SHIPS, SAINTS AND SEALORE:
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE RED SEA

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Ghost ships are some of the spookiest tales throughout history. When we look back throughout seafaring, we’ll find tale upon tale of these mysterious ships. But what you might not know is that ghost ship actually has two different meanings: the ghost ship that you might imagine, a spectral image seen at sea, a misty ship that appears from the fog that you’re not quite sure whether or not you’ve seen but that brings with it a sense of deep fear and forboding, as well as, the ghost ship of doomed vessels like the Mary Celeste. Ships that are abandoned at sea, or that are found simply floating without a crew. Maritime Rituals and Beliefs Sea-related rituals and religious practices in various forms throughout the Red Sea and Mediterranean with papers which will relate to specific deities and saints that enjoy a special place in the everyday life of people of the sea. Maritime Traditions and Historical Narratives Some of the most valuable information from the maritime world originates from travelers who note the peculiarities of those that live and work at sea in documents such as diaries and letters. Papers delivered in the course of this session will be aimed at drawing out information. These iconography are rich in maritime detail. This paper tells the tale of a sailor on a Russian steamship who fell overboard and the perils experienced by the crew of a pilot boat while escorting a ship into Malta’s harbour. Key words: Ex-voto, painting, steamship, pilot boat, Malta, peril at sea. Introduction 1 In this paper, I will discuss the many facets of life at sea depicted in two nineteenth-century Maltese iconographies that are found in a small church belonging to the Karmelitani Skalzi (Discalced Carmelites) in Bormla (Cospicua), Malta. (Figs.)