

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM
UNDER THE SULTANS

BY THE LATE

F. W. HASLUCK, M.A.

*Formerly Fellow of King's College
Cambridge; Librarian of the British
School at Athens*

EDITED BY

MARGARET M. HASLUCK

B.A. (CANTAB.), M.A. (ABDN.)

*Wilson Travelling Fellow in
Aberdeen University, 1921-3*

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SAINTS AND DEMONS OF THE SEA

IT is, indeed, very natural that simple persons should assume that the sudden mishaps of a seafaring life are occasioned by local sea-demons.¹ The apparent vindictiveness of wind and wave, with their at times almost animal voices, makes these demons intensely concrete conceptions. They are conceived of as human, bestial, or monstrous in form, and of course hostile to man; their cult, if any, is deprecation. To this substratum of 'black' superstition may be added the 'white' conception of a divine force acting beneficently on man's behalf against the perils of the sea; this beneficent action is invoked through an intermediary who is apt ultimately to usurp the placatory cult formerly offered to the demon, as also, like all such intermediaries, to be considered largely independent of the supreme power. Such is the process of transition from the placation of a local sea danger personified to the invocation of a local sea-saint.

We have thus the following typical forms :

- (1) the local sea-demon,
- (2) the local sea-hero or sea-saint.

The latter becomes in favourable circumstances :

- (3) a widely potent or even universal sea-saint.

In modern times we have at least two instances of Greek sailors' belief in sea-demons of this sort, conceived of as inhabiting dangerous parts of the coast, and of a cult of deprecation directed to them. Sibthorp² in

¹ For demons causing the winds see Maury, *Croy. du Moyen Âge*, p. 105.

² In Walpole, *Memoirs*, p. 286 : ' We weighed anchor in the port of Cephalonia. As our sailors rowed by Cape Capro, they made libations of bread, using the following words.' See also Polites, *Παραδόσεις*,

the latter years of the eighteenth century transcribed the prayer directed by his sailors with an offering of biscuit to the eponymous demon of Cape Kapro near Cephalonia. The emended text is as follows :

Γειά σου, Κάπο Κάπρο	<i>Greeting, Cape Kapro, to you,</i>
μέ την Καποκάπραινά σου	<i>And to Mrs. Cape Kapro</i>
καὶ μέ τὰ Καποκαπρόπουλά σου.	<i>And the little Cape Kapro's.</i>
Νὰ Κάπρο, νὰ Κάπραινα,	<i>Here's for you, Kapro and Mrs. Ka-</i>
	<i>pro,</i>
νὰ τὰ Καποκαπρόπουλα.	<i>Here's for you little Cape Kapro's.</i>
Φάτε τὸ παξιμάδι	<i>Eat up the biscuit,</i>
ἐσεῖς ψάρια μελανούρια.	<i>You melanouria fish.¹</i>

A similar cult was observed by von Hahn at Cape Linguetta in Albania. Here, according to his sailors, dwelt a marine she-demon named Linguetta, to whom ships passing her abode offered a handful of salt with the invocation 'Here's your bread, Linguetta, and send us (fair) voyage.'² Similarly, in classical times we may regard Scylla as the typical example of a sea-demon.

1209 ; *ib.* (biscuit to Cape Volpo, *cf. Z. f. Anthropol.*, p. 215) ; see note on no. 558 for all such practices.

¹ The *melanouria*, as actual inhabitants of the water, accept the offering, apparently as proxies for the Cape Kapro family.

² *Alban. Studien*, i, 131 f. ; *cf. Polites, Παράδοσεις*, no. 558 and *note*. Bread is thrown into the sea at Gaza (Baldensperger, in *P.E.F.*, Q.S. for 1893, p. 216) ; food is sent by Arab sailors ashore for Hasan el Merabet on an island in the Red Sea (Burckhardt, *Arabia*, ii, 347) ; bread is thrown into the Nile at Bibbeh at a saint's tomb (Bussierre, *Lettres*, ii, 57). The relatives of Sheikh Selim (for whom see Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters from Egypt*, pp. 45, 304) on the Nile have to be tipped before dahabieh's can get under way (King, *Dr. Liddon's Tour*, p. 75). In rough weather Moorish pilgrims invoked a saint, hung a basket of bread for him to the masthead, threw a bottle of oil and a basket of *couscous* into the sea, and tied a written charm to the masthead (Pococke, *Voyages*, iv, 213). On S. Andrew's day at Sinope cakes of wheat, sugar, and flour are baked, consecrated in S. Andrew's church, and part eaten by the fishermen who subscribed the money for the cakes. Part, however, is kept and carried to sea in the boats ; when the sea is rough, crumbs are sprinkled on the waves with an appeal to S. Andrew for protection (White, in *Mosl. World*, 1919, p. 15).

Scylla, as her name implies, was originally conceived of as a dog (or a 'sea-dog' or shark = *κύων*?) and bears traces of her origin in her later art-types.¹ The 'dog-mounds' (*κυνόσσημα*) of the Hellespont, later connected with Hecuba,² and that on the modern Cape Volpo³ in Caria, probably celebrated similar demons.

For the development of a demon-cult to a corresponding saint-cult an important link is furnished by travellers' accounts of the Turkish cult of Baba at Lectum. Turkish saint-cults are much less trammelled by ecclesiastical tradition than Christian,⁴ and consequently show more clearly the rude natural conception of such a cult. The first notice, then, of the Lectum cult dates from about 1550. It comes to us from the monk Pachomios Rousanos, who was shocked to find that Christian sailors took part in the placation of the 'demon'. His words are as follows:

'As we sailed by Lectum, a promontory of Troy, I saw and heard the sailors preparing food for a demon who once dwelt or still dwells there, called in the Turkish or the Arabick *Para*. And they prepared for him of their own victuals, breaking bread

¹ Roscher, *s.v.*; Pauly-Wissowa, *s.v.* For a dog-headed sea-monster on a clay seal see Evans in *J.H.S.* xxxii, 291.

² The connexion is evidently made through the dog-goddess Hekate (*Ἑκάτη*), of whom Hecuba (*Ἑκάβη*) is a by-form (*cf.* Pauly-Wissowa, *s.v.* *Hekabe*, p. 2660). *Cf.* Strabo, XIII, i, 28.

³ Polites, *op. cit.* ii, 1209. *Cf.* Strabo, XIV, ii, 15. The locality is still dreaded: *cf.* the Symi folk-song in Michaelides, *Καρπ. "Αισματα*, no. 10:

*Πανερμιώτη Συμιακέ
Καὶ Ἄγία Σοφιά τῆς Μπόλις,
Κι Ἄτ' Δημήτρι Βούργαρε,
ἀπὸ τὸ Σαλονίκι.*

*S. Michael of Panormos on Symi,
And S. Sophia of Stambol,
And Bulgar S. Demetrius
From Salonica.*

Ex-votos from ships in danger find their way automatically to S. Michael's church there, as Professor R. M. Dawkins, to whom I owe the translation of the difficult *Πανερμιώτη*, informs me; *cf.* a similar story told of a church of S. George in Egypt (Amélineau, *Contes de l'Égypte Chrétienne*, ii, 240).

⁴ See above, p. 255.

in a plate and setting thereon cheese and onion . . . which also they cast into the sea calling on him after the Gentile manner. Howbeit I gave them no countenance, but upbraided them for their superstition.’¹

From the notes of later travellers it is clear that the ‘demon’ invoked in passing the dangerous cape was for devout Moslems a perfectly legitimate recipient of worship, ‘Papa’ being merely the title ‘Baba,’ given familiarly to old men and often, with no lack of respect, to popular Turkish saints.

The passages relating to the ‘Baba’ of Lectum are of sufficient interest to be given in full. Des Hayes² says of him :

‘Les Turcs appellent [le Cap de Sainte Marie] Bababournou, qui en leur langue signifie *Le nez du pere*, à cause que . . . l’un des six-vingts quatre mille Prophetes, dont i’ay parlé au discours de la Religiō,³ y est enterré : c’est pourquoy tous les Turcs qui y passent, iettent à son intention plusieurs morceaux de biscuit à des oyseaux, qui demeurent continuellement aux enuirons.’

Le Bruyn,⁴ some fifty years later, gives substantially the same account :

‘Il y a à ce *Bababarnouë* un de leurs Saints qui y est enterré ; on le nomme *Baba*, qui signifie Pere. Les Barques y jettent toujours quelque morceau de pain : mais les Plongeurs, qui y sont en grande quantité, en emportent la meilleure partie.’

Egmont,⁵ in the next century, adds some details as to the traditional personality of the saint, called by him

‘a dervise or *Baba*, who always gave the Turks intelligence when any rovers were in the neighbouring seas. This cape is very dangerous, on account of sudden squalls from the mountains. In passing by it with a fair wind, the Turks, out of respect to the memory of the above saint, throw pieces of bread into the sea,

¹ Published by Polites in *Δελτίον Ἱστορ. Ἐταιρείας*, i, 108 ; cf. the same author’s *Παραδόσεις* ii, 1208.

² *Voyage*, p. 340.

³ P. 257.

⁴ *Voyage*, i, 510.

⁵ Egmont and Heymann, *Travels* (1759), i, 162 f. ; cf. also Galland’s *Journal*, ed. Schefer, ii, 158, where the tomb of the Baba is mentioned.

tho' they see them immediately carried away by a species of sea-fowl common in these parts : and the more devout among them add to this offering a prayer, for the happiness of his soul.'

We have here exactly the ritual of the demon-cults down to the peculiarity, already observed at Cape Kap-ro, that the offering is actually accepted, not by the saint himself, but by his *famuli* or protégés, in this case birds. But the saint is conceived of as a person who, in his lifetime, acted in the interest of mariners and continued his beneficence after death.

Whether the *Baba* of Lectum ever existed or not is immaterial. Hermits with special powers over the weather (and this, not the signalling of pirates, was undoubtedly the function of the *Baba*) have certainly been reputed and placated elsewhere. In Morocco, for instance (and from North Africa much sea-lore and superstition must have come to the Turks, who are themselves no seamen), Teonge, in the seventeenth century, records that 'on the top of Apes' hill lives a Marabott wizord or Inchanter ; and what vessell soever of the Turks goes by, gives him a gun as shee goes, to beg a fortunate voyage.'¹ Evliya mentions a somewhat similar sailors' saint, Durmish Dede of Akkerman, buried at Rumeli Hisar on the Bosphorus, who foretold the fortunes of mariners on their way to the Black Sea in the reign of Ahmed I.² A prophet of this sort is supposed

¹ *Diary* (1675), p. 33 ; cf. p. 141 : 'It hath been very tempestuous all night, and so continues. Wee may suppose their Marabotts are a woork to drive us from their coasts ; but *God* is above the Devill. Pierre Gonçalez, a Dominican friar of the thirteenth century at Tuy in Galicia, is the patron of Spanish sailors, being invoked as S. Elmo (Collin de Plancy, *Dict. des Reliques*, ii, 436-7).

² *Travels*, I, ii, 70 ; cf. 27 ; cf. Hammer-Hellert, *Hist. Emp. Ott.* xviii, 85. Durmish Dede is still placated with offerings by seamen though his personality is entirely changed. He is now represented as a dervish of the period of the Turkish conquest, who miraculously crossed the Bosphorus on foot and established himself (*durmak* = 'stop, remain') at the spot now occupied by the (Khalveti) convent bearing

to influence the luck as well as to foretell it. The late Professor van Millingen once told me that in his father's time a dervish on the Bosphorus was regularly consulted by Black Sea sailors and was credited with power over the wind.¹

The sea-demon and the local sea-saint are propitiated for the same reason, viz. for security in passing dangerous points in a voyage, but in a different sense, the demon, being 'black' or hostile, producing the danger, the saint, as a rule 'white' or beneficent, averting it.

The cult both of demons and of saints owes its existence, or its interpretation in a marine sense, to the notorious dangers of their locality. Consequently, we find their sanctuaries located at such critical points on sea-routes as promontories,² where violent winds might be expected, localities affected by currents³ and dangerous shoal waters;⁴ it is the permanent and (locally) fixed nature of these phenomena which tends to perpetuate a cult of some kind at such points. The exact site of the local sanctuary may therefore vary, but within a radius limited by the area affected by the natural phenomena which necessitate supernatural help. So long as these exist, there is apt to be a cult, but the personality of the *numen* is liable to a complete change. The cult at Lectum was in all probability directed in ancient times to Palamedes, the sailors' god to whom the invention of lighthouses was attributed, and whose sanctuaries are always found on littoral sites.⁵ In the case of Lectum the Palamedeion was some miles north of the grave of the *Baba*. In the Middle Ages we may

his name. Cf. the cult of Barbarossa (Khair-ed-din) (see above, p. 279). and of the ancient Protesilaos (Philostratos, *Her.* 291, Herodotus, vii, 33).

¹ Cf. King, *Dr. Liddon's Tour*, p. 75, and Duff Gordon, *Letters from Egypt*, pp. 45, 304.

² e.g. at Lectum, Thracian Chersonnese, Malea, Taenarum.

³ e.g. Hellespont, Bosphorus.

⁴ e.g. Black Sea.

⁵ See Roscher's *Lexikon*, s.v. *Palamedes*, especially pp. 1271-2.

infer from the name 'Cape S. Mary' that a chapel of the Virgin¹ existed on Lectum and that she was invoked by sailors as the *Baba* was later. The three persons are wholly different in conception, but succeed one another as sailors' intercessors largely on account of the position of their sanctuaries.²

Further, the placation of a local sea-demon and the invocation of a local sea-saint and universal sea-god are logical. The local demon, like the local saint, is locally potent, the universal sea-god is potent over the whole area. The evolution of a universal sea-saint needs explanation.

In the case of the Turks, who look on Noah as the patron of shipping,³ and propitiate him before undertaking a voyage,⁴ the choice is perfectly logical.⁵ But S. Nicolas, who has actually attained in the Eastern

¹ D'Arvieux, *Mémoires*, ii, 315, comments on the invocation of the Virgin of Mount Carmel by Turks, Moors, and Arabs. Lucius (*Anfänge des Heiligenk.*, p. 522) says the *stella Mariae* idea dates from Isidore of Sculli and that till then her connexion with the sea was incidental only.

² Some sort of parallel is given by the succession of seamen's saints on the Bosphorus (Zeus Ourios, S. Michael, Durmish Dede), on the Hellespont (Protesilaus (?) and Hecuba, S. Euthymius of Madytos, Ghazi Fazil), and on Malea, where Moslem influence never penetrated (Apollo, S. George (Orthodox), and S. Michael (Catholic)); cf. *B.S.A.* xiv, 173. [A marginal note of my husband's on the MSS. says 'this gives a wrong impression'. The warning was presumably directed against using such a sequence of saints to support theories about the permanence of the sanctity of a once sacred spot. In general, his investigations had led him to question most cases of alleged permanent sanctity. In the present case he would probably have wished to emphasize once more the changes in the personality, even in the sex, of the successive saints, the variation in actual site of the sanctuaries, and the point that the permanent factor was not sanctity, but danger, at the places in question.—M. M. H.]

³ He was the patron of sailors' guilds at Constantinople, as of the shipwrights' (Evllya, *Travels*, I, ii, 128, 129, 135).

⁴ Cf. Seaman's *Orchan*, pp. 71-2, where the Turks before their first crossing to Europe invoke Noah; Evllya, *Travels*, I, i, 63. His name is a protection against snake-bite, because poisonous beasts laid aside their venom as a condition of entering the ark (J. H. Petermann,

church the position of Poseidon, was a bishop; S. Phocas,⁶ who preceded him, was a gardener; S. Spyridon, who enjoys great local vogue in the Adriatic, again a bishop; while S. Paul, who travelled by sea more than any saint, has, on the contrary, no honour among Greek sailors on that account. It seems thus probable that two main causes determine the maritime importance of particular saints. First, the chief saint of a seafaring population tends to become a specialist; ⁷ second, a saint, whatever his character, who possesses a church on a notoriously dangerous piece of coast, becomes the natural person to invoke against the local perils of that coast, exactly as the local demon. If, in the one case, the local seafaring *clientèle* is numerous and important, or if, in the other, the coast is sufficiently frequented, its local sea-saint may, by the widespread fame of his miracles, obtain a wider reputation. The first cause seems to account for S. Phocas' vogue,⁸ the second for

Reisen im Orient, ii, 303). For the pretty legend of Noah and the swallow in the ark see Comtesse de Gasparin, *A Constantinople*, pp. 189 ff.

⁵ So, too, with Jonah. Moslems hold that he was thrown up by the sea at the village of Gie on the Syrian coast and they never fail 'de demander permission au Prophete de passer devant chez lui' (D'Arvieux, *Mémoires*, ii, 329). A Cherbourg sailor prayed to him at Fécamp for much the same reason (Collin de Plancy, *Dict. des Reliques*, iii, 237), though he thought of him as a great sailor changed into a fish. A mound at Nineveh marks where he preached; Moslems think also that his tomb is there and jealously exclude Christians, whom, however, they allow to join in the three days' fast they observe in honour of the prophet (Hume Griffith, *Behind the Veil in Persia*, p. 174). Another reputed grave of Jonah is in Galilee and is equally difficult of access for Christians (Le Bruyn, *Voyage*, p. 318).

⁶ For food thrown to him see Lucius, *op. cit.*, p. 294, n. 3.

⁷ A curious case is given in Polites, *Παραδόσεις*, no. 205; at Spetsa, an island whose inhabitants are largely seamen by profession, S. Aimilianos, who has a chapel at the entrance to the harbour, is regularly placated by seamen leaving the port, though not usually a sea-saint. Similarly, S. Edmund became a fisherman's saint because east coast fishermen liked him (Hutton, *English Saints*, pp. 138 ff.).

⁸ As in classical times for that of Isis at Alexandria.

S. Nicolas',¹ whose original church lay on the Karamanian coast and was passed regularly by the two streams of Christian pilgrim traffic (from Constantinople and Venice) towards the Holy Land. Among the Turks the sea-saint of this class remains local. The characteristic sea-saints at Lectum and the Hieron (Durmish Dede) were in their lifetime given to the service of seafarers. On the other hand, Ghazi Ahmed Fazil of the Hellespont, whose grave was formerly saluted by Turkish ships, like the 'Marabott' of Teonge and doubtless with the same purpose, had,² as his name implies, no connexion with the sea till the position of his grave decided for him.

We have still to consider a secondary class of gods and saints who acquired the general reverence of seafarers in virtue of their patronage of travellers and a special attribute, that of sudden help. This phase is represented in the ancient world by Hermes the luck-bringer, in the Orthodox area by S. George, and in the Moslem by Khidr. Hermes and S. George³ alike give their names to many capes in the Greek area.⁴

¹ Interesting is the cult of S. Nicolas *in undis* (Molanus, *Hist. Imaginum*, p. 390). In France S. Nicolas is now patron of fresh water only (Paul Guérin, *Vie des Saints*, Dec. 6; Peyre, *Nîmes, Arles, Orange*, p. 209).

² Walpole in Clarke's *Travels*, iii, 82.

³ For S. George see Covell, *Diaries*, p. 277 (at Selymbria); Pouqueville, *Travels in the Morea*, p. 322 (at Prinkipo); Macarius, *Travels*, tr. Belfour, i, 12 (Virgin, S. Nicolas, S. Simeon the wonder-worker, S. George the rider on sea and land, S. Demetrius at sea, are the saints invoked by travellers; cf. the list in Grünemberg, *Pilgerfahrt*, ed. Goldfriedrich, p. 134, which includes S. Catherine of Sinai, S. Nicolas of Beyrut, S. Mary Magdalene of Marseilles, and S. James of Galicia); cf. Amélineau, *Contes de l'Égypte Chrétienne*, ii, 210, 240 (in Egypt); Boucher, *Bouquet Sacré*, p. 428 (a Georgian refuses to commit the sacrilege of embarking the evening before or the day after S. George's feast); Le Bruyn, *Voyage*, p. 177 (vows in general at sea); Miller *Latins in the Levant*, p. 621 (Skyros).

⁴ [The chapter could not be completed. M.M.H.].