 87/3.3000): 'Τότε λέγω αὐτῇ. Καὶ διὰ τί θέλεις πορνεῦσαι. Ἡ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη μοι λέγουσα. Ὅτι πεινῶ.'

[94] Refer to Chapter 5, footnotes 86 and 92.

[95] Mary of Egypt is a good example. The author of her *Vita* has Mary narrate that she refused to accept payment for the sexual services she offered, despite the fact that by her own admission, she was exceedingly poor and had to beg for food. *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, 18 (trans. Kouli, in Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium*, 80). Procop. *Aed.* 1.9.1-5 (Dewing, 7 4-5).

stories of prostitute saints developed and became popular. These stories tell of reformed harlots who were able to overcome their base feminine nature to devote themselves solely to their religion and god.[96] Such women 'embodied the notion of the female in general as lustful and promiscuous',[97] and they came to represent the redemptive power of Christianity and its ability to overcome the ultimate temptation and sin. Indeed, the representation of women in general during this period was strongly influenced by the stereotypes advanced by the Church. Women were often simply seen as either pious and chaste or immoral and promiscuous. The meaning behind the use of prostitutes as protagonists in these carefully constructed Christian narratives should not distract from the realities that such stories reflect. Whether the characters in these saints' lives were fictitious or not, the everyday lives of prostitutes and the conditions in which they lived were based on the situation of real women—women who were identifiable to a good deal of the common population. Prostitutes in this period were not all wanton women; many were down and out through no fault of their own. They were often neighbours, friends, relations and slaves who simply had no other employment available to them.[98]

In their sermons, church leaders like John Chrysostom talk of the benefits and luxuries of a life of prostitution, as though all sex workers were self-employed as high-class courtesans or actresses; never as barmaids, common streetwalkers or women who waited at the docks for new customers. John speaks of the luxurious clothing, makeup and perfume worn by prostitutes and the sumptuous feasting, drinking, singing, lovemaking and laughter that they enjoyed.[99] In other sermons, John Chrysostom does say that women who prostituted themselves on the streets

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[96] For a discussion of female 'prostitute' saints and the meanings behind their stories, see V. Burrus, 'Secrets of Seduction: The Lives of Holy Harlots' in *The Sex Lives of Saints. An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography*, ed. V. Burrus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 128-59; C.L. Connor, 'Saints and Sinners: Women at Risk: Mary of Egypt' in *Women of Byzantium* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 78-93; R. Mazo Karras, 'Holy Harlots: Prostitute Saints in Medieval Legend', *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* vol. 1, 1 (1990), 6-17; B.Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources,* Cistercian Studies Series 106 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987).

[97] Mazo Karras, *Holy Harlots*, 6.

[98] One example is the female neighbour of the pious Anna, the protagonist in *Miracle* 34 of the *Miracles of St Artemios* (trans. Crisafulli and Nesbitt, 177-9 and 279). This woman (who is considered to be of ill-repute) has a husband and daughter whom she loves, and she sits by her daughter's bedside when she is ill.

[99] John Chrysostom, *Homily on Martyrs, delivered in the shrine of the holy martyr Acacius*, 15, in *St John Chryostom: The Cult of the Saints, Select Homilies and Letters,* trans. and intro. W. Mayer, with B. Neil (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 252.

did so out of poverty. But he still stresses that these women would do anything, and give themselves to anyone, for a piece of gold.[100] Yet there was little luxury in the lives of many women employed in the lower-class leisure industry. Along with those soliciting in the marketplaces, brothels and baths, women in taverns were also considered to be of mean status. The general assumption was that barmaids were prostitutes, even if they were officially only employed to serve food and drink to patrons. Legislation clearly specifies that a barmaid was unable to accuse a man of unlawful sexual intercourse due to the assumed nature of her employment. A law recorded in both the *Codex Theodosianus* and *Codex Justinianus* states plainly that women who served in taverns were seen to encourage immoderate drinking in their patrons, and were thus fair sexual game.[101]

Yet some lowly barmaids-cum-prostitutes clearly had considerable influence over the men who frequented their places of employment. Laws dealing with marriage and the legitimacy of children were re-worded several times from the early fourth century. This suggests that there was a perceived need to clearly define the types of women who were not at all suitable as legitimate partners for men of rank. [102] Such women included slaves, tavern-workers, actresses, public vendors, the daughters of anyone involved in these unseemly occupations, and any woman generally deemed low and abject. The latter category surely encompassed those prostitutes not already covered by the other listed occupations. Justinian's *Novella* 117.6 chose to reject aspects of the former laws, noting that men of status were allowed to marry women employed in any of the above occupations, so long as they were free.[103] Men of

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[100] See for example John Chrysostom, *Homily in Epistolam ad Hebraeos* 15.3 (*PG* 63.120-1).

[101] *Cod. Theo.* 9.7.1 (*CJR* 1.445-6) = *Cod. Just.* 9.9.28(29) (*CJC* 2.376): 'Quae adulterium commisit utrum domina cauponae an ministra fuerit, requiri debebit, et ita obsequio famulata servili, ut plerumque ipsa intemperantiae vina praebuerit; ut, si domina tabernae fuerit, non sit a vinculis iuris excepta, si vero potantibus ministerium praebuit, pro vilitate eius quae in reatum deducitur accusatione exclusa liberi qui accusantur abscedant, cum ab his feminis pudicitiae ratio requiratur, quae iuris nexibus detinentur, hae autem immunes a iudiciaria severitate praestentur, quas vilitas vitae dignas legum observatione non credidit.' Also refer to *Dig*. 23.2.43.9 (*CJC* 1.332). For further discussion, see G. Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity. Pagan and Christian Life-Styles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 29 and McGinn, *Legal Definition, 91*. Tavern-keepers clearly acted as pimps for their female staff in many instances.

[102] The relevant legislation includes: *Cod.Theo.* 4.6.3 (*CJR* 1.176) = *Cod. Just.* 5.27.1 (*CJC* 2.216); *Nov. Marc.* 4 (*CJR* 2.190-3); *Nov. Just*. 117.6 (*CJC* 3.555-6).

[103] *Cod.Theo.* 4.6.3 (*CJR* 1.176) specifies the following women as unsuitable partners: '... ex ancilla vel ancillae filia vel liberta vel libertae filia, sive romana facta seu latina, vel scaenica vel scaenicae filia, vel ex tabernaria vel ex tabernari filia vel humili vel abiecta vel lenonis vel harenarii filia vel quae mercimoniis publicis praefuit ...'; *Nov. Just*. 117.6 (*CJC* 3.555-6) modifies the law, allowing

status clearly continued to succumb to the charms of tavern-workers, slaves, actresses, prostitutes and other lowly women. Otherwise these laws would no longer have retained their relevance.

The marriage and legitimacy laws also relate to courtesans, who usually catered to a more elite crowd than their poorer counterparts. It is unlikely that many courtesans were servicing itinerant sailors and merchants arriving at city ports, unless the merchants in question were very wealthy. During the Roman period, some women who provided sexual services to elite clientele were able to attain a certain level of influence and even social standing. Such courtesans were never seen as fully reputable, but their activities were viewed as somewhat socially acceptable, since they provided what was seen as a much-needed service to men of status. In the later Roman and Early Byzantine periods, there is little doubt that there were still courtesans who catered to the sexual desires of men in the upper echelons of society. However, as is clear in the sermons of men like John Chrysostom, prostitution was generally not considered to be compatible with the tenets of the new Roman religion, no matter the status of a sex worker's clientele. Still, the many love poems devoted to these women by Agathias, Paulus Silentiarius, and their peers attest to the popularity and reputation of both courtesans and lower-class prostitutes in the fifth and sixth-century period.[104]

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men of rank to marry such women: ''Εκείνου ἀναμφιβόλως παραφυλαττομένου, ὥστε τὴν Λέοντος τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς μνήμης διάταξιν ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν ἄλλων θεμάτων τῶν μὴ περιεχομένων τῷ παρόντι νόμῳ τὴν ἰδίαν ἔχειν ἰσχ΄θν. τὸν δὲ Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς λήξεως νόμον τὸν πρὸς Γρηγόριον γεγαμμένον, καὶ τὴν ἐπ᾽αὐτῷ γενομένην ἑρμηνείαν ὑπὸ Μαρκιανοῦ τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς λήξεως, δι ὧν αἱ τῶν γυναικῶν συζυγίαι, ἅς ὁ Κωνσταντίνου νόμος εὐτελεῖς ἐκάλεσεν, πρός τινας ἀξιώμασι κεκοσμημένους κωλύονται, οὐδενὶ παντελῶς τρόπῳ κρατεῖν συγχωροῦμεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἄδειαν τοῖς βουλομένοις παρέχομεν, εἰ καὶ οἱοιςδήποτε μεγάλοις ἀξιώμασι κοσμοῖντο, τὰς τοιαύτας γυναῖκας μετὰ προικῴων συμβολαίων ἑαυτοῖς συνάπτειν. οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ παρὰ τοὺς τοῖς μεγάλοις ἀξιώμασι κεκοσμημένους ἄδειαν ἐχέτωσαν τὰς τοιαύτας γυναῖκας λαμβάνειν, εἴτε ἐγγράφως βουληθεῖεν εἴτε μόνῃ διαθέσει γάμου, εἰ μέντοιγε ἐλεύθεραι εἴησαν καὶ μεθ᾽ ὧν ἔξεστι γάμον ἐπιτελεῖσθαι.'

[104] Examples include *Anth. Gr.* 5.252, 5.257-9, 5.261, 5.271, 5.278, 5.286, and 5.302 (Paton, 1.384-5, 388-91, 400-1, 406-7, 412-3 and 428-9) and 16.80 (Paton, 5.200-1). Such epigrams made use of poetic traditions, however, there was still some reflection of contemporary life in them. See Paton's Introduction, p.xv for his suggestion that these erotic poems were read aloud in sympotic and other erotic environments (where courtesans and prostitutes would have been present). Also see McCail, *Erotic and Ascetic Poetry*, 205-27 for discussion of the reflection of Agathias' personality and his contemporary world in his love poems.

Educated men like Agathias and Paulus were known to patronise the types of leisure establishment where gambling, drinking and prostitution were the norm. Such men were not without influence, and their writings provide some insight into the range of women (and their customers) who were a central part of the leisure industry in urban centres like Constantinople. Women treated as partners, whether legitimate or otherwise, would often have been *au fait* with the activities and acquaintances of their lovers. Female tavern-workers, bath attendants, actresses, prostitutes and courtesans would also have borne witness to many a drunken conversation as part of their daily activities. Much of the drunken chatter around tables or mattresses in taverns and other leisure establishments may have been trivial, but these places were also hubs of illicit activity and dissent. As such, women may have been privy to information that sober men would not have otherwise divulged in the company of strangers. Barmaids, actresses and prostitutes may actually have been quite well-informed in regards to the criminal activity and social unrest that centred around the leisure establishments of urban centres.[105]

Actresses were also a popular drawcard for the leisure industry and, as such, they played a crucial role in maritime and lower-class leisure culture in cities of the East. Like barmaids, actresses were often conflated or associated with prostitutes and courtesans in both the legislative and non-legislative sources.[106] There is much ambiguity and scholarly debate around the issue of whether or not actresses were synonymous with prostitutes during this period. Herrin notes that although the laws tend to unfairly treat all working women as prostitutes—especially actresses, mimes, dancers and other entertainers—the dividing line between these professions and prostitution was probably quite narrow.[107] McGinn, on the other hand, considers it strange that actresses and prostitutes would be identified with one another, even though he does acknowledge that some actresses may well have engaged in prostitution. He believes the conflation of these two roles was due to the fact that

[105] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 197, note that women in these roles 'functioned as the axes of recreational, social, criminal, and political intercourse'. They suggest that 'women became an important conduit for communications, thus making themselves integral to the organization of subversive enterprises …'.

[106] Examples include: *Cod. Theo.* 15.7.8 and 15.7.12.1 (*CJR* 1.823-4); *Nov. Just.* 51 (*CJC* 3. 295-6); Procop. *Anec.* 9.1-28 (Dewing, 102-13); Palladius, *Hist Laus.* 32 (*PG* 34.1091-4). English trans. in Lowther Clarke, *Palladius*, Chapter 26, 106-7. For a detailed discussion of the association of prostitutes and actresses in this period, see McGinn, *Legal Definition of Prostitute*.

[107] Herrin, *In Search of Byzantine Women*, 170.

referring to a woman as either an actress or prostitute was a standard form of criticism in this period.[108]

Much of the debate on this issue centres around Procopius' depiction of the empress Theodora and Antonina, the wife of Belisarius. Procopius portrays Theodora as an actress who engaged in erotic stage plays and prostituted herself from a young age, and Antonina as an actress-cum-prostitute who came from a line of entertainers.[109] It is clear that Procopius hoped to discredit both Theodora and Antonina in his *Secret History*, and therefore his depiction of both women has to be treated with suspicion. However, the fact that a woman could be referred to as an actress, courtesan and common prostitute as though these roles were synonymous, does demonstrate that the line between them was blurred at the time. Procopius' depiction of Theodora hovers between that of an actress, comedienne, successful courtesan and a common streetwalker who frequented the marketplaces and solicited young men who passed her by. Such a description may not be accurate or fair to the empress herself, but it should still not be discounted. Procopius' account provides information on the activities of women of the stage, the various levels of prostitution that existed in the sixth century, and the ways in which actresses and prostitutes were viewed by their contemporaries. The type of criticism aimed at both Theodora and Antonina by Procopius would not have been believable to their contemporaries unless prostitutes and actresses were seen to hold similar roles. Nor would Procopius' account have been credible unless the activities he described actually occurred in the theatre venues of his day.

That actors, mimes, dancers and other entertainers were extremely popular with the masses during Late Antiquity is undoubtable. Despite the fact that mimes and pantomimes had 'an undeniable social, political, and cultural influence' in this period,[110] the popularity of the artists themselves rarely translated to advanced social standing. In an anonymous military treatise from the sixth century, the different citizen classes in early Byzantine society are listed. Theatrical people are only

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[108] McGinn, *Legal Definition of Prostitute*, 100-2.
[109] Procop. *Anec.* 9.1-28 (Dewing, 102-13) and *Anec.* 1.11-13 (Dewing, 6-9).
[110] R. Webb, *Demons and Dancers. Performance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2.

mentioned as an afterthought; indeed, these men and women are not allotted a place in the author's contemporary society at all.[111] Many actors and actresses were born into the compulsory service of the theatre or they were slaves, but it is still somewhat surprising that they were viewed as beneath those who were considered useless to the state. Even those deemed 'useless'—the very young, old, and frail—were allocated a place in society.[112] Men and women who hired out their services were also quite low on this social scale and, although not explicitly mentioned in the anonymous treatise, local sailors would presumably have been included here also.[113] An interesting law from the *Codex Theodosianus* notes the right of everyone—except plebeian men and women of the stage, entertainers and tavern keepers—to sit and convene in public.[114] This law from Constantinople further highlights the low status accorded to people of the theatre, and to those who worked in taverns and similar establishments. Yet entertainers could still be influential. Why else would imperial leaders deem it necessary to ban the public display of images of popular actors, mimes and charioteers in their cities?[115] This suggests that emperors were having to vie with such entertainers for the affections and loyalties of the populace.

There has been considerable scholarship on the popularity of chariot racers in this period and, as such, they will not be considered in any detail here. Suffice to say that charioteers and the entertainers who accompanied them drew crowds to the hippodromes of great cities, and were able to attract inordinate devotion from the masses. The entertainments that took place in hippodromes and arenas were an important part of the leisure culture of cities of the East, with many spectators spilling

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[111] Anon., περὶ στρατηγικῆς (On Strategy) 3.101-7 in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, text and trans. G.T. Dennis (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 18-9: ''Ρωμαῖοι δὲ καί τι ἕτερον τούτοις προστιθέασι πολιτείας μέρος, ὅ δὴ θεατρικὸν καὶ θυμελικὸν ὀνομάζεται ... τὸ δὲ παλαιον οὐ μόνον Ῥωμαῖοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἕλληνες καὶ πολλὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν τούτοις ἐχρῶντο'.

[112] Anon., περὶ στρατηγικῆς 1.14-6 and 2.33-5 (Dennis, 10-13).

[113] Anon., περὶ στρατηγικῆς 1.13-4, 2.33-4, and 3.94-100 (Dennis, 10-19). Refer to περὶ στρατηγικῆς 1.11-3.107 (Dennis, 10-19) and Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 80-1 for an idea of the context of these groups in wider society.

[114] *Cod. Theo.* 15.13.1 (*CJR* 1.827-8): 'Exceptis plebeis scaenicis et qui spectaculo sui praebuit populo materiam voluptatis et tabernariis, ceteris omnibus usum sellarum et sedendi ac conveniendi in publicum tribuimus facultatem'.

[115] *Cod. Theo.* 15.7.12 (*CJR* 1.824) = *Cod. Just.* 11.41.4 (*CJC* 2.438): 'Si qua in publicis porticibus vel in his civitatum locis, in quibus nostrae solent imagines consecrari, pictura pantomimum veste humili et rugosis sinibus agitatorem aut vilem offerat histrionem, ilico revellatur neque umquam posthac liceat in loco honesto inhonestas adnotare personas'.

onto the streets and into taverns, brothels and baths after a long day at the races. Unlike charioteers, the magnetism of other entertainers—particularly females—and their ability to draw and influence a crowd has been largely underestimated to date. Some of the moral objections to entertainers held by the Church and elite suggest that they could be quite influential at all levels of society. The considerable sway of both Theodora and Antonina in the sixth century confirms that female entertainers—particularly those involved in profane theatre—were not without charm. Such entertainers could become quite renowned, so much so that they might even come to the attention of an emperor. Theodora's background may not have been as sordid as Procopius wanted his readers to believe, but there seems little doubt that the empress lifted herself out of the gutter. The aforementioned marriage and legitimacy laws also make it clear that there were other low-class women who were able to climb the social ladder.[116] No wonder then that actresses and other female entertainers were seen as a corrupting influence on male dominated society.

Alan Cameron writes that it is easy for modern scholars to scoff at moralising Christians who saw venues like theatres and hippodromes as abodes of sin and corruption. Yet, given the eagerness with which the populace (and sometimes the elite) attended these places of leisure, and their devotion to the entertainers employed in them, the Church was right to fear their influence.[117] Nor were Christians the only ones to abhor the unethical influence of men and women of the theatre. In an attempt to discredit the emperor Theodosius, Zosimus accused him of allowing immorality to take hold during his reign. According to Zosimus, one of the ways that Theodosius did this was to encourage actors, dancers and musicians into his cities.[118] The emperor Julian talked of the degeneracy and intemperance of theatrical entertainers and, in turn, also the crowds that loved them.[119] Clearly, the immoral influence of entertainers on the general population did not only pose a problem for

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[116] Refer to Chapter 5, footnotes 69-72 and 102-3. In Justinian's time, *Nov. Just.* 117.6 (*CJC* 3.555-6) and *Cod. Just.* 5.4.23 (*CJC* 2.196-7) are of most relevance.

[117] Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 293. Also see Lavan, *Political Talismans*, 449-50. Lavan highlights a 'lack of Christian penetration' into venues like the circus as late as the sixth century, and he argues that this allowed ideas and images of the past 'to linger longer than one might expect' in these venues. This might also account for some of the Christian clergy's distaste for these venues.

[118] Zosimus, *NH* 4.33.4 (Mendelssohn, 187-8). English trans. in Ridley, *Zosimus*, 85.

[119] Julian, *Misopogon*, 342b-343c, in *Orations 6-8. Letters to Themistius, To the Senate and People of Athens, To a Priest. The Caesars. Misopogon*, trans. W.C. Wright, Loeb Classical Library 29, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1913), 432-7.

the Christian clergy. That said, a series of laws dated to between the late fourth and early fifth centuries demonstrate that actors and actresses were generally not of the Christian faith. The laws contained in the *Codex Theodosianus* demand that men and women who continued to practice their theatrical profession could only request baptism on their deathbed; and if they survived, they were forbidden to return to their most immoral and un-Christian of callings.[120] The legislation speaks of lower-class women born into the compulsory service of the stage, who had a choice either to continue to live the life of an actress or to embrace Christianity.[121] Once these women had converted to Christianity, there was no turning back. An actress who returned to the stage to practise her former ways was seen to have betrayed the Christian faith. Such women were hauled back to the theatres where they were made to live out their days without hope of absolution.[122]

The aforementioned laws from the *Codex Theodosianus*[123] highlight the perceived incompatibility of Christianity with the lack of morality associated with the theatre and its attendant activities. Blake Leyerle notes that one of the main reasons for the hostility of the Christian clergy to the theatre and its performers was the competition that they posed to the Church, particularly in drawing the crowds.[124] Considering the ongoing popularity of theatres and other venues where dancing, music and other entertainments were available, this would most certainly have been the case. Gregory of Nazianzus highlights another reason for the Church's aversion to the theatre and its players. In one of his orations, he complains that the caricature of

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[120] *Cod. Theo.* 15.7.1 (*CJR* 1.821): 'Scaenici et scaenicae, qui in ultimo vitae ac necessitate cogente interitus inminentis ad dei summi sacramenta properarunt, si fortassis evaserint, nulla posthac in theatralis spectaculi conventione revocentur.'

[121] *See Cod. Theo.* 15.7.4 (*CJR* 1.822): 'Mulieres, quae ex viliori sorte progenitae spectaculorum debentur obsequiis, si scaenica officia declinarint, ludicris ministeriis deputentur, quas necdum tamen consideratio sacratissimae religionis et Christianae legis reverentia suae fidei mancipavit ...'. Also see *Cod. Theo.* 15.7.9 (*CJR* 1.823).

[122] *Cod. Theo.* 15.7.8 (*CJR* 1.823). The sentiment of this law is rather nasty: 'Scaenae mulier si vacationem religionis nomine postularit, obtentu quidem petitionis venia ei non desit, verum si post turpibus volutata complexibus et religionem quam expetierit prodidisse et gerere quod officio desierat animo tamen scaenica detegetur, retracta in pulpitum sine spe absolutionis ullius ibi eo usque permaneat, donec anus ridicula senectute deformis nec tunc quidem absolutione potiatur, cum aliud quam casta esse non possit.'
For a discussion of the various social, religious, and legal issues around the conversion of stage-performers to Christianity, see R. Lim, 'Converting the Un-Christianizable. The Baptism of Stage Performers in Late Antiquity', in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, eds. K. Mills and A. Grafton (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 84-126.

[123] *Cod. Theo.* 15.7 (*CJR* 1.821-4).

[124] Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows*, 13.

Christians was a popular form of amusement in the theatres, marketplaces and other venues where plays were staged.[125] Legislation contained in both *Codex Theodosianus* and Justinian's *Novellae* corroborates Gregory's complaint that the ridicule of Christians regularly occurred in these theatrical settings. The legislation mentions people, especially actors, actresses and prostitutes, who imitated and ridiculed monks, nuns and ascetics. The earlier law from *Codex Theodosianus* clearly had no effect on the popularity of this particular form of satire; the penalties prescribed for this sacrilegious behaviour had to be upgraded by Justinian to include exile and death.[126]

Jacob of Serugh's homilies from the early sixth century are also invaluable for our understanding of the Church's objections to the theatre. Jacob laments the fact that theatres were often more popular meeting places than churches.[127] He writes of the licentiousness of the activities performed in entertainment venues, and of his strong belief that the stories of non-Christian gods told in them encouraged pagan devotion and practice.[128] In response to members of his congregation (and his detractors) who asserted that attending the theatre did not mean they believed in the Hellenic stories told by actors and actresses, Jacob retorted, 'Who can bathe in mud without being soiled?'[129] Certainly, watching performances that featured non-Christian deities did not necessarily mean that the crowds continued to believe in those gods.

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[125] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 2.84.2-10, in *Grégoire de Nazianze Discours 1-3*, ed. and trans. J. Bernardi, Sources Chrétiennes, 247 (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1978), 200: '... καὶ γεγόναμεν θέατρον καινόν, οὐκ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις, οἷον ὁ γενναιότατος τῶν ἀθλητῶν Παῦλος, πρὸς τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας ἀγωνιζόμενος, ἀλλὰ πᾶσι μικροῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς καὶ ἐπὶ παντὸς καιροῦ καὶ τόπου, ἐν ἀγοραῖς, ἐν πότοις, ἐν εὐφροσύναις, ἐν πένθεσιν. Ἤδη δὲ προήλθομεν καὶ μέχρι τῆς σκήνης, ὃ μικροῦ καὶ δακρύω λέγων, καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἀσελγεστάτων γελώμεθα, καὶ οὐδὲν οὕτω τερπνὸν τῶν ἀκουσμάτων καὶ θεαμάτων ὡς χριστιανὸς κωμῳδούμενος.' ('… Nous sommes devenus un spectacle nouveau, non pour les anges et pour les hommes, comme Paul, le plus vaillant des athletes, lorsqu'il luttait contre pouvoirs et puissances, mais pour tous les mechants, ou peu s'en faut, en toute circonstance et en tout lieu, sur les places publiques, dans les festins, dans les rejouissances et dans des deuils. Desormais, nous paraissons meme sur la scene, je suis au bord des larmes en disant cela, et nous partageons avec les etres les plus debauches le privilege de soulever le rire: il n'existe pas de sujet de comedie qui offre un spectacle aussi agreable pour les yeux et pour les oreilles qu'un chretien.') See Leyerle, *Theatrical Shows*, 25 for further discussion of the ridicule of Christians in theatres and other similar venues. Webb, *Dancers and Demons*, 125 notes that in the quoted passage, Gregory speaks of 'Christological mime'. Also refer to Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, 52-3.

[126] *Cod. Theo.* 15.7.11 (*CJR* 1.823-4); *Nov. Just.* 123.44 (*CJC* 3.624-5).

[127] Jacob of Serugh, *Homily* 3, ed. and trans. C. Moss, in 'Jacob of Serugh's Homilies on the Spectacles of the Theatre', *Le Muséon,* 48 (1935), 105.

[128] Jacob of Serugh, *Homily* 3 (trans. Moss, 105-6) and *Homily* 2 (trans. Moss, 104).

[129] Jacob of Serugh, *Homily* 5 (trans. Moss, 108-9).

However, Jacob was right to be concerned. These tales ensured that non-Christian myths and deities continued to entertain and, in many ways, educate the masses.

Those who worked in the theatre and other similar venues were associated with sex, immorality and paganism, and competed with both the clergy and emperors for the attention of their congregations and subjects. As such, these entertainers—particularly females, who added a lasciviousness to the theatre that only women could—were seen to pose unnatural temptations to a range of men; the common man on the street, itinerant travellers, and those in the upper echelons of society and the Church.

Summary

Leisure venues were extremely popular haunts in the large coastal centres where merchants, sailors, soldiers and other itinerant travellers were the norm. Establishments such as taverns, brothels, baths, theatre venues and hippodromes occupied a substantial space in the urban landscape, and would have been highly visible to contemporaries. Leisure venues and the culture they sustained may have been somewhat aberrant in nature but, as the evidence presented in this–and the next–chapter confirms, they were certainly not entirely underground phenomena. Indeed, lower-class leisure culture was a crucial component of everyday life in large maritime cities. Activities such as gambling, drinking and whoring gave leisure establishments their sordid reputation. But it was these same activities that drew in the punters, many of whom were seeking an escape from the hardships of everyday life. Prostitution was at the heart of lower-class leisure culture in coastal centres. The sexual service industry thrived in maritime entrepôts, swarming as they were with itinerant, unattached males and poor women and girls. Prostitutes, actresses and other female service workers were the biggest attraction of the maritime leisure industry. These women played a crucial role in leisure culture and cannot be seen as merely incidental to the male-dominated culture of Late Antiquity. Their presence attracted patrons from all classes and walks of life to their venues, and underpinned lower-class leisure culture. It is important to remember that the extant sources depict elite culture as mainstream during this period, but it was certainly not the culture of the masses. Lower-class leisure culture may not be a glamorous side to the history

of cities like Constantinople, but it is integral to understanding the character of even the Queen of Cities. After all, even the emperor Justinian lost his heart to an actress, and that same woman eventually ruled the empire at his side.

Chapter 6. Subversion: The Role of the Maritime Crowd in Social, Political and Religious Unrest

Introduction

Elite culture was clearly only part of the rich social tapestry that comprised bustling maritime and overland trading centres like Constantinople and Alexandria. The leisure industry that catered to the men and women of non-elite culture was an integral part of any trading city or town and, in this chapter, it is proposed that maritime and lower-class leisure establishments acted as hubs of social unrest and discontent in those locations. It was in these establishments that sailors, merchants and other travellers fraternised with locals, and leisure venues were natural places in which ringleaders could find supporters for any given uprising or cause. In many instances, the organisation of rioters centred around leisure and entertainment venues as well. Itinerant sailors—regular visitors to leisure venues—often had time on their hands when they were in port, and theirs was a naturally oppositional or subversive sub-culture. Evidence of the maritime community's involvement in a number of social, political and religious clashes in large, urban and coastal centres is examined. There are a variety of possible motivations for the participation of mariners in episodes of unrest and, as outsiders, maritime men were able to participate in disturbances without the same fear of consequence that may have worried more permanent residents. As such, they were perfect recruits for any dispute or brawl. The men of the maritime community also enabled and facilitated effective, efficient and extensive communication networks between factional, political and religious leaders and groups. Mariners carried the ideologies and protests of institutions like the Church and factional groups with them when they sailed to and from major centres, and played a crucial role in the empire-wide success of these institutions. Evidence of the collaboration of factional members and mariners in uprisings is also investigated; with clues suggesting that, in some instances, partisans and mariners were actually one and the same men.

Maritime and Lower-Class Leisure Establishments: Breeding Grounds of Social Unrest

The types of leisure establishments that have been the subject of previous sections of this thesis were essentially meeting places. It was in the marketplaces and in and around popular haunts like taverns, inns, bathhouses, hippodromes and theatre venues that many people congregated, sharing their troubles and concerns—be they social, economic, political or spiritual. Such establishments were ordinary features of harbour cities and towns. They were located in busy neighbourhoods and catered to residents and travellers alike. It was in these places that many itinerant sailors and merchants came into contact with residents and their concerns, sometimes themselves becoming embroiled in local troubles and disputes. Large crowds regularly met in hippodromes and theatres; sites that have long been recognised as environments where social, economic and political issues were aired.[1] Demonstrations could easily escalate into protests or riots in these large entertainment venues and, as a result, the authorities regularly cancelled games and closed theatres in times of civil unrest.[2] Yet, as Evelyne Patlagean points out, and as the sources discussed in the previous chapter confirm, it was not only in the main theatres and hippodromes that people gathered to converse about issues affecting them.[3] In particular, Patlagean notes the role of inns and taverns as centres where popular sentiment could always be measured. Public baths were also popular meeting places, and conversations overheard in bathhouses would have regularly encompassed everyday social, economic, political and religious concerns.[4]

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[1] See Bell, *Social Conflict*, 143-4; Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 223; Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 256; and Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 210-11.

[2] See Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 294-6. Examples where games and theatres were cancelled or closed as a result of unrest are detailed in Malalas, *Chron.*, 18.41 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 262). Malalas records that Justinian prohibited the performance of theatrical shows after a riot in Antioch. Libanius also calls for the theatre to be shut down due to its role in riots. See Libanius, *Or.* 16.41-4 (Norman, *Selected Orations,* 1.236-7): 'κλείσωμεν βραχὺν χρόνον τὸ θέατρον καὶ δεηθῶμεν τῶν ὀρχηστῶν τουτωνὶ καὶ μίμων μεταδοῦναι καὶ τοῖς ἀστυγείτοσι τῶν παρ' αὐτῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἡμῖν δὲ ἐπιτρέψαι τὸ θέρος ἄνευ τέρψεως διαγαγεῖν … δικάσωμεν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, ἵνα μὴ βασιλεὺς ἡμῖν. ὑπόσχωμεν ἑκόντες τιμωρίαν, ἵνα μὴ μείζω πάθωμεν ἄκοντες. οἰκείᾳ ψήφῳ τὴν ἐκείνου κωλύσωμεν.'

[3] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 207-8.

[4] Ammianus Marcellinus' summation of commoners in his period was that they congregated in meeting places like taverns, marketplaces and other low haunts, spending their time drinking, gambling, arguing and causing trouble. See Amm. Marc., *History* 28.4.28-9 (trans. Hamilton, 362).

Interestingly, Patlagean highlights the fact that churches played a similar social role to leisure establishments, especially the theatre. Churches provided parishioners with a communal space where grievances were shared and emotions stirred, much like many leisure and entertainment venues of the day.[5] The communal aspect of churches saw them play a role in much of the religious unrest that plagued Late Antiquity, particularly in the fourth and fifth centuries. The discontent that was voiced in churches sometimes spilled into popular lower-class establishments like baths, taverns and theatre venues (and vice versa). John Chrysostom found support amongst some of the disreputable elements of society who even left the mimes and circuses to listen to his sermons on occasion.[6] It was at the public baths in Constantinople that Nestorius recruited the unruly mob that accompanied him to the Council of Ephesus in 431; a mob that most likely included sailors in its midst.[7] Itinerant sailors would have regularly mixed with the locals around baths and other leisure venues in port cities all over the Mediterranean.

Scholars have been divided for decades as to the reasons for the seeming increase in urban tension and violence throughout Late Antiquity.[8] It is not my intention to provide further discussion of the many possible reasons behind these phenomena. Of more concern here is the fact that there *was* much urban unrest, and lower-class leisure establishments and venues in maritime centres were hotspots for this

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[5] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 208-11. Of course, the leisure culture of the masses was deemed distasteful by many members of the social and religious elite, unlike that of the Church by the Late Antique period. Patlagean notes on page 210 that there were some semi-positive perceptions of the theatre in the elite sources; Libanius, for example, did not view it as entirely unsavoury. However, it should be noted that Libanius did still believe that it was the common masses who loved the theatre the most. See Libanius, *Or.* 16.42-4 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 1.237-9). Also see Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, 54 for similarities between churches and theatres (and those who performed in both venues).

[6] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 47-8.

[7] *ACO* 1.1.3, 101, 46-7; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.34 (*PG* 67.813-4): '... ὁ Νεστόριος σὺν πολλῇ δυνάμει ὄχλων Πάρῆν εἰς τὴν Ἔφεσον …'. Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16 (*PG* 67.215-6) mentions an unruly mob hanging around these baths on other occasions as well. Libanius, *Or.* 22.5-6 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 2.378-9) mentions a mob of protesters who descended on the baths in Antioch, set on causing trouble. He implies that most of this mob were Christian.

[8] For discussion of the types of riots and disturbances and the possible motives behind them, refer to: Bell, *Social Conflict*, 58ff; Cameron, *Circus Factions*; J. Crow, 'Water and Late Antique Constantinople', in Grig and Kelly, *Two Romes*, 129; Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 256; R. Lim, 'Religious Disputation and Social Disorder in Late Antiquity', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 44, 2 (1995) 204-31; R.W. Main, *Mob Politics: The Political Influence of the Circus Factions in the Eastern Empire from the Reign of Leo I to Heraclius (457-641)* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 2013), particularly 5-10; Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 204-15, 220-5 and 233-4. For a detailed discussion of the Nika Riot, see Greatrex, *Nika Riot*, 60-86.

activity.[9] It was in leisure establishments that much urban tension was born or fuelled. It was also in and around these venues that willing men could be found to engage in episodes of violent and non-violent protest.[10] The places where locals and travellers naturally gathered and conversed became hubs of agitation and protest, particularly in times when social, political or religious tensions were already high. When these venues were places of entertainment, popular amongst the lower, under-class and transient elements of society, there was even more potential for fireworks.

It is for the theatre and circus that we have the most evidence of civic unrest in large urban centres such as Constantinople and Alexandria.[11] Scholars like Charlotte Roueché and Peter N. Bell have shown that the venues in which public entertainments were held had an extremely important political role during this period, making them difficult to ignore even for the most disapproving of contemporaries.[12] Bell aptly refers to the theatre and hippodrome as a 'lightning conductor' for class conflict in major urban areas.[13] Patlagean says that despite this, theatrical entertainments had to be tolerated by the authorities because they satisfied the simple, violent and illiterate tastes of the bulk of the population, whose sheer weight in numbers meant that they had to be conciliated.[14] The profane theatre of the

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[9] As an aside, it is important to note that although there was substantial unrest in this period, the impression given by many of our sources is of a state in constant turmoil. As Michael Whitby points out, the surviving sources (predominantly the Malalas "nexus" of texts, which include Malalas' *Chronographia*, the derivative *Chronicon Paschale*, and the *Chronographia* of Theophanes) present a 'rich picture of urban unrest' but they may actually give an unbalanced indication of violent versus non-violent periods. There would also have been substantial periods of calm amongst the storms of Late Antiquity: M. Whitby, 'The Violence of the Circus Factions', in *Organized Crime in Antiquity*, ed. K. Hopwood (London: Duckworth, 1999), 452.

[10] Some monasteries and other similar religious premises were also places where men willing to engage in violent protest could be found.

[11] The term 'theatre' is a complex one in this period; there were actually several different types of theatrical genres and venues in which theatrical entertainments were held.

[12] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 125-45; C. Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods: Study Based on Inscriptions Found at Aphrodisias in Caria* (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1993), Chapters 3 and 4.

[13] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 143-5. Also see Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 210; and Whitby, *Violence of the Circus Factions*, 235. Most scholars agree that the reorganisation of funding for public entertainments occurred between the late fourth and mid fifth centuries. After this time, the activities held in the major theatres and hippodromes of Late Roman cities were fully state-financed. There is less scholarship on the smaller, less savoury (and sometimes more makeshift) venues where most profane theatre would have been held, but it is unlikely that these were state-financed. See Bell, *Social Conflict*, 125-45; Roueché, *Performers and Partisans,* Chapters 3 and 4; Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 11-13 and 220-1; and Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, Chapters 5 and 6.

[14] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 210-1.

masses (predominantly mime and pantomime) was conducted in a variety of venues, including purpose-built theatres and amphitheatres, hippodromes, taverns, marketplaces and other makeshift and lower-class establishments.[15] Profane theatre audiences were naturally rowdy; Libanius mentions the plebeians in Antioch who lived only to riot and attend the theatre, and emphasises the role played by outsiders and strangers in events of civic unrest. These same foreigners were apparently devoted to the theatre.[16] With his descriptions of foreigners and theatre-goers, Libanius may have hoped to deflect much of the blame for rioting from the permanent citizens of Antioch to non-locals. Nevertheless, he does regularly depict men of the theatre claque and their supporters as disreputable foreigners; itinerants, criminals, fugitive slaves and the like.[17]

Entertainment venues may have served a political role, but most people congregated in them for amusement. They also offered a break from the realities of everyday life, and the chance to converse and grumble with those of like mind. These are the main reasons that entertainment venues were such hotspots for rebellion and unrest. The climate of theatres, hippodromes and other recreational venues was such that emotions and passions ran high. People's behaviour was often unrestrained, and crowds or groups of individuals could easily be stirred into a frenzy. Venues offering lowbrow entertainment and recreational activities were environments that were highly conducive to riotous and unruly behaviour.[18] John Chrysostom blames the theatre for all manner of urban evils, including the incitement of sedition and general unrest.[19] Many of his contemporaries also criticise theatrical entertainments and

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[15] Neiiendam, *Art of Acting*, 125. See Neiiendam's chapter titled 'Byzantine Profane Theatre', 94-127 for a full discussion of 'profane theatre' enjoyed by the masses. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre*, 152-3 notes that various imperial measures to ban profane theatre and to close venues from the fourth to seventh centuries were mostly unsuccessful. These performances went on, even when the larger public venues were closed.

[16] Libanius, *Or.* 16.41-44 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 1.236-9) and *Or.* 19.27-8 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 2.286-7). Centuries earlier, Horace also spoke of the rabble who attended the theatre as uneducated and brainless people who were always up for a brawl. See Horace, *Ep.* 2.1, 182-6 and 193-200, in *Horace: Satires, Epistles, Art of Poetry*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library 194 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 412-3. See also R. Browning, 'The Riot of A.D. 387 in Antioch: The Role of the Theatrical Claques in the Later Empire', *The Journal of Roman Studies,* 42, 1 and 2, (1952), 16. Also see Beacham, *The Roman Theatre*, 151.

[17] See Browning, *Riot of A.D. 387*, 16 for a list of examples from Libanius.

[18] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 211-2.

[19] See as examples John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Matthaeum* 37.6-7 (*PG* 57.427) and *Homiliae De Statuis* 17.2 (*PG* 49.173-6).

entertainers for initiating the sorts of disturbances that resulted in major social upheaval.[20]

Demonstrations and riots that started in the theatres and hippodromes of urban centres spilled out into the streets and other establishments nearby. Unrest often continued outside of the arenas and theatres because others were willing to get involved. Socrates describes a commotion in an Alexandrian theatre that occurred after the urban prefect posted an edict regulating theatrical performances.[21] The unrest was carried into the streets, where brawling between many different people took place. Socrates blames the Jewish population for initiating the unrest, but the bulk of the populace was in thrall to these amusements, so there must have been other individuals and groups present who were willing to protest.[22] Indeed, Libanius says that in Alexandria, the theatre was the battleground of the people.[23] Evagrius Scholasticus also relates an account of an ongoing dispute between Gregory, patriarch of Antioch, and Asterius, the *comes Orientis* in the late sixth century. People of all classes, including merchants and artisans, seem to have taken the side of the governor in this dispute, and shouting, protests and other disturbances filled the whole city. Naturally, such protests flowed into the streets and theatres, where even itinerant visitors to the city would have become involved.[24] Despite the original

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[20] Examples include: Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.13 (*PG* 67.759-66); Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyricus Anastasii imperatoris* 16 (*PG* 87/3.2815-6); Libanius, *Or.* 20.6 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 2.314-5); and *Malalas*, *Chron.* 18.41 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 262). The fact that punishment for riots often entailed banishing actors and temporarily closing theatres strongly suggests that these venues, the entertainers who worked in them, and their hired supporters were conduits of unrest. On the obverse, the quelling of riots was often achieved by providing the people with pantomimes and circus performances. It should also be kept in mind that unrest in recreational environments generally reflected deeper social issues and public discontent. See Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 249-50, 255-6, and 277; Whitby, *Violence of the Circus Factions*, 231-3 and 241; Main, *Mob Politics*, 8-10.

[21] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.13 (*PG* 67.759-66).

[22] Another example of a demonstration which spread from the theatre or circus is a factional protest during the reign of Anastasius. When Anastasius sent troops into the Hippodrome to deal with the main rioters, the disturbance overflowed into the streets, causing substantial destruction in the city centre. See Malalas 16.4 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 221-2).

[23] Libanius, *Or.* 19.14 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 2.276-7): '… ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ … οἷς τὸ θέατρον τοῦ πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντας αὐτῶν πολέμου χωρίον.'

[24] Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 6.7 (Bidez and Parmentier, 225-6). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 296-7: 'Λοιπὸν δὲ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἀφείθη πρὸς τὰς κατ'αὐτοῦ βλασφημίας. Ἄμφω τοιγαροῦν τὼ δήμω ἐς μίαν συνήτην γνώμην, καὶ κατά τε τὰς λεωφόρους ἀνά τε τὸ θέατρον τὰς κατὰ τοῦ ἱερέως ὕβρεις ἐπεβόων, οὐδε τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς τούτων ἀποσχομένων'.

cause of these types of disputes, it is clear that many other unaligned individuals and groups participated in unrest once it was underway.[25]

Constantinople's infamous Nika Riot of 532 is a well-known example of urban unrest that centred around the Hippodrome, and this large-scale riot ultimately ended in widespread destruction.[26] Malalas' account of the events suggests that many people became involved in the rioting; not only the locals who identified as circus faction members.[27] We should certainly look for the presence of other, less documented, participants in events such as the Nika Riot. Whitby stresses that, once protests were underway, 'casual opportunism would suck in looters, while non-factional grievances and aspirations would attract others'.[28] Liebeschuetz agrees that 'discontented groups' would often become involved in disturbances started by others for a variety of reasons.[29] Not all of those who became involved in protests would have been aware of the initial motives behind them, nor would all participants have been fully committed to every cause. Indeed, many mariners and other mobile elements would have fallen into this category, becoming embroiled in disturbances that centred around the venues that they flocked to while in port. For those with a rebellious nature or subversive streak, Late Antiquity certainly presented no shortage of popular disturbances to participate in. Men with opportunistic tendencies, time on their hands, and a natural propensity for trouble, inevitably found it.

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[25] The so-called Riot of the Statues in late fourth-century Antioch is another prominent example of a riot which spilled into the streets and baths once it got underway. See Libanius, *Or*. 22.5-6 (trans. Norman, *Selected Orations*, 2.378-9).

[26] Accounts of the riot are contained in Procop. *Pers.* 1.24 (Dewing, 1.218-39); *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 9, year 4 (Dindorf, 1.620-9). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale,* 114-27; and Malalas, *Chron*. 18.71 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 275-81). For a full description of the riot and surrounding events, see Greatrex, *Nika Riot*.

[27] Malalas, *Chron*. 18.71 (trans. Jeffreys et al., *Chronicle of John Malalas*, 275-81). Procopius' account of the event suggests that the rioters were all aligned to either the Blues or Greens; however, he also says that the entire populace became involved. See Procop. *Pers.* 1.24 (Dewing, 1.218-39). Also see Greatrex, *Nika Riot*, 60ff who demonstrates that the Nika Riot was not an isolated incident of unrest, but one which should be set in the wider context of violence and popular discontent in the eastern capital; Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 250 also notes that a close reading of accounts of the riot indicate 'wider discontents underlying the mindless violence in the street and hippodrome'.

[28] M. Whitby, 'Factions, Bishops, Violence and Urban Decline', in *Die Stadt in der Spätantike - Niedergang oder Wandel?* eds. J-U. Krause and C. Witschel (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 443-4. See also Whitby, *Violence of the Circus Factions*, 233.

[29] Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 256 suggests that all manner of grievances could be aired once a riot had started, some of which were not even remotely related to the original motive or motives for the disturbance.

It was in a range of leisure establishments, recreation centres and marketplaces that many rebels, itinerants and troublemakers could be found—men who were empathetic to social or other injustice, and naturally inclined to oppose the authorities. MacMullen sees attempts to limit the hours, merchandise and overall influence of taverns and other similar establishments during the fourth century as evidence of their role as hotbeds of dissent, stating succinctly that 'troubles begin when men congregate, especially drunken men'.[30] Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain also point out that taverns and brothels, particularly those in maritime neighbourhoods, acted as communication hubs. These venues facilitated the transmission of information through the working, lower and under-classes of society at a local, inter-city and inter-regional level. In short, taverns, brothels and other similar establishments in maritime trading centres acted as breeding grounds for 'political dissidence and urban social rebellion'.[31] Whether or not disturbances and riots actually began in leisure venues, it was in places of entertainment that resentments and protests were aired, trouble was fomented, tactics were discussed, strong-arm support was recruited, and schemes—both impulsive and premeditated—were hatched.

The assortment of plebeians, misfits and itinerants who patronised lower-class and maritime leisure establishments were regularly portrayed by their contemporaries as one large, faceless body; as the masses, plebs, crowd or mob.[32] The fact that those who were at the heart of lower-class and maritime leisure culture were regularly lumped in with the rest of the lower classes is important. As a result, the transient elements of society, such as sea-traders and sailors, are difficult to distinguish in the historical crowd. Many scholars have taken for granted that the only significant participants in the social, economic and political riots of this period were circus faction members or partisans. In fact, the study of the factions has relegated other

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[30] MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 166-8. MacMullen reminds us that crime and general troublesome behaviour always tended to be concentrated in particular areas of cities. Theatres, taverns, wine shops, bathhouses, street corners, fountains and marketplaces all attracted troublemakers.

[31] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 238.

[32] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 10-1 highlights the difficulties faced by modern historians attempting to determine the exact connotation of the various Greek and Latin terms used by our sources to describe the people, the masses and the crowd.

groups to the background.[33] It has also largely been presumed that bands of monks provided all of the physical support for church leaders in religious disputes. Although partisans and monks were undoubtedly heavily involved in many events of unrest, they were not the only ones who participated in riotous behaviour. Studies that examine only these two groups do so at the expense of all others, and thus tell only a part of the overall story of Late Antique urban unrest.

Gregory's *Vox Populi* commendably investigates the different elements of the urban crowd involved in religious unrest of the fifth century. Yet, all too often, he downplays the role of certain groups, like sailors, as 'outsiders' or 'outside agitators'.[34] But sailors were often not as alien to those around them as this label suggests. This thesis argues that many of the men dubbed as foreigners or outsiders—including sailors and other mariners—actually played a significant role in everyday life in urban centres. As such, they regularly became embroiled in protests and other conflicts. It was easy for contemporary sources to label and dismiss anyone who did not conform to their societal ideal as an outsider. In turn, it has become commonplace for modern scholars to do the same. Yet the crowd or mob was often comprised of a variety of individuals and groups, some local and others transient or foreign. All of these players added to the mix, and they are equally important in a study of urban unrest.

Numerous professional, social and religious groups existed at all levels of society during the Late Antique period. Many organised groups, such as guilds and other societies, were customary elements of the urban environment. MacMullen notes that men aroused suspicion when they attempted to form groups. This distrust would not have persisted unless collectives or groups of men continued to instigate or become involved in episodes of urban unrest.[35] Men who banded together for a cause,

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[33] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 206.

[34] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, Preface ix, 108, 203, 208, and 221. Gregory argues that the ecclesiastical disputes of the Late Antique period were 'exclusively religious' (221), with little or no involvement from other participants. When ecclesiastical sources do mention the involvement of others like Egyptian sailors, Gregory largely dismisses them as outsiders. Gregory does not seem to acknowledge the limitations and bias of ecclesiastical sources which recorded history in purely Christian terms. Yet these sources have a strong religious slant, often ignoring any other social, political or economic aspects of the events or times. It was neither important nor sagacious for church historians to highlight the role or presence of anyone who detracted from their spiritual or theological recording of events. See Bell, *Social Conflict*, 121-4 for a discussion of the major gaps in the ecclesiastical sources in regards to religious disputes.

[35] MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 174-5.

particularly those who belonged to pre-existing groups or sub-communities, could wield considerable power and cause significant disruption.[36] Alan Cameron lists a number of references to guilds and their members who were involved in urban violence. He sees their role in unrest as an important one, far more so than the circus partisans who are most often blamed for civic unrest in the Late Antique period. In reference to guilds, Cameron warns against downplaying their role, noting that even 'if they hit the headlines less than the partisans, this does not mean that they were a negligible influence on the formation and expression of popular attitudes'.[37]

In the early fifth century, guilds and their members were warned against participating in illicit religiously motivated gatherings. So too were slaves and clerics, particularly those who were foreigners to large urban centres like Constantinople.[38] Guilds and groups of artisans, farmers, merchants and sailors banded together to demand higher wages in the sixth century.[39] Of particular relevance to this thesis is the shipowners' or shipmasters' guild. This group was powerful and influential; it ultimately controlled the influx of food and other products into urban centres. The collective of shipmasters in Africa is recorded as having insisted on increased compensation for sailing during the winter months in the late fourth century.[40] It was also the guild of shipmasters that John of Ephesus called the most powerful group in the city of Alexandria in his time.[41] This same group was also fomenting trouble a century earlier, when riots occurred in Alexandria over the appointment of a new bishop. The guild of shipmasters was influential enough to petition the emperor in

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[36] MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 184. MacMullen says that from the fourth century, organised groups were utilised to greater effect in public demonstrations and in order to agitate for change.

[37] Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 85-6. Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 27 also notes that in times of stress, the guilds would have provided a form of organised leadership for popular protests.

[38] *Cod. Theo.* 16.4.1-6 (*CJR* 1.853-5). *Cod. Theo.* 16.4.5 (*CJR* 1.854): 'Si quis servos in hac sacratissima urbe possideat, eos a tumultuosis conventiculis faciat temperare, sciens se pro singulis servis, qui interesse conventibus interdictis fuerint conprehensi, trium librarum auri dispendio feriendum, servis videlicet puniendis. Quam formam in nummulariis ceterisque huius almae urbis corporibus volumus sub poena graviore servari, ut unumquodque corpus pro his, qui de suo numero conventus celebrare inlicitos detegentur, ad quinquaginta pondo auri solutionem multae nomine adstringatur.'

[39] *Nov. Just.* 122 (*CJC* 3.592-3).

[40] *Cod. Theo.* 13.9.3.2 (*CJR* 1.761).

[41] John of Ephesus, *HE*, 3.1.33 (trans. Payne-Smith, 69).

favour of their chosen candidate, Timothy Aelurus, apparently with the support of the majority of the city's population.[42]

Other noteworthy groups from this period that played a substantial role in unrest were tavern and inn-keepers. These men and women may have suffered from a poor reputation but, judging by their repeated appearance in the civil laws, they were an active and influential group in their own right.[43] It was in their establishments that many other groups met and congregated, and where sailors, merchants and other travellers were exposed to local troubles. Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain list a range of evidence concerning tavern and shop-keepers (*tabernarii*) from throughout the Roman period to the late fourth or early fifth century. The evidence confirms that these men and women existed in organised groups with considerable sway over the lower and under-classes. Tavern, inn and shop-keepers were able 'to mobilize populations for political purposes, particularly urban protests', and mass protests of considerable size 'all but required their involvement'.[44] Given that demand for the services offered by tavern and shop-keepers did not abate during the fifth to seventh centuries, it is unlikely that their popularity and influence declined either.

The theatre claques and circus factions were also heavily involved in riots and unrest during the Late Antique period, and they have been credited with a prominent role in much of the unrest that surrounded the theatres, circuses and streets of the Late Roman world.[45] The leaders of both groups were certainly experienced in crowd manipulation and, as such, may have provided the 'nucleus around which popular discontent could rally for support and organization'.[46] This is certainly suggested of the theatre claques by John Chrysostom when he condemns their role as agitators

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[42] Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.9 (Bidez and Parmentier, 60). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 90: '… ὥστε τί πέπρακται περὶ τοῦ εἰρημένου Τιμοθέου, ὅν ὅ τε τῆς Ἀλεξανδρέων δῆμος καὶ οἱ ἀξιωματικοὶ καὶ οἱ πολιτευόμενοι καὶ ναύκληροι ἐπίσκοπον ἑαυτοῖς αἰτοῦσι …'

[43] Tavern and inn keepers and various legislative references to them are discussed in Chapter 5.

[44] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 231-3.

[45] Cameron, *Circus Factions*, Chapter 8 and 237-8, 241, 249, and 274-5. Cameron suggests that it was because all entertainments in the theatres and hippodromes became managed by the one 'common state-financed and administered guild' (220) that the circus factions and partisans were able to infiltrate the theatre after the late fourth century. Their activity seems to have been mostly limited to the circus prior to this time.

[46] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 28-9; Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 234-5; and J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 212-8.

involved in all sorts of civil unrest.[47] Monks, or those regularly identified as monastics, also played their part in urban violence in this period.[48] Like the staunch supporters of the circus factions, monks were 'hard-core fans of the churches'.[49] Urban monks in particular were able to incite the crowds, and the legislation makes it clear that the number of monastics who engaged in troublesome behaviour increased in the Late Antique period. Legislation attempted to restrict the number of monks and *parabolani* in large cities like Alexandria and Constantinople, as well as their ability to attend public events, meetings and spectacles of any kind.[50] One law from the fifth century specifically bans monastics from taking Christian objects into places of entertainment, and from attempting to take possession of these popular meeting places.[51]

Patlagean notes that, although monks and circus faction members and partisans had a prominent role in urban unrest, the social composition of the crowds involved in factional and other protests needs to be expanded. She stresses that Libanius' portrayal of the involvement of foreigners and outsiders in urban unrest is not isolated.[52] Patlagean hypothesises that the influx of migrants, itinerants and other displaced or socially excluded individuals into urban centres created a great diversity within the urban crowd. With this diversity came a heightened restlessness in the cities and an increase in agitation and violence.[53] A Novel of Justinian from 539

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[47] Refer to Chapter 6, footnote 19.

[48] *Canon 4, Council of Chalcedon* in *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3, Sessions XI-XVI, trans. and intro. R. Price and M. Gaddis, Translated Texts for Historians 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 95. Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 290 sees the fifth century as 'the great age of monastic violence'. He believes that bands of monks were responsible for the elevation of urban violence in this period, more so than the factions and their partisans.

[49] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 136 and 190-1.

[50] See *Cod. Theo.* 16.2.42 (*CJR* 1.850); *Cod. Theo.* 16.2.43 (*CJR* 1.851) = *Cod. Just.* 1.3.18 (*CJC* 2.20); *Cod. Just.* 1.3.17 (*CJC* 2.20); *Cod. Just.* 1.3.26 (*CJC* 2.21); and *Cod. Theo.* 9.40.16 (*CJR* 1.504-5).

[51] *Cod. Just.* 1.3.26 (*CJC* 2.21): '... ut posthac neque monachi aut quicumque alius cuiuslibet status aut fortunae in aedes publicas vel in quaecumque loca populi voluptatibus fabricata venerabilem crucem et sanctorum martyrum reliquias illicite inferre conentur vel occupare audeant ea, quae vel ad publicas causas vel ad populi oblectamenta constructa sunt.'

[52] For Libanius, refer to Chapter 6, footnotes 16-7.

[53] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 204-5 and 225-33. Patlagean highlights an increase in urban banditry ('*brigandage urbain*') in this period, and notes that the gangs involved were often viewed as ethnically different or foreign in some way. Sources often refer to foreign groups of bandits as 'monks', but Patlagean says this term became somewhat of a catch-all term for foreigners and other displaced persons involved in urban brigandage. She also stresses that the influx of people into large cities impacted heavily on life in urban centres, but that contemporary sources often ignored these people and their impacts. Patlagean highlights archaeological data, in particular, which

suggests that there were larger numbers of migrants and itinerant travellers without employment in Constantinople than ever before. This was a problem because idle men were allegedly more prone to committing crimes and to becoming involved in disturbances and other reprehensible acts.[54] The circus factions, theatre claques, and monastic leaders made the most of this increased restlessness and tension. They were able to stage larger and perhaps more disruptive protests than ever before by recruiting the mobile and displaced elements of society.[55] Cameron raises a valid point when he warns that writers often accused troublemakers of being outsiders during this period. At the same time, he agrees that it is highly likely that many of the men who supported the claques and factions were drifters who moved from city to city.[56] Indeed, the willingness of itinerants, migrants, and other drifters to become involved in protests and demonstrations may have rested largely on their transient nature; those who travelled from city to city generally always had an exit strategy.

Liebeschuetz and Bell note that the large choruses of spectators employed by circus faction leaders, in both acclamations and protests alike, were comprised of a mix of men; the itinerant and unemployed (largely 'attracted by pay'),[57] and young men of means.[58] The composition of the mobs that became involved in religiously motivated events was also varied. MacMullen highlights that, prior to the sixth century, most of the physical violence against non-Christians was instigated by bands of monks, either on their own or with the support of a frenzied mob.[59] It was a mixed crowd that provided the strong-arm support for church leaders at Councils such as those of Ephesus and Chalcedon in the fifth century. Those who later testified against Eutyches and Dioscorus' actions at the Second Council of Ephesus almost

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demonstrates the huge increase in size in the urban, poor population of cities. Also see Greatrex, *Nika Riot*, 60 for further discussion.

[54] *Nov. Just.* 80 (*CJC* 3.390-7). See *Nov. Just.* 80.5.1 (*CJC* 3.393) for the suggestion that idle men easily became involved in illegal activity in urban centres.

[55] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 229. Patlagean says that descriptions of the circus factions and their partisans often confirm that these were open groups that attracted crowds of adherents.

[56] Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 244. P.A. Brunt, 'The Roman Mob', *Past and Present* 35, (1966), 24 also notes that the elite end of society regularly vilified those who caused trouble as exiles, foreigners, runaway slaves, desperadoes and criminals.

[57] Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 210.

[58] Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 210; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 136-7.

[59] MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 31. From the sixth century on, the instigation of violence against religious dissenters became largely state-sanctioned.

unanimously mentioned the threat of violence that existed at the Council as a result of the presence of an assorted mob of supporters.[60] Nestorius suggests that the same atmosphere of terror existed at the earlier Council of Ephesus, where Cyril of Alexandria and Memnon of Ephesus had rallied their mob of drunken, violent supporters against anyone who opposed them.[61]

In his *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian*, Bell includes a model of the main social actors and groups that existed in Late Antique Antioch. The model could also be applied to other prominent cities of the time.[62] In this model, the three main groups are the Imperial, the Civic Elite, and the People. The People (or *demos*) encompasses most of the sub-groups that have been mentioned so far in our discussion of social unrest; guilds/tradesmen, claques and factions, church congregations, the urban poor, peasants and monks. Although considered to be outsiders, some local merchants and sailors would also have been covered by this broad model. Merchants, shippers and sailors were often members of guilds and of the poor or peasantry respectively. In Greatrex's study of the Nika Riot, he compares episodes of early modern rioting to the situation in Constantinople in the sixth century. He stresses that the mob in both periods was always comprised of all the lower orders in the city, not just the 'scum' of society.[63] Late Antique sources regularly imply that the mob was made up of men and women who were low-bred, loose, undisciplined, 'the rabble of the market place', and so on.[64] The actual composition of the crowd has rarely been dissected and thus it is still largely seen as dominated by the two unruly groups that modern historians have been most interested in; the circus factions and bands of wandering monks.

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[60] See the testimonies in the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon in *ACO* 2.1.1, 15-6, 66-7; *ACO* 2.1.1, 53-9, 75, and *ACO* 2.1.1, 851-7, 179-80. English trans. in Price and Gaddis, *Acts*, 1.131-2, 1.140-1, and 1.269-70. Also see Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heracleides* 2.2, ed. and trans. G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 351-3.

[61] Nestorius, *Bazaar* 2.1 (trans. Driver and Hodgson, 134 and 266-7); *ACO* 1.1.5, 153, 124: '… Κυρίλλου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως καὶ Μέμνονος συμφραξαμένων καὶ πλῆθος ἀγροικικὸν συναθροισάντων …'.

[62] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 36-7 (Figure 2.1).

[63] Greatrex, *Nika Riot*, 61-2.

[64] MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 209.

Sailors and Merchants in the Crowd: Members of the Maritime Community in Episodes of Urban Unrest

One type of person or group regularly overlooked in the urban crowd—and of particular relevance to this thesis—are the mobile members of society. These transient elements deserve special attention. At times, they appear in our sources as respectable or semi-respectable members of society. Most of the time, however, they blend in with the rest of the *hoi polloi*. Mobile men and women regularly participated in lower-class leisure culture in trading centres and towns, mixing with the rowdy, disruptive and rabble-rousing elements of society. To varying degrees—depending on their social or economic status—they were outsiders and misfits. A perfect example is Jacob of the *Doctrina Jacobi*. The story of Jacob may be a fictitious account, yet there is no reason to dismiss the type of character that the young man represents. The sequence of Jacob's story demonstrates that, when he was a relatively inoffensive and somewhat respectable travelling merchant (with a patron in Constantinople), he became caught up in the anarchic activity of the factions and in urban banditry in general. As a travelling merchant and a Jew, Jacob was an outsider in the numerous cities that he visited. Yet it is clear that he was able to blend in with the crowd in many of these same cities. Jacob tells of his travels to Constantinople and other ports and islands throughout the Mediterranean region, where he was immediately able to take up with the local rowdies and circus partisans.[65] To the contemporary sources reporting on any of the episodes of unrest in which Jacob became involved, he was simply yet another hooligan in the crowd.

The role that members of the maritime community played in protests and riots has been mentioned sporadically throughout this thesis. Yet itinerant sailors and travelling merchants like Jacob need to be discussed in further detail. Like other drifters who moved from city to city, sailors and itinerant traders did not have family ties, obligations, responsibilities or even accountability in many of the centres they visited. When they were away from home, these men were not local residents and

[65] *Doctrina Jacobi* 1.40-1 and 5.20 (Dagron and Déroche, 128-31 and 214-9). Jacob joined in with the activities of both the Blue and Green factions at different times in various cities and ports. These port cities include Constantinople, Antioch, Rhodes, Pylai, Cyzicus and Charax. Also see Bell, *Social Conflict*, 146-7 and Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 228-9.

thus were never part of the permanent class structure that existed in large urban centres.[66] Sailors and sea-merchants were generally seen as either foreign or as part of under-class society. This would have influenced the way in which they behaved when they were on shore. To an extent, sailors and itinerant merchants were free to participate in riots and other episodes of unrest, without the same fear of punishment and long-term consequences that many local residents had. The transient nature of many sailors and sea-merchants may have misled modern scholars to assume that they were never significant players in the disturbances that occurred in coastal urban centres, yet this is a tenuous assumption. In his book *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea,* Marcus Rediker studies sailors of the eighteenth century. His research shows that sailors carried their rebellious and oppositional sub-culture ashore with them. They empathised with social and other injustices encountered on shore and acted as catalysts for unrest in the ports they visited. Their harsh lives (both at sea and in dockyards), transient existence, and the sense of collectivism that existed in the maritime community resulted in the belligerent attitude of sailors towards authority.[67] These same conditions affected mariners in the fourth to seventh centuries, and there are useful parallels between the behaviour of early modern sailors and those of pre-modern times. Just as in the modern period, Late Antique sailors, merchants and other sea travellers were not averse to employing a little 'purposeful violence and direct action' in an attempt to right what they saw as wrong.[68]

With increasing numbers of migrants flocking to urban trading centres, there also came a heightened demand for basic staples such as food, drink and other items. This in turn meant that the number of foreign sailors and traders in major cities swelled.[69] Cities like Constantinople, Alexandria and Ephesus all relied heavily on

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[66] The activities of merchants and sailors in their home ports has only been considered briefly so far in this thesis. However, for those mariners who considered one port home, life could have been quite different there. On arrival into their home ports, sailors and merchants may have spent time with family and friends, taking advantage of the home comforts that were missing when they were at sea and in foreign ports. Indeed, in his home port, a sailor or merchant would often have been seen as one of the locals (although not necessarily as a respectable one).

[67] M. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 250-1; Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 225-7.

[68] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 225-7.

[69] See Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 185-7 for a discussion of the growth in number of foreign individuals involved in the carriage and service of the *annona* and other staples during Late Antiquity.

the seaborne trade that entered their ports and harbours. These were maritime trading centres, full of sailors and merchants who had arrived by both sea, river and over land. As mentioned early in this thesis, there has been little appreciation of the impact that the presence of the maritime crowd had on social dynamics in port cities. Yet cities full of sailors and merchants who were willing to engage in protests and demonstrations with very little hesitation, must only have heightened the already volatile character of these urban centres. Gregory accepts that the men of the Alexandrian grain fleet played a role in religious unrest in both Alexandria and Constantinople during the fifth century, although he sees them only as outside agitators who were specifically brought in by local church leaders to incite unrest.[70] But Alexandrian sailors were already regular visitors to both Constantinople and Alexandria and, although they were seen as outsiders, their presence was never as alien as one might initially think. Indeed, many men of the grain fleet would have made their homes in Alexandria. Their status as locals, coupled with the state organisation and funding that lay behind their movements, must have led to a certain level of both political and social influence for some of these men.[71] We should also consider the role of all the other sailors and traders who were present in major centres of the time. Like our merchant Jacob, maritime men added to the overall atmosphere of tension that existed in the port cities and urban centres into which they sailed; and like Jacob, they easily mixed with the urban crowd and became embroiled in a number of protests and confrontations.

The men of the Alexandrian grain fleet were certainly not the only sailors in major ports, but they are the ones mentioned most frequently by both ancient and modern historians. One of the reasons that we actually have literary evidence of sailors during the fourth to sixth century period is because Egyptian mariners participated in several of the well-documented ecclesiastical disputes of the time. The fact that these men were labelled as Alexandrian (or Egyptian) by our sources is of importance. Often our Constantinopolitan writers used this ethnic marker to highlight that nautical men were outsiders with reputations for tumultuous and unscrupulous behaviour. For ecclesiastical historians who were intent on establishing the

[70] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 31-3, 208, and 221.
[71] Refer to footnote 86 of this chapter for evidence of the potential political influence of men of the grain fleet.

orthodoxy of their own version of Christianity (or the orthodoxy of their chosen protagonist), highlighting the support of Alexandrian sailors for a church leader was not coincidental. Rather, it flagged the fact that these unruly and notorious sailors were on the side of one or another of the Alexandrian patriarchs or some other non-Constantinopolitan church leader.[72] This, in turn, served to discredit the men whom these sailors supported.

The concept of patronage is an important one here and, as an organised group, sailors of the grain fleet may have become involved in events of unrest in the interests of their wealthy and influential patrons. Both the leaders of the Church and the shippers of Alexandria were powerful forces during this period. Certainly, in the case of Alexandria, their interests became intertwined. By the time of John the Almsgiver's episcopacy in the early seventh century, the Alexandrian patriarchate owned and operated a large fleet of ships, including vessels carrying grain and other necessities throughout the Mediterranean.[73] The mariners who worked on these vessels may have been under an obligation to provide support of various kinds to the patriarch, both at home and abroad. Merchants and shippers also needed a network of contacts in the ports that they visited, particularly for financial purposes, and the Church may have provided this much-needed service. George R. Monks suggests that merchants would have been prominent amongst the clientele of the Alexandrian Church, abounding as it was in wealth, and willing to supply maritime

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[72] Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 291 discusses inter-city rivalry and the huge place that it had always held in the Graeco-Roman world. He says that despite its earlier importance, 'none of the feuds of the early Empire could match the rivalry between the great eastern patriarchates in the fifth and sixth centuries'.

[73] *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 9, in H. Delehaye, 'Une Vie Inédite de Saint Jean l'Aumônier', *Analecta Bollandiana* 45 (1927), 23: 'καὶ δι᾽αὐτοῦ ἀποστέλλει πολλὴν χρυσίου ποσότητα πλῆθός τε σίτου καὶ οἴνοι ἐλαίου τε καὶ ὀσπρίων'; *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 23 (Delehaye, 30-1): 'Ταῦτα εἰπὼν προσέταξε παρευθὺ παραδοθῆναι αὐτῷ δρόμωνα γέμοντα σίτου μυριάδων δύο ἐκ τῶν πλοίων τῶν ἀφωρισμένων τῇ κατ᾽αὐτὸν ἐκκλησίᾳ …'; *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 26 (Delehaye, 38): 'δύο δρόμωνας τῶν τῆς ἐκκλη σίας πλοίων κατᾶραι πρὸς τὸν λιμένα ἐξ ὧν προαπέσρειλεν ἐν Σικελίᾳ κομίζοντας σίτου χιλιάδας οὐκ ὀλίγας'; and *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 40 (Delehaye, 57): 'τὰ πλοῖα γὰρ τῆς κατ᾽αὐτὸν ἁγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὸ λεγόμενον Ἀδριακὸν πέλαγος χειμῶνι μεγάλῳ περιπεσόντα, ἠναγκάσθησαν οἱ ναυτικοὶ πάντων τῶν ἀγωγίμων ἀποβολὴν ποιήσασθαι, ἐπιφερόμενοι πολύτιμα πράγματα τιμήματος ἀξιούμενα κεντηναρίων τριάκοντα τριῶν. ὁμοθυμαδὸν γὰρ εὑρέθησαν ὅλα συμπλέοντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντα τρισκαίδεκα.'. English trans. E. Dawes, in *Three Byzantine Saints: Contemporary Biographies of St. Daniel the Stylite, St. Theodore of Sykeon and St. John the Almsgiver*, ed. N.H. Baynes (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948), 204, 217, 223 and 239-40. Also see Monks, *Church of Alexandria*, 355-7; Hollerich, *Alexandrian Bishops*, 197-8.

loans and aid to those who suffered losses at sea.[74] There would, of course, have been an expectation of support—if ever it was required—in exchange for this aid.

In the early fifth century, Alexandrian sailors were reported by several sources as providing their rousing support to the Alexandrian patriarch Theophilus, when he arrived in Constantinople to curb the influence of John Chrysostom. Both Sozomen and Socrates record that it was only the Alexandrian sailors who were on shore at the time that supported the Egyptian patriarch, noting that all of the clergy refused to welcome him into the city. Many of these sailors were from the grain fleet; however, Sozomen records the presence of other non-*annona* sailors as well.[75] Socrates fails to mention any of the ships and sailors who were transporting goods other than grain, but, unlike Sozomen, he probably did not see the need to distinguish between different types of sailors.[76] Palladius, who also records the event, simply refers to the men who loudly welcomed Theophilus as sailors.[77] Presumably, Palladius believed his readers would think that these sailors were from the Alexandrian grain fleet, although perhaps it did not matter; a sailor brought disrepute to the man he supported, no matter what goods his ship transported.

Later in the same episode, both Sozomen and Socrates mention serious conflict that occurred between Theophilus' and John Chrysostom's supporters in Constantinople. Sailors are not specifically mentioned, but Sozomen reports that it was the Egyptian and Alexandrian multitude that sided with Theophilus in the attack.[78] This multitude must have included sailors from the Egyptian vessels already in Constantinople's ports. It would be safe to assume that there could not have been too many other

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[74] Monks, *Church of Alexandria*, 359-60; Hollerich, *Alexandrian Bishops*, 198-9. Refer to Leontius, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 23 (Delehaye, 30-1).

[75] Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.17 (*PG* 67.1557-1560): 'Τὸ δὲ τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων ναυτικὸν, οἵπερ ἔτυχον ἐνδημοῦντες ἔκ τε τῶν ἄλλων πλοίων, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν σιτηγῶν, ὁμοῦ συνελέγησαν, καὶ προθύμως αὐτὸν εὐφημοῦντες ἐδέξαντο.'

[76] Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.15 (*PG* 67.709-10): '… τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων τὸ ναυτικὸν, ἔτυχε γὰρ τότε παρεῖναι τὰ σιτηγοῦντα τῶν πλοίων, ἀπαντήσαντα σὺν εὐφημίᾳ ἐδέξαντο'.

[77] Palladius, *Dialogus* 8 (*PG* 47.26): '… τοῦ ναυτικοῦ κατακροτούμενος στίφους …'.

[78] Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 8.19 (*PG* 67.1565-1566): '... τὸ λοιπὸν τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων καὶ Αιγυπτίων πλῆθος …'. See also Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.17 (*PG* 67.715-6): 'Στάσις οὖν ἐντεῦθεν καὶ διαπληκτισμὸς μεταξὺ τῶν Κωνσταντίνου πόλεως καὶ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐγίνετο σύντονος. καὶ γενομένης συμπληγάδος, πολλοὶ μὲν τραύματα ἔλαβον, ὀλίγοι δὲ καὶ ἀπώλοντο.'

non-nautical members of the Alexandrian populace in Constantinople at the time.[79] When Timothy Aelurus returned from exile later in the same century, we are told that Alexandrian sailors were once again in the ports of Constantinople to acclaim the popular patriarch.[80]

Much has already been said about the social standing of the men who accompanied both Nestorius and Cyril to the Council of Ephesus in 431. It is clear that amongst their supporters there were a number of ruffians. The *Acts of the Council* record that the city was eventually overrun by large numbers of peasants and sailors who supported the various church leaders involved.[81] In particular, the *Acts* note the presence of Egyptian sailors who were there in support of Cyril. A good majority of these Egyptians would have been from the vessels of the Alexandrian grain fleet,[82] but there is no reason to discount the idea that other sailors who were in port in Ephesus also became involved in the violence. Sailors and shippers involved in events of religious unrest may have been acting out of obligation to their patrons. Others may have acted through faith or fanaticism (a fine line in these events). However, these were not the only possible motivations driving these men.

In the late fourth century, Gregory of Nazianzus referred to Egyptian sailors as miserable creatures who were susceptible to bribery. In fact, he claims that Egyptian sailors would auction off their own gods if they were able.[83] Gregory's comments refer particularly to a gang of sailors—typical Alexandrian ruffians—who he says had been recruited to storm the church in Constantinople in order to claim the episcopacy for his rival Maximus. Gregory says that these men were hired from the fleet

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[79] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 57 says that Theophilus had probably brought 'a band of roughnecks with him to Constantinople'. Gregory does not specifically state that Egyptian sailors were involved, but he does stress that they were in Constantinople at the time. He suggests that '... behind the scenes, on the docks and in the streets and churches of Constantinople itself, the agents of Alexandria were constantly at work'. Presumably these agents included sailors, at least in the dockside areas of the capital.

[80] Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *Chronicle*, 5.1 (trans. Phenix and Horn, in Greatrex, *Chronicle*, 175).

[81] *ACO* 1.1.5, 156, 128: '… θορύβου καὶ ταραχῆς τήν τε πόλιν καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν σύνοδον ἐμπλήσαντας ναύταις τε Αἰγυπτίοις καὶ ἀγροίκοις Ἀσιανοῖς …'.

[82] Hollerich, *Alexandrian Bishops*, 195 provides further evidence of the involvement of the men of the grain fleet in these events.

[83] Greg. Naz., *De Vita sua,* 1.841-3 (*PG* 37.1087): '… Δύστηνα ναυταρίδια καὶ παράφθορα, Εὔωνα, μικροῦ κέρματος πολλοὺς θεοὺς Ῥᾷστ'ἄν προθέντα, εἴπερ ἦσαν πλείονες.'

(πολλοὺς ἔχοντες μισθίους ἐκ τοῦ στόλου).[84] If the sailors to which Gregory refers are men of the Alexandrian grain fleet, his comments regarding the fickle nature of their religious loyalties are particularly interesting. Such comments question the prevailing view that, at any given time, all of the sailors of the fleet were ardent supporters of the Alexandrian patriarch and his theological beliefs. It is also a little ambiguous as to what fleet or ships Gregory actually refers. The language used by the theologian, albeit chosen for its poetic quality, could refer to any assemblage of ships that happened to be in the harbour at the time, including those of the grain fleet, navy and private merchantmen.[85] It is quite possible that the sailors involved in storming the church were from a number of ships in the harbour, and Gregory simply used the men of the grain fleet to represent all Egyptian sailors who he saw as being of the same ilk.

It is interesting that Gregory of Nazianzus describes sailors as men for hire, able to be bribed into criminal activity or other objectionable behaviour with the promise of some form of payment. There are other events in which sailors and shipmasters acted as mercenaries for hire, providing or disrupting services that would have made them largely unpopular amongst the locals. These were roles for outsiders with little social standing to lose and minimal investment in the cities in which they caused disruption; men who were able to move on once they had been paid. It was in this way that men of the grain fleet often became involved in subversive or divisive activity. This is illustrated by the involvement of mariners in the interruption of grain supplies throughout Late Antiquity. There are several claims of both political and religious leaders threatening the supply of grain into Constantinople and Alexandria in this period. In order to manage this, such leaders must have had the support of the men of the grain fleet.[86] As tempting as it might seem to attribute their support to

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[84] Greg. Naz., *De Vita sua* 1.887-94, (*PG* 37.1090-91): '… πολλοὺς ἔχοντες μισθίους ἐκ τοῦ στόλου, Ἐξ ὧν Ἀλεξάνδρεια ῥᾷστ' ἀνάπτεται (Καὶ γὰρ συνεμπίπτουσι τῷ στόλῳ σαφῶς) …'. For an English translation of this episode, see *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems. Concerning his own Affairs; Concerning Himself and the Bishops; Concerning his own Life,* trans. D.M. Meehan and ed. T.P. Halton, The Fathers of the Church 75 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 101-2.

[85] Refer to the previous footnote for the Greek text. It is also worth noting that the revolt of General Leontius in 695 started on military ships which were in the Harbour of Julian (Sophia) at the time. The sailors on both naval and non-naval vessels could have become involved in revolts and other disturbances at the behest of a patron. See Kocabaş, *Old Ships*, 18-9.

[86] Examples include: Athanasius' threat to stop the supply of grain to Constantinople in the first half of the fourth century (or the accusation made by his enemies that he was capable of doing so). For

unwavering faith or loyalty to a patriarch or emperor, it should be remembered that any delay to the supply of grain would also have meant the suspension of wages and profits for those involved in its shipping. It is unlikely that the sailors of the Alexandrian grain fleet would have willingly accepted this loss of wages without some other form of monetary compensation or advantageous offer of patronage.

In the Aykelah revolt of the late sixth century, the rebellious governors of the small town of Aykelah near Alexandria were able to disrupt the supply of grain into Alexandria by capturing ships headed for the city laden with grain.[87] John of Nikiu reports that, in this way, the people of Aykelah were able to cause havoc throughout Egypt, both at land and at sea.[88] The rebels captured a number of grain ships, and one has to ask whether this would have been possible without at least some insider assistance from men on board those vessels. Some sailors of the grain fleet may have been able to be bought by the highest bidder. Of course, sailors who could be bought, or who were willing to engage in a little unscrupulous behaviour for profit, were not restricted to those of the grain fleet. During the persecution of Hellenic philosophers in Alexandria in the late fifth century, the patriarch of Alexandria sent a letter condemning a local Hellenic official in Aphrodisias to the leader of the church in that city. The condemnation was sent via a letter carrier (probably a merchant or sailor). Zachariah of Mytilene says that the carrier was able to be bribed not to deliver the letter, demonstrating that personal profit could certainly outweigh duty.[89] In a very different type of episode, Sozomen records the involvement of sailors in the execution of a number of non-Arian church leaders in Nicomedia by indirect order of

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an account of this episode, see Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 1.35 (*PG* 67.169-72). Dioscorus of Alexandria and the monk Eutyches also planned to stop the transport of grain to Constantinople during Marcian's rule, but were thwarted by the emperor when he arranged for it to be sent via a different route (which also caused grain shortages in Alexandria). For this episode, see Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 5945 (de Boor, 106-7). English trans. in Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes*, 164. Around the same time, the people of Alexandria approached military and civil officials asking them to intercede and reinstate the grain allowance. This is detailed in Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.5 (Bidez and Parmentier, 50-1). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 76-7. Also see Haas, *Alexandria*, 70-1; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 186-7.

[87] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 97.7-13 (trans. Charles, 157-8).

[88] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 97.9 (trans. Charles, 158).

[89] Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 49-50 (trans. Brock and Fitzgerald, 51). Also see Trombley, *Hellenic Religion*, vol. 2, 61-2 for a discussion of these events and the evidence that the pagan official, Asklepiodotos, remained a popular and powerful figure in Aphrodisias until his death a decade after the letter was sent. The censure and punishment of Asklepiodotos demanded in the letter was obviously not accomplished. There is an extant grave inscription mentioning Asklepiodotos' god-like status in the city at the time of his death in the 490's.

the emperor Valens. Considering that the city prefect feared an insurrection if he were to openly execute these men, this was dirty work best reserved for outsiders; men, such as sailors, who could leave town once their work was done. Sozomen narrates that the condemned ecclesiastics were all placed onto a ship, which was set alight by the sailors on board (who were acting according to the instructions they had received). All of the sailors escaped via a smaller vessel they had brought along for the purpose.[90]

In the above-mentioned revolt of the governors of Aykelah, John of Nikiu mentions a certain Isaac and his band of freebooters who plundered ships sailing along the Mediterranean coast.[91] It is unlikely that Isaac and his men were hired to raid these ships; however, their actions do illustrate that there were men in the maritime community who were willing to commit theft and other criminal activity for the promise of reward. In Benerson Little's book, *Pirate Hunting*, he notes that throughout the long period from the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE, there were many men engaged in petty piracy and privateering, 'in numbers and histories only hinted at in the written record'.[92] The brief reference to Isaac and his gang of pirates operating along the Mediterranean coast near Alexandria suggests that there were pockets of sea-pirates who were active near all of the major shipping and trading centres. Indeed, the fact that maritime theft and other forms of piracy were still common during the Late Antique period has already been established. Numerous regulations in both the civil and maritime legislation demonstrate beyond a doubt that piracy was alive and well in this period.[93] Ashburner, in his study of *Rhodian Sea Law*, concludes that 'there was no hard and fast line between the mariner and the pirate' during this period, and that many of the maritime laws were implemented in an attempt to regulate the activities of unscrupulous mariners.[94] Rauh, Dillon and Davina McClain would agree, noting that the expansion of trade

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[90] Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.14 (*PG* 67.1329-30): 'Ἐπεὶ δὲ πλέοντες κατὰ μέσον τοῦ Ἀστακίου καλουμένου κόλπου ἐγένοντο, οἱ μὲν ναῦται πυρὶ τὸ σκάφος ὑφάψαντες, ὡς ἦν αὐτοῖς προστεταγμένον, ὑπεχώρουν εἰς τὸ ἐφόλκιον μεταπηδήσαντες'.
[91] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 97.10 (trans. Charles, 158).
[92] B. Little, *Pirate Hunting: The Fight Against Pirates, Privateers, and Sea Raiders from Antiquity to the Present* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2010), 51-3.
[93] Examples include: *RSL* 3.1-2, 3.4, 3.8, 3.15-7, 3.26, 3.28-9, 3.31, 3.33, 3.39, 3.48, 3.50 (Ashburner, 10-47); *Dig.* 4.9.1.7, 4.9.3, 4.9.6 (*CJC* 1.101-2), 14.2.3 (*CJC* 1.220), 47.5 (*CJC* 1.825).
[94] Ashburner, *RSL*, cclxi-cclxiv.

throughout the Mediterranean led to a situation whereby the 'maritime population absorbed an increasing array of antisocial laboring elements compelled to sell their minds and muscles for money'.[95] These same men could be found in maritime leisure establishments in port cities and towns throughout the Mediterranean and wider region. They proved an able and willing resource for those looking to outsource an unpleasant deed, or to gather some strong-arm support at a civil or religious demonstration. There is evidence of the payment or bribery of members of the urban crowd in order to secure their support in public demonstrations. Nestorius accused his opponents in Constantinople of furnishing the unruly crowd with money and provisions in order to gain their support. In another example, Eusebius of Dorylaeum and Sophronios complained that Dioscorus of Alexandria paid the rabble who supported him in the events surrounding the Council of Ephesus.[96] As we have seen, sailors were a crucial component of the crowd in such events.

Timothy Gregory is one of the few scholars to examine the role of both mariners and the urban crowd in events of unrest during the Late Antique period. Gregory primarily investigates religious disputes and demonstrations, but his work and subsequent conclusions are of considerable relevance to this chapter. Gregory would disagree with the idea that sailors, merchants and shippers—and indeed many of the other men and women who became involved in religious disputes—were willing to sell their souls to the highest bidder. The involvement of maritime men in the events surrounding religious controversies is primarily seen by Gregory as evidence of their unequivocal allegiance to whatever doctrine was being championed by their chosen church leader at the time. Their support took many forms, including the enthusiastic welcoming of patriarchs when they were in Constantinople; strong-arm support at Church councils and similar events; involvement in mob violence or criminal activity on behalf of a bishop or other ecclesiastic; the execution of 'heretical' opponents; and the carriage of letters on behalf of prominent clergymen. This thesis argues that the motives of sailors and shippers would not always have been spiritual. Indeed, often their motives would have been far more material.

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[95] Rauh et al., *Ochlos Nautikos*, 223.

[96] Nestorius, *Bazaar* 2.1 (trans. Driver and Hodgson, 278-9); *ACO* 2.1.1, 16, 66-7. English trans. in Price and Gaddis, *Acts*, 1.131; *ACO* 2.1.2, 64, 23-4. English trans. in Price and Gaddis, *Acts*, 2.63.

Gregory highlights the complexity of the religious controversies of the fifth century, noting that the theological disputes were so complicated that they 'strained the capacities of the greatest minds of the age'.[97] He believes that it is this fact that has led many scholars to doubt the 'simple religious explanations' given by Late Antique ecclesiastical historians for the involvement of the people in these disputes.[98] How indeed could the average man or woman have understood the complex theological arguments? Gregory suggests that understanding the theology at the centre of religious disputes was not altogether important. He says it was 'a deep identification with Christianity as they understood it' that forced average men and women (he uses the example of sailors and shopkeepers) to become heavily involved in theological disputes.[99] At the same time, Gregory acknowledges that there must have been a number of 'secular concerns, personal loyalties, and psychological factors' that motivated the actions of many individuals.[100] Despite this acknowledgement, he largely dismisses any secular reasons for the involvement of the urban crowd in religious disputes of the fifth century.

Gregory attributes the motivation of the average sailor and shopkeeper to their understanding 'that their personal salvation depended upon the successful resolution of the controversy'.[101] The desire for personal salvation did play an important role in the lives of many people during this period. However, to presume that this was the primary motive for every sailor, shopkeeper or man and woman from the lower tiers of society who became embroiled in religious unrest, is ill-considered. Indeed, the promise of deliverance from hunger and poverty may have provided a more pressing incentive for many men and women of this time. Social, economic, political and other concerns should not be discounted as significant rationale for involvement in any unrest in this period, even for disputes stemming from religious controversy.[102] In fact, given the recondite nature of much of the

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[97] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 203 and 85-6.
[98] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 203.
[99] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 5-7 and 222.
[100] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 223.
[101] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 203 and 223.
[102] Main, *Mob Politics*, 18. In his discussion of 'economic' riots, Main cautions that there was rarely a sole motive for any given riot. Many people became involved in riots once they had started, and they often had different motivations for becoming involved. In regards to theological disputes, many rioters would simply not have understood the arguments that the major players in these disputes advocated.

theology being argued in the fifth and sixth-century disputes, it is highly likely that there were a number of other motivations for many of those in the urban crowd. Even contemporary historians noted how trivial and pointless much of the theology being argued was.[103]

There are some serious flaws in Gregory's argument. Firstly, the extant literary sources that deal with theological disputes and religious unrest have been written mostly by elite church historians and theologians. As such, they do not speak for the people as a whole, and certainly not for those who were seen as outsiders. Yet Gregory views these sources as representative of the minds and hearts of the people in general, particularly the men and women who participated in episodes of unrest, such as shopkeepers and sailors. He says that if there were any secular concerns entwined in any of these religious disputes, they were only ever seen or expressed by the people in religious terms.[104] However, the sources who wrote about religious controversies had very little idea of either the secular concerns or religious understanding of the people. For example, based on his reading of the sources dealing with the controversy surrounding Nestorius and Cyril, Gregory argues that it is evident that many people understood the complex Christological significance of the theologians' argumentation.[105] Yet the understanding of these elite sources does not reflect that of the average man and woman. Indeed, given that the theological debates were so complex, it is unlikely that the uneducated masses would have understood them. It is even more unlikely that itinerant sailors and traders—men who did not even have the opportunity to regularly attend church services and hear sermons—understood the complex theology behind the religious disputes of the time.

In regards to the events surrounding the exile of John Chrysostom from Constantinople, Gregory suggests that the people fully understood what was going

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[103] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 124-5 questions how masses of supporters could have been mobilised over 'recondite doctrinal disputes'. Late Antique historians who mentioned the triviality of theological disputes include: Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.5 (Bidez and Parmentier, 50-1) and Procop. *Goth.* 5.3.5-9 (Dewing, 3.24-5): '… ἀπονοίας γὰρ μανιώδους τινὸς ἡγοῦμαι εἶναι διερευνᾶσθαι τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ φύσιν …'.

[104] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 206.

[105] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 99.

on, and that they acted in support of John without any leadership.[106] This is a rather tenuous assumption given the nature of the crowd in this period (and again, considering the complexity of the theological arguments). It is highly likely that the crowd of people who became involved—on both sides of the dispute—were acting under some form of leadership, impromptu as it may have been. Their knowledge of the actual machinations of the controversy would have been limited. It is far more realistic that the sources reporting on these events attributed their own knowledge and motives to the crowd, a fact that Gregory acknowledges in a separate footnote.[107] Without dismissing the religiosity of a substantial portion of the populace, Bell also questions how much the views of theologians should be ascribed to the common people.[108] He notes that the extant ecclesiastical sources are often extremely polemical, lacking in many important details not directly related to the theological argumentation at hand, and aimed at achieving victory over theological opponents rather than recording historical facts.[109] The views of these Christian historians should not be seen to reflect lower or under-class resentments or sentiments at all.

Gregory also argues that during Late Antiquity, people identified first and foremost as Christians, and only then as Romans or Egyptians, or as citizens of Constantinople or Alexandria.[110] Yet in the fifth century when these disputes were at their most venomous, the empire was certainly not Christian in its entirety, nor did regional allegiances always count for less. Indeed, for travellers who were regularly away from home, ethnicity may have been seen as a more distinctive marker than religious belief. There were many men and women, particularly in the early fifth century, who did not identify as Christian at all.[111] The prominent role played by church leaders in this period meant that the everyday lives of non-Christians were

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[106] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 54-5. Gregory's view is based on the versions of John's exile contained in the histories of Palladius, Socrates and Sozomen.
[107] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 55, n. 85.
[108] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 124-5 and 181. Bell asks how much of the theology many of the bishops of the time understood, let alone the common people.
[109] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 121.
[110] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 222-3.
[111] Refer to Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of religious belief during this period. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 9-11 cautions that if modern historians based their information solely on Late Antique ecclesiastical accounts, they would remain completely unaware of the fact that paganism was alive and well in the major cities of this period. These major cities are where most of the religious disputes of the time were centred.

impacted by their policies and activities; the choice of a patriarch or bishop—and his philosophy and policies—was not irrelevant to someone simply because they did not believe in the same god or attend Christian services. The ecclesiastical historians might suggest that the motives of the crowd were always for or against the religious policy of a given church leader, but the situation was more complex than that. A preacher like John Chrysostom, for example, was supported (and hated) by Christians and non-Christians alike. For many, the choice to support him was directly related to his social and economic reforms and policies. Gregory notes that John had many supporters in the lower classes and enemies in the upper classes, but refers to this as an 'accident' of his preaching and self-discipline:

> … because he was outspoken in his criticism of the rich and powerful, he earned the enmity of many of them, while others, including most of the poor, were attracted by his eloquence and ascetism.[112]

This was no accident. Those living on or below the breadline would have supported the leader who seemed to have their best interests at heart; unless, of course, they were paid handsomely to do otherwise.

Many of those living in poverty in large urban centres would have been attracted by John Chrysostom's charitable activities.[113] So too would many of the mobile members of society; migrants, merchants, travellers and strangers who came to the big cities either temporarily, or in the hope of finding employment and better living conditions.[114] For the men and women of the lower classes, the choice to support John against his detractors would have been heavily influenced by his efforts to improve their social and economic lot. He seems to have had some support from all levels of society, and Gregory believes this proves that none of his supporters were motivated by social or economic concerns. Yet Gregory notes that John could regularly rely on the support of pagans, Jews and heretics in Constantinople.[115] This

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[112] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 67 and 204.
[113] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 218.
[114] Palladius, *Dialogus*, 5 (*PG* 47.20) provides an example of John Chrysostom's charitable activities extending to strangers. He says that John re-distributed church funds to hospitals, some of which expressly provided care for visitors to Constantinople.
[115] Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 67-8.

fact alone demonstrates that many of John's supporters were motivated by things other than his religious attitudes and policies. It would be incorrect to see religious motives as the sole reason for everyone's involvement in the civic unrest surrounding religious controversies.

As MacMullen highlights, protests were initiated over a range of issues and concerns, but the most common of these was hunger.[116] In a society where many were living in dire poverty, the lower and under-classes would have often supported the party or person most invested in alleviating their hunger and overall misery. In many instances, itinerant sailors and merchants would have empathised with the lower classes in urban centres. In other circumstances, mariners may have been part of the problem. In the mid fifth century, after the deposition of the patriarch Dioscorus and the appointment of his successor Proterius in Alexandria, there was widespread rioting and unrest. The unrest may well have started over the competing popularity of the old and new patriarch; however, once the people had been deprived of grain, spectacles and access to the baths, all rioting ceased. The religious nature of the dispute—if, to the people, the nature of the dispute had ever been purely religious—was forgotten, and the people petitioned officials to have the distribution of grain and their entertainments restored.[117] Sailors may have acted on both sides of this dispute. On the one hand, the support of the grain fleet was necessary in holding back supplies of grain, but on the other, mariners would have been just as upset as local residents at the lack of food and entertainment in the city. One thing that this episode shows clearly is that the secular concerns of the people could override religious ones. Personal salvation would have been an issue of extreme importance to many men and women in this period. However, to locals and transients of the lower and under-classes, the promise of food for survival, and the assurance of entertainment to alleviate the hardships of everyday life, would usually have trumped any religious or theological concerns.

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[116] MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, 179-80. Bell, *Social Conflict*, 58-63 (amongst others) also highlights the 'rising inequality and oppression' that existed alongside the 'spectacular wealth of the upper classes' during Late Antiquity. Bell says that to ignore this gap between the classes, or to consider it irrelevant in disputes and riots, is to 'lose our grip on the dynamics of the society'. Indeed, any increase in social tension would naturally have increased the potential for conflict of any sort.

[117] Evagrius, *Ecc. Hist.* 2.5 (Bidez and Parmentier, 50-1). English trans. in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, 76-7. For Gregory's discussion of these events, see *Vox Populi*, 183-7.

Mariners, the Factions, and an Active Social and Political Network

As we have already seen in the story of Jacob, the sea-merchant of the *Doctrina Jacobi*, mariners travelling from port to port were able to engage in factional confrontations and other disturbances that they encountered onshore. They were also able to assimilate seamlessly into partisan groups. In the case of Jacob, we read that he did not even have to go far from port to encounter trouble—he participated in brawls at the Harbour of Julian and the markets in Constantinople, alongside the guild of sail-makers in Rhodes, and in skirmishes at a number of the other ports into which he sailed.[118] There are other reported instances of factional violence in port or dockside areas that mariners like Jacob would have contributed to, including in the city of Constantinople. One of these is an incident recorded by Malalas in the sixth century where faction members crossed over from the northern shore of the Golden Horn to clash with their counterparts on the opposite shoreline. Malalas reports that dockyard workers joined in the affray, and warehouses and other dockside buildings were destroyed as a result.[119] Another incident that demonstrates how merchants were able to integrate into factional groups occurred during the early stages of the infamous Nika Riot. One of the injustices chanted by the crowd was that a timber merchant had been murdered in the Zeugma region, one of the northern port areas of Constantinople.[120] The fact that the factions chose to protest the death of a merchant as part of this major insurrection strongly suggests

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[118] *Doctrina Jacobi* 1.40-1 and 5.20 (Dagron and Déroche, 128-31 and 214-9). 1.41: 'Ἀπεκρίθη Ἰσαάκιος καὶ εἶπεν ... Ἐπεί, ταλαίπωρε καὶ ἄθλιε Ἰάκωβε, οὐ γινώσκω τί ἐποίησας εἰς τὰ Μακέλλου καὶ εἰς τὸν Ἰουλιανοῦ λιμένα ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει τοῖς Χριστιανοῖς, καὶ εἰς Πύλας καὶ πέραω εἰς τὰ Πύθια καὶ εἰς Κύζικον καὶ εἰς τὸν Χάρακα καὶ εἰς Αἰγέας καὶ εἰς Πτολεμαΐδα πόσους ἀπώλεσας Χριστιανούς …' and 5.20: 'Καὶ ἐν Ῥόδῳ τῇ πόλει ὡς πράσινος μετὰ τῶν ἁρμενορράφων κακὰ ἐποίει τοῖς ἀπὸ Ἀνατολῆς φεύγουσιν βενέτοις: καὶ παρεδίδου αὐτοὺς τοῖς ἁρμενορράφοις ὡς ἀνθρώπους τοῦ Βονόσου καὶ ἐβακλίζοντο.' Also see Bell, *Social Conflict*, 146-7 and Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 228-9.

[119] Malalas, *Chron*. 18.135 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 300).

[120] Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 6024 (de Boor, 183). English trans. in Mango and Scott, 278: 'δέσποτα Ἰουστινιανὲ, αὐτοὶ παρακαλοῦσιν, καὶ οὐδεὶς αὐτοὺς φονεύει. νοήσει ὁ θέλων, τὸν ξυλοπώλην, τὸν εἰς τὸ Ζεῦγμα, τίς ἐφόνευσεν, αὐτοκράτωρ'. Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople*, 215-6 notes that timber was regularly stored outside the city gates at the Zeugma region where the merchant was murdered. This was on the shoreline next to one of the most important piers on the southern shore of the Golden Horn. Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 86-7 notes that the Zeugma shoreline was a popular spot for murders. This was perhaps due to its importance as a merchant thoroughfare.

that this man (and other merchants trading in Constantinople) was involved with the factions and their partisans in some way.

The terminology used by contemporary sources for the young men who became involved in violent demonstrations and clashes is often ambiguous. It can be difficult to determine who became embroiled in violence alongside circus partisans and monks, or who indeed these partisans and monks were. In the example of Jacob, most sources reporting on the confrontations in which he took part would not have specifically mentioned his presence or the presence of other travelling sea-merchants or sailors. To these elite reporters, Jacob and his cronies were just more partisans and troublemakers in the mob. That those of the lower and under-classes, the rootless and itinerant, outsiders, and the socially excluded were all welcomed into the factional supporter groups seems clear.[121] The extant sources also prove that there were sailors and other mariners who were members or supporters of the factions. Malalas records that, in the late fifth century, the prefect Julian punished faction members whom he knew to be involved in murders, robberies and assaults, both at land and sea.[122] There were clearly men involved with the factions who were engaging in piracy.[123] These factional pirates were the concern of the city prefect and, as such, must have been operating close to the coastline in the waters leading to and from Constantinople (much like Isaac and his band of pirates near Alexandria). Procopius also narrates a story that demonstrates that men were committing acts of piracy within the confined waters of the city of Constantinople itself. He reports that young faction members patrolling the waters of the Golden Horn abducted a woman from her husband's side as the couple sailed by.[124]

David Álvarez Jiménez notices a link between maritime piracy and the factions. However, he sees pirates and bandits as largely separate to faction members, even

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[121] Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 204-5 and 225-33; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 150; Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 210.

[122] John Malalas, *fr.* 168, 51, in *Excerpta Historica iussi Imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti. Vol. 3: Excerpta de Insidiis*, ed. C. De Boor (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903), 176. English trans. in Jeffreys et al., 18.151, 305-6: 'ἐξαιρέτως τοῖς τοῦ πρασίνου μέρους, πικρῶς ἐπὶ μῆνας ι' καὶ προσκαίων καὶ κοντεύων καὶ ἀποτέμνων καὶ παρὰ μέλη ποιῶν αὐτούς, εὑρίσκων αὐτοὺς φονεῖς ὄντας καὶ ἐφόδους εἰς ὁδοὺς καὶ ἁρπαγὰς τολμῶντας καὶ λῃστείας καὶ πειρατείας, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐναρμοσάμενος αὐτοῖς, ὡς ἐχρῆν.'

[123] Malalas calls them 'πειρατείας'.

[124] Procop., *Anec.* 7.37-8 (Dewing, 88-9).

if their criminal activities sometimes overlapped.[125] He views faction members or partisans who engaged in piracy as non-mariners who simply took their terrestrial banditry offshore—highway or street robbers who tried their luck on the seas, as it were. One of the main reasons Álvarez Jiménez sees piracy as only a minor criminal activity for such men is because success as a pirate relied on 'preparation, navigation skills, and resources, ships or boats and a secure landing place'.[126] This is true, yet it entirely assumes that there were no faction members who already had navigation skills, knowledge of ports and coastlines, and access to sailing resources. There is, in fact, no reason why a merchant or sailor could not also be part of the factions. Circus partisans and faction members may certainly have become sailors when they were in need of work, but it was probably more common for sailors and merchants to become embroiled in the activities of the factions than vice versa. Sailors and sea-traders were prime targets for recruitment into partisan groups. It should be no surprise that many of the same young men who were drawn to the seas in this period were also attracted to the disorderly and mutinous behaviour of the factions. Indeed, it should be expected.

An interesting source suggesting that men of the factions were involved in maritime activities is a series of epigrams dedicated to a prominent charioteer. Two epigrams demonstrate that members of the Green faction were involved in protecting Constantinople against Vitalian when he rebelled in the early sixth century.[127] The battle for Constantinople was fought at sea, and although other historians think that faction members were simply stationed at the city walls, one of the epigrams suggests that this was not necessarily the case.[128] Porphyrius the charioteer is praised for joining the fighting at sea (καὶ σὺ συναιχμάζων ἥψαο ναυμαχίης·).[129]

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[125] D. Álvarez Jiménez, 'The Fanatic is a Fan in a Madhouse: Urban Piracy and the Roman Circus', in *New Perspectives on Late Antiquity in the Eastern Roman Empire*, eds. A. de Francisco Heredero, D. Hernández de la Fuente and S. Torres Prieto (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 332-45. For his conclusion that the factions and pirates/bandits were separate entities despite the overlap in their criminal activities, see page 345.

[126] Álvarez Jiménez, *Fanatic is a Fan*, 338.

[127] *Anth. Gr.* 15.50 (Paton, 5.154-5) and *Anth. Gr.* 16.350 (Paton, 5.368-9). For further discussion of these epigrams, see Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 107 and Main, *Mob Politics*, 27-8.

[128] Main, *Mob Politics*, 27-8 and Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 107-8. Both Main and Cameron refer to additional sources that mention factional members being utilised to man the city walls when Constantinople was under attack. These episodes include Maurice's defence of the city in 601 against Avar attack, and again in 602 when the usurper, Phocas, attacked Constantinople).

[129] *Anth. Gr.* 15.50 (Paton, 5.154-5).

Other members of the Green faction also participated in the same conflict, and thus it is unlikely that the charioteer was the only one who was involved in naval combat.[130] Although Robert Main's hypothesis that the emperor would only have used skilled citizens in the navy is sensible, it is unsubstantiated.[131] In another episode, John of Nikiu reports that the general Marinus procured a great number of ships to face Vitalian, and collected together as many soldiers as he could find in Constantinople at the time to man them.[132] It is unrealistic to suggest that all of these recruits were skilled sailors or even trained soldiers.

In similar circumstances, one of Heraclius' generals needed to gather an army of men to defend Alexandria against the forces of Phocas in the early seventh century. His recruits included citizens of Alexandria, members of the Green faction, and sailors.[133] Some of the recruits presumably belonged to more than one of these categories. John of Nikiu also reports that a number of Alexandrian grain ships were seized by Phocas once they had reached Constantinople, and that prefects were ordered to prepare them for use in battle.[134] The captured grain ships would not have been completely abandoned by their crews, and thus some of the sailors from these vessels would also have been instructed to fight, if necessary. Once Heraclius had been proclaimed emperor, the inhabitants of Constantinople, members of the Greens, and sailors assembled their ships and pursued the Blue supporters of Phocas, who were escaping by water.[135]

There was clearly a mix of Blues, Greens, mariners and non-mariners involved in these skirmishes at sea. When Heraclius sailed towards Constantinople from Africa he had amongst his sailing companions many members and supporters of the Green faction. John of Nikiu relates that Heraclius stopped at various islands and ports along his way, adding to his crew with more Greens from each of these areas.[136] The inhabitants of coastal ports and harbours also provided Heraclius with much-

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[130] *Anth. Gr.* 16.350 (Paton, 5.368-9).
[131] Main, *Mob Politics*, 27-8.
[132] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 89.81 (trans. Charles, 131).
[133] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 107.46 (trans. Charles, 172).
[134] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 109.29 (trans. Charles, 176-7).
[135] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 110.3 (trans. Charles, 177).
[136] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 109.25 (trans. Charles, 176).

needed provisions and possibly more ships for his fleet.[137] He clearly had substantial support from many of the inhabitants, shipowners, merchants and sailors in these port cities and towns. The stories of the execution of Phocas by Heraclius also demonstrate the importance of the maritime (and factional) contingent in Heraclius' campaign and victory. Details of Phocas' capture and death vary amongst the sources, but most agree that he was paraded through the Harbour of Julian and displayed to those on Heraclius' fleet of ships.[138] John of Nikiu's version of Phocas' demise does differ from other accounts; however, the historian still states that, once Heraclius had been proclaimed by the people, fighting broke out on the shore, with the 'men of the chariots' (presumably circus faction members) killing the general Bonosus.[139] Regardless, the cheers from Heraclius' supporters on the vessels in the harbour would no doubt have been heard throughout all of Constantinople.

When Heraclius sailed through the Mediterranean, recruiting supporters at various ports along the way, the future emperor was taking advantage of the social and political network that enabled the Green faction to operate on an empire-wide scale. Of course, the Green faction was not alone in having such a network; each of the factions had their own network or networks that they utilised to maintain factional cohesion over a wide-ranging area.[140] Several scholars have highlighted the

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[137] Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 43.

[138] For the version of events in *Chronicon Paschale*, see *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 13, year 8 (Dindorf, 1.700). English trans. in Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale,* 151-2: 'Φῶτις ὁ κουράτωρ τῶν Πλακιδίας καὶ Πρόβος ὁ πατρίκιος ἐπῆραν Φωκᾶν ἐκ τοῦ Ἀρχαγγέλου τοῦ παλατίου ὁλόγυμνον, καὶ ἀπήγαγον διὰ τοῦ λιμένος ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τῶν Σοφίας, καὶ βαλόντες αὐτὸν εἰς κάραβον ἔδειξαν τοῖς πλοίοις. καὶ τότε ἀποφέρουσιν αὐτὸν πρὸς Ἡράκλειον ...'. Also see Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 49-50 for other versions of these events. Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 284-5 says that the *Chronicon Paschale* does not mention the role of the Greens in Heraclius' victory, and that this should be taken as a sign that the factions did not feature as heavily as other sources would suggest. However, this claim is tenuous. The author of the *Chronicon Paschale* does provide less detail of the event than other historians, yet this is simply due to the nature of his chronicle and its genre. Regardless, the *Chronicon Paschale* does suggest the involvement of circus faction members when it later describes the execution of figures involved with the circus groups and the Hippodrome. See *Chron. Pasch.*, Indiction 13, year 8 (Dindorf, 1.701): '… Λεόντις ὁ Σύρος ὁ ἀπὸ σακελλαρίων, καὶ ἔτι ἐμπνέοντες αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν αὐτῷ τις μετὰ ξύλου κατὰ τὴν Χαλκῆν τοῦ Ἱππικοῦ, καὶ τότε ἀπέθανεν, καὶ ἐπήρθη ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὕτως ἀπενεχθέντων τῶν σκηνωμάτων αὐτοῦ καὶ Φωκᾶ εἰς τὸν Βοῦν, καὶ αὐτὰ κατεκαίθη. ὁμοίως δὲ ἐκαύθη εἰς τὸν Βοῦν καὶ ὁ μαππάρις καὶ ὁ ταξεώτης τοῖ ἐπάρχου τῆς πόλεως, ὁ ἐπιλεγόμενος ἀπὸ Δαιμονιαρίων.'

[139] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 110.1-3 (trans. Charles, 177).

[140] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 138 emphasises that factional networks stretched across the entire eastern and western regions.

solidarity that existed between faction members and groups in a range of locations around the Mediterranean region. Liebeschuetz notes that:

> a cause taken up by members of a faction in one city had a good chance of being taken up by members of the same faction in all the others, and riots in one city could easily spread to all the cities of the East.[141]

There was clearly effective and active communication between faction members throughout the entire eastern Mediterranean region during this period.

There are several other documented episodes where a protest by faction members in one city was continued in another; demonstrating that communication between faction members was certainly not hindered by distance. Procopius provides one example where partisans of the Blues in Tarsus protested against a local official in the mid sixth century. A prominent patron of the Blues in Tarsus was murdered as a result. When news of this reached the capital, members of the Blues in Constantinople quickly took up the cause, creating a disturbance on behalf of their Blue counterparts in Cilicia.[142] Malalas also records events where members of the Blue faction rioted concurrently in cities throughout the East during Justin I's reign. The punishment meted out to the people as a result included the restriction of theatrical entertainments and dancers in every city.[143] No doubt this ban served as both penalty and warning against further violence, and aimed to discourage protests from being taken up in solidarity with (or imitation of) fellow faction members in other cities. Knowledge of these protests and disturbances—and the punishments meted out for them—were promptly carried from city to city by sailors, merchants and other travellers along the very effective Late Antique maritime communication network.

Factional identity was important to a range of people in the eastern empire. Bell states that the mere fact of identifying with one of the faction groups provided many 'with rituals and loyalties they could carry from Constantinople to Antioch or

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[141] Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 216.
[142] Procop., *Anec.* 29.29-34 (Dewing, 342-5).
[143] Malalas, *Chron.* 17.12 (trans. Jeffreys et al., 235-6). Spectacles were not banned in Alexandria, probably because this would only have served to create further protests in the Egyptian city.

Alexandria, and which could also cut across conflicting religious (or class) identities'.[144] The Christian author of the *Doctrina Jacobi* was writing in the genre of anti-Jewish polemic and, as such, he attributes religious motivations to Jacob for his involvement with the factions. He suggests that Jacob changed his factional allegiance depending on the circumstances in each of the ports he visited.[145] At the same time, it is clear that many of the riots and scuffles in which Jacob participated were not religiously motivated for others at all. On several occasions, Jacob clearly pretends that he is not Jewish in order to hide his general anti-Christian sentiments.[146] Jacob may have changed his factional loyalty at the drop of a hat, but most men—including sailors and merchants—would have remained aligned to the one colour. Mariners and other travellers who supported one or other of the colours would have carried their allegiance with them when they sailed to and from port. Since the circus factions were empire-wide institutions, mariners could simply pick up with the partisans of their chosen colour at each new port of call.

It was not only violent or unruly mariners who aligned themselves with the factions. Each of the faction groups had links to wealthy patrons, and their supporter base came from all levels of society.[147] Many men fanned the flames of unrest without themselves becoming physically involved in demonstrations. As noted earlier, scholars like Patlagean and Bell have highlighted the similarities between the factions and the Church during this period. One of the ways they were alike was in how their supporter bases came from a broad range of social classes, ethnicities

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[144] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 156 and 151.

[145] *Doctrina Jacobi* 1.40-1 and 5.20 (Dagron and Déroche, 128-31 and 214-9); Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 230; Bell, *Social Conflict*, 146-7.

[146] For example, in *Doctrina Jacobi* 1.40 (Dagron and Déroche, 128-31): '… Καὶ ὅτε ἐβασίλευσε Φωκᾶς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, ὡς πρασίνους παρεδίδουν τοῖς βενέτοις τοὺς Χριστιανούς, καὶ Ἰουδαίους καὶ μαμζίρους ἀπεκάλουν. Καὶ ὅτε οἱ πράσινοι ἐπὶ Κρουκίου ἔκαυσαν τὴν Μέσην καὶ εἶχαν τὴν κακήν, ὡς βένετος, φησι, πάλιν ἐκύλλωνα τοὺς Χριστιανούς, ὡς πρασίνους ὑβρίζων καὶ καυσοπολίτας ἀποκαλῶν καὶ Μανιχαίους.'

[147] See Bell, *Social Conflict*, 155-60 and Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall*, 277. Other historians have noticed that influential patrons of the circus factions (including emperors) enabled them to operate as empire-wide, organised crime networks. See Main, *Mob Politics*, 16 and Whitby, *Violence of the Circus Factions*, 244-5. I would suggest that sections of the Church could also be seen as akin to organised crime networks in this period. Leading patrons of the Church and some of the more influential church leaders themselves were able to rally supporters, and they used violence and intimidation to achieve their ends; much as in a modern organised crime network. Sadly, this fascinating thread requires a separate and lengthy discussion and will need to be pursued in a separate paper.

and groups.[148] The wealthy and influential patrons who supported these institutions helped to keep them afloat, and enabled them to become the powerful organisations that they were. Although the shipowners and masters of the Alexandrian grain fleet are not overtly linked to the factions by our primary sources, the support provided by them to Church leaders has all the hallmarks of factional advocacy and its accompanying strong-arm tactics. The fact that Heraclius was provided with ships and other necessary provisions along his voyage from Carthage to Constantinople also suggests that there were shipowners, shipmasters and shopkeepers who were willing to aid his cause and align themselves with the Green faction. These supporters probably included men of the Carthaginian grain fleet. John of Nikiu's reference to Phocas' seizing of Alexandrian grain ships, and his subsequent plan to use them and their crews in battle, further suggests the willingness of those in the Alexandrian fleet to become involved in political and factional disturbances.[149] It is not always clear as to whose side they were on, but maritime men were definitely willing to get involved in a range of political, social and religious matters.

The maintenance and provision of an active, effective, and supportive communications network was perhaps the most important role that the maritime community performed for institutions such as the Church, the factions, and political groups like those involved in the rebellion of Heraclius. Just as Christianity and the overall doctrine of the Church was carried far and wide on ships by sailors and other travellers, so too were the convictions and ideologies of other religious, political, and social supporter groups.[150] The maritime community was responsible for the everyday running and facilitation of overlapping regional and long-distance maritime networks that were utilised by so many individuals and groups. Such extensive maritime networks had far more than just commercial significance. Maritime society had a significant role in the global success of all of these institutions and groups.[151]

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[148] Bell, *Social Conflict*, 134-5 and 156; Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 208-11; Main, *Mob Politics*, 7-8.

[149] John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 109.29 (trans. Charles, 176-7).

[150] Refer to Chapter 4 for further discussion of the role of the maritime community in the spread and maintenance of religious beliefs and traditions.

[151] In regards to the role of maritime networks in the global success of the Church and Christianity, see Dark, *Globalizing Late Antiquity*, 3-14. For the Indian Ocean region, see R. Tomber, 'Bishops and Traders: The Role of Christianity in the Indian Ocean during the Roman Period' in *Natural Resources and Cultural Connections of the Red Sea: Proceedings of the Red Sea Project 3*, eds. J.C.M. Starkey, P. Starkey and T. Wilkinson (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 219-28.

Athanasius, in the fourth century, certainly knew what he was doing when he urged the maritime community to publish his message everywhere in order that the entire empire would hear it.[152] The extensive maritime communication network was clearly the fastest and most effective way to spread a message, ideology, protest or a call to action.[153]

Summary

The mobile elements of society, including sailors and merchants, helped to maintain an atmosphere of general tension and unrest in Late Antique urban centres. There is a variety of evidence for their participation in protests and demonstrations during this period. In particular, sailors often acted as strong-arm support for church leaders during episodes of religious unrest. When onshore, many mariners frequented the types of leisure and entertainment venues that acted as hubs of social unrest. It was in the theatres, hippodromes, taverns, baths, brothels and marketplaces that ringleaders went to recruit muscle for their demonstrations and riots. Sailors carried with them a naturally oppositional culture, often empathising with the grievances of the lower classes when they were in port. As such, they were prime targets for recruitment into social, political, and religious riots and other disturbances. Yet it is not always easy to distinguish sailors in the urban crowd, since both ancient and modern historians tend to blame violence and unrest on the circus factions, theatre claques, bands of monks and the ill-defined mob.

As outsiders with little or no ties or obligations, many sailors, sea-merchants and other mobile characters were able to participate in rebellious or subversive behaviour with less apprehension than the permanent inhabitants of the maritime coastal centres they visited. Sailors were often open to bribes and willing to sell their services. Their transitory nature enabled them to perform the types of unsavoury tasks that others were not inclined to do. The motives of sailors and shippers for participating in episodes of unrest, even those surrounding religious controversies,

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[152] Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 81 (*PG* 25.793-4): ‘Ὁρκίζομεν δὲ καὶ τοὺς ναυκλήρους πάντας κηρύξαι ταῦτα πανταχοῦ, καὶ εἰς ἀκοὰς τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου Αὐγούστου ἀνενεγκεῖν, καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἐπάρχους, καὶ εἰς τοὺς κατὰ τόπον δικαστάς …’.

[153] There is still much work to be done in order to appreciate the extensive role played by mariners in the facilitation of social and political communication networks (including their own maritime social networks). This lengthy topic will need to be the subject of a separate research paper.

could be varied. The rebellious nature and fellowship of the circus factions and their supporter groups would have appealed to young men of the sea. The empire-wide popularity of the factions allowed mariners to carry their allegiances with them on their voyages, and to integrate into partisan groups when they arrived in port. Sailors and merchants acted as facilitators of the vast maritime communication networks utilised by factional and other groups. These networks enabled communication over large distances, and mariners carried knowledge of protests and controversies with them from coast to coast. Without them, institutions like the Church and the factions would not have been so powerful, nor would their conflicts and struggles have been so far-reaching, tempestuous and volatile.

Conclusion

It would be difficult to overstate the influence and significance of the maritime community in the Late Antique period. To the Roman and Byzantine empires, and to institutions like the circus factions and the Church, mariners were indispensable. They transported goods, people, letters, laws, information, ideas, beliefs and loyalties throughout the entire Mediterranean and beyond. The large urban populations of Late Antiquity would have been impossible to feed without them. Dignitaries, envoys, letters and information would have been delivered that much slower if only land travel were possible. The dissemination of beliefs, conventions and allegiances would not have been as widespread, nor could protests have spread so quickly from city to city. Communication in general, particularly over large distances, would have been far less effective. In some instances, the crews of ships connected regions that simply could not be connected via land. Indeed, many cities, towns and islands were only connected to the broader world through their harbours and ports. The maritime community was not only important for its role in trade and the economy, it was one of the major connecting forces of Late Antiquity from a social, religious and political perspective.

Contemporaries appreciated the products, services and information carried along maritime networks and shipping routes, but they rarely acknowledged the significant role played by members of the maritime community in facilitating such a widespread phenomenon. The impression we are given by many of the sources is of scattered individual merchants and small random groups of sailors. Yet the sailors, captains, merchants and shipowners who facilitated maritime trade, travel and communication were not inconsequential characters. They played a larger part in Late Antique society than many of our sources suggest, and their presence and cultural influence have for too long been overlooked. There was a human element to maritime trading networks that has to date been largely ignored; but the men and women of the maritime community were a mix of fascinating and diverse individuals, well worthy of their own study. We may not know many of them by name, but we catch glimpses of their activities at sea and in port, in marketplaces and leisure establishments, and

in protests and riots on shore. A distinct maritime cultural milieu existed throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, and its influence was widespread.

Constantinople was at the centre of the eastern Roman world. It was an imperial, ecclesiastical and administrative capital, but it was also a large and active maritime entrepôt. To gain an understanding of everyday life in Constantinople, one needs to acknowledge its maritime atmosphere and the social dynamics that inevitably came hand-in-hand with an influx of maritime traders and commerce. Elite culture played its part in Constantinople, but the lower-class and maritime elements determined the overall rhythm and quality of life for the majority of its inhabitants. The everyday social and commercial interactions that occurred in such a city are an important part of its character and history. In the East, Constantinople's cultural influence was only truly rivalled by Alexandria, another maritime metropolis. Mediterranean maritime culture emanated from these great entrepôts, and its influence could be felt throughout the Roman world. This cultural influence can be seen in the transfer of maritime symbolism and imagery from Classical to Early Medieval and Byzantine times. The Mediterranean Sea was a traditional part of the Roman identity, but Constantinople's maritime aspect ensured that it played an even greater role in eastern Roman identity and thought.

Despite the Roman penchant for maritime imagery, the men and women of the maritime realm were largely seen as outsiders and relegated to the fringes of society. Contemporary depictions of mariners and those who fraternised with them were largely unfavourable. Roman attitudes to traders had always been negative, but the evidence does confirm that members of maritime society were frequently involved in anti-social behaviour. As such, their dishonest and rowdy reputations were sometimes well-deserved. The sea and seafarers traditionally elicited strong and emotional responses from contemporary writers; yet cultural attitudes and emotional reactions to mariners and their ilk should not be discounted. They help us to determine the prominent place of maritime sub-culture in broader society. A group with little influence or impact would certainly not have evoked such vehement reactions. Contemporaries may have attempted to ignore the maritime community; however, the lucrative and extensive nature of seaborne trade guaranteed the presence of mariners and maritime culture in coastal cities throughout the empire.

One of the overriding presumptions regarding sailors and merchants, particularly in the eastern empire, is that they were predominantly Christian by the early stages of Late Antiquity. The men of the Alexandrian grain fleet have also dominated the extant sources, leaving the lasting impression that Egyptian Christians monopolised maritime trading activities in this period. Yet not all sailors and merchants were Egyptian or Christian, and a perusal of a broader range of sources shows that mariners were a culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse group. Egyptians and Syrians may have provided 'the nominal foundation or character'[1] of the overall maritime community, but there were also others who were heavily involved in seaborne trade. Ships, ports and coastal communities were cosmopolitan environments where culture, religion and ideas were shared. The elite attempted to segregate religious groups but, in reality, the everyday commercial and social interactions between ordinary men and women continued on regardless.

Many mariners carried Christian convictions with them on their voyages, but others were responsible for the retention of a range of non-Christian beliefs and rituals. Jewish sailors and merchants maintained an important role in maritime trade throughout this period. There is also evidence of the worship of Graeco-Roman deities and the practice of maritime cults well into the late sixth century; much later than has traditionally been assumed. Natural bodies of water—including the sea—continued to be viewed with fear and reverence and, as such, remained places of cultic activity for Christians and non-Christians alike. Various maritime deities continued to be revered, and female deities like Isis and Athena appear to have had a special bond with sailors and merchants. The celebration of sailing and other festivals dedicated to these goddesses continued throughout Late Antiquity. The manufacture and use of steelyard weights in the likeness of the goddess Athena strongly suggests that this popular deity maintained her place on merchant ships and in marketplaces in the fifth to seventh century period; including in the eastern capital, where her statue oversaw a range of commercial transactions and daily interactions.

[1] Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 396.

Many traditional maritime customs were Christianised during this period, and the allegiance of many sailors was transferred almost seamlessly from Graeco-Roman seafaring deities to maritime saints. Mary became a protector of sailors and merchants, and eventually replaced other maritime goddesses like Isis on the decks of eastern Roman ships. Yet Mary's worship in maritime contexts did not negate the powers of other Graeco-Roman deities for centuries. Christian and non-Christian rituals and beliefs were able to co-exist in maritime and commercial contexts—on ships, in ports and in the marketplaces of trading cities and towns. On ships at sea, mariners continued to call upon any number of gods to ensure their personal safety, with little fear of punishment or disapproval. Scholars have acknowledged that sailors and merchants played a role in the spread of Christianity along shipping routes and maritime networks. Yet mariners also preserved Graeco-Roman traditions and beliefs along these same networks, helping to maintain an atmosphere of cultural and religious vibrancy throughout Late Antiquity.

Members of the maritime community were an integral part of the lower-class leisure industry that thrived in port cities and harbour towns. With prostitution and women at its core, maritime leisure culture was an important aspect of everyday life, particularly in large urban centres like Constantinople and Alexandria. As Libanius reminds us, such maritime cities were inevitably 'full of nautical vulgarity, base clamour, ribald cries and all the rest which can defile and destroy the morals of towns'.[2] Maritime and lower-class leisure culture is important because it is more representative of everyday life in trading centres than the elite culture of which we are most aware. Contemporary writers may have said little about lower-class culture and prostitution, but they were a huge part of the overall character of maritime entrepôts like Constantinople and Alexandria. The leisure establishments around which this culture revolved were places of entertainment, but they also acted as hubs of social discontent and urban unrest. Riots and disturbances were often initiated in venues such as hippodromes, theatres, public baths and taverns. It is in these leisure establishments that sailors and merchants would have been recruited into many local disputes and protests.

[2] Libanius, *Or.* 11.37-8 (Foerster, 448-9). English trans. in Norman, *Antioch as a Centre*, 14.

The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates that the existence of a thriving maritime and lower-class leisure culture added to the overall atmosphere of tension in urban centres during Late Antiquity. As is evidenced by the men of the Alexandrian grain fleet and the Jewish protagonist of the *Doctrina Jacobi*, sailors and merchants often acted as mercenaries, and were willing to become involved in a range of protests and brawls when they were on shore. As transients and outsiders, they were the perfect recruits for any uprising or unpleasant deed. Their presence, and willingness to participate in episodes of unrest, would only have added fuel to the fires of Late Antiquity. Sailors and merchants carried these tensions and conflicts with them when they sailed to and from ports, and thus enabled protests to spread quickly from city to city.

Scholars have not previously considered that mariners may have participated in the activities of the circus factions and their partisans. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that the men of the maritime community became embroiled in factional violence and criminality, including piracy. At the very least, the maritime community was responsible for enabling active and effective communications between factional groups on an empire-wide scale. Maritime networks were used by political figures, faction and church leaders alike, and mariners played a significant role in the success of social, political and religious institutions. Ideology and unrest were carried alongside goods on ships destined for ports, both near and far. The maritime community facilitated extensive, empire-wide networks of communication during Late Antiquity, without which the eastern Roman empire would not have survived.

The men and women of maritime society have been anonymous for too long. The sea held a significant place in the hearts and minds of those living in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. The mariners who traversed those seas may not have been held in favourable regard, but they had a considerable impact on everyday life, culture, religion, politics and the economy during this period. Sailors and sea-merchants were the lifeblood of the Late Antique world. Without sailors and merchants manning the ships that transported food, people, ideas and information into urban centres like Constantinople, the eastern empire could not have developed into the extensive and powerful force that it came to be.

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