

failure. It was not until 1752 that the first European was known with certainty to have landed on the east coast in modern times. Peder Olsen Walloe, a trader in Greenland, passed by Kap Farvel from west to east in an umiak — an indigenous boat — and managed to travel 60 km (32nm) up the east coast. There his progress was thwarted by ice and an inhospitable shore. The farthest point he reached was named “Kap Walloe” in his honour.

In the spring of 1822, William Scorsby Jr., a young whaling captain, sailed from Liverpool in command of the arctic whaler *Baffin*. The coast of East Greenland was sighted on 8 June in latitude 74 06 N, the first recorded sighting in 150 years. Drifting southerly, he was finally able to land on 24 July. The following day, in a “spacious” inlet, he met his father, the master of the whaler *Fame* that had entered the inlet the day before. Scorsby Jr. named the inlet “Scorsby Sound,” for his father.

Fridtjof Nansen and five companions who made the first crossing of the Greenland ice cap in 1888 commenced their epic journey from a sealing vessel using two rowing boats set on the ice just south of Ammassalik on 17 July 1888. They drifted for twelve days before reaching open water along the coast at about latitude 61 35 N. A further twelve days, under oars, were spent seeking a landing with a practical route onto the ice cap. This they found at Colberger Heide at latitude 64 04 N, on 10 August. The following day they began their ascent of the inland ice, reaching the west coast of Greenland in the latter part of September, the first to do so.

The latter two-thirds of this book are devoted to East Greenland from the time of Danish pre-eminence in 1883. Included are public and private expeditions, jurisdictional disputes with Norway, experiences of early aviation, military

operations by Allied and Axis forces to establish meteorological stations during the Second World War, post war air defence installations, and the “compulsory civilization” that followed the introduction of civil aviation into East Greenland.

Each operation was full of the experiences demanding of body and mind that are particular to polar regions, and are here illuminated in the words of the men and women that lived the experience of “Lands that hold one Spellbound.”

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Ayşe Devrim Atauz. *Eight Thousand Years of Maltese Maritime History. Trade, Piracy, and Naval Warfare in the Central Mediterranean.* Gainseville, FL: University Press of Florida, www.upf.com, 2008. xvi + 379 pp., illustrations, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$69.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8130-3179-9.

With this book, Ayşe Devrim Atauz has filled a vacuum that has long been empty while giving Malta’s maritime history an international perspective. Her work represents the first attempt to present a globalized history of Maltese maritime activity that stretches from pre-historic times to 1800, when Malta *de facto* became part of the British Empire. Until now, Maltese maritime history had been treated disjointedly either through the production of highly researched monographs which focused on one particular maritime aspect or period or else via sporadic references in the numerous articles and books that are published about Malta both locally and abroad. Despite the evidence of a serious interest in Malta’s maritime past, there has never been an attempt to create a general historical monograph. For this reason, the

author should be congratulated for attempting a holistic account of Maltese maritime history.

To achieve her goal, Atauz tapped into two different streams of research; her archaeological studies which relied on empirical discoveries, and secondary historical sources comprising numerous historical monographs. Unfortunately, her underwater archaeological research yielded few encouraging results since it focussed on only some of Malta's harbours. She interpreted this to mean that Malta was not as important a maritime base as was hitherto believed. Moreover, Atauz largely avoided primary source material in favour of secondary sources, which admittedly is not normal for this type of general work. Given the author's Turkish nationality, one would have expected her to turn to Turkish-language publications relevant to Maltese maritime history. Malta has quite an extensive historical literature that is published in Turkey, all of which is beyond the reach of most English readers.

Atauz' research allowed her to build tables containing chronicles of maritime events which can help the reader better understand Malta's historical trail as well as the island's role in the maritime history of the central Mediterranean. This is a point of great relevance and innovation in this work but the author should also be praised for her interpretation of the facts that emerge from her research.

In recent years, Maltese maritime history has tended to focus more heavily on the Hospitaller period (1530-1798), often ignoring the rest. Atauz seeks to reconstruct a balanced account of Malta's role by taking the innovative approach of giving equal importance to the prehistoric and classical eras, as well as the Middle Ages. Her reading and interpretation of Maltese maritime history from the High Middle

Ages until the arrival of the British is completely different from the one the Maltese public is accustomed to encountering in their local history books. Atauz is quite conscious of this fact and attributes it to a certain bias by local historians toward their island's history. Again, I would have expected the author to have made more use of Ottoman sources, in particular for the period of the Knights of Saint John. Current studies of this period by both local scholars (such as Victor Mallia Milanes) and foreign scholars (such as Molly Greene) point to a different conclusion than Atauz reaches. It is true that the Knights of Malta had a small fleet but their raids in the Levant were still such an irritant to the Ottoman Empire that the Knights caused several international crises during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Atauz considers the High Middle Ages as Malta's golden age of maritime history. She bases this on modern demographic studies which indicate a population expansion in Europe from the thirteenth century onwards followed by a heavy drop in the fourteenth century. Unfortunately, due to the scarcity of documentation for this period, it is definitely premature to consider Malta as a major maritime power. This hypothesis needs to be further studied and tested against better demographic evidence. Furthermore, before accepting such a definition, one needs to explain why Malta failed to possess an important arsenal at this period. Maritime importance and the existence of a good arsenal go hand in hand. I cannot imagine a nation claiming to be a maritime power without an arsenal.

Malta's history under the Knights of Saint John has been treated in extensive detail. Although focussed on the struggle between the cross and the crescent, Malta

experienced other developments during the period which deserve more detailed attention. For example, a local boat-building industry developed for the construction of fishing boats as well as cross-channel transportation. The book also lacks comprehensive references to the many Maltese merchant ships which fell victim to Muslim corsairs. Atrocities were not only committed by the Maltese corsairs; they were a feature of the universal law present in the Mediterranean at the time.

Atauz dismisses Malta as an important maritime power during early modern times, basing her conclusion on her underwater archaeological research. She claims that Malta's wrecks are less important, both in terms of quantity and quality, than those found in the Aegean and off the Turkish coast and argues that if Malta had been an important maritime power, as many have claimed until recently, there would have been more maritime wrecks.

In my opinion, this conclusion has a number of drawbacks. First of all, the author's underwater archaeological research did not include the Grand Harbour, Malta's main harbour. Failing to study this area leads to a strongly biased argument. In fact, archaeologically, one cannot compare Malta with the eastern Mediterranean - these were two different maritime realities. Firstly, there has been continuous dredging in the Grand Harbour and the surrounding areas for centuries. Secondly, Maltese sailors tended to sail smaller vessels, so that the only wrecks one would expect to find in Malta are those of small boats, rather than large vessels. Malta would not have many wrecks around its coast. I am astonished that some are still being found.

Why then are there are so many wrecks along the Turkish coast, the Aegean, or the Italian coast? This is due to the

popularity of the system known in French as *cabotage* or coastal sailing. It was a way of protecting a ship, particularly if sailing next to a friendly territory since one would not expect to be attacked by pirates or corsairs. It also allowed sailors to pull into a coastal community to trade their goods along the route. Thirdly, it was safer, since travelling alongside a recognisable coast did not require the use of maritime instruments. Coastal sailing, however, had one big disadvantage: it increased the risk of shipwreck. A strong, adverse current or bad navigation could bring the ship onto rocks or cause it to overturn. The presence of so many wrecks in the Eastern Mediterranean and Italy can surely attest that the *cabotage* system was being practised. Perhaps, the extensive number of wrecks implied by Atauz to have been present along Turkish coast can be an indication of the weakness of Turkish navy personnel. It is a known fact that during the modern period, naval operations were being relinquished by the Ottoman Empire to French seafarers or else their Greek subjects. The Ottoman establishment was experiencing difficulties.

The same argument cannot be made for Malta. Although Malta was on the route of the *cabotage* trade, as has been explained by Daniel Panzac in his book *La Caravane Maritime*, ships sailing to the island had only one destination, the Grand Harbour. Big ships did not do any coastal trading around Malta as it was too small to permit such a system. Thus, any serious conclusions based on maritime archaeological evidence have to be focused on the Grand Harbour to carry any weight. The rest of the coast was only sailed by small fishing boats.

On the other hand, measures and systems introduced by the Knights of St. John to increase the maritime importance of

Malta seem to point in a different direction from Atauz. In fact, Malta's importance increased greatly after the Middle Ages. Although Atauz argues that Malta was an important base for piracy in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, I am strongly convinced that Malta was not a haven for corsairing or piracy at that time and no more than an occasional base.

It was only during the early modern period, in particular from the end of the sixteenth century, that the name Malta became synonymous with corsairing. The island became famous for this type of activity, and such fame confirms its maritime importance. In the published material of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Malta is mostly mentioned in reference to the Hospitaller fleet. Their activity was so prevalent that it succeeds, in terms of propaganda, to obfuscate a new order that was set up to undertake a similar mission dedicated to St. Stephen in the Duchy of Pisa.

Finally, the book would have been more complete if the British period, which Atauz has rightly considered to be very important for Malta's maritime history, had been treated more comprehensively than the superficial three-page coverage it received.

By basing the book primarily on published sources, Atauz ran the risk of reproducing and repeating errors to be found in the original publications. One such case is her reference to the presumed census undertaken during the Arab period. This census never existed and is the result of the forgeries of Abbe Vella. Unfortunately, these documents continue to trap local and foreign historians. This is not the sole historical mistake that results from the use of secondary sources. Certain historical facts reproduced from local amateur historians leave much to be desired. The author should have paid more attention

to verifying historical dates.

Nevertheless, one congratulates Atauz for challenging historical stereotypes and for producing a solid synthesis. It is the first maritime work which features a good database of maritime events for a small island nation at the centre of the Mediterranean which has eight thousand years of maritime history.

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~~Merrill L. Bartlett and Jack Sweetman. *Leathernecks. An Illustrated History of the United States Marine Corps.* Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, www.navalinstitute.org, 2008. xx + 479 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$60.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-59114-020-7.~~

~~There are many published histories of the United States Marine Corps, including several illustrated histories. This new illustrated history of the United States Marine Corps brings the Corps's history up to date, ending with a final chapter that perceptively analyzes the Corps's spectrum of contributions to the war on terror, from peacekeeping operations in Africa to pitched battles in Iraq and Afghanistan. The battles and counter-insurgency operations are discussed candidly and accurately, no small feat in the middle of on-going operations. The authors' treatment of the two battles for Fallujah merit particular attention. This highly readable narrative is combined with many unpublished and perhaps unknown visuals of every description, including black/white photographs, numerous maps, and full color paintings. It contains a wealth of Marine Corps combat art, most of it rarely seen by the public. There is no doubt that this book will be popular with Marines and those who~~