

VIAGGIO DEL MAGNIFICO MESSE PIERO QVIRINO

GENTILHOMO VINITIANO.

Nel quale partito di Candia con Maluagie per ponente l'anno 1431. incorre in uno horribile & spauentofo naufragio, del quale alla fine con diuersi accidenti campato, arriva nella Noruegia & Suetia Regni Settentrionali.



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dell'anima che sopra gli altri animanti il nostro Signor Dio pe
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deli. del qual officio anchor che tutti ne siano debitori, pur quelli si deono
maggiormente, i quali nelle immense aduersità loro, doue hauean bisogno
taneo, sono stati soccorsi & liberati per l'infinita bontà & misericordia sua.
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furono le aduersità & infortunij che mi soprauenero per il corso & d
lubil rota di fortuna, l'officio della quale (come habbiamo per lunga es
far in vn momento il sublime, & per il contrario l'infimo & basso in
quelli che pongono in essa ogni sua speranza. Per tanto non è da ta
mente son debitor di dichiarare i miracolosi soccorsi che'l nostro pi
na persona, & d'altri dieci che fummo

INSIGHTS INTO THE SOURCES FOR PIETRO QUERINI'S JOURNEY

TEXTS, INTERPRETATIONS,
AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by Stefano Agnoletto



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Detail from G.B. Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*,

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INTRODUCTION

Stefano Agnoletto

Chairman of the Scientific Committee

of the International Cultural Association Via Querinissima

This volume inaugurates a new series of scholarly e-books produced by the Scientific Committee of the Via Querinissima International Cultural Association, founded in 2022. At the heart of this initiative is the cultural itinerary known as the *Via Querinissima*, which retraces and commemorates the extraordinary journey of the Venetian nobleman Pietro Querini and his crew between 1431 and 1433. His route traversed much of Europe, linking Greece, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy.

More than just a historical route, the *Via Querinissima* aspires to be a living bridge between Southern and Northern Europe, promoting intercultural dialogue, hospitality, and shared cultural heritage – values that emerge vividly from Querini's adventure.

The *Via Querinissima* project, and the international association that manages it, encompasses multiple fields of action: sustainable tourism, educational and school-based activities, valorization of local tangible and intangible cultural heritage, exchange and cooperation projects, as well as cultural events and productions. At the same time, the project aims to function as a cultural hub, which is why it operates through an International Scientific Committee composed of scholars from various countries and disciplinary backgrounds.

THE PIETRO QUERINI'S JOURNEY¹

Pietro Querini was a merchant and nobleman from a prominent Venetian family that held a feudal domain on the island of Candia (modern-day Crete). His expedition began on 25 April 1431, when he departed from

¹ An extensive body of literature – both academic and popular – has developed around the story of Pietro Querini. A selected bibliography can be found at the following link:
www.viaquerinissima.net/_files/ugd/6f751a_6b01730053cd431a8da76d794d568c6d.pdf.

Candia aboard his ship, laden with luxury goods – Malvasia wine, olive oil, raisins, cotton, and other valuable merchandise – destined for Flanders, then a thriving commercial center.

The voyage quickly turned into a dramatic ordeal. A broken rudder, adverse weather conditions, and repeated emergency stops in Cadiz, Lisbon, and Muros marked the early stages of the journey. Eventually, the crew sailed into the Atlantic, but in November 1431, a violent storm drove the vessel toward the Isles of Scilly. In desperation, the crew abandoned ship, dividing into two lifeboats. One boat, with 21 men aboard, was lost. The other, carrying 47 survivors, including Querini, drifted beyond the Arctic Circle. Of these, 26 died from hunger, cold, and dehydration.

On 6 January 1432, the remaining survivors reached the island of Sandøy in Norway's Lofoten archipelago. After several days of exposure, they were rescued by local fishermen and brought to the nearby island of Røst. The islanders received them with great generosity, offering food, shelter, and care. Querini documented in detail the community's way of life and their practice of preserving cod – unsalted cod dried in the open air (the stockfish).

After 100 days on Røst, the survivors began their journey back to Venice. Querini's itinerary included stops in Trondheim, Vadstena, London, Lodose, Basel, and finally Venice, where he arrived on January 25, 1433. Some of the survivors, including Cristoforo Fioravante and Nicolò de Michiel, did not accompany Querini to London but traveled through present-day Germany and Austria to return directly to Venice.

According to tradition, Querini “discovered” stockfish and became a foundational figure in its trade between the Lofoten Islands and Venice. The claim that Querini was indeed the first to introduce stockfish into the Italian culinary tradition is today the subject of considerable debate within historiographical scholarship.

In this e-book, Richard Holt's article offers a different interpretation of that legacy. While the historiographical debate remains open, the symbolic importance attributed to Querini by the tradition remains a compelling subject for reflection. The notion that the origin of a dish now

embedded in Italian culinary tradition was born of an unexpected yet positive encounter between two distant and previously unfamiliar cultures is, in itself, noteworthy.

The cultural weight of Querini's legacy is also illustrated by the *Globe of Fra Mauro*, dating to around 1450. This masterpiece is considered one of the most valuable cartographic testaments of the late medieval world and is often described as the last map to represent a pre-modern world-view. The *Globe*, currently housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, includes a reference to Querini's shipwreck at the heart of Norway. Fra Mauro's writings offer one of the earliest European cultural and geographic depictions of the Arctic, shaping his rendering of vast northern territories such as Grolandia, Islant, Fillandia, and Permia, even beyond the North Pole. Querini's experience helped Fra Mauro imagine a frozen and expansive world, blending medieval perceptions with new geographic understanding.

As an association, *Via Querinissima* aims to continue supporting research on these topics, welcoming contributions from all scholars who wish to explore Querini-related themes.

Querini's odyssey is not merely a tale of survival; it marks a foundational moment of cultural exchange between the Mediterranean and Northern Europe – an unexpected window into the Arctic and the North.

Through this e-book series, we seek to provide a platform for further reflection on these themes, offering both scholars and curious readers the tools to explore the significance of *Via Querinissima*.

THE SOURCES

This first e-book in our series is dedicated to the primary sources that recount Querini's journey. The dramatic events experienced by Querini and his crew are preserved in two key manuscripts.

The first is a narrative attributed to the Florentine Antonio di Matteo di Corrado de' Cardini, written in 1433 based on oral testimonies by crew members Cristoforo Fioravante and Nicolò de Michiel. Although the original manuscript is lost, a 1480 copy by Antonio Vitturi is preserved in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice (ms. It. VII 368 [7936]).

The second manuscript is attributed to Querini himself. Two versions exist – one housed in the Vatican Apostolic Library and another, incomplete, held in the Biblioteca Marciana. While it remains uncertain whether these are Querini's own writings, scholars agree that both date from no later than the 16th century. In this e-book, Dr. Daniela Di Pinto offers an in-depth investigation into the origins of the Vatican manuscript.

In 1559, both Querini's and Cardini's accounts were printed for the first time in *Navigazioni e Viaggi* by Giovan Battista Ramusio, although his edited versions differ significantly from the manuscripts in the Vatican and Marciana libraries. The question of which version – Ramusio's or the earlier manuscripts – more accurately reflects the original testimonies remains a topic of scholarly debate. In this volume, curated by Dr. Adam Westwood, we present the first contemporary English translations of the two narratives as published by Ramusio.

Querini's story has inspired many adaptations and translations over the centuries. Manuscript-based editions include Claire Judde de Larivière's 2005 French version,² Paolo Nelli's 2007 modern Italian adaptation,³ Angela Pluda's 2019 literal Italian translation,⁴ and Alberto Quarapelle's full English translation published in *Terrae Incognitae* (2025).⁵ Translations from Ramusio's edition include a 1613 German version by Hieronymus Megiser⁶ and a 1625 English summary in Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus*.⁷ Other translations followed in Danish⁸ (1763),

2 Pietro Querini, Nicolò de Michiele, and Cristofalo Fioravante, *Naufrages. textes traduits du venitien et postface par Claire Judde de Larivière*, (Anacharsis, Toulouse, 2005).

3 Pietro Querini, Nicolò de Michiele, and Cristofalo Fioravante, *Il naufragio della Querina: Veneziani nel circolo polare artico*, edited by Paolo Nelli, afterword by Claire Judde de Larivière, 2nd ed. (Nutrimenti mare, Roma, 2018).

4 «*Infelice e sventurata coca Querina*», *i racconti originali del naufragio dei Veneziani nei mari del Nord*, edited and annotated by Angela Pluda (Viella, Roma, 2019).

5 Alberto Quarapelle, "The Shipwreck of the Venetian Pietro Querino at the Lofoten Islands (Norway) in 1432", *Terrae Incognitae*, 57(1), 2025, pp. 5-59.

6 Hieronymus Megiser, *Septentrio Novantiquus, Oder Die neue NortWelt* (Leipzig, 1613).

7 Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (London, 1625).

8 Gerhard Schønning: Beretning om den Venetianske Edelmands Petri Qvirini Skibbrud og Ankomst til Øen Røst i Nordlandene. Ao 1432, in *Det Trondhiemske Selskabs Skrifter*, Vol 2. Kiøbenhavn 1763, 95-157.. Despite the author's Norwegian origin – specifically from the Lofoten Islands – the two texts were translated into Danish, as Steinar Aas discusses in his article featured in this e-book.

Norwegian (1908,⁹ 1991,¹⁰ 2004,¹¹ and 2019¹²), German¹³ (1784), and Italian¹⁴ (1881), with Monica Milanese's 1980 critical edition serving as a modern reference.¹⁵

THIS E-BOOK

As noted, the first part of this volume presents the first contemporary English translations of the two texts published by Ramusio: Querini's and that of Fioravante/Michiel – translated by Dr. Greenwood with explanatory footnotes by Professor Richard Holt.

The second part of the e-book features three scholarly essays offering context and interpretation.

Professor Richard Holt's article, *Putting Querini in His Place: Venetians in the European Trade Networks*, examines Querini's role within 15th-century European commerce, emphasizing the connections between major trade centers such as London, Bruges, and Venice. The article explores maritime practices, regional politics, and the importance of luxury commodities. In its final section, Holt challenges the traditional narrative whereby Querini introduced stockfish to Italian cuisine, raising thought-provoking questions.

Professor Steinar Aas contributes an article titled *The Discovery of Querini's Travel in the Norwegian Public*, tracing the cultural and historiographical reception of Querini's story in Norway. He focuses on the work of Gerhard Schønning and follows the development of public interest in Querini from the 18th to the 20th century. Aas also examines the narrative's role in shaping local and national identity and its increasing relevance in transnational memory.

9 Amund Helland, *Norges land og folk* (1908).

10 Helge Wold, *I paradisetts første krets: om drømmen om ære og rikdom, om et grusomt forlis, om et opphold på Røst i Lofoten 1432: italieneren Pietro Querinis egen beretning i ny oversettelse: med et tillegg om una reise til Røst i vår tid for å lete etter det tapte paradiset*. Trad. (Cappelen, Oslo 1991).

11 Helge Wold, *Querinis reise = Il viaggio di Querini. Historier om en historie*, (2004).

12 *Querinis beretning* (2019), edited by Querininoperaens venne forening, (Røst, 2019).

13 Johann Reinhold Forster, *Geschichte der Entdeckungen und Schiffahrten im Norden* (Frankfurt, 1784), pp. 250-274.

14 Carlo Bullo, *Il viaggio di M. Piero Querini e le relazioni della Repubblica veneta colla Svezia* (Venezia, 1881).

15 Giovan Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, edited by M. Milanese (Torino, 1980), vol. 6.

Dr. Daniela Di Pinto, in her essay *The Travel Diary of Messer Pietro Querini* (Vat. lat. 5256): *Initial Investigations into the Manuscript's History*, reconstructs the codicological history of the Vatican manuscript. Her work examines the document's physical features, content, and historical trajectory. It is the first in-depth analysis of this important source.

By making Ramusio's version of Querini's and his companions' odyssey accessible to a global readership through a modern English translation – and by placing these texts in their historical context with expert commentary and original manuscript studies – we hope to renew interest in this extraordinary, but not well-known, chapter of European cultural history.

This e-book is the first installment in an ambitious project aimed at producing academically sound yet accessible works, reaching beyond a specialist audience. The e-book series represents one aspect of the work of the Scientific Committee of the International Cultural Association Via Querinissima, committed to multidisciplinary research and outreach as part of the Association's broader mission.

We have chosen to begin the series with the sources that have preserved Querini's epic for posterity. These texts were the starting point of the *Via Querinissima* project and remain its foundation. Future volumes will address other dimensions of this rich and vital initiative. The second e-book, scheduled for release in autumn 2025, will present educational and academic projects that have used the story of Pietro Querini as a case study.

PART 1

*Contemporary English Translations of the Two Texts on Pietro Querini's
Story from Giovanni Battista Ramusio's Navigazioni et Viaggi*

THE VOYAGE OF THE MAGNIFICENT MASTER PIER QUIRINO, VENETIAN GENTLEMAN¹:

in which, having departed from Candia headed west with malvasia wine² in the year 1431, he is involved in a grim and frightful shipwreck, after which, having survived various perils, he arrives in Norway and Sweden, northern kingdoms

Translation by Adam Greenwood

Footnotes by Richard Holt

While human weakness naturally inclines us to vain thoughts and reprehensible deeds, nevertheless – partaking as we do in that divine part of the soul which our Lord God, in his singular grace, has given us over and above all the other animated beings – we must exert ourselves with all our strength to praise our benefactor. We must extol his miraculous works and make them known, as a source of devotion for Christians and as an example to the infidel nations. This duty befalls everyone, but some ought to feel themselves especially beholden, namely those who amidst great adversity, in which they required help urgently, were succoured and brought to safety through his infinite goodness and mercy. For this reason, I, Pietro Quirino of Venice, have decided – for the awareness of future generations and for the knowledge of those present – to write and describe, in all truthfulness, the nature and whereabouts of these adversities and misfortunes which befell me in accordance with the course and disposition of the revolving wheel of fortune, whose work, as we know by experience, is to bring down in an instant the sublime and, contrarily, to raise up the low and abject, and all the

1 Translation from the original Italian text: *Viaggio del magnifico messer Piero Quirino gentiluomo vinitiano. Nel quale partito da Candia con Malvasie per ponente l'anno 1431, incorre in uno horribile et spaventoso naufragio, del quale alla fine con diversi accidenti campato, arriva nella Norvegia et Svetia Regni Settentrionali*, in G.B. Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, 1559. The translation has not been entirely consistent with rendering of proper names. Most are left untouched, given in their original form; at the same time, it would seem pedantic not to translate directly names of well-known features such as the Straits of Gibraltar.

2 Rich Mediterranean wine, produced chiefly in Crete, which is often called malmsey in English although that term is more appropriate to the later, similar wines of Madeira.

more those who rest all their hopes in it. This being true, I ought not to remain silent; indeed I am all the more beholden to reveal the miraculous succour that our most merciful Lord God brought to my unworthy person, as well as to the other ten persons who were part of the consortium and company of sixty-eight men.

You must know therefore that, prompted by the desire to acquire a part of that which we worldly creatures are insatiable, namely honour and riches, I set about taking charge of a ship for the voyage to Flanders, on which I planned to place not only my own person, but also my goods and one of my eldest sons. And it pleased our Saviour, whose judgements are immense and profound, to bestow on me, of all the divine gifts and graces I was to receive, the most supreme (although at the time paternal feeling prevented me from knowing): five days before leaving *Candia*,³ where I had loaded the ship, my aforementioned son departed this life. This was an immense sadness to me. It invaded every sinew of my body. I felt alone and bereft of any consolation on such a long journey as the one I had soon to make. Such was my blindness and ignorance that on this account I believed I had been wronged by God.

Following this miserable event, and following great labours on my part despite great bitterness of heart, I departed from Candia on the 25th of April 1431 heading west. We kept close to land most of the way along the Barbary Coast, due to the difficulty posed by the contrary winds, before passing the Straits of Gibraltar. On the 2nd of June, we arrived with our unhappy ship at the town of *Calese*,⁴ in the province of Spain. Here, owing to the incompetence of the pilot, as we neared the mouth of the *San Pietro* river⁵ the ship ran against a rock concealed beneath the water, such that our rudder became dislodged, not without repercussions for the hinges, as was proved by later events. Furthermore the ship was breached in three parts of the keel, taking on great quantities of water, with such fury that the greatest effort was required to keep her

3 The largest city and seaport of Crete, now Heraklion (alternatively Iraklion). Crete was a Venetian possession between 1204 and 1669: Theocaris Detorakis, *History of Crete*, trans. J.C. Davis (Iraklion, 1994), pp. 143-244.

4 Cadiz.

5 San Pedro.

dry. This event, so unexpected, doubled the pain to my grief-stricken heart, although our most clement Lord God did not withhold his grace. Having arrived in Calese on the 3rd of June, we immediately unloaded the damaged ship. Once unloaded, we careened her and in the space of twenty-five days we repaired all the damage, after which we loaded her once more. And because I received word of the war declared between my ducal *signoria* of Venice and the Genoese,⁶ we were obliged to increase the number of my fighting force; thus I enlarged this contingent to a total of sixty-eight persons.⁷ And on the 14th of July I departed, embarking on the next stage of the unfortunate voyage. In order to avoid coming across too many enemy ships, which we were expecting from the west, I chose to keep a good distance from Cape St Vincent, straying somewhat from my course. But the wind known along that coastline as *agione*, which blows off the land from north-east, was exerting its dominance. It would not permit us to regain sight of the coast and I passed forty-five days in the vicinity of the Canary Islands, regions unknown and terrifying to all mariners, especially those from our parts.

Such as are normally the thoughts of worried captains when they find themselves with such a large company in similar situations, places and weather conditions, so you must believe were my own thoughts; all the more seeing our food-supplies diminished day by day, which alone can give relief and sustenance to the human being, especially to mariners who are continually working. However, it pleased God to extend to me remedy and help, in the guise of a *garbino* wind.⁸ In order to return to the land we desired so much to see, we directed the prow and sails towards the north-west and for two days and two nights we ran before the wind with our sails raised. However, inimical Fortune was against further progress along our desired path. She threw in our

6 Essentially a war between Venice and Milan, to which duchy the Genoese were at the time subject: F.C. Lane, *Venice: A maritime republic* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 229-30.

7 Approximately one adult sailor for each 10 tons was legally required to man a square-rigged cog, thus Querini's ship of about 420 tons (see footnotes 3 to Fioravanti's account, below) should have had notionally a crew of 42, plus those rated as boys. In addition, cogs had to carry 4 to 8 bowmen, according to the danger of the voyage: Lane, *Venice*, pp. 123-4. Querini sailed from Candia with around 50 men, therefore, and so can have hired perhaps ten to twenty extra men in Cadiz.

8 A south-east wind, so called in the Adriatic, a sea with which Querini was perhaps more familiar.

way other frightful incidents: some of the hinges of the rudder broke and we were again forced to provide a support to reinforce the rudder. In place of the iron we made some ties using hemp rope and we deployed them in such a way that they served us all the way to Lisbon, where we arrived on the 29th of August.

In the aforementioned place we made good with due care the broken hinges and we replenished our store of victuals. On the 14th of September we left the port to continue our voyage. However, opposed by adverse winds, and tossed around on high seas, we reached the port of Mures⁹ on the 26th October, whereupon I, accompanied by thirteen of my companions, devotedly made a visit to the church of St James.¹⁰ I stayed there but a short time. As soon as I returned we set sail on the 28th, with a most favourable garbino wind, which I hoped would continue. Having come some two hundred miles¹¹ from Cape Finisterre along the right course, on the 5th November this prosperous, gentle wind dropped and another began to blow, that from the east and south-east. Had it remained benign, it would have escorted us into the channels of Flanders, whence we most ardently desired to arrive, but the power and impetus of the wind grew hour by hour and we were pushed off our true course, to the extent that we bore in with *l'Isola di Sorlinga*.¹² Although by sight of land alone we were not certain of this, the opinion of our good pilots gave us confirmation, for they had sounded the depth of the sea and found it to be 80 *passa*.¹³ As the pilots steered us closer to land, the wind changed and showed signs of suddenly strengthening, blowing from north-east to north, preventing us reaching the coastline and the protection of land.

I come now to relate the beginning of our troubles and most tragic deaths, even though the power of our Saviour extended the most opportune help to my unworthy person and ten of my companions, as you will find out – not without astonishment – in what follows. On the 10th of the

9 Muros.

10 Santiago de Compostela.

11 The mile of 1000 *passa*, that is about 1.5 km.

12 The Isles of Scilly.

13 Perhaps around 1.5 metres, and so approximating to an English fathom of 6 feet or 1.83 metres.

aforementioned month, the eve of St Martin, it happened that our rudder was knocked from its hinges¹⁴ by the force and impetus of the swollen sea. The rudder was the brake and security of our unhappy ship. Not a single hinge remained to hold the rudder. I leave it to the good judgement of my listeners to imagine the nature and extent of our anguish and desperation. At that moment I felt deserted of life in precisely the way those poor beggars do when, with the noose around their necks, they see themselves pulled upwards. But I rallied my spirits as best as I could. I began to exercise the duties of a captain, encouraging and comforting with words and gestures the terrified mariners, who were already half lost. Using a thick cable they tied the aforementioned rudder down; not that we were sure we could keep it in its place, but just to have it secured in order to keep it safe on the side of the ship, which continued to be tossed around by the sea. However, it so happened that the rudder came away from the ship completely, while still attached to the back of the ship. Thus for three days we dragged the ineffective rudder behind us. Finally, with great exertion of spirit and body, we hauled it in and kept it aboard the ship, strapping it down as tightly as we could so that with the rolling of the ship it would not smash into the sides and make a hole. I found myself therefore in high and impetuous seas, assailed by a furious storm, with no means of steering whatsoever. Her sails raised to the wind, the ship went where the wind would, bearing up until the sails billowed and then bearing off. In this way we were driven hither and thither in the manner and in the direction imposed on us by the storm, taking us ever further from land. Seeing myself on such a desperate course, and knowing the nature of sailors who are always eager to satisfy their appetites I exhorted them, after long and fruitful reflection, to impose a rule and moderation with regard to what remained of our victuals. I entrusted the management of the rationing to two or three men, which was approved by the majority. They distributed the rations equally, twice in the course of a day and night; even I was included among those in receipt. In this way

14 *Cancare*, which clearly is being used for the whole fixing rather than just a part of it. The iron pintles of a rudder were held in the gudgeons, attached to the sternpost of the ship; it is not clear from Querini's description which of these had failed.

if our misfortune continued we would be able to keep ourselves longer from death. The idea was praised and put into practice by everybody. After this, seeing that there was nothing else to be done, I retreated alone into my small quarters with great bitterness of spirit and, reflecting on the piteous situation I was in, turned my heart to God, commending myself to Him and repenting of my sins. Truly I confess that the removal from my sight of that person, whom through paternal affection I loved dearly, gave me incredible relief from the immense anxieties which oppressed me. My heart would most certainly have broken every hour had I seen him there, knowing that he was going to die before my eyes. And wanting to alleviate my suffering a little, I set myself thinking about the miserable nature of our bodies and about how all the great princes and kings, all the poor and lowly, present and future, were subject to the necessity of death, and that we Christians had the privilege, given us through the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the glory of paradise, when we commended ourselves to Him in a spirit of contrition. With these and similar thoughts I was greatly invigorated, to the extent that I regarded death as little or nothing, and with this same reasoning I went to hearten that pitiful throng of sailors, and to encourage them to repent of their misdeeds. To some of them I noticed my words had brought profit.

Finding ourselves in this predicament, it was decided, following the advice of one of our carpenters, to refashion the superfluous yards and the main mast¹⁵ into two side-rudders of a triangular shape,¹⁶ in the hope of checking a little the immense rolling of the ship. These rudders were constructed immediately with the utmost care and placed in the appropriate positions. This gave us much comfort and hope, seeing in due course that they were working. But the hostile storm did not allow us a moment to draw breath, increasing the force of the winds and the swell of the sea and pummelling the aforementioned rudders with waves, such that it took them away completely. This left us stunned and bewildered, just like those who in times of plague recognize in their illness

15 *Albero di mezo* means literally the middle mast, so that by implication the ship had three masts. But apparently it had two, so that "main mast" would be a better rendering, and is consistent with the description of events on 7th December.

16 *Timoni alla latina*, or "latin rudders", as were used to steer Mediterranean galleys.

the fatal symptoms. Thus abandoned we followed the course which the fury of the winds imposed upon us.

On the 26th of November, the day dedicated to the virgin Saint Catherine,¹⁷ on which the weather turns tempestuous and a star is said to rise,¹⁸ the fury of the sea and the winds increased so much that we thought it certain that that day would be our last. Therefore everyone joined together in commending ourselves, amidst great tears of sorrow, to the glorious Virgin Mary and the other saints of paradise, that they might placate our Lord God and come to our succour. We vowed to perform various pilgrimages of devotion and other works of humility. This had a marvellous effect, because despite the furious sea we were saved from death. In fact the sea calmed somewhat, although we were nevertheless still running in a north-westerly direction, driving further and further from land. And already, owing to the continuous rain and the fury of the winds, the sail was so weakened that it began to break apart, such that after a sequence of furious gusts we were deprived of it altogether. We put up a second sail, carried for just these eventualities, but it too was not very strong. Drenched by the sea and distended by the furious winds, it did not serve us for long.

The ship was now without sails or rudder, equipment which is necessary for navigation. In the same way everyone's spirits were so afflicted and crushed that there was no vitality, strength or vigour to be found. The ship, stripped of the said fittings and no longer at all seaworthy, was as it were tired. Nevertheless the unrelenting impetus of the sea continued to rattle the ship, such that it was felt in every one of her joints, and on occasions a wave covered and filled her with water. It fell to us, miserable and tired as we were, to bail the water out.

We had on several occasions sounded the bottom of the sea, when at one point we found it, at a depth of eighty paces¹⁹ and of a gravelly nature. As happens to those who cannot swim, who – finding themselves in deep

17 Actually, St Catherine was celebrated in the Western church on the 25th November.

18 Various days in the year were known by Venetian mariners as *punto di stella*. These were days on which a star rose in the sky. Some portended good fortune, others the opposite. In this case the star was called *Ebide* and it portended ill-fortune: *Algune raxion per marineri*, ed. Ornella Pittarello, (Padova, 2006), p. 83.

19 *Passa*; perhaps about 1.5 metres.

water – grab hold of the smallest twig in an effort not to perish, so we, in our desperation, thought we would take a comparable measure, which was the only one available to us: to hold ourselves fast with the anchors. This we did, joining together four lengths of cable. We thereby secured the ship but our efforts, in the end, were in vain. The ship, already weakened, had laboured heavily for some forty hours above the anchoring when one of our pitiful companions, terrified and fearing a worse fate, secretly cut the end of the last cable at the prow. And so, severed from this anchoring, we went on in the usual way, continually expecting the arrival of death, which the majority of us prepared to receive in the most Christian manner, placing all our hopes in the life to come. And there were some who, to judge by their actions and words, seemed completely devoid of hope, especially seeing no end to the rage of the sea and winds. On the 4th December, the festival of St Barbara, we were battered and overcome by the combined force of four waves, to such an extent that the unhappy ship sank lower in the water than usual. Although we were all half-dead, we responded with great vigour, wading into the water up to our waists and bailing out. So doing, we had the better of it and for the following three days the going was a little better. But on the 7th of the month the fury of the wind and sea was re-awakened and we were once more overcome, such that the ship listed heavily and water rushed in on the leeward side, unopposed. At that point we truly thought we would sink completely, since, not knowing what to do, we were constantly waiting for death, looking at each other with the greatest pity and compassion. In the end we remembered that as a final recourse we could cut down the mast, on the assumption that unburdening the ship of that weight would liberate her somewhat and allow her to rise in the water. This was done. Once we had cut it down, there was a sudden surge of water which launched the mast overboard, together with the yard, without them even touching the side, as if they had been thrown by a hand. This gave great relief to the ship and it gave us the spirit required to empty it of the great quantity of water that it had taken on. And as it pleased God, the sea and wind began to calm themselves from their fury.

The ship now found herself stripped of all the masts,²⁰ which are necessary to keep a ship upright, as all sailors know. Thus, while we expected her to be somewhat alleviated by this, in fact she began to list more, such that the waves could easily wash into her. We were suffering from the continuous hardship which had accompanied us for so long. We could neither stand nor sit, such had our bodies succumbed to extreme fatigue, yet together we manned at all times the equipment to bail water. In that present state we had no hope of ever seeing land again and – examining well our pitiful and calamitous predicament – we decided that, should it please God to attenuate the wrath of the sea and wind, we would launch our boat and skiff²¹ into the sea, jump aboard and go in search of land. To remain with the ship would be to voluntarily watch ourselves die of hunger, since it was impossible that we could sail the ship to land. We had no rudder, no mast, no sail, and according to our estimations the nearest land to our east, which was the island of Ireland, was more than seven hundred miles away.

The order was therefore given to prepare the smaller boats to abandon the larger one, as soon as the furious sea allowed it. Some of the pitiful company were accustomed to drinking wine without moderation. They did not expect to die and they spent all day warming themselves by the fire, which they made from scented cypress wood (since much of both the hull and cargo of the ship was composed of this timber). It was incredible to see how much harm befell these people when they were aboard the boats and exposed to different living conditions, as will be related below.

As the nights descended and stretched endlessly before us, we had the custom, owing to the fact that we no longer had a mast, of repairing to my cabin and calling upon the Virgin, our Empress. We used to pray in tears, in the most pious words, both to her and her omnipotent son, our redeemer, to save us from so much force and fury and darkness. It was no longer in our power to perform our holy rites, since we could neither stand nor move. Indeed, it was only with great difficulty that

20 See note 14.

21 *Barca e schiffo*.

we were able to lie down. Therefore, wherever we found ourselves stretched out, we all did likewise in making heart-felt pleas. Whilst I was in these cramped conditions, various considerations came to mind, among which was the desire to avoid any arguments or fights breaking out upon entering the boats. Everybody would want to get on to the larger boat and fighting among those with less discretion than others could result in bloodshed. This was not unlikely, in view of the excessive drinking that inclined them to this behaviour. So it was that I turned to the omnipotent God, praying to him for illumination as to how to find a way of avoiding such unseemly scenes among us. It pleased our Good Lord to listen to me, putting into my mind the idea that I ought to reassure everyone that the voting for which boat to board would be secret, known only to the clerk, who would make a note of everybody's preference. Having established that the skiff would hold twenty-one and the larger boat forty-seven, it so happened, by a miracle, that twenty-one were of their own free will happy to go in the skiff and the rest in the boat. It is true that I was granted the authority to board, together with one of my servants, whichever boat I chose; and although my own judgement had led me to opt to go in the skiff, because it was considered to be a good craft, in the end I changed my mind, having seen that my officers had gone for the boat. Therefore, together with my manservant I boarded the larger boat, which was the cause of my salvation, as you will find out.

Having separated the groups, we began to prepare the boats for launching from the ship. It seemed it would be a very difficult task, owing to the lack of the mast or of any other high position from which to manoeuvre them over the side. Nevertheless, driven by necessity we stood the tiller of our former rudder upright and lashed it tightly to the left side of our sterncastle,²² since this was the leeward side, fixing suitable blocks and tackles to it using ties that would bear the weight. We then waited for the weather, sea and wind to quieten.

22 Like other such ships, this was fitted with high castles at the bow and stern. Querini's "side" of the sterncastle was presumably the port side.

At daybreak on the 17th of December;²³ in view of some somewhat better weather, we lowered, with great difficulty, the small boats into the vast and frightening sea. Having gathered together the remaining supplies, we shared them out equally, giving those on the skiff a ration proportionate to twenty-one people and to the boat an amount proportionate to forty-seven people. But of the great quantity of wine that we found, both groups took as much as the boats could reasonably carry. Having reached the time of our departure and separation, I firstly summoned all those who seemed to me most lacking in clothing and gave to each person clothing of my own which I came across. Then, when we were about to board and go our separate ways, we were all overcome by a great tenderness of heart and the men of each group embraced each other, exchanging kisses on the mouth and letting out the most bitter sighs. It seemed – as in fact happened – that we were never to see each other again.

Thus we departed at dawn of that day, leaving the unhappy ship, which I had built with such endeavour, and such delight, and in which I had placed the highest hopes. We left behind eight hundred barrels of malvasia wine, much scented and worked cypress wood, pepper and ginger which were of no small value, along with a lot of other fine merchandise. On that day we changed boats; our fortune, however, did not change. During the following, interminable night, that between Tuesday and the break of Wednesday, the wind from the east and south-east picked up again such that our poor companions aboard the skiff became lost from us, and we heard nothing further regarding their destiny.²⁴ As for us, seeing ourselves overcome by the force of the sea and the waves, due to our vessel being overloaded, we began as a last resort to jettison our cargo. To prolong our life, that is, we deprived ourselves of the necessities of life, for that night we threw overboard the majority of the food and wine we had, together with some of our clothing and other necessary equipment, in order to save the boat. Yet it pleased God, for the good of the eleven of

23 Which fell on Monday in 1431, although Querini in the next paragraph implies that it was a Tuesday when they left the ship, i.e. that it was on the 18th, as Fioravante wrote (below).

24 Fioravante (below) claims that the survivors saw wreckage from the skiff on their journey southwards along the Norwegian coast some five months later.

us who survived, that on the following day, the 18th,²⁵ the storm should yield. We thus directed the prow eastwards, looking to find the closest, most westward piece of land belonging to the island of Ireland. But since we were unable to keep to that course due to the changeable winds which at one moment came from north-east and the next from the south-west, we continued on with little, nay, with no hope at all of keeping ourselves alive, above all because we lacked for something to drink.

Here I must relate the tragic incidents by which the number of people who boarded the boat, forty-seven in total, began to be reduced. Firstly, owing to the pummelling the boat had received whilst aboard the ship, she had been damaged somewhat and was taking on water. We had to keep watch continuously in groups of seven to bail the water and to man the helm, in extremely cold conditions. Secondly, we suffered from a shortage of wine, only small quantities of which remained. It was necessary to regulate its consumption, drawing a quarter of a cup – a small cup at that – twice over the course of a day and night, which was a pitiful amount. As for comestibles, we could satisfy ourselves somewhat better, for we were well-stocked with salted meat, cheese and biscuit. But given the little we had to drink, we were frightened indeed to eat salted foods. For these reasons, some of our number began to die, without showing any signs of death beforehand, simply falling down dead in an instant before our eyes. To elaborate, I should say that the first were those who on the ship had lived most dissolutely in drinking much wine and giving themselves to excess, sitting by the fire and carrying on with no moderation whatsoever. These people, who went from one extreme to the other, even if they were more robust were nevertheless unable to withstand such conditions and they fell down dead, two on one day, three or four on another in the period from the 19th until the 29th of December. We threw them into the sea immediately.

On this day, the 29th, having no wine left at all, nor knowing how far or near we were to land, I desired – to speak frankly – to be among those who had already died. Yet it pleased God for me to have immense endur-

25 Or the 19th, according to Fioravante.

ance, which kept me alive. And seeing us all there in such desperation and oppressed by the certainty of death, I was inspired by God to entreat the remaining men, in an address suitable to the occasion, to receive their certain death in a devout and contrite manner. So saying, I served out the last drops of wine remaining to us. At these words, everyone, with eyes full of tears, manifested an excellent, Christian disposition, recommending their souls to God. Now, labouring under this acute form of thirst, many, enraged by the need to drink, took to drinking saltwater. Thus it was that one after the other, according to their constitution, began to fall. Those of us of the pitiful company who could restrain ourselves started to drink our own urine, a major factor in our survival. Furthermore, in order not to increase the suffering from thirst, I abstained from eating anything but the tiniest amounts, because the only food we had was salted. We continued in this pitiful state for five days. On the 4th of January, before daybreak, sailing with a very gentle wind to the north-east, one of our company who was positioned towards the bows saw what seemed to be the outline of land ahead of us, downwind. In an unsure voice he began to announce to us what he believed he saw, so that everyone in their eagerness to see such a happy sight turned to look attentively in that direction. And since day had still not broken, we stayed there until the light of day had confirmed, to our great delight, that it was indeed land.

Thus, with renewed strength and vigour, we took up oars to get closer to the land, which we so longed to reach. Because of the great distance and the brevity of the daylight, which lasted only two hours, however, we lost sight of the land. Due to fatigue we could not use the oars too much and we passed that unending night with no little hope. When the following day came the aforementioned land had vanished from our sights, but we saw more land leeward, mountainous and far closer, providing – it seemed to us – a better possibility of landing than did the other land sighted. We noted therefore the direction of the land with the compass so as not to lose trace of it the following night and with the sails windward catching the wind, we arrived at the land at around the fourth hour of night. As we neared the coast, we found ourselves surrounded

by shallows, as we could tell by the breaking of the waves. There is nothing a sailor fears more than to find himself pushed towards the coast by the wind,²⁶ at night and in unknown waters. So it was that our joy and relief turned to panic and despair. Tearfully we recommended ourselves to God and to his mother, faithful helper of sinners. It was pleasing to the merciful God to help us amidst such grave danger. Our boat had run on to one of the shallows, when a wave came and rolled underneath the boat, raising it up and moving it away from the ground. Thus extricated from one danger, we came up against another, for as we neared the rock of our salvation, there was not a single beach along its shore to be found upon which we could safely land, because it was rocky all along its coastline. It happened, by a great miracle, that our guide and saviour led us to the only little beach that there was, depositing us there tired and exhausted, like weary birds landing after migration.²⁷ We crashed onto the beach with the prow of the boat and those in the prow immediately jumped to the shore. They found that the land was completely covered in snow and they took of it without measure, to cool their scorched and arid insides. Having done this, they brought some to us in a bucket and a kettle – those of us, that is, who had remained on the boat through weakness and in order to prevent it from being destroyed in the surf. I speak truly when I say that I swallowed more than I could carry on my shoulders. It seemed to me that my entire health and happiness consisted in consuming that snow. But the opposite proved to be the case for five of the pitiful company, for that night, having also eaten of it, they departed from this life. To us it seemed that the saltwater which they had drunk previously had given them the seal of death.

That interminable night we stayed with the boat in order to save it from being broken to pieces, since we had no rope or anything else with which to tie it. There we waited for the brief appearance of day. Upon

26 A fear never expressed more vividly than by William Falconer (1732-69) in his poem from 1762 "The Shipwreck", canto iii: "... the impervious horrors of a leeward shore": *The Poetical Works of William Falconer, with a Life*, J. Mitford (Boston 1854), p. 114.

27 The island on which they landed was often thought to be Sandøya. A good case has now been argued by Helge Wold, *I Paradisets Første Krets* (Oslo, 1991), pp. 41-65, that it was the mountainous Storfjellet, which better fits Querini's description even down to the single, fortuitous place where a boat can be landed.

its arrival, the sixteen of us who remained of the original forty-seven disembarked.²⁸ We found nothing but snow, in which we laid ourselves down to rest, thanking our Lord God for having guided us to this place and rescuing us from drowning in the sea. Hunger then spurred us to take stock of what had remained of our reserves, the sum of which were found at the bottom of a sack and consisted of a lot of biscuit crumbs, mixed up with rat excrement, dried bacon and a small piece of cheese. These things, when heated up over a small fire which we made with bits of wood from the boat, gave us some respite from our hunger.

Having ascertained with certainty that the rock was barren, we decided to leave on the second day and we filled five of our barrels with water derived from the snow. When the following day came we boarded the boat in the hope of finding by chance another, inhabited, place, without knowing in the least where to go, however. But as soon as we climbed aboard, water came pouring in through cracks. The reason for this was that the boat had not been well secured the previous, unending night. It had smashed against the rocks and in many places had been punctured, with the result that it sank like a stone, while we, soaking wet, strove to return to land. Realising that we were stuck on that desolate land, we were overcome by a sadness which, though nothing like the despair we felt beforehand while aboard the little boat on the high seas, was nevertheless great. We thought that death had given us a short reprieve, not a pardon, and what else were we to think seeing how weak we were, marooned on the kind of land I have described, without any cover whatsoever and without any provisions. But inspired by our only Benefactor, we took two measures as extreme as they were pitiful. The first was to make two shelters using the oars, two cloaks and the sail. The second was to cut the timbers and the boards from the boat to make a fire, to warm us up. For food we repaired to the shore, where we gathered sea snails and barnacles, which were found in small quantities and with which we assuaged somewhat our raging hunger. Thirteen of us were under one shelter, three under

28 This being the morning of 6th January.

the other, some lying on the snow and some sitting on it. We warmed ourselves in front of a very weak and smoky fire – smoky because of the wet tar on the wood in the fire – which produced so much smoke that we could hardly bear it. Our eyes and faces became so inflamed that we doubted whether we would be able to see again. But, worse still, we were overrun and laden with lice, which we were throwing into the fire by the handful. Among us was one of my clerks, on whose neck I saw so many lice that they had eaten away the flesh to reveal the nerves. I believe they were the main cause of his death.

Amidst these pitiful conditions, three of our unfortunate companions from the Spanish nation, robust, well-built men, departed this life – I believe as a result of drinking seawater. And since the thirteen of us who remained were weak and incapacitated, we were unable to remove them from around the fire, so that for three days and nights they stayed where they were. Only with difficulty did we move them outside of our shelter, which gave us little protection.

After eleven days, my servant had gone to gather barnacles, as this alone was our food, when he happened to find in the furthest part of the land a little rustic house made of timber and around and inside it there was cattle dung. Therefore it was clear that animals of that kind had been there recently and that human beings had worked there. This gave us not a little hope. We resolved to go there to find help and shelter. Three of the company were so exhausted and close to death that they could not leave. While the ten of us made bundles of wood from our small boat, I took my small *ancona*²⁹ which never left me, nor I it, and we set out for the aforementioned house. Owing to the heavy snow and the fact that I was weaker than the others, I struggled mightily to get there, even though it was no more than one and a half miles away from the original place. Entering the dwelling, it seemed to us that we had found respite indeed, for it protected us from the wind and from the snow. We cleared the inside as well as we could and then lay down to rest, reasoning amongst ourselves that there had to be some inhab-

29 *Anconetta d'un Crocifisso*: a small icon or painting of the crucifixion.

ited place close by, but that they must only have come to that dwelling during the summer to see their animals, because we already knew by the freshness of the dung that animals had been there. And although reason and necessity argued that we should go in search of them, nevertheless in view of our extreme weakness it was impossible for any one of us to climb the nearby mountain. Thus, assailed as ever by hunger, we trawled the nearby shoreline, a stone's throw away, looking for our usual food, that is, barnacles and sea snails. Our journey to the house took place on a Thursday.³⁰ The following Saturday³¹ was a day which brought us good things. Everyone was out looking for barnacles, except for me. It so happened that one of the pitiful company found a fish³² of a remarkable size dead on the seashore, weighing perhaps two hundred pounds. It seemed fresh. In what way it had been thrown there, we do not know, but we must well believe that God in his pity made this concession to save us. The man who found it began to call his companions, announcing this favour bestowed upon them. Having cut the fish into several pieces, they carried it back to the little house, where I had made a feeble fire. Imagine our joy! We set about cooking it straight away, one part in a cauldron that we found there, another in the feeble fire itself. As the smell of cooking fish filled the air some of our companions were seized with wonder at such an unusual odour. On account of their great hunger they were unable to wait until it was cooked through completely, so we began to eat it. For four days we ate of it without restraint. Seeing it running out, it was decided that from then on it would be distributed in an orderly fashion. An important little episode must not be overlooked. Of the three of our companions who had stayed behind, there was one who, seeing that we had gone, came to look for us and found us the day after we had found the fish. Upon his entry to the little house, there was among us someone so ill-natured as to suggest that we ought not to let the newcomer taste of the fish; as a matter of fact he

30 17th January.

31 19th January.

32 Fioravante seems to have been clear that this was a sea mammal, by its size a porpoise or perhaps a young pilot whale.

wanted to violently block his entrance. But I argued, with aptly-chosen words, the opposite and induced everybody to give him a part of the fish, and that night he stayed with us. The next day he went back to his two other companions and invited them to enjoy the boon sent to us by God; they duly came and restored themselves. The regulation regarding the consumption of the fish, put in place as I described, meant that, after the first four days, the fish lasted ten, giving us not only relief from hunger but strength to our weakened bodies. What is more, all the time we had the fish the weather was stormy, so violent that in no way would we have been able to have recourse to our usual barnacles. Thus we understand quite clearly that God sent us the fish for our salvation. Once we had finished the fish we returned to our usual occupation of trying to satiate ourselves with barnacles, food of meagre nutrition.

Now we come to relate how, miraculously, it pleased our Saviour to deliver us from such tribulation and despair. It came to pass as follows. There was a rock eight miles distant, inhabited by fishermen, among whom there was one who had two sons. On the uninhabited island where we were he kept some of his animals to pasture and enclosed them in a little building on top of the mountain. One of his sons had a vision of how these animals had escaped down the slope into the area where we found ourselves. He reported this to his father, who decided to come to the island with his sons in a little boat to investigate. So it was that at dawn they came to the shore near to our encampment. The two sons went ashore while the father stayed behind to look after the boat. Seeing smoke rising from the house where we were camped, they directed their steps in that direction, wondering to themselves what on earth this smoke coming from the uninhabited house could mean, for they could not imagine how anybody from anywhere could find themselves upon this piece of land. By chance the sound of the human voice first reached the ears of my companion named Cristoforo Fioravante, who said with amazement: "Can you not hear human voices?" Our helmsman replied that it was just those damned crows, waiting for our end so that they could devour us, as they had done with the bodies of our companions. But as the sons came nearer, it became clear to all that the sound was

that of humans. Whereupon we moved towards the doorway, with the presentiment of a hope unimagined. When we saw them, indescribable relief poured into our hearts. They, however, seeing a large number of unknown people, were for some time frightened and silent. But after we had assured them through our gestures and our voices that we were endangered and in need of help, they began to speak to us, pointing out their island and many other things, although we did not understand a word. Two of our company went off towards the boat in the hope of finding some food, but there was no food at all. When they had returned, we concluded that the boat must be from an inhabited place close by, on account of which they had not brought any food with them. At this point we decided that two of us would go with the boat, because it could carry no more, and however much some thought it wise to keep one of the islanders behind – arguing that in so doing we would receive help more quickly – in truth neither I nor the others were inclined to give our consent to this, for fear of offending some of those very people from whom we were expecting some favour and help. Thus our two men went aboard the boat and using actions they tried to make them understand our needs, because using words neither party could understand anything. They departed on a Friday,³³ leaving us in high hopes and with the expectation that they would come back for us the following day. But the next day there was no sign of any messenger or envoy, hence the night of Saturday through to Sunday was spent amidst great sighs and worrying thoughts on our part, thinking that the little boat, being of small burden and overloaded, had capsized along the way. But the reason for the delay was that the inhabitants of the island, away as they were on fishing expeditions, could not have received word of our plight. But in this time their priest, who was German, had spoken to one of the two companions who had gone with the boat, who was himself Flemish. On Sunday, having finished Mass, the chaplain explained to everyone our situation, our conditions and where we came from, showing them our companions. Everyone was moved to pity, crying, and thought it a blessing to be the

33 Evidently the 1st February.

first to get underway with their boats and bring food to us. Thus on that Sunday, a day of solemn worship and to us life-giving, six ships arrived one after the other, bringing us a great quantity of their food.³⁴ Who can imagine the immensity and nature of our joy, being visited with such love and charity?

The priest, a friar of the Order of St Dominic, came with them and in Latin asked who among us was the leader, in response to which I made myself known to him. After he had given me something to eat – some rye bread he had which seemed like manna to me – and some ale to drink, he took me by the hand and told me to bring two men with me. Whereupon I chose Francesco Quirini of Candia and the Venetian Cristoforo Fioravante and together we followed the friar. Having boarded the boat belonging to the island's principal, we were taken to the island and led to the household of the principal who was also a fisherman. I was led all the way by the hand by one of his sons, since I was so weak I could not even walk. Once inside, the lady of the house came to meet us with one of her kitchen maids and I, calling to mind the manner in which certain Greek slaves recognize their mistresses, threw myself to the ground wanting to kiss her feet. But she, moved to pity, refused the gesture, and led me to the fire where she handed me a little dish of good milk. As time went on, I received a lot of company and I was thought more highly of than the others. It is true that I did not disdain to lend a hand in their affairs, during the three and a half months we stayed there, and indeed nothing is more important to someone who travels the world than to be humble in mind and deed.

The other companions, who were eight in number, were led to and distributed among the dwellings. Of the two who had stayed behind at the first encampment, one died and the other was in a bad state. As soon as he reached us he departed this life. He and all the others who had died on the first island were given a fitting burial, even though the crows had devoured the flesh of some of them. The rest of us were received and taken care of in accordance with the people's means, with

34 Sunday was the 3rd February, the day Fioravante also wrote that they were rescued.

great charity. There were a hundred and twenty souls living on the inhabited rock and at Easter seventy-two souls took communion like devout and most faithful Catholics. They subsist entirely on fishing, since no crops grow³⁵ in that extreme region. For three months of the year, that is, June, July and August, it is always day, the sun never sets, while during the opposite months it is always more or less night and the light of the moon can always be seen. They catch a huge quantity of fish throughout the year, always only of two species: one, to be found in greater, indeed incomparable quantities, is called *stocfisi*;³⁶ the other is plaice, but of amazing proportions, each one with a gross weight of two hundred pounds.³⁷ They dry the stockfish in the wind and sun without salt, and since they are fish with little oily fat, they become as hard as wood. When they want to eat them they beat them with the reverse side of their axes, making them as thin as *nervi*,³⁸ then they add butter and spices. This fish supports an inestimably large trade in the Germanic sea. The plaice, being so large, they cut into pieces and salt them, and they taste good like that. Then in the month of May they leave the island on a brigantine,³⁹ with a burden of fifty *botte*,⁴⁰ and they transport

35 Literally, no fruits grow: *non vi nasce alcun frutto*.

36 Querini's words leave some doubt as to whether he had or had not encountered stockfish – wind-dried cod – before. The name is the one we would expect him to use – *stoccafisso* in modern Italian, derived from the variants in common use throughout northern Europe in the middle ages, including Germany. We can be sure he did not learn the name from the islanders, who did not use that term for *Gadus morhua*, which they called by a name akin to *skriða* (Old Norse) or *skrei* (modern Norwegian). If he had not seen stockfish before, he must have learnt the name either from the Flemish Girardo da Lione who must have known it or from the German friar, together perhaps with the details of the shipping of the fish southwards (below). It seems most likely, however, that most of what Querini writes about the stockfish trade was learnt from the Venetians in London who cared for him on his way home. Stockfish may not have reached Italy at this time, but given its prominence as a commodity in the trade of north-west Europe – which he himself acknowledges in the following sentences – it would be surprising if he had never encountered it in the northern ports or heard of the stockfish trade. The terms of Fioravante's description of stockfish (below) do nothing to resolve the question, as they imply neither familiarity nor unfamiliarity.

37 These were halibut, *Hippoglossus hippoglossus*, which Querini clearly had not previously encountered and neither had Fioravante.

38 This term can be translated variously, meaning usually nerves or tendons. It probably should be taken as meaning "as thin as bowstrings", or similar.

39 Querini uses the word *grapparia*, which was a Mediterranean brigantine (not to be confused with the brigantine of later centuries), being a light ship, generally with two masts, which was both sailed and rowed. This was, then, a ship quite unlike the later *jeht* of the Norwegian coastal trade, a single masted ship carrying a square sail and which was never rowed.

40 The *botte*, meaning "barrel" or tun, was a traditional unit of measurement of a ship's burden. To convert to burden in metric tons, a multiplier of 0.6 is appropriate: F.C. Lane, "Tonnages, medieval and modern", *EcHR* 2nd ser. 17, 1964, pp. 213-33; Lane, *Venice*, pp. 479-80.

a cargo of the fish described to a place in Norway, more than a thousand miles away, called Bergen. Ships from all over the world come to this hub, ships with a burden of three hundred and three hundred and fifty *botte*, loaded with merchandise originating in Germany, England, Scotland and Prussia, things necessary to live and to clothe oneself. Those who carry the fish (and there are innumerable other brigantines) barter it in exchange for things they need, because as I said nothing grows in their land, and they neither possess nor handle any money whatsoever. Hence as soon as the bartering is finished they turn around and go home, always securing a place where they can procure some timber to use as fuel throughout the year and for other purposes.

The men from these islands are of the purest kind and of handsome aspect, as are their women, and such is their simplicity that they do not think to lock away any of their things, nor do they watch over their women. This was seen quite clearly by the fact that we had our lodgings in the very same rooms in which husbands and wives and their daughters slept. When they wanted to go to bed they would strip absolutely naked in front of our eyes; on Thursdays, when it was their custom to take a bath, they would strip their clothes off at home and then, absolutely naked, walk the distance of a cross-bow shot to the bath-house, meeting men along the way. They are, as I said before, the most devout Christians: they would not miss the celebration of Mass, and when they are in Church they are always on their knees in prayer; they never mutter or blaspheme against the saints; they do not speak the name of the devil. Upon death, on the day of their burial, wives prepare for their husbands a great feast for all their neighbours, who come dressed, according to their customs and means, in sumptuous, fine clothes. The wife of the deceased wears the most elegant and expensive clothes she has, she gives her guests shabby clothes, and reminds them frequently to be jovial, to ensure the repose of the deceased. They fast without fail on the prescribed days and celebrate in the most Christian faith all the festivals that fall throughout the year. Their dwellings are constructed of timber and are of a circular form. They only provide one opening right in the middle of the roof and in winter, on account of the perishing cold, they

cover it up with skins of huge fish, which they know how to treat in such a way that much light passes through them. They use thick woolen clothes from London and other places, while they hardly use furs at all. In order to acclimatize them to the cold region and to tolerate it the better, as soon as their young are born, at four days old, they place them naked under the opening, uncovering it so that the snow falls on them, for indeed throughout the whole winter period from the 5th February to the 14th May, which was the time of our stay, it snowed almost continuously. The young who escape the perilous age are so hardened and used to the cold that, when they are big, they have little regard for it, or rather none at all. Consider how we must have fared, poorly dressed and unused to such a region, especially on religious days when we would go to the church located half a mile away. Yet, with the help of our Redeemer, we withstood all these things on the island.

In the season of spring countless wild geese arrived and nested on the island or, more precisely, in the walls of the houses.⁴¹ They were so domesticated as a result of not being intimidated in any way that the ladies of the house could go to their nest and the geese would slowly get up and allow them to take their eggs more or less as they pleased. They would then use them to make a *frittata*⁴² for us to eat. Just as the goose had made way, it then returned to its nest and settled down to warm its eggs, taking no alarm whatsoever at the situation. We were astounded by this as by many other things, which would take too long to relate.

The island was seventy miles true west from the Cape of Norway, and was an extreme and strange land, which they call in their language “the backside of the world”.⁴³ It was low in the water and flat apart from some areas of higher ground where they have built their houses.⁴⁴ There are

41 A reference to eider ducks. Their habit of building their nests around the houses was encouraged not primarily to obtain eggs, but so that after the breeding season the householders could collect the eider down with which the nests were lined. This was another valuable trade commodity for the islanders.

42 A thick, well-cooked Italian omelette, typically containing ingredients in addition to eggs.

43 *Culo mundi*, which translates literally as anus of the world, though without necessarily any vulgar connotations. It would seem to express the remoteness and marginality the islanders perceived of their location rather than implying contempt for it – so that “arsehole of the world” would be an inappropriate rendering.

44 Røst is a group of 365 islands, most little more than rocks or skerries, the largest by far being Røstlandet – itself generally and confusingly called “Røst”. Røstlandet is 3.6 square kilometres in extent, being nearly all grassland and bog; it is very low-lying, the highest point being only 11 metres above sea level.

some other islands nearby, some inhabited, some not, some small, some a bit bigger. Our island had a circumference of three miles. In the time we stayed there we were treated with humanity in line with their means, eating their food heartily for two solid months: butter, fish and sometimes meat. We could never satiate ourselves. Truly had these foods not been by nature oily⁴⁵ we would have died from eating too much. Our medicine was freshly-drawn milk, because each head of family kept a certain number of cows, maybe four or six, for the sustenance of their kin.

When May arrived, at the end of which they take their fish to the place described above called Bergen, they made preparations to take us as well. A few days before this, however, our presence in those parts came to the attention of a woman who was the wife of the governor of all those islands,⁴⁶ who was away from the area. She sent one of her priests with a boat rowed by twelve oars and he presented me, as our company's principal, on behalf of this woman, with sixty fish, stockfish hardened in the wind, three huge round loaves, in our own style, made with rye, and a cake.⁴⁷ He said the reason for the visit was that the lady had heard that we had been treated badly by the people with whom we were lodging and that if we would but tell her the ways in which we had been wronged, she would make fulsome recompense. At the same time she ordered the islanders to extend us warm company and to take us to Bergen. We thanked her and excused the innocence of our hosts, praising their conduct. I found a string of paternosters⁴⁸ made of amber that I got at Santiago in Galicia and I sent it to the lady, so that she would pray to God for our safe repatriation.

As the time of our departure drew near, on the suggestion of the islanders' chaplain, because he was a German preacher, we were each obliged to pay two crowns⁴⁹ a month, in other words seven crowns each. And since we did not have enough money, they had from us instead six silver

45 *Lubrici* also can mean "purgative", or "laxative", which may also be implied here.

46 Presumably the wife of the *fogd* or local royal official whose residence was Hadsel on the island of Vesterålen, to the north of the Lofoten Islands.

47 Querini's text has *fugaccia*, which is *focaccia*; as he distinguishes it from rye bread he might have meant simply a flat wheaten bread. But it is more likely that he was thinking of the traditional sweet focaccia of Venice, *focaccia veneta*, which contains eggs, sugar and butter rather than olive oil and salt.

48 Rosary beads.

49 *Corone*; it is not clear which coin Querini was thinking of.

cups, six forks and six spoons, the greater part of which ended up in the hands of this iniquitous friar, who perhaps felt he was acting righteously in claiming recompense for his interpreting and in ridding us of the souvenirs of such an ill-fated journey. On the day of our departure everybody presented us with fish. As we took our leave, the women and children were crying and we cried with them. The friar came with us to see his archbishop and to take him his share of the things he had acquired. We left in the season when the day had already grown much longer, so long that sailing at the end of May we saw the solar orb for forty-eight hours. But heading in the direction of the midday sun and travelling further and further from the northern region, we began to lose sight of the sun's rays for a short space of time, although despite that the sky remained bright and the sun would reappear in the space of an hour. It was just as the people from the island of our salvation had affirmed – the inhabited island, that is – that for three months of the year they see the solar body continuously, as I said above.⁵⁰ Sailing as we were between many islands, through channels ever in the direction of the south, we heard the great shrieks of gulls and other marine birds which had made their nests on the islands. But when the time came for them to sleep, they all fell silent and in so doing indicated to us that it was time to rest, despite it still being daytime, and then we too would prepare ourselves for sleep. We ran thus for fifteen days, with the wind almost right behind us, continuously sailing to the right of the headlands which, being mountainous, signalled to us perfectly the clear and deep route. We found that many of these islands were inhabited and we were received by these people with piety. And once they had learned about our situation from the priest, they offered us their food, such as milk, fish and suchlike, without asking for any payment at all.

It so happened that along our route we met with the archbishop whom the friar was intending to visit and who presided over all the islands of

50 Querini was misinformed, or his memory was at fault. Whilst the period of light in the summer is long, at the latitude of Røst – some 67° 30' north – the whole disc of the sun is continuously above the horizon only from about the 30th of May until the 15th of July. Those of course are the dates after the Gregorian calendar. In 1432 the Julian calendar already lagged some 9 days behind the true date, so that 14th May, when the Venetians left Røst, would correspond to the modern 23rd May; by that date, the complete disc of the sun is below the horizon at the latitude of Røst for a few minutes at most.

that region. He was entitled the archbishop of Trondheim.⁵¹ He had two balingers⁵² in tow, and there were in excess of two hundred in his company. We were introduced to him. When he had heard about our recent misadventure, our situation and nationality, he gave us his condolences, putting himself at our disposition. He wrote a letter to the place of his episcopal see, called Trondheim, where lie the remains of St Olaf, who was the King of Norway, and where we were due to go presently. In addition to the letter, which procured for us a good reception, he also gave me a horse. After much conversation concerning our shipwreck, we left to resume our journey. Once arrived in Trondheim, the captain of our ship was informed of a war being fought between the Germans and his Lord King of Norway, on account of which he decided not to proceed any further.⁵³ Thus he stationed us on an inhabited island near Trondheim⁵⁴ and, having recommended us to the inhabitants, began his return. The following day was the most holy day of the Ascension of our Lord.⁵⁵ We were taken to Trondheim and led to a most ornate temple of St Olaf, where we found the dean⁵⁶ with the populace. There we attended Mass. After the ceremony we were introduced to the dean and we made it known under whose guidance we had come to those parts. He was

51 *Archiepiscopus Trundunensis*. Aslak Harniktsson Bolt (c. 1380-1450) became archbishop in about 1427.

52 *Belingieri*. The balinger was a small, sea-going boat much favoured in north-west Europe in the later middle ages: it was invariably less than 100 tons, often much smaller, with a single mast and up to 15 pairs of oars. They were general-purpose boats with no castles and a shallow draft, used in war but they also had many other uses including as whaling boats, from which their name derives. The archbishop's balingers were being towed, suggesting they were smaller boats for use as tenders, or perhaps as whaling boats. It is also possible they were intended to be filled with stockfish to be taken south to Trondheim. "Pinnace" might also be a good translation for such a boat, although a later term.

53 The Kalmar Union of Scandinavian kingdoms was at war with the Count of Holstein and the Hanseatic League. In part a trade war over shipping rights and tolls in the Baltic Sea, this would have had no implications for Querini's intended voyage through the Channel to Bruges. The Count of Holstein's seizure of Flensburg in southern Schleswig in April 1431 and the castle there in September had clearly increased the level of fear in the Norwegian seaports: Thomas Riis, "The states of Scandinavia, c. 1390-c. 1536", *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. vii, ed. C. Allmand (Cambridge 1998), p. 680. The Victual Brothers, a loose band of privateers and pirates from the north German ports, had attacked Bergen in 1429.

54 Presumably Munkholmen, a small island some two kilometres from the Trondheim waterfront which housed a Benedictine monastery.

55 In 1432 Ascension Day was 29th May.

56 *rettor*. Svein Eriksson was dean of the cathedral of Trondheim – correctly *Nidaros* – from 1430 (before 29th December) until 1480. He was clearly still a young man when Querini met him, but nevertheless had been incumbent of the church of Trondenes (in modern Harstad) since 1427. This massive parish was apparently Norway's richest, which doubtless helped him entertain Querini so lavishly: *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol.5 (Christiania, 1860), No. 601, p. 422; *ibid.* vol. 17 (Kristiania, 1913), No. 459, p. 365.

amazed and full of pity. He asked me if I could speak Latin, to which I said that I could. He then invited all of us to dine with him, at the time he would send for us, before asking us to go back into the church. We remained there for a brief period of time, for a canon soon came for us. I conversed at length with him about our predicament, leaving him quite flabbergasted. Having reached the dean's house, we found that he had invited a number of people from the area, together with other clerics of the country. He received us with the utmost humanity, presenting us with a feast containing various dishes in their own style, although we were quite distracted by the company, who were more interested in marvelling at us and questioning us than in eating. We had been provided with lodgings but there was no end to the abundant feast which the dean and other canons had had prepared for us.

I had nothing else in mind other than going back home, and the following day I asked for some advice and help as to how we ought to go about heading in the direction of Germany or England, because however seemed best to them was the way we would take. After much talk, we decided on a course of action which avoided the war to some extent, did not involve too much sea-travel and which offered us some relief from our privation. The plan was to find a certain Master Zuan Franco, created a knight by the King of Denmark and our own countryman, who lived in his castle in the Kingdom of Sweden, some fifty days travel away.⁵⁷ So it was that eight days after our arrival at Trondheim we left, receiving from the dean a guide with two horses. In exchange for my fish that I gave him and a seal and girdle of silver, he gave me spurs, boots, hat, a hatchet in honour of St Olaf – whom he had as his motto on the weapon – leather satchels, some herring, bread and four Rhenish florins.⁵⁸ On

57 Ivan VI Frankopan, *alias* Giovanni Frangipani *alias* Giovanni Franco, *alias* Gian Franchi, *alias* Johan Vale; son of Nikola IV Frankopan, *Ban* or viceroy of Croatia 1426–32. Giovanni Franco served King Eric of Pomerania of the Scandinavian lands, holding Stegeborg as the king's bailiff. He had joined Eric's staff as an interpreter when the king passed through Venice from 31 July to the middle of September 1424 on his way to the Holy Land; he made Giovanni his knight in Jerusalem. As a result of the Engelbrekt rebellion, he left Sweden, and returning to Croatia he ruled as *Ban* until his death in 1436: Absalon Taranger, *Norges Historie*, III, part 1, 1319–1442 (Kristiania 1915), pp. 251–3; Lars-Olof Larsson, *Kalmarunionens tid* (Stockholm, 2003), p. 160; Mladen Ibler and Birgitta Fritz, "Kunglig reseledare i Heliga landet och slottshövitsman i Sverige. Om Johan Vales märkliga karriär och verkliga identitet samt Erik av Pommerns besök i Dubrovnik år 1424", *Scandia*, 70 (2004), pp. 3–16.

58 Coins struck by several German states in the Rhineland, after c. 1419 of 79 per cent gold and weighing 3.51 grams, generally referred to as *Rheingulden*.

top of this we had the horse from the reverend archbishop. Thus we set out on our journey with twelve in our company, including the guide, and three horses. We walked east constantly for fifty-three days, in continuous daylight, experiencing accommodation ranging from bad to worse. Above all we longed for bread. In several places they ground tree-bark in a hand-mill, cut into slices like pumpkins and, mixing this with milk and butter, they produced as it were little cakes, which they used in place of bread. We were given milk, butter and cheese and, to drink, water from soured milk. For all that, we continued on our path and at times we stumbled across better lodgings, which could offer ale, meat and other necessities. There was one thing that we found in abundance: charitable and loving hospitality, which ensured that we were well received everywhere. There are very few habitations anywhere in the Kingdom of Norway. On many occasions we arrived at a place at the time to sleep (even though it was not night-time, it was the time of night) and our guide, who knew the customs and ways, would open the door of the inn and we would find the table surrounded by chairs with leather cushions stuffed with good down, which served as mattresses. Upon finding everything open, we would begin to eat what there was available. Then we would lay ourselves down to rest. On many such occasions it happened that the landlords of the inns came to look at us while we were asleep and would stand there amazed. Hearing them, the guide would then speak to them and inform them of our nationality and our story, whereupon they would be filled with pity and wonder and would bring us things to eat without taking any payment. In this manner twelve people and three horses were nourished for the whole journey of fifty-three days for the total amount of four florins, which were given to us at Trondheim. Along the walk we came across extremely barren and foreboding mountains and valleys. The majority of animals, like goats, and birds, such as francolins and partridges,⁵⁹ were as white as the snow, while pheasants were as big as geese.⁶⁰ In the church of St Olaf we saw a bearskin of

59 Doubtless in fact willow ptarmigan, *Lagopus lagopus* or rock ptarmigan, *Lagopus muta*, although June is late in the year for these birds still to have their completely white winter plumage.

60 Doubtless black grouse, *Tetrao tetrix*, or the larger capercaillie, *Tetrao urogallus*, and perhaps especially the hen birds of these species.

the purest white, fourteen and a half feet long, beneath the metropolitan seat, and there are other birds – gerfalcons, goshawks, falcons of various kinds – which are whiter than their usual shade. This is on account of the extreme cold of that region.

Proceeding on our journey, cheerful and already forgetful of our misfortunes, we came to within four days travel of Stichimborgo⁶¹ the castle where resided the above-named Master Zuan Franco. First, however, we came upon a place called Vasthena,⁶² birthplace of St Brigida,⁶³ who founded an order of women and priests known for its pious observance. In her honour, monarchs and rulers of the West had commissioned the construction of an exceptionally noble and marvellous church, in which I counted sixty-two altars and whose roof was made of copper. The nuns⁶⁴ are most pious and their priests observant of the rule. We were received as foreigners in need at this monastery, because it is rich and abundant and because it is a pious habit of theirs to give shelter to the poor. Thus they gave abundantly to us too. Two days later we resumed our journey in search of our compatriot Master Zuan Franco, at whose residence we arrived four days later. No one can imagine what a comfort it was for us to see him and, for his part, he was no less pleased to see us. Having given him an account of the events and shipwrecks that had befallen us, he showed us great courtesy and compassion. He comforted us and helped us with unrivalled diligence and eagerness, for by nature he was exceptionally courteous and generous. I say that for the fifteen days that we stayed with him everyone sought to treat us well in words and deeds, to the extent that we would not have been more comfortable in our own homes.

It was near the time when a great many Christians from faraway provinces customarily go to the above-mentioned church of St Brigida in Vasthena wishing to procure a special indulgence. Wanting to cheer us and also to keep us informed, the valorous Sir Zuan said that he had

61 Stegeborg.

62 Vadstena.

63 St Bridget or Birgitta of Sweden (1303-73), canonized in 1391.

64 *Donne monache*, literally "lady monks", or "monastic ladies".

decided that he wanted to go to the indulgence and to take us with him, not just so that we could receive the indulgence, which was large, but so we could see the procession of so many devoted people and find out if there were any ships in a port nearby which were due to sail towards Germany or England, places through which it behove us to pass for the purposes of our repatriation. So it was that at the appropriate time we set off with him and with a company of his servants which exceeded a hundred horses, beautifully groomed, and every day we stopped at very comfortable lodgings in the lands belonging to Sir Zuan. The trip took five days and, truly, the magnificent and splendid hospitality of the castle was repeated in the villages along the way. We arrived in Vastena on the eve of the indulgence. We found a procession of countless people from various nations: many knights with their servants from Denmark, over six hundred miles away; others from Germany, from Holland, from Scotland, which are overseas; others still from Norway and Sweden, with many having arrived by land. Here we learned that in Lodese,⁶⁵ a coastal town eight days journeying away, there were two ships, one headed for Germany, more precisely Rostoch,⁶⁶ and the other for the island of England. This left us most elated and, since we stayed until the day after the ceremony, which was on the 1st of August, we received the indulgence most devoutly. On the third day we obtained leave from the magnificent knight, who embraced us all with such sweet and loving words that we all cried, and he entrusted us to one of his sons named Mafio, a very well-mannered and caring young man, commanding him to lead us to Lodese. Furthermore, seeing that I was suffering somewhat from fever, that most valorous of knights, to make me more comfortable, wanted to give me one of his excellent ambling horses, with a gait so gentle I have never seen the like. And I well had need of it as my fever increased; in other circumstances it would have done me much harm.

Upon arrival at Lodese we took lodgings in one of his own houses that he had there with possessions, like the one in Vastena, and here we were overseen by the son in the style customary to him and his father. We re-

65 Lödöse.

66 Rostock.

mained there several days awaiting the departure of the aforementioned ships. Eventually the ship bound for Rostoch in Germany departed, and with it departed Niccolo di Michiel, my clerk, Cristoforo Fioravante, my counsellor,⁶⁷ and Girardo dal Vin, second officer. The eight of us remaining then left for England on the 14th September, supplied by Mafio with all the things we might need. And as pleased the divine Goodness, we had eight days and nights of such favourable and gentle wind that we arrived in England, at *Lisla*,⁶⁸ which is in the most northerly part of the island.⁶⁹ Here the good captain introduced us to the ship's owner, a rich and well-to-do man, who, having heard about our predicament, received us with a kind of charity that even our closest relatives would struggle to match. We stayed in this place for two days and two nights, after which the owner of the ship put us on our way to London, with his goodwill and a present to me of four nobles.⁷⁰

But I do not want to pass over in silence what happened to me when I disembarked the ship at *Lisla*. It seemed to me that I had escaped from the bowels of hell and I was awash with such happiness and devotion that for that night I could not sleep, thanking God and crying tenderly. Leaving *Lisla*, we went up a river by rowing boat⁷¹ and we arrived in Cambridge, a large settlement where there is a university with various faculties. On Sunday we went to Mass at an important monastery⁷² and, while we were listening to Mass, a monk from the monastery, of the Order of St Benedict, came to find me. Thinking that I was superior in rank

67 *Huomo di consiglio*. Fioravante's functions are unclear, whether he served as Querini's right-hand man in everything including commerce or specifically in the management of the ship. Fioravante's apparent greater knowledge of maritime matters may imply that Querini, though captain by virtue of his ownership of the ship and its cargo, in fact delegated the command to Fioravante who acted as master of the vessel.

68 This must be Lynn in Norfolk, then Bishop's Lynn and now King's Lynn. But Querini may subsequently have confused details of his journey, as the name implies the Isle of Ely, through which they would have passed on their way from Lynn to Cambridge.

69 Lynn is of course an east coast port, although Querini presumably noticed that they had to approach it from a northerly direction. His confusion is perhaps an indication that he had little experience of navigating the seas outside the Mediterranean.

70 *Nobeli*. The noble was an English gold coin worth 6s.8d (six shillings and eightpence, 80d or one-third of a pound), issued from the mid-14th century until the 1460s.

71 *Bato*.

72 There was no such monastery in Cambridge; perhaps Querini was misled by the presence of the monk, of whom this university town would have contained many. Probably he attended the church of St Mary the Great.

to the others, he said to me in Latin that after Mass he wanted to speak to me. As soon as Mass had finished he came to find me and took me alone to a remote part of the church. After he had questioned me regarding my nationality and the events that had befallen us, he thrust sixteen *scudi*⁷³ into my hand, saying that he wanted to go to the Holy Sepulchre and that he would perhaps pass by Venice and come to find me. I accepted these alms and thanked him appropriately, then I left and went to give cheer to my companions, reporting everything. Having paid the inn with these alms, we all began cheerfully to once again give thanks to divine mercy, as not for a single day since leaving the deserted island, despite the lack of money and possessions, had we suffered from a shortage of food, grace always providing for us at the right time and place. Let us hope therefore in God and do good, for he will never fail us.

We left Cambridge and the following day we arrived in London, anticipated by just a few hours by my helmsman with two others. He made himself known to the merchant community of our nation and told them of my coming, whereupon Master Vettor Cappello⁷⁴ with the others came to intercept us, travelling many miles from London to meet us. When we met, our joy was such as every person of wit will understand. Embracing me, crying compassionately, it seemed to them that they had recovered someone long lost, while for my part I felt I had been restored from death to life. They led me and all those in my company to their houses and received us there as if we were none other but their own dearly loved brothers. Master Zuan Marcanuova, exceptionally courteous and decorated with every virtue, came to visit me, because I was unable to venture outside, and he similarly embraced me with great affection and love; then he led away the nobles born in Candia⁷⁵ whom I had in my company and were in need of care, that is Master Francesco Quirini and Master Piero Gradenico his nephew, who truly could not have hoped for better, because their bodies had been so

73 *Scudi* were issued by many states in Italy and elsewhere, though somewhat after Querini's time. Unless the word is a later interpolation in the text, it would seem to be a general term for a major coin, perhaps a half- or quarter-noble.

74 For Vettor Cappello, and Giovanni Marcanova, see Richard Holt, *Putting Querini in his Place*, below.

75 Querini may here be using "Candia" to mean the whole of Crete rather than just the city of that name.

weakened and ravaged by the long journey that had it not been for this loving and merciful reception they would have run the risk of death. Therefore they were tended in that house with a dedication and charity far in excess of their requirements. In the house where I was staying, that of the valorous Master Vettor Cappello, in the company of Master Ieronimo Bragadin, men of great humanity and courtesy, I too found that all my requirements were so abundantly met that I would not have been able to want for anything else. They endeavoured, together with the other merchants, in every possible way to comfort me and help me, so that I could regain my health. O Lord God, how very great are the gifts and grace you bestow on us amidst such difficulty, danger and misfortune, that from an extreme of misery and calamity you restore us to such an abundance of every good! This I feel with my heart, say with my tongue and also put down in writing.

After a few days, a part of my company wanted to leave, namely the helmsman Bernardo da Cagliari and Andrea di Piero da Otranto, both mariners, to fulfil their religious vows, and I stayed behind with Niccolo, faithful servant, and Alvise di Nasimben, officer, in the house of the Venetian lords,⁷⁶ as did Quirini and Gradenigo. Money was given to those who left, so that they would not suffer any difficulties along the way.

We stayed in London for around two months, against our will, at the behest of the noble and caring merchants, who deemed us still too weak. We were all dressed and groomed in accordance with our rank. They wanted me and my companions to consider as a gift all the clothes and money that they gave us for the horses and the journey. I thanked them but in no way could I accept, making sure they were reimbursed. I beseeched him to bestow his favour instead on the other companions, insofar as they were in need. When the time came for our departure from London, I procured horses and a guide for us and set off together with the noble Master Hieronimo Bragadin, one of our benefactors. Having crossed the sea, some mariners separated from my company to go and perform their religious vows and Masters Francesco Quirini and Piero

76 Who seem thus to have had a common commercial base in London, with ample living accommodation.

Gradenigo, noblemen of Candia, also went their own way. Both we and they passed through Germany. Master Hieronimo and I took the route through Basle and in twenty-four days we arrived at the cherished haven of our *patria*, our mother city Venice, where my prayer was answered by the merciful God through the intercession of Saint Augustine, a prayer which for forty days I had recited devoutly on my bare knees before the Crucifix with steadfast hope and faith of being heard. It began: “O most sweet Jesus Christ, True God etc.” and my request was that the Lord God grant me the grace to return home safe and find there my family alive and in health. Such came to pass, therefore may praise and glory unceasingly be made to the Lord *in secula seculorum*.

The End of the Voyage and Shipwreck of the Magnificent Master Piero Quirino.

SHIPWRECK OF THE ABOVE-NAMED MASTER PIERO QUIRINO DESCRIBED BY CRISTOFORO FIORAVANTE AND NICOLO DI MICHIEL, WHO WERE PRESENT¹

Translation by Adam Greenwood

Footnotes by Richard Holt

Examples infinite, ancient and modern, constantly exhort us mariners, in our lives of misery and toil, to always have our mind and spirit directed towards our Merciful Lord Jesus Christ. However, whether as a result of being poorly raised, or of natural inclination, which always tends towards evil, these exhortations do us little good. Therefore, in the hope of moving our hardened and irreligious spirits, it seemed to us a worthy task to commit to posterity, rather than let slip into oblivion, a pitiful and cruel journey full of countless extreme incidents. These happened in 1431 to a Venetian cog² with a burden of over seven hundred *botte*,³ loaded with wines, spices, cottons and other merchandise of great value, built of cyprus wood and crewed in Candia with sixty-eight men.⁴ The ship was to sail west and her captain was Master Piero Quirini, Venetian gentleman. After much trouble, misfortune and damage incurred on the journey from Candia to the West, on the 6th of November of the year the ship arrived at the mouth of the channels of Flanders, but she left them

1 Translation from the original Italian text: *Naufragio del sopradetto Messer Piero Quirino descritto da Cristoforo Fioravante e Nicolo de Michiel, che erano presenti* in G.B. Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, 1559. The translation has not been entirely consistent with rendering of proper names. Most are left untouched, given in their original form; at the same time, it would seem pedantic not to translate directly names of well-known features such as the Straits of Gibraltar.

2 *cocca*, a type of roundship originating in northern waters that was introduced as a trading vessel into the Mediterranean after 1300. The cog had a stern rudder and a square-rigged sail and generally one mast, although Querini's ship had two. F.C. Lane, *Venice: A maritime republic* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 122-4.

3 Reckoned to be some 420 tons, using Lane's multiplier of 0.6 to translate *botte* to tons: Frederic Lane, "Tonnages, medieval and modern", *Economic History Review*, ser. 2, 17 (1964), pp. 213-33.

4 Which disagrees with Querini's statement that they were 68 on board only when he had hired extra soldiers at Cadiz. This could be just a simplification: Fioravante provides no details of the vicissitudes between that date and the fatal loss of the rudder on 6th November, that Querini gives precisely and at great length.

far behind, carried by a storm from the south-east in a north-westerly direction around a hundred and forty miles, running further and further above the island of *Ussenti*,⁵ where we, Cristoforo Fioravante and Nicolo di Michiel, agree that at midday we sounded with the lead and found ourselves in fifty-five fathoms of water.⁶ We sounded again towards evening and found bottom at over ninety fathoms. But the storm and the wrath of the winds were so great that they broke five hinges from our rudder, which were fastened to the sternpost of the ship, such that some of the gudgeons were ruined. To repair the rudder we tried to put it back and to secure it using hemp rope, cables and strops, which we did with the greatest difficulty, yet the ship continued to head towards west-northwest with a wind from the east.

On the 11th of the month we found we had been blown almost to the end of the island of Ireland, where we met two ships from *Baia*⁷ full to the gunwales with salt, which were making for Ireland. We endeavoured to pull up alongside to hail them; with difficulty we managed to shout a few words to one of them and we realized that the ships also wanted to speak to us, and had the force of the storm not obstructed us we would each have extended help to the other. But, as we later found out, one of the ships came to grief.

At dawn on the 12th, the storm, not abating but rather worsening hour by hour, unleashed such force and fury upon the weakened rudder that it broke all its fixings, leaving it hanging to one side. Whereupon as a last resort we tied a great cable to it, with which we towed it behind us for three days, unable to do anything else. In this time we believed we ran over two hundred miles against our will.

On the morning of the 15th, seeing that the wind and sea had somewhat calmed, we pulled the rudder aboard the ship with great effort. We hoped that in time we could mend it and use it again. In the meantime we constructed two stabilizers or sea anchors out of timber, with which

5 Ushant.

6 *passa*. This is a recollection; they have no ship's log or other written record to work from.

7 The bay of Bourgneuf on the coast of the French Vendée, an important area for salt production in the middle ages.

we could oppose the course imposed on us by the wind and sea. These, against our will, were still pushing the ship along transversely, as we were unable to harness the wind in the sails for our purposes.

We sailed on amidst these difficulties from the 20th to the 25th November, the night of Saint Catherine. That night the posts of the two makeshift rudders we had made in the absence of the real rudder were smashed and broken to bits by the ferocity of the wind and sea. Furthermore, the storm took with it most of the windward part of the sail on the right side of the ship, following which at dawn it was necessary to let down the yard with the little that remained of the sail and put up a second sail, although it was far from sufficient in times of such raging storm. Then we lifted away the battens of the two makeshift rudders and with various bits of wood we made another one, which bore little resemblance to a true rudder. We then put it in its place to steer the ship. But it only lasted until the 26th of November, when the force of the sea carried it off completely, leaving us without any hope of navigating the vessel.

On the 27th we were all full of sorrow and anguish. Death seemed to be reflected in us. Not knowing what to do, we decided to put down an anchor. Sounding the depth with the lead, it was eighty fathoms in the morning; hoping for shallower waters, we sounded again in the evening but found ourselves to be some one hundred and twenty fathoms from the sand. It seemed to us the case not to wait any longer to anchor ourselves, whence we took three new, thick cables and tied them together end to end, such that their combined length would span the distance to the sea floor. Tying the cable to the main anchor, we threw it into the sea. It held us firmly, while the ship continued to toil for a long space of time. The storm worsened, however, making the rope of the anchor rub so much on the side of the ship that it began to fray. Seeing that the rope in this state was not going to last long and losing all hope of being secured by it, we thought to cut it, which we did, leaving it in the sea together with the iron.⁸ The ship, cast adrift, went where the fury of the winds and sea bade, to the great fright of those aboard.

8 Pace Querini's assertion that cutting the cable was done in panic, without authority.

On the 29th, the storm did not let up one bit, indeed its fury grew hour by hour, as a gust of wind, stronger than usual, stripped the second sail from the yard. Frightened and dismayed, we strove once again to fashion another sail from the rags of the first and second.⁹ It was more of a flag than a sail. We hung it as best as we could on the yard and with this arrangement we were carried now here, now there, wherever the sea decided, until the 4th December, which was the day of Saint Barbara.

On the 4th the rage of the wind once again intensified, to the extent that it took away the third sail altogether. Denuded of sail and rudder, we carried on without direction until the 8th, aimlessly, with no idea how to rescue ourselves. From then on the wind from the east grew ever stronger, the force of which began to whip up the sea so high that the waves seemed like mountains, far bigger than anything we had seen before, and in the obscurity of the endless night it seemed as though we were going into the depths of hell. At this point one can imagine the anguish and fear in our hearts, because although we were alive, yet in that moment we felt as if we were dead, all the time expecting death, which we saw present among us. In the gloom the heavens flashed open at intervals with bolts and lamps of lightning, so bright that they temporarily took away our vision. At one moment, the ship being carried up on a wave, it would seem that we could touch the stars, the next we would find ourselves buried in hell. We were terrified and had lost all our strength and ability to help ourselves. We could do no more than look at one another with pity. After a long time of being blown along with such force, a wave came over us leeward and with such fury that water came pouring in and almost half-filled the ship. Already weakened, the ship heeled, revealing its underside. Those would indeed have been our final moment and the sea would certainly have swallowed us up, had it not been for our Lord Jesus Christ, who does not abandon those who call upon him with piety. He instilled in our spirits so much vigour and strength that we decided – seeing the ship in such a perilous condition, full of water, and unable to bail it out with human force – to cut down the mast and

9 The ship had carried only one spare sail, therefore.

throw it overboard along with the yard and rigging. This we did, and the lightened ship was afforded a little respite, whence we took heart; we began to bail water overboard and after much toil and sweat we prevailed over the water. Thus occupied, we ran before the wind the whole of that endless night. When the semblance of day came, our noble and steadfast captain spoke to us. He had seen his ship denuded of all its equipment and controls, a ship he had built and bedecked with so much joy. He was burdened by unimaginable sadness and fatigue which left him dazed and beside himself, realizing that there was no longer any way of saving ourselves and that we were being directed by the caprice of the wind and sea. Yet he then steeled himself, showing no sign of worry at all on his face or in his speech, even though his heart was shot with grief and tears were visible in his eyes. He turned to us and in a strong voice he began to address us in this way:

“My dear brothers and companions, united in such an extreme and horrifying situation, since He who alone is able to save our souls and in this way purify them decided to lead us to this pitiful pass, I pray you with all my heart to raise your minds towards our Lord, who for the love of us came to this world to suffer death with so great and so cruel a passion. Repent of all your sins and commend yourselves to his pity, so that when the hour comes when we must leave this pitiful and afflicted life, an hour I see approaching, his Majesty will receive us on our passage into his benign and compassionate arms.”

At that point his voice failed him, his heart awash with compassion, and for some time he remained there unable to speak, without, however, showing any signs of his grief, other than that we could see tears streaming from his eyes. Once he had recovered himself, he carried on in the same steadfast voice:

“Having reflected on the frightful circumstances in which we find ourselves, I see clearly that to remain with the ship is to prepare ourselves for a certain death and that we will be the authors of our own demise.

For even if the winds abated and the seas calmed, still we would only have supplies to last us forty days, saving and stretching as far as possible the victuals we have with us. When this has finished, we will all die at once without delay, being without any means of help or of piloting this corpse of a ship, which, without sails, masts and rudder, can well be called dead. If we abandon ship with the few supplies we have left and climb aboard the two boats we have here on the ship, it is true that we will not escape the violence of the sea, to which one can only submit, but we will have means of governing the boats and sails, enabling us to navigate to wherever we understand lies our salvation, rather than being driven here and there against our will. Therefore, if it pleased our Lord God to give us a little calm, which would be a sign that he was placated with regard to us miserable sinners, my idea, if it found favour with you too, would be to furnish the boat and the skiff with the few remaining victuals, dividing them equally.”

To these final words, everyone, in tears, replied that they agreed. Our captain then continued:

“Therefore, with your consent, I command you, Nicolo di Michiel, clerk, to keep a private record of the names of those who would like to board the skiff and those who would like to board the boat.”

Immediately forty-five people voted to board the skiff, which only had a capacity of twenty-one men, and therefore it was necessary to decide who would go on it by casting lots.¹⁰ This was done, whereupon they prepared it and put it in order. They did the same with the boat, aboard which went the captain with forty-seven men, who had survived thus far. On the 17th of December, the fury of the winds had let up somewhat and everyone felt the time was right to leave the ship and climb aboard the boats. But the rudder, which was laid out on deck, prevented us from launching them into the sea. We had to cut it up and make it into three pieces, before throwing them over the side. The day was so short that

10 Pace Querini's assertion that such a course was not necessary.

a moment later it was night, which meant we had to wait for the 18th.¹¹ On this day the sea was calmer and we began to ready ourselves to hoist the boat and skiff. However, in the absence of the mast, we had to use the tiller of the rudder, along with ropes and pulleys, and in this manner we made ready to hoist the boat. But we were unable to lift it high enough, such that it remained on the internal side of the ship's hull. It was necessary therefore to cut away a section of the side of the ship, no less than two yards in depth and many more in width, and this allowed us to launch the boats into the sea without damage. The time came for us to depart in our respective vessels. Our hearts were laden with sadness. We began to embrace and kiss one another amidst infinite tears, sighs and sobs. Our spirits were so immured in sorrow that it was impossible to articulate a single word, leaving us to look at one another with tearful eyes. The twenty-one who had been selected by lot boarded the skiff. They were given, by way of rations – determined by what remained of the victuals – biscuits, about three hundred pounds of bread-dust, eighty pounds of Candian cheese, eight pounds of dry bacon, forty pounds of tallow to trim the vessel, around two pounds of oil and no more, but seven small barrels of Tyrian wine, which is a variety of Malvasia.¹² More than this the boat could not hold. Forty-seven men likewise boarded the other boat. The captain kept a count and they were apportioned their share of the supplies, plus a little green ginger in syrup form and lemon syrups, with a few spices that had been found. By our judgement we were five hundred miles or more from the nearest island or land windward in a northerly direction. For that short day we sailed in convoy with our twenty-one companions on a tranquil sea, drawing comfort from the onset of such mild conditions. But as night fell a fog descended, shrouding us in obscurity. It heralded the sinister fate and end which were to befall our companions aboard the skiff, whom we lost from sight and were never to see again.

11 Querini and Fioravante disagree as to the date they abandoned ship, Querini asserting it was on the 17th. As he also writes that this was a Tuesday (and the 17th that year fell on Monday) Fioravante's date is on balance the better one.

12 This precise account of the given quantities might imply that di Michiel retained some sort of note made when they divided the rations.

As dawn broke on the 19th we saw no sign of the skiff and we were uncertain of their fate. And our spirits were most troubled by the uncertainty of what had happened, for the winds became ferocious, so much so that a violent wave surged onto the ship behind the stern, where we, Cristoforo and Nicolo, were sitting. Two stays were bent under the force of its fury, causing unsustainable distress to the boat, which was weighed down more by the burden of the water than by her own weight. In order to rescue the vessel, we all raced to lade her with our bare hands. Driven by fear and necessity in our effort to alleviate her, we threw overboard everything that came to hand most readily and easily, whether it was water or not. Once the boat had been bailed we realized immediately that amidst the drama we had tossed away the greater part of our wine. Our situation was now so desperate that if anyone wanted to taste of the wine to revive their stricken senses, he was limited to a ration of no more than one cup a day, and whoever wanted more to drink was obliged to drink seawater. This arrangement lasted for no longer than eight days, after which, realizing the extent of our deprivation, we imposed an even greater extremity on ourselves, reducing our ration to half a cup each day. None of us could sleep for any length of time owing to the various unknowns and dangers which were always present to us. There would be four or six of us at all times tending the helm and bailing out the bilges. These men would stand diligently and upright at their posts until they were relieved. The cold that we suffered on these shifts was without comparison, far greater than the cold that we had not many years ago in Venice, when all the canals froze over, when not only men and women crossed over from Marghera¹³ to Venice on the ice, but great numbers of oxen, horses, carts and wagons, much to the admiration of the people. For this region is incomparably colder than the country of Italy. Imagine what our condition was, exposed to the elements as we were, with minimal clothing, with no food or drink, or anything else necessary for a human to live, apart from a little bread-dust, with each night twenty-one hours long, and dark too. As a result

13 On the mainland of Italy, separated by a channel some 10 kilometres across during the middle ages.

of the cold we began to lose feeling in our feet and little by little the intense cold invaded our entire bodies, awakening in us a rabid, canine hunger, such that everyone sought to devour whatever was closest to them wherever they could, insofar as their impoverished, diminished strength permitted them. With the arrival of death, their heads would lollop to one side and they would fall down dead on the spot.

Of the forty-seven men who found themselves in these dire circumstances, twenty-six expired, and it is not to be wondered at, since we had no recourse whatsoever, indeed it is a divine miracle that anyone survived at all. Those who remained survived only to provide a reminder to us to exalt the divine power to the heavens. The twenty-six men died between the 23th of December and the 3rd of January, at the rate of one, two or more a day. We gave them to the sea for burial.

On the 31st of December, our wine ran out completely. Considering the appalling experience of our twenty-six companions, who had died as a result of drinking seawater, by necessity we steeled our stomachs and drank our urine to slake our thirst. There were some who were already used to drinking it in abundance, since they missed the usual abundance of wine and they could not tolerate or banish the extreme thirst. This alone, however, did not quench their thirst and indeed they considered it the highest favour to be able to beg for some of it from their companions, among whom in turn there were those who would refuse it to their closest friends, wanting to keep it for themselves. It is true that some of us warily corrected it with a little green ginger or lemon syrup, a supply of which by chance remained.

On the 3rd of January we had our first sight of land, which filled us with unimaginable hope, even though it was a great distance away. We saw some rocks windward, buried under masses of snow; but, owing to contrary winds, we could not approach them under sail, or indeed with the oars, since our arms had been considerably weakened. We endeavoured to approach them going with the wind but the currents took us past and we completely lost sight of the land.

On the 5th of the month we sighted a higher peak leeward and immediately we sought to approach it, such that we ran for some hours. Given

our upwind position to the albeit distant island, we spread our sail and within around three nocturnal hours we were upon it. We had perhaps gone too close: it was only through the light of divine mercy that those stationed at the prow noticed the hidden, rocky island. Immediately those manning the rudder were ordered to pull leeward. We were in very great danger of certain shipwreck as there were countless rocks underneath us, giving us much fright, for we had gone between two rocks into a place which in every direction was stony and unnavigable. At that point God in his pity immediately sent a wave, which did not break, digging us out in one piece from that concavity. It filled the boat with a great quantity of water, which we bailed immediately. Truly we recognized this to be a gift of our Lord God, who, in accordance with our requirements and with the severity of the situation, gave us courage, strength and skill of body, as also of mind.

Going in the direction of one of the higher peaks, we sighted a gully between two adjacent mountains, which, at around the fourth hour of night, we tried to enter, but the cruel winds denied us. Spurred by the intense desire to reach land, we drew on all our strength and by dint of oars and of divine assistance we entered the cove precisely in its least treacherous part, as it were at its beginning. As soon as we felt the boat hit sand underneath, five of our company – more motivated by a desire to drink than by anything else – jumped into the water without a second thought, even though it was very deep. They headed straight for the snow and ingested an astonishing amount of it. They then brought great quantities of it to the rest of us, who had remained with the boat to defend it from being battered in the waves. We too fell on the snow with great avidity, consuming it without measure.

According to our calculations, our boat had run for eighteen days from the day we left the ship to that day the 6th of January; always sailing between north-east and east, with winds of no less than six miles per hour, we had covered more than two thousand five hundred miles, without ever having seen land.¹⁴

14 Only the most approximate estimate can be made of their position when they abandoned ship, but following Fioravante's reckoning it would have been well to the north of Ireland.

On the 6th of January – the ceremonial day of the Epiphany – nineteen of us disembarked on to land, an uninhabited and barren place called the Island of Saints¹⁵ off the coast of Norway and subject to the Crown of Denmark. We left two men in charge of the weakened boat, to prevent it from being broken up by the sea. Once disembarked, we set about making a fire with an oar, repairing with the box of flint to the area least exposed to the wind. At the sight of fire our bodies revived a little. But during that first night, as a result of the hardships already experienced, three of our companions who had come ashore died. The two companions who had remained aboard the boat abandoned their post, since nobody went, nor could they go, to help or relieve them. Together with their things, trembling with cold and half-dead, they came to find us, where they were able to warm themselves just a little. We realized the gravity of our situation. We knew that the island was uninhabited; furthermore, we could tell quite clearly that another island five miles from us was inhabited, as we saw fires and rivers there. The eighteen of us who were left decided to go there. Our boat had suffered much damage at the hands of the sea during the time she had been unattended; therefore we tried to plug and caulk her as best we could, before loading the items that we still had left and preparing to go to the island. But as soon as we had embarked, the boat split open and her hull flooded: within an instant she was full of water, whereupon we were obliged to change our plans.

Some of us jumped out neck-deep in water, some up to their waists in shallower water, as we tried to pull her ashore. Having lost hope of ever boarding her again, we chose to adapt her in such a way that she provided cover for us as best we could, rendering her into two parts. With the bigger part we made a shelter or rather a kind of cabin for thirteen of us, with the smaller part we made another capable of holding five men. We entered the shelters, covering them with part of our sail, and we kept a fire burning continuously using the remaining parts and effects of the boat, merely to keep us alive.

15 *L'Isola di Santi.*

In the absence of any source of food or drink, we roamed the shore, where nature proffered us a lifeline in the form of a few sea snails and barnacles. These we found neither in the quantity nor as often as we desired, rather as often as we could and in small quantities. By uncovering the snow in certain places, we found some grass underneath, which we would put into the cauldron with some snow and eat when it seemed cooked. We could not satiate ourselves on this and we lived for thirteen continuous days with very little charity among us, owing to the scarcity of all things and extreme hunger, more in common with the life of beasts than that of humans.

Subjected to a life so harsh, it came to pass that four of our company who were in the main shelter passed away, just where our unfortunate captain was. They were unable to withstand the hardship and of course did not benefit from any treatment, whether of body or soul. Their bodies stayed where they were, since we were so intensely weak and devoid of our strength that we could move them no further than two yards away from our eyes. Indeed I should add that no sooner had we taken the frozen or warm water into our mouths than our bodies rejected it, though we were unable to abstain from it, nor could we even stand up.

The cold season had reduced us to such a state that in order to warm ourselves we stayed huddled up, making it seem as though we were sewn together. I entered under the sail, which covered both cabins all the way down to the ground, meaning that the smoke – produced in my opinion by the pitch covering some of the bits of the boat – could not escape. As a result, our eyes became so enflamed that we could not see. But we were prepared to suffer anything if we could only warm ourselves. Our clothes, which not once did we remove, began to teem with vermin. Lice abounded in such quantity that we were grabbing them and throwing them in the fire in handfuls. They ate into our skin and in some cases right down to the bone, eventually causing the death of one of our young clerks, who could not defend himself against such abominable vermin – an example to us to abate our pride and haughtiness.

Consensus no longer existed among us: everyone did what he deemed best. So it was that some of our companions, whilst roaming the wild

and uninhabited land, came to know of a solitary, old shelter built by shepherds for use in summer, located on the highest point of the island's western coast and about one and a half miles from our own shelter. Six of the eight of our company who were in the first shelter decided to relocate to the new shelter, in order to reduce their discomfort. They left behind their two companions in the abandoned refuge, because they were unable to walk, just as we were powerless to take them.

It came to pass, by the grace and gift of God, that these six men found a colossal fish. I waver between calling it a whale or a porpoise;¹⁶ at any rate, we must assume it was sent by the highest and divine goodness to nourish us. Considering that it had been thrown on to the beach by the sea, dead, but fresh, and huge, and in a time of such need, we rendered thanks to the most merciful Lord God, who at that time desired to sustain our bodies so extenuated and so desperate for such food, placated perhaps by the prayers of some vigilant and devout soul.

Soon the other five of us in the second, smaller shelter became aware that our companions had acquired such an abundant bounty¹⁷ and that they wanted to keep it a secret. Angered we went to find them, prepared in our want to impose ourselves by love or force, driven by hunger to the verge of every conceivable cruelty and to threaten them with death. Every hour the hate among us grew.

Our prudent captain could see that we were ablaze with anger and he began to entreat them with humble words, full of charity, threatening divine wrath on those cruel enough not to make us sharers in the gift, a gift sent to them by our most merciful Lord. As a result we joined them in eating as much of the fish as we wanted and even the two other companions who had remained in the first shelter too weak to move had some. We nourished ourselves happily with this fish for nine days and as luck would have it those nine days had so much wind, rain and snow that the cruel weather would never have let us take more than a footstep outside our cabin.

As we finished the miraculous fish, the raging weather had settled down somewhat. Without food, like wolves driven by hunger in

16 *Balena ouer porcho de mare.*

17 *Preda*, literally "prey".

search of habitations, we left our cabin and roamed the deserted island in search of a little sustenance in the way of sea snails and barnacles, with which we had to content ourselves, even though they were tiny morsels. Thus we nourished ourselves up to the end of January 1431,¹⁸ rendering us thin, pale, full of suffering and half dead. During this time we came across some cattle dung which had been blasted by the cold and wind and which we used as fuel. It gave us confirmation that that place had been used by oxen, which in turn gave us firm hope of some future deliverance, enabling us to put up with some of our painful thoughts and sufferings.

The hour finally came when our Maker and merciful Lord desired to lead his exhausted lambs to the haven of safety. It happened as follows. The year before a fisherman from an island five miles away had lost two heifers, which had escaped from the place where he used to keep them. Over the course of the year he had heard nothing more of the two heifers and had no expectation of finding them, when one night – the eve of the first day of February – one of the sons of the fisherman from Rustene (the name of the island),¹⁹ a sixteen year-old, had a vision of how the two heifers had escaped onto the Island of Saints – a distance away from their original island – to be precise to the western part of the island where we were camped, where no one dared go owing to the low tides. The son who had the vision begged his father and his older brother to join him in going to look for them; so it was that all three of them aboard a fishing boat be-took themselves to the island and they came precisely to where we were. The two sons went ashore, leaving the father to look after the boat. Having climbed a little way up the coastal hill, they saw before them smoke in the air coming from their formerly used cabin. At this, in their fear and confusion, they marvelled, and not a little, wondering how, whence and by what means this could be. Therefore they remained there astonished and, wanting to know the explanation, they began to talk to one another. Although we heard the sounds they were making and their voices, we

18 The new year did not start generally in Europe until 25th March, although the Venetian new year began on 1st March: *Handbook of Dates*, ed. C.R. Cheney, (Royal Historical Society, London, 1978), pp. 3-5. This was now 1432 by modern reckoning.

19 Røst, or more correctly Røstlandet.

could not understand what to make of it. We were more inclined to think that it was the cawing of ravens than human voices, owing to the fact that a few days before we had seen hoards of them feasting upon the pitiful bodies of our eight companions, which we had thrown to the elements. As they feasted they rent the air with their shrieking, thus we thought it must be they who made the noise. But as the voices of the children of God, who had been sent to save us, went on, we could clearly tell that they were the voices of humans rather than the crying of birds. At that moment Cristoforo Fioravante went outside the shelter. Upon seeing the two young men, he came towards us shouting at the top of his voice: "Rejoice, there are two people here who have come to find us!" Burning with desire, we got to our feet, moving ourselves more with our hearts than our feet. Having reached them, we realized that this sudden and incredible event had frightened them; they became pale. We, meanwhile, were overjoyed and filled with new-found hope. By means of actions and gestures of humility, we demonstrated that we were in no way going to harm them. Several ideas occurred to us: whether we should keep one or both of them with us, or whether one or two of us should go with them. The first idea did not recommend itself to us, for we did not know with whom or with how many we were dealing, unable as we were to understand each other. Advised by the Holy Spirit, we were as courteous as we could be, as we went back to their boat where their father awaited them. He too was dumbstruck when he saw us. In the meantime we looked in their boat to see if there was anything to help with our hunger but we did not find anything. They were moved to pity, realizing that we were famished through the signs and actions that we were making, and they agreed to take two of us with them, the second officer Ghirardo da Lione and the seaman Cola di Otranto, who knew a little French and High Dutch.²⁰ The rest of us stayed behind, mightily hopeful of imminent salvation.

When their boat arrived at Rustene carrying our two companions, all the people there gathered around. Seeing the appearance and clothing of our companions, amazed at such an usual event, they began to dis-

20 That is, German.

cuss among themselves whence and how two men such as these had appeared, or whence they had landed, and to be better understood they tried speaking in different languages. Finally a German priest of the Order of the Preachers²¹ managed to communicate with one of our companions in High Dutch. In this way they came to know who we were, and from whence and how we had ended up there. The following morning, which was the second day of February, a day dedicated to the glorious Mother of Christ, all this was reported by the priest in an address to the entire population of Rustene. He entreated them to be moved to pity by our misfortune and to help us in accordance with their means. We on the uninhabited island waited meanwhile in the firm belief and unwavering hope that without any delay whatsoever they would return for us that morning, since this was what was agreed and, moreover, because our two companions would hasten them. But the day and the night passed without a sign of anyone. Various, dreadful thoughts coursed through our minds, all of them of a pessimistic bent, such that as the ceremony of the glorious Madonna drew to a close with no sign of an envoy or any help whatever, we were exceedingly disturbed and lay there half dead. Then, however, following the catholic message of the German priest, on the 3rd of February 1431,²² the day itself of Saint Biagio,²³ the kind and pitiful citizens of Rustene came to us. They brought vast amounts of every kind of food that they have, to nourish and revive us, and they wanted to take us into their loving homes so they might restore our extenuated bodies. So it was that we were led and welcomed into Rustene that same day, where we were provided with restorative meals, which in their abundance were in fact more harmful to us, because we could not satiate our hunger: our weak stomachs, unable to cope, brought about such a pain in the heart that we thought we were going to die.

Two of our company who were incapacitated had remained in the first and larger of our two shelters and knew nothing of our miraculous rescue. We told the catholic country people about them and also

21 The order of Dominican friars.

22 1432.

23 St Blaise.

about the other eight companions who had died but were unburied. The country people gathered together and went with the priest singing psalms and hymns, both to bury the eight dead and to bring the remaining two to safety. When they arrived on the Island of Saints they carried out their merciful duty upon the eight deceased, to whose number was added one of the other two, whom they found dead. Think how the other must have felt, without company or any human sustenance. With a glimmer of life remaining in him, he was taken to Røst, where two days later he departed this life.

Upon arrival in Rustene, we were taken to the house of our overseer, host and sire, as he and the others desired. In the entrance our prudent captain, drawing on his knowledge of these things, performed an act of great humility. As soon as he saw the consort of our superior, by gestures he showed his desire to recognize her as lady of the house and he threw himself at her feet. She would not have this, however, and she helped him up off the floor, embracing him. She then led him to the fire and personally gave him something to eat.

There are twelve little houses on this island and about a hundred and twenty souls, most of whom are fishermen. By nature they are gifted with the art of making boats, buckets, barrels, baskets, nets of every kind and everything else which is necessary for a fisherman. They are very kind to each other and willing to help, wanting to please more for the sake of love than in hope of some favour or gift in return. The currency of their payments and bartering, in place of coin, is fish called *stochfis*, which are almost all of a uniform size. Every year they dry an infinite quantity of these fish in the wind. In May they load them up and sail them to the kingdoms of Denmark – that is, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, although all are subject to the King of Denmark – and here they barter the fish against dressed leather, clothes, iron, pulses and other things of which they are in want.

There is little else here to live on besides fish, although at times there is a small amount of beef and cow's milk, which they mix with rye and some other ingredient to make bread, which has an unpleasant taste. They drink soured milk, which is unpleasant to those who are not used to it.

They also make ale, that is, wine made from rye. We ate plaice, which are of enormous size, to be seen to be believed.²⁴ We saw some much more than six feet of common Venetian measure in length, more than two feet in width across the back, and of a height of more than two-thirds of a foot – an amazing thing to report.²⁵ The men wear red leathers and black too, resistant to water. The woollens that they wear are heavy, in colours of blue, red and greyish brown, and they import them from Denmark at low cost. These country people are in the habit of going to church very often, because they are extremely devout and hold religion in the greatest reverence. Avarice is almost wholly extinct among them; therefore they have no way of knowing or understanding what it is to make one's own what belongs to someone else, if not by means of barter. Neither, therefore, are they in the habit of locking their doors, their houses, their windows or any safe, except when they wish to deter the wild animals.²⁶ The inhabitants of these parts, both the young and old, have such simplicity of heart and are so obedient to the divine code that they neither know, understand, nor consider what fornication and adultery are. They treat marriage according to God's commandment, as a true sacrament, purely to obey the divine injunction rather than from any wish to satisfy or arouse the flesh, since the region is cold and contrary to lust. To give proof of this, I Cristoforo say that we were in the house of our aforementioned host and we slept in the same room where he and his wife slept, next to whom in an adjacent bed were his daughters and sons of a ripe age, all together. We slept not at all far from these beds, indeed right next to them, such that when they went to bed or rose in the morning or in the night, completely naked, as we were, we would look at each other quite normally, with such purity that it was as if we were little children. Indeed I will go on: almost once every two days our host would get up with his eldest sons in order to go fishing, at perhaps the most delicious hour of sleep, leaving his wife and daughters in bed, doing so with a con-

24 Halibut.

25 *Un piede veneziano*. A Venetian foot is 0.348m.

26 It is difficult to imagine which wild animals Fioravante was thinking of on Røst, other than rodents and birds.

fidence and purity that made it seem that he had left them in the arms of a mother, not returning for at least eight hours.

The inhabitants of this island, especially the older ones, find themselves so in accord with the will of God that whenever there is a natural death, be it a father, mother, husband, wife, child or any other relative or indeed friend, when the moment of their passing to the next life has come, immediately and without any bitterness of heart they gather together at the church²⁷ to thank and praise the highest Creator, who granted a life of so many years to that person, whom now, as his creature, he has desired to call to grace and to his side, wherefore at the appropriate time they cleanse that person so that he is as pure and clean as he was when born. Then, joyful, content with God's infallible will, they render praise and glory to Him, without showing any kind of grief in their speech or actions, just as if the deceased were merely asleep. We can say truly that between the 3rd of February 1431²⁸ until the 14th of May 1432 – one hundred and one days – we were within the circuit of paradise, to the shame and embarrassment of the Italian countries.

At the beginning of May we noted a great paradox of custom. Their women are accustomed to go to the baths, which are very near and commodious. Through purity and custom, which latter they hold to be a second nature, they leave their houses as naked as they left their mothers' wombs, heading off on their short journey without any qualms at all. In their right hands they carry bunches of grass which serve as brushes, which they say they use to wipe the sweat from their backs, while they keep their left hands on their hips, the fingers outstretched in what seems a gesture at covering their posteriors, even though their hands in fact are not very close at all. Having seen them more than twice, we would pass them by with the same nonchalance as did their own people. The cold climate and the habit of seeing them everyday caused us not to pay any attention at all to them. On the other hand, these same women would be seen on Sunday going into church wearing long garments of the greatest modesty. In order to completely hide their faces, they wear

27 *Cathedral.*

28 1432, of course, according to the modern calendar.

upon their heads something like a complete wimple including a gorget, which has a visor rather resembling a tube through which from inside they can see out, but only things that lie beyond the extent of the pipe, as if they had the instrument in their mouths ready to play. Worse, they cannot see or speak unless they distance themselves by an arm's length or more from the listener.²⁹ I wanted to record these two extremes of custom, as worthy of being understood.

Here, from the 20th of November up until the 20th of February, the night persists and lasts for around twenty-one hours or more, although the moon – or at least the moon's rays – are never completely hidden. From the 20th of May to the 20th of August either all of the sun is always visible or its rays are.³⁰

In this region there is an infinite number of white birds, which in the native language are called *muxi*, while we call them marine cocks.³¹ These by nature frequent and dwell in places inhabited by people, be that on a boat or on land, and they are as tame as the house doves we have at home. These birds give the impression of feeding and nourishing themselves purely by their squawking, so constant is their song. During the warmer period, when it is always day, they stop squawking for about four hours, at a time which for us would be just before sunset. At that time the country people, who are used to this, go to sleep, taking the pause as a sign of quiet. On this island and in the provinces of Sweden we saw the skins of bears of a pure white, as white as ermine, longer than twelve Venetian feet, astonishing but true.³²

We were in Rustene for three months and eleven days, waiting for the right time to sail with our host to Sweden, with his usual cargo of stockfish, a time which falls in May, when these islanders depart taking with them a huge amount of stockfish, and go to the kingdoms of the aforementioned King of Denmark.

29 This description seems to defy interpretation.

30 As he was present on the islands only from January to May, Fioravante is reporting what he has been told. The periods of darkness and sunlight are not so protracted as this at the latitude of Røst.

31 Kittiwakes, or *Rissa Tridactyla*.

32 If Fioravante really did see valuable polar bear skins on the island – and Querini says only that they saw one in the cathedral in Trondheim – then they had been acquired by trade, unless the islanders were also involved in hunting expeditions to the polar regions. It is more likely that Fioravante's memory was at fault.

On the 14th of May 1432, the moment so much desired came for us to turn our gaze towards our loving and beloved *patria*, which had always been in our hearts and minds, and to leave the charitable island of Rustene, which had been the help and remedy to our suffering. We took leave of our household acquaintances and from the lady of the house, our hostess, to whom – as a sign of charity – we left not what our debt obliged us to leave, but what we still had left in our possession: certain little trinkets of minimal value to us, such as goblets, girdles and little rings. We also took leave of our neighbours, of the priest and of everybody else, making known to them by gestures and words – insofar as they understood what was said through the interpreter – how we all felt very much obliged to them. After these farewells, we boarded the foist,³³ a boat with a burden of twenty *botte*³⁴ loaded with fish, and piloted by our patron host with three of his sons and some of his relatives. And on this day we departed, holding course for Bergen. This is the first port where they can properly despatch the fish, about one thousand miles from Rustene. They navigated the foist through a succession of straight and safe channels, rowing with great ease.

When we had travelled some two hundred miles from Rustene we came across some remains of the hull and planking belonging to our skiff, confirming to us that our companions aboard it had sunk and perished during that first night when we had lost each other.

On the 29th of May 1432, we docked with the foist at Trondheim, a city on the coast of Norway, under the dominion of the King of Denmark, where rests the venerated body of Saint Olaf. We stayed here for ten days, waiting for suitable weather and passage to continue our journey. However, these were not forthcoming and, so as not to lose any more time, we took leave of our loving host, his sons and all the others and continued our journey by land.

On the 9th of June we left Trondheim, travelling on foot towards Vastena, a city under the dominion of the King of Denmark in the province of Sweden, home to the jaw and part of the skull of Saint Brigida.

33 *fusta*: a light sailing boat with one mast, that was also rowed.

34 So of about 12 tons burden.

Here, when it was known that we were Venetian, the people sought to provide us with advice, help and money, for they held their glorious King Saint Olaf in much reverence and, as they well knew, our *signoria* of Venice had previously bestowed great favour on this saint during his journey to and from Jerusalem.³⁵ First, they advised us not to take the direct route through Denmark, owing to the threat of wild animals, but rather to journey towards Stichimborg and seek out a valorous Venetian knight called Master Giovan Franco. Through love of *patria* we could hope to receive from him a great deal of help and good favour, even though the road there would take us thirty days in the opposite direction to our direct route home.

Having left Vastena, two of our companions, fleet of foot than of mind, went on ahead at a distance of two bow shots. Finding a fork in the road, one prong of which was less-trodden but shorter and more rugged, they took the shorter road, arriving at Stichimborg on the 13th of July. The nine of us who were behind went by the other road, travelling with some consternation at having lost them. On the 18th we arrived in the court of the aforementioned knight, Master Giovan Franco, a baron honoured and esteemed by the Danish crown, where we found to our delight our two lost companions.

The valorous knight, who now had foreknowledge of our arrival, received us with a cheerful face and revealed to us how strong his patriotic love was, especially in view of the calamities and privation that had befallen us his compatriots and the fact he was able readily to assist us. He did not grow tired of honouring us, clothing us, feeding us, giving us money for things we required. He later equipped us with horses and personally accompanied us on our journey of many days riding across his lands. He brought with him his only son Master Mapheo and a hundred and twenty horses for his servants, and saw to all the expenses of the journey. At the borders of his territory, we took our leave, thanking him in the most reverential and loving words we could muster. Thereupon he departed and left us his son Master Mapheo as a guide along with

35 St Olaf, king of Norway 1015-28, died in battle in 1030 and never visited Jerusalem.

twenty grooms on horseback. The son accompanied us as far as Vastena, a place that we had left some forty days previously and to which we made pains to return, so that we might avoid a two-month journey by road. On the 30th of July we arrived in Vastena and stayed there up until the 2nd of August, accompanied and paid for by M. Mapheo.

On the 2nd of August we took our leave of M. Mapheo, showing him as much gratitude as we could. Having left him we went to Lodese,³⁶ where we arrived on the 11th of the month. Here we found two crossings, one for England, the other for the Low Countries. At this point we separated voluntarily into two groups. On the 22nd of August 1432, we Cristoforo Fioravante, the counsellor³⁷ aboard the unfortunate ship, together with Girardo da Lione, second officer, and Nicolo di Michiel of Venice, clerk, now writer of the present work, left our eight remaining companions, who went to London. We headed towards Venice via Rostoch,³⁸ pretending that we wanted to go to Rome to obtain a pardon. After many struggles and hardships, crossing over mountains, valleys and rivers, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, always with the help of the omnipotent God, we arrived safe and sound in our beloved *patria* of Venice on the 12th of October, 1432. We left the aforementioned Ghirardo da Lyon at *Vasenech*, who made his way from there to his own country. Those who went to England were as follows:

Master Piero Quirini, son of Master Francesco, ill-fortuned captain, who before these cruel events had been used to such refined living, as befitted a gentleman of his kind, of very delicate complexion. Therefore, just as before his body was weak and soft, after it had become strong and robust, its nature changed by the experience of hardship.

Master Francesco Quirini, son of Master Iacomo, Venetian gentleman and a merchant on the unhappy ship.

36 Lödöse.

37 *uomo di consiglio*.

38 Rostock.

Master Piero Gradenico, son of Master Andrea, eighteen years old, a young merchant. It is an incredible thing that at such a tender age he was able to withstand the struggles and hardships described.

Bernardo da Cagliari esquire, helmsman of the ship, whose wife, still young, aware both of the amount of time that had passed and of the many reports confirming that the ship and all those aboard had been in peril, with no evidence to the contrary, resolved to marry again at Treviso, haste prevailing over sense, as is the case with women in need. She lived for several months in holy matrimony and thought it to be permanent. But when she heard of our arrival and the truth regarding her living, true husband, she immediately dissolved the bond of the second marriage and retreated to a respectable nunnery, as much to prove the purity of her mind as to occupy the time before the return of her real spouse, who arrived back in Venice safe and sound about three months after us. Once some reasonable though unfounded suspicions had been cleared, he took her back, as an honest, wise and cherished woman. He took into consideration her weak nature, rather than her rash decision, and today he holds her innocence dearer than ever.

Aluise di Nasimben da Zara, officer aboard the ship.

Andrea di Piero da Sibenico, Cola da Otranto, seamen, and Nicolo Quirini, formerly Tartar and a highly loyal manservant, who ought sooner to be called nurse or mother of his patron Master Piero. Truly in every crisis he showed quite clearly that he held the life of his patron dearer than his own, always supplementing his rations with his own and thus providing for the extenuated body and appetite of his needful lord.

All these except Bernardo di Cagliari esquire returned after the performance of their vows from the 14th of January to the 25th of January. All the things related above were narrated by Cristoforo Fioravante and written down by Nicolo di Michiel clerk, but commissioned and put together by me, Antonio di Mattheo di Curado, according to the things

recited to me by them. In spite of their haphazard composition, they are nonetheless written in all truthfulness.

Master Piero Quirini, passing through Bruges on his return, stayed in the house of Master Vettor Cappello, son of Master Giorgio, where he heard one of the captains who we came across at Cape Clear, how on that night of our misfortune, the other patron with his ship full of salt, with whom they communicated, came to grief on the 11th of November 1431.

The End of the Narration of Cristoforo Fioravante and Nicolo di Michel regarding the Shipwreck of the Magnificent Master Piero Quirino.

PART 2

Texts, Interpretations, and Historical Perspectives

PUTTING QUERINI IN HIS PLACE: VENETIANS IN THE EUROPEAN TRADE NETWORKS

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Historians who have looked at the case of Pietro Querini and his crew have been concerned primarily with what they said about the way of life in Northern Norway. That is understandable, given the paucity of alternative sources; yet the texts are much more than a description of the island of Røst. They can tell about the operation of trading networks in western Europe, and a little about political affairs in both Norway and Sweden. They also provide information about travel through southern and inland areas of Norway. More intangibly, the texts further our understanding of attitudes and mentalities. There are popular editions of the texts in Norwegian which have actually cut out everything except the stay on Røst, and the descriptions of the lives of the fishing people. And yet to come to a fuller understanding of what was written about Røst, the reader will benefit from examining the texts as a whole, to form a deeper acquaintance both with Pietro Querini and his fellow-author, Cristoforo Fioravante.

All we know about the stranding of Pietro Querini and his crew on Røst in 1432 we have from the two short texts these men composed when they came home to Venice. How do we have these texts? There are several manuscript copies in Italian archives¹ but it can be argued that the best, most reliable texts are those printed by Giovanni Battista Ramusio in his *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, a description of famous voyages and early voyages of discovery, the first volume of which appeared first in Venice in 1550 and the third and final volume in 1556. The work appeared in several later editions in the years that followed.² Both texts describe a

1 Now edited by Angela Pluda, in *«Infelice e sventurata coca Querina», i racconti originali del naufragio dei Veneziani nei mari del Nord*, edited and annotated by Angela Pluda (Viella, Roma, 2019).

2 The text I have used is that of 1583 (volume 2), printed in facsimile, (Amsterdam, 1968), pp. 200-211.

sea voyage and a shipwreck, events that went over a period of nearly two years, from April 1431 until January 1433, when the last of the surviving sailors got home to Venice.

THE NORTHERN TRADE NETWORK

The two great centres of the north European trade network that Querini visited were London and Bruges. The latter was his original destination, but on account of his misfortunes he visited the city only on his way home to Venice. In the 1430s these were old cities. London was already well-established as a commercial centre in the eleventh century, and by the twelfth century it had a close trading relationship with Bruges. Van Houtte has emphasized the paramount importance of England in the overseas relationships of Bruges, principally because it was during the twelfth century that England became the source of the wool used by the Flemish cloth industry.³ London merchants were heavily involved in this trade, as were also Flemish merchants. The notary Galbert of Bruges, in his contemporary account of the murder of Count Charles of Flanders in 1127, recorded how quickly news of the deed came to London. From the time Charles was killed at dawn on Wednesday March 2nd while praying in the church of his castle in Bruges, it was just two days later, on the Friday, that the citizens of London were shocked to hear the news. This was reported home to Bruges by the merchants who were in London on business, presumably buying wool – though whether they were resident there, or visiting, Galbert does not say.⁴

During the thirteenth century, Bruges became the most important west European market north of the Alps. At the same time, it became a meeting place for merchants from many countries. The English who came to Bruges maintained and extended their control over wool supplies to the Low Countries, but also merchants from Germany became important visitors. Merchants from Cologne and other Rhineland towns came to Bruges in growing numbers, closely followed by merchants from the

3 Jan Arthur Van Houtte, "The Rise and Decline of the Market of Bruges", *Economic History Review*, New Series, 19 (1966), pp. 29-47, at pp. 29-30.

4 James Bruce Ross (ed.), Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, Toronto (1967), pp. 113-4.

German North Sea and Baltic towns. Lübeck and Hamburg, in 1252, opened negotiations to obtain the right to establish an extra-territorial settlement where their merchants could live and enjoy special legal privileges, like those already established in London and Novgorod. They were successful inasmuch as trading privileges were granted, and the Hanseatic *kontor* of Bruges dates from that time.⁵

In time, the Hansards became the most numerous of all the foreign merchants in Bruges, and their contribution to the market was most varied. They brought wine from the Rhineland, linen cloth from Westphalia, salt, and dyestuffs. But most of the German trade was from the Baltic zone – cereals, and Russian forest products – chiefly furs but also timber and timber products, and vast amounts of wax and honey. Most of these wares were shipped by merchants from German ports, first and foremost Lübeck which also shipped iron and copper from Sweden, herring from Denmark, and cod from Norway. The demand for salt, mainly for preserving fish, and for wine, saw the German merchants extend their activities to the salt-producing areas of the Bay of Biscay and further south.⁶

The cod from Norway came in the form of stockfish, caught in the winter months along the northern coasts, wind-dried in the cold air, and thus preserved without the use of salt. Produced for local use since prehistoric times, Norwegian sources point to commercial production of stockfish in the north already in the eleventh century, with an increasing intensity of production in the centuries that followed.⁷ There are indications that England was an important early export market, although north Atlantic cod appears in the archaeological record for London only after 1200. Thereafter stockfish is mentioned in a wide range of English written sources, not only from London, testifying to its wide consumption. The Oxford English Dictionary records the first use of the word from 1282,

5 Van Houtte, *Market of Bruges*, pp. 32-3).

6 *Ibid.* p. 35. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Lübeck and the Baltic Trade in Bulk Goods for the North Sea Region, 1150-1400", in Berggren, L., Hybel, N., Landen, A. (eds.), *Cogs, Cargoes and Commerce: Maritime Bulk Trade in Northern Europe, 1150-1400*, Toronto (2002), pp. 53-91, *passim*.

7 Alf Ragnar Nielssen, "Early commercial fisheries and the interplay among farm, fishing station and fishing village in North Norway", in James H. Barrett and David C. Orton (eds.), *Cod and Herring: the archaeology and history of medieval sea fishing*, Oxbow, Oxford (2016), pp. 42-9.

and from 1293 the first reference to a stockfishmonger, a professional seller of stockfish. A street of such sellers, *Stokfisshmongerowe* in London, is recorded in 1373 and 1428.⁸ To match the evidence for consumption of dried cod, customs accounts for (King's) Lynn around 1300 show that stockfish was being imported from Norway in large quantities.⁹

Stockfish exports to the rest of Europe also began early. In 1186 King Sverre, according to his contemporary or near contemporary saga written under his direction, complained of the German merchants who came to Bergen with cargoes of cheap wine which only encouraged drunkenness, while they filled their ships with stockfish to take home with them. The English merchants who frequented Bergen to buy fish brought with them useful commodities, Sverre thought: woollen cloth, linen, wheat, honey, wax, and cooking pots. Four years later, the Danish contingent to join the Third Crusade docked in Tønsberg and then in Bergen, where again the incidence of drunkenness was remarked upon. Like the author of Sverre's saga, the contemporary chronicler described Bergen in 1190 as populous and rich, built on the export of stockfish; a port to which English, German, and Danish merchants, mainly, came with desirable products such as wine, wheat, honey and fine clothes.¹⁰

For the most part, the raw materials and commodities that passed through Bruges were intended for consumption within this northern European network. But woollen cloth and English wool, in particular, were exported outside the network in large amounts to the consumers and woollen cloth industries of northern Italy.

THE MEDITERRANEAN TRADE NETWORK

The Mediterranean trade network, of which northern Italy was an important centre, was considerably more developed than the northern network and handled more valuable goods. It linked more densely populated lands

8 J. Barratt; E. Ekwall, *Street-names of the City of London*, (Oxford, 1954), p. 169.

9 Arnved Nekvitne, "The development of the Norwegian long-distance stockfish trade", in Barrett and Orton, *Cod and Herring*, pp. 52-9.

10 Þorleifur Hauksson (ed.), *Sverris saga*, Íslenzk fornrit, 30, Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag (2007). M.C. Gertz (ed.), *Historia de profectone Danorum in Hierosolymam, Scriptores minores historiæ Danicæ mediæ ævi II*, København: G.E.C. Gad (1922), pp. 457-492.

and regions, where there were greater concentrations of wealth. It had important connections through Alexandria to caravan routes to the Arab world and India, and through Trebizond to the caravan routes into central Asia and ultimately to China. These long-distance routes were, particularly after 1204, largely in the hands of Venice and Genoa.¹¹ The most valuable commodities were silk, and slaves: domestic slavery again became legal in the north Italian cities in the fourteenth century and wealthy households bought expensive slaves – usually girls, but also young men – who were imported from Asia.¹² We remember Querini's faithful personal servant, the Tartar Nicolo Querini, described by Fioravante as the saviour of his master for the loving care he gave him, who was presumably legally unfree – a slave, owned by Querini, and named by him. But the bulk of the trade was in foodstuffs: to match the north European grain markets a southern grain market stretched from Spain to the northern Black Sea coast, and a Mediterranean wine market had important centres at Seville, Naples, and Candia in Crete. There was a considerable trade in olive oil, and in salt.¹³ Peter Spufford's judgment – and he acknowledged that the calculation was a risky one – was that the trade passing through each of Genoa, Venice and Barcelona was some five times as great in value as the trade passing through Lübeck, and that the Mediterranean trade was worth in total perhaps fifteen times as much as the Baltic trade.¹⁴

Some of these luxury commodities that came into the Mediterranean network were destined for re-export to northern Europe. In addition, there were Mediterranean staples, chiefly olive oil and wine, that were much in demand in the north. What the Italian merchants wanted in return was for the most part high-quality but relatively cheap wool to supply the textile industry of Northern Italy, and increasingly the relatively cheaper cloth that was produced in Flanders and later England as

11 Kathryn Reyerson, "Commerce and Communications", in D. Abulafia (ed.), *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 5, c. 1198-c. 1300 (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 50-70, at 60-62; Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 68-73.

12 Peter Spufford, "Trade in Fourteenth-Century Europe", in R. McKitterick (ed.), *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 6, c. 1300-c. 1415, (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 155-208, at p. 204; Lane, *Venice*, pp. 132-3.

13 Spufford, *Trade in Fourteenth-Century Europe*, p. 158.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6.

well.¹⁵ Originally, the export trade in northern wool and woollen cloth to northern Italy went overland. In the twelfth and thirteenth century most of the trade went through the great seasonal fairs of Champagne where Italian merchants met their counterparts from northern Europe, and from where goods were transported to the south via well-developed road systems which led to the Mediterranean coast. By the middle of the thirteenth century an alternative route had developed, from Flanders along the Rhine, through Germany and via the St. Gothard Pass into Italy (which was the route home taken by Querini in December-January 1432-3). But the overland routes were slow and often difficult, and could be dangerous, and were disrupted in times of war.¹⁶ A revolution occurred when in 1277 a fleet of galleys from Genoa sailed the Atlantic route to Bruges, and after 1300 sea-travel from both Genoa and Venice was replacing the overland trade route between Italy and Flanders.¹⁷ Clearly there must have been a cost advantage, but a galley was still an expensive way to move goods. A Venetian galley of about 1300 had up to three masts carrying lateen sails for when the wind was favourable and required a crew of nearly 200, mostly rowers, and could carry about 50 tons of cargo. The Venetian state took over this trade, building and operating the galleys which were rented out to merchants, and through the fourteenth century the ships became bigger, eventually capable of carrying around 150 tons. According to new regulations in 1412, such a galley should have a crew of around 250, including 170 oarsmen, who should all be free Venetians.¹⁸ That puts Querini's expedition from Crete to Bruges into perspective, for his sailing ship in 1431 had a cargo capacity of 700 *botte*, around 420 tons,¹⁹ and a crew of 68 – and that included an unspecified number of extra fighting men recruited in Cadiz when Querini heard

15 Reyerson, *Commerce and Communications*, pp. 62-3.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 53-5.

17 Alwyn Ruddock, "The Flanders Galleys", *History* 24 (1940), pp. 311-317.

18 Spufford, *Trade in Fourteenth-Century Europe*, p. 183. Lane, *Venice*, pp. 124-7. Stefania Montemezzo, "Galley routes and merchant networks between Venice and the North Sea in the Fifteenth Century", *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400-1800* (2014), 153-69, at 153-7.

19 The *botte*, meaning "barrel" or tun, was a traditional unit of measurement of a ship's burden. To convert to burden in metric tons, a multiplier of 0.6 is appropriate: F.C. Lane, "Tonnages, medieval and modern", *Economic History Review* 2nd ser. 17 (1964), pp. 213-33.

that Venice was now at war with Genoa. His ship would carry between twice and three times as much as a galley, with one third of the crew. It was a *cocca*, a Mediterranean ship derived from the Hanseatic cog.²⁰ They usually had one mast, though Querini's ship was relatively large and had two. The price advantage of square-rigged sailing ships was obvious, and the Genoese ceased to use galleys on the Atlantic trade; Venice continued to send out regular fleets of galleys until the early sixteenth century, and Querini's example perhaps explains why. Adverse winds when he sailed into the Atlantic, which would not have affected a rowed galley, severely delayed his voyage into the perilous autumn months; then, the loss of his rudder and unusually stormy weather saw his ship driven helpless before the wind, into the far north. Oarsmen can always manoeuvre their craft, even without a rudder, and had Querini embarked in a galley he would have come safe to Bruges, with his smaller cargo and a modest profit. He took a risk, and it did not pay off.

Still in the fifteenth century, the cargoes of the Italian merchants were luxury goods that for climatic reasons could not be produced within the trade network of western and northern Europe: wine, cotton, silks and spices, as well as expensive dyestuffs for the cloth industry. But while their return cargoes were mostly wool and woollen cloth, the latter was now of more importance. Lead and tin were also commodities they exported to the south. And still, much of the trade went through Bruges, which thus in the later middle ages was a great emporium where the northern and southern European trade networks met; where the finest commodities from all over Europe and further afield were for sale – silks from northern Italy, wines from Crete and Spain, spices from Asia and Africa, cotton, sugar, furs from the north – and vast quantities of the mundane foodstuffs: grain from the Baltic, herring from the Netherlands and Denmark, and stockfish from Norway and Iceland.²¹

20 For an informative presentation of what is known about northern trading vessels in the Middle Ages, their construction, and their capacity, see Jan Bill, "the Cargo Vessels", in Berggren, et al., *Cogs, Cargoes and Commerce*, pp. 92-112. For Venetian galleys and sailing ships, their construction and operation, see Lane, *Venice*, pp. 122-27.

21 Wendy Childs, "Commerce and Trade", in C. Allmand (ed.), *New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol.7, c.1415-c.1500 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 145-160, at p. 148.

It was the pre-eminence of England as a producer of high-quality wool, and increasingly by 1400 as a producer of good quality but relatively cheap cloth, that also made London a destination for the Italian merchants. In 1378 Parliament legislated to grant permission to Venetians, Genoese, and Spanish merchants to ship wool directly from London (instead of from the Staple of Calais, which was otherwise established by law as the location of all sales of wool for export).²² There had apparently been no regular sailings from Venice to Southampton after 1319, but from 1384 the Flanders galleys began to stop at Southampton on their way to Bruges, and from 1395 there were regular sailings to both Southampton and London, at least two and sometimes three galleys per year. Some of the galleys then went on to Bruges.²³

Consequently, we see the increased presence in London in the years around 1400 of Venetian merchants, in addition to other Italians from Genoa, Florence, Milan and Lucca, as semi-permanent residents who congregated around the Lombard Street area. Like the German Hanseatic merchants in their *kontor* towns and elsewhere, the Italians concluded, where they could, favourable terms on which they could trade with native merchants and suppliers. By 1409 the Venetian residents in London were organized under a vice-consul, and in the following years there were around forty of them at any one time.²⁴

QUERINI'S PARTICIPATION IN THESE NETWORKS

When Querini arrived in London on September 30th 1432 on his way home from Røst to Venice, he identified the leader of the Venetians as Vettor Cappello, whom we know otherwise as a leading merchant, and in the years up to his death in 1467 a prominent politician and soldier. Born probably in 1400, he was resident in London and Bruges from 1431

22 *Statutes of the Realm*... 11 vols., London (1810-28), ii, p. 8: 2 Ric. II, Stat. 1, c. 3.

23 Paula C. Clarke, "The Commercial Activities of Giovanni Marcanova di Giacomo", in Barile, Elisabetta, Clarke, Paula. C., Nordio, Giorgia, *Cittadini Veneziani del Quattrocento: I Due Giovanni Marcanova, il Mercante e l'Humanista*, (Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti, Venezia, 2006), pp. 249-373, at pp. 252-3; Montemezzo, *Galley Routes and Merchant Networks*, pp. 156-7.

24 Clarke, *Giovanni Marcanova*, p. 253; Frederic C. Lane, *Andrea Barbarigo, Merchant of Venice, 1418-1449*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series LXII, No. 1 (Baltimore, 1944), p. 123; Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 35.

until around 1440, and equipped and manned Flanders galleys in 1428, 1438 and 1441.²⁵ There has been discussion around just how profitable the Flanders and England trade was for the Italians, although E.B. Fryde, using the London hosting records that recorded transactions, was able to show that the exports of cloth from England were worth far more than was recorded in the customs accounts that historians had earlier relied on. And Fryde concluded his study by presenting some evidence for a high price differential between the value of both wool and finished cloth in England and in Venice: the merchant Andrea Barbarigo in 1441 was sent a cargo of cloth and some tin from England worth about £900, much of which was sold locally though most of the tin was re-exported to Alexandria and some of the cloth to Constantinople. In all, he sold his cloth for 38 per cent more than he paid for it, while the rate of return on the tin was even higher, at 51 per cent. Further, and in support of the proposition that price differentials between northern Europe and the Mediterranean trading zone worked in the favour of the Italians, are some figures from the notebook of an anonymous merchant of the second half of the fifteenth century. Working from the average price of Cotswold wool, and allowing for the customs and taxes to be paid by foreign merchants, the freight charges on the state galleys, and other expenses, and the price he expected to receive for the wool in Venice, the merchant reckoned his profit would work out at 37 per cent. Without all the other costs, the price differential for wool between England and northern Italy was 47 per cent.²⁶

We can see, therefore, how a man such as Vettor Cappello could grow wealthy in London. Paula Clarke's extensive study of the career of another of the Venetians named by Querini demonstrates the same.²⁷ Giovanni Marcanova (1392-1458), who established himself in London about 1417 and returned to Venice in 1438, received Querini and his companions with great compassion and housed and nursed back to health two

25 Laura Giannasi, "Cappello, Vettore", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Rome, 1975), vol. 18, www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vettore-cappello, read 3.12.2023.

26 Edmond B. Fryde, "Anglo-Italian Commerce in the Fifteenth Century: Some Evidence about Profits and the Balance of Trade", *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 50 (1972), pp. 345-355.

27 Clarke, *Giovanni Marcanova*.

who were particularly weak, Francesco Quirini and his eighteen-year old nephew Piero Gradenico. Both Marcanova's father, Giacomo, and his brother, Guglielmo, were renowned physicians, and Querini seems to be hinting that Giovanni shared some of their skills. After his return to Venice, Giovanni's nephew Lorenzo Marcanova took over his interests in England.²⁸ Lorenzo traded on behalf of his uncle and other named Venetian merchants, as the hosting accounts compiled in 1440-43 make clear. These accounts were drawn up by the hosts or owners of the houses where foreign merchants were required to reside, and record all of their sales and purchases, to be forwarded to the Exchequer for taxation purposes. They show that between September 1440 and April 1444 Lorenzo purchased English cloth worth at least £15,473. He exported nothing else, not even wool. Of the goods he imported, dyestuffs and alum amounted to one third in value but probably far more in bulk; wine, paper and a range of spices constituted the rest.²⁹

We can reconstruct something of Querini's own plans for his voyage, and its anticipated outcome. His cog, with its 420-ton capacity capable of carrying more than twice the capacity of any of the great galleys, was loaded in Candia (Heraklion) with – according to Fioravante – “wine, spices, cottons and other merchandise of great value”. Querini later referred to scented cypress wood as part of the cargo, and pepper and ginger, and specifies that there were 800 barrels of malvasia wine – a Cretan speciality, strong and sweet, popular in England where it was usually called malmsey, to be produced only much later on the island of Madeira. Understandably, we are given no clue as to the commodities that were planned to be loaded at Bruges for the return trip, but it is overwhelmingly probable that woollen cloth and perhaps wool would have been Querini's cargo. The commodities available in Bruges were of the same sort that were available in London, and the Italian merchants traded in both cities indifferently; Vettor Cappello, in addition to his London base, also

28 Giorgia Nordio, “Lorenzo Marcanova in Inghilterra, fattore dello Zio Giovanni” (1440-1444), in Barile, Clarke and Nordio, *Cittadini Veneziani*, pp. 377-93.

29 Fryde, *Anglo-Italian Commerce*, pp. 349-50. The hosting account for Lorenzo's affairs from 29th September 1440 to 16th April 1441 (The National Archives: PRO, E 101/128/30 mm. 3r, 8r) is published by Nordio, *Lorenzo Marcanova*, pp. 388-93.

kept a house in Bruges where Querini stayed when he returned to Venice, choosing – understandably – to travel overland, taking the route from Bruges, through Germany and via Basle. Even had Querini been tempted to travel by sea, it was December when he was fit enough to travel from London, and January 1433 when he came home to Venice, and surely no ship would be travelling all or part of that route until spring at the earliest. Interestingly, at no point does Querini say that all the ship's cargo was his own, and we note that among the eleven survivors were Francesco Querini and his eighteen-year old nephew Piero Gradenico, both described by Fioravante as merchants, and by Querini as Venetian noblemen of Crete. Had they been mere passengers, intending to reside in Bruges for a period, they would not have travelled back through Germany with Querini. They must have had an interest in the voyage, perhaps as formal partners in Querini's enterprise or more likely having rented cargo space for their own goods on both the outward and return voyages. Whether or not there had been other merchants who sailed with Querini and who had been lost at sea we are not told.

THE MARITIME BACKGROUND OF QUERINI AND FIORAVANTE

To form a better understanding of how Querini and Fioravante experienced and described their adventures in the north, we should try to establish whether or not they had any previous knowledge of the Atlantic – whether they had ever sailed to Bruges or another northern port before. Neither of them tells us anything so specific about himself. Fioravante, in a charming way, tells his reader that Querini, who had been used to refined living and had the soft, weak body and delicate complexion appropriate to a man of his class, came home strong and robust, physically transformed by hardship. We might ask: was this a man with much former experience of the sea? Perhaps the shorter Mediterranean voyages might allow a noble Venetian merchant to keep his delicate complexion. Querini, though, was not a young man. Just days before he sailed from Candia his son died, “one of my eldest sons”, he said, counting it – in retrospect – a blessing from God that the young man was spared the hardships to come, and likely a miserable death.

We can conclude that this was the first time Querini's ship had been outside the Mediterranean, or indeed anywhere else. Fioravante describes Querini's sadness for "the ship he had built and bedecked with so much joy"; and indeed, as the crew took to the two lifeboats on December 17th 1431, Querini tells us he felt the pain of abandoning the ship he had himself built and in which he had placed the highest hopes. He does not mention a long attachment to his ship: clearly, this was its maiden voyage. And what appears to be a significant episode in the voyage was when the ship docked at Muros on the 26th of October. They had been dangerously delayed by the adverse winds that blew them southwards as they sailed into the Atlantic, and by the extensive (and, as subsequently proved, inadequate) repairs to the rudder in Cadiz; and yet they made this stop just so that Querini, with thirteen companions – in what can only be described as an act of pious folly so late in the year – could take the opportunity to travel the approximately 65 kilometres to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela. They must have ridden furiously as they were back in time to set sail again on the 28th, although Querini had not neglected the opportunity to acquire an appropriate souvenir, a rosary with amber beads. The pilgrimage to such an exalted shrine had surely been anticipated from the beginning of the voyage, and can be taken as an indication that Querini was availing himself of an opportunity he had never had before, that he was sailing these waters for the first time.

And Fioravante? Querini is always described by both men as the owner and captain of the ship, a Venetian nobleman. Both of them also name Cristoforo Fioravante as his *huomo di consiglio*, counsellor or adviser, though the term is not easily translated. It was customarily used at that time in Venice, alternatively with *armirao*, for a senior ship's officer responsible for navigation,³⁰ and Fioravante was quite clearly Querini's first officer, effectively in charge of sailing the ship. Under him were Giordano de Lione described as the second officer, another officer, Alvise di Nasimben da Zara, and Bernardo de Cagliari, helmsman; doubtless

30 Lane, *Venice*, p. 169.

there had been other officers who had not survived. Fioravante – who it is made clear was no nobleman – was the professional seaman, appropriately experienced, the man on whom Querini could rely for the practical business of navigating and sailing the ship. And as the ship's master, carrying so much responsibility for the successful outcome of this important voyage, it is entirely unthinkable that he had never sailed to Bruges before. It was because of his skills and experience that he had been engaged. And the same must be true, one might add, for the senior officers who served under Fioravante.

We have, then, the noble merchant Querini venturing into the north European trading network for the first time, while his trusted sailing master was familiar with both the sea passage and with the city of Bruges and most likely the English ports as well. Is that difference in their experience reflected in the texts they produced? It is Fioravante who provides gratuitous details of ships; so that Querini refers simply to his “ship”, while Fioravante says it was a cog of 700 *botte* or 420 tons burden. Querini tells us just that his party sailed south from Røst to Trondheim, but Fioravante felt the need to say that they sailed in a *fusta* or foist, implying a sailing boat with one mast that was also rowed, with a burden of twenty *botte*, or about twelve tons, crewed by the headman of Røst, three of his sons and some of his relatives. It came naturally to him to provide these practical details. And what of the accounts both men tell us about their time on Røst: while there is much overlap in the accounts, do we see significant differences in what they chose to tell?

An interesting difference is the way they described the staple activity on Røst, then and long before their time, but also up to the present. That is the production and sale of stockfish, in sufficient quantities to maintain the community living on the island. Fioravante tells us in a couple of sentences that the islanders – who numbered some 120 souls living in twelve houses – caught and dried vast quantities of *stochfis* in the wind, and in May took them south where they exchanged them for the necessities of life: dressed leather, clothes, iron, and foodstuffs. It was mainly fish the islanders ate, and Fioravante was most impressed with the halibut they were given, though he had no name for them and could only describe

them as enormous plaice, six feet long. Querini was also amazed by the halibut, and he too had not learnt a name for them, describing them also as enormous plaice weighing 200 pounds. The other fish the islanders caught, he said, were *stocfisi*, in incomparable quantities. He then proceeded to describe in some detail how the *stocfisi* were dried, how the dried fish could be prepared for the table, and how in May they were transported south to Bergen in a ship he called a *grapparia* or Mediterranean brigantine, with a burden of 50 *botte*, or 30 tons.³¹ Still eager to tell precise details about shipping – unusually for him – he went on to tell how ships from all the world came to Bergen, ships of 300 and even 350 *botte* burden, bringing useful goods from Germany, England, Scotland, and Prussia which they exchanged for the *stocfisi*. Those who had brought the fish to Bergen, and there were innumerable such *grapparia*, he said, received these necessities of life in barter, because the fishermen used no money, and took them home with them. On the way home they stopped to load timber for fuel through the year and for other purposes.³² These descriptions – particularly Querini's – pose a series of questions. The Venetians arrived on Røst on February 3rd 1432 and left on May 14th in the vessel *Fioravante* the sailor said was a *fusta* of twenty *botte* burden. Where did Querini get his numerous *grapparia* of 50 *botte* from? For linguistic reasons, direct contact with the islanders was perforce limited. Querini and the priest, the German Dominican friar, could converse in Latin, and a couple of the seamen had some German. But Querini despised the greedy friar and the feeling may have been mutual; contact between them may have been minimal. Someone had told them that the barren island where they had first come to land was called the Island of Saints, *L'Isola di Santi*, and that must have been the friar; and who else could have told them that the people who lived on Røst could refer to their island as *culo mundi*, literally the anus of the world? Unless

31 Querini's word *grapparia* is translated as Mediterranean brigantine but is not to be confused with the European brigantine of later centuries, being a light ship, generally with two masts, which was both sailed and rowed. This was, then, a ship quite unlike the later *jekt* of the Norwegian coastal trade, a single masted ship carrying a square sail and which was never rowed.

32 Anyone familiar with Røst and other places in the region that still produce stockfish, will understand how great was the need for a constant supply of long poles for constructing and maintaining the great number of racks necessary for drying the fish.

this was an expression of the priest's, reflecting his bitterness at being required by his archbishop to spend the winter in this isolated place, the words may have been misunderstood – perhaps communication was not so easy after all. Fioravante could report that the kittiwakes, plentiful on Røst, and of which he said they “give the impression of feeding and nourishing themselves purely by their squawking, so constant is their song” were called *muxi* by the islanders; but there is no sign that the sailors learnt any other words. They seem to have eaten halibut often, but never learnt its name. And the cod that sustained the islanders? They would have called it by a name akin to *skríða* (Old Norse) or *skrei* (modern Norwegian) – always assuming of course that the people Querini met were Norwegian in speech and culture and were not a Saami community. But Querini called it *stocfisi*, and Fioravante *stochfis*. This is *stoccafisso* in modern Italian, a term derived from the variants in common use throughout northern Europe in the Middle Ages, including Germany, and is stockfish in English. Where did they learn this name?

If they learnt it on Røst, it was from the friar, who was the only person on the island who would have known it. But it was surely not the friar who explained all the details of the stockfish trade to Querini. Nor is it likely that he learnt these details during his brief stay in Trondheim, and certainly not during the long journey through Norway and Sweden as far as the Baltic Sea, and then back to Sweden's western coast before he took ship from Lödöse to (King's) Lynn. Surely, the overwhelming probability is that he learnt all about the stockfish trade in London. For two months he dined at the table of his host, Vettor Cappello, or as the guest of others of the Venetian community. On the frequent fast days there would have been fish, and often that would have been stockfish. With what pleasure would Querini have been able to tell of where and how the fish was caught and prepared, and by whom! Meanwhile, the Venetian merchants, with years of experience in the markets of London and Bruges, and knowledge of the north European trade network as well as the Mediterranean, would have told him what happened to the fish after its producers delivered it into the hands of the merchants. Querini had seen the first part of that process, the shipping of the fish southward

along the Norwegian coast, but he himself had never come to the great stockfish emporium of Bergen, and had never seen how the stockfish was exported to other European lands. Was his detailed account of the stockfish trade a reflection of his merchant mentality? All his life he had lived by buying and selling commodities on international markets, and here was one that was new to him, in which he took a natural interest. Fioravante did not travel home by way of London and Bruges. He and two others took ship in Lödöse for Rostock, from whence they travelled overland to Venice – a demanding journey, sometimes on horseback and sometimes on foot, which took some seven weeks. How can we interpret the little he had to say about stockfish? He named the trade to explain how the islanders made a living, but clearly felt no need to say more. His few words express no surprise or wonder, and there is nothing to suggest that the stockfish of Røst were something new in his experience. We have already established that Fioravante was an experienced traveller in northern waters and must have spent periods not only in Bruges but in other northern ports, before making return journeys to the Mediterranean. There he would have encountered stockfish among the other foodstuffs served in the inns or lodging houses frequented by sailors. But he was above all a seaman, who did not share Querini's merchant mentality, and he had no interest in the place of stockfish in the northern trading network.

WHEN DID COD BEGIN TO BE TRADED IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?

These encounters with wind-dried cod, stockfish, and the way these two Venetians described the commodity, are very relevant to a myth that has grown up – not in informed academic circles, but in popular historical belief. In short, the story has arisen that it was as a consequence of these events that stockfish became the popular dish that it is in parts of modern Italy. Querini, it is said, took his new-found knowledge of stockfish, acquired in Røst, home to Venice. Certainly, the texts that he and Fioravante compiled soon after they got home would have been quite widely disseminated, so that many in Venice in 1433 could read about the production and distribution of stockfish. However, it is also often

repeated that he travelled home with a quantity of the fish – after which stockfish became a major import to Italy.

The notion that Querini took stockfish home with him from Røst is certainly the most absurd aspect of this mythmaking. He did indeed leave Røst with some fish: before his party sailed south they were contacted by the wife of the person Querini called the governor of all the islands – presumably the local royal official called the *fogd* who was based at Hadsel on the island of Vesterålen, to the north of the Lofoten Islands. She had sent them three large rye loaves and a *fugaccia* – perhaps Querini was thinking here of the traditional sweet focaccia of Venice which contains eggs, sugar and butter instead of olive oil and salt. And in addition, she sent 60 stockfish. Querini, a true gentleman, responded by sending her the rosary he had acquired in Santiago de Compostela. The bread and fish were useful supplies for their voyage, though as it turned out through all the fifteen days it took to reach Trondheim the travellers were provided with food by the local people whenever they stopped. The bread was eaten, but Querini still had the fish when they prepared to leave Trondheim after being entertained lavishly for eight days by the dean of the cathedral, Svein Eriksson, so at their parting he presented them to his host along with what were apparently his last possessions, a seal and a girdle of silver. Quite what Svein thought of this gift of fish we cannot tell: his prebend was the very rich parish of Trondenes, far in the north, wealthy from the tithes and rents paid in thousands and thousands of the same stockfish.³³ Querini describes him as a friendly and generous man, so doubtless he appreciated the thought that lay behind the gesture. And even had Querini not had reason to give his 60 fish away, it is not feasible that he had intended to carry them with him as some sort of souvenir on a journey that took another seven months. From Trondheim they travelled to the east coast of Sweden, to the castle of Stegeborg which was held by the man they called Zuan Franco, whom they believed to be a Venetian. They then travelled back to Swe-

33 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. 5 (Christiania, 1860), No. 601, p. 422; *ibid.* vol. 17 (Kristiania, 1913), No. 459, p. 365. *Norsk biografisk leksikon*, "Svein Eriksson" https://nbl.snl.no/Svein_Eriksson (read 5.01.2025).

den's west coast where they took ship for England; then to London, and from London to Bruges where they took the overland route to Venice, via Basle. When they left Trondheim, Svein Eriksson had helped them on their way with useful presents – not least, two horses. He also gave them salted herring for their journey, but nobody has ever suggested that Querini took this delicacy home to Venice.

The myth that Venice discovered stockfish as a consequence of Querini's experiences collapses from whichever angle you look at it. As we have seen, the north European seaports and trading centres frequented by Venetians, Genoese, Florentine and other Italian merchants from at least the High Middle Ages were also places within the northern trading network where stockfish was a staple commodity. The firm evidence for consumption of large quantities of Norwegian stockfish in London after 1200, and indications that it was imported and eaten long before that, cannot be matched for Bruges, but as the location of a Hanseatic *kontor* (like London) we know it also was a centre for the distribution and consumption of stockfish. Any Italian merchant active in the trade to Flanders and England during all those centuries, exporting wine and spices and other luxuries to the north and taking home with them wool and woollen cloth, could have told his fellow-countrymen about the stockfish he had eaten, and seen for sale. And had north Italian merchants thought it was profitable for them to carry cargoes of stockfish back to their countrymen, they could – and would – have done so long before Querini came on the scene. They did not do so, nor did they do so until long after Querini's time.

Venice consumed fresh fish from the Mediterranean, and preserved fish as well, but mainly from the Black Sea.³⁴ The expansion of the Ottoman Empire into Greek territory during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries presented Venetian merchants with difficulties, but it was the final act, the seizure of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, that changed everything. Even in its dying years, the Byzantine Empire had kept open the straits into the Black Sea, and the Venetian galleys had continued

34 Lane, *Venice*, pp. 132, 304.

to bring home regular cargoes of furs, salt fish, Tartar slaves from Tana on the Sea of Azov, and from Trebizond silks from the east and metals from Anatolia. But no merchant galleys visited Constantinople again until Venice made peace with the Ottomans in 1479, and the Venetians no longer ventured into the Black Sea.³⁵

When did northern cod first come to the Mediterranean? Richard Hoffmann finds that stockfish were known all over northern Europe, even in the inland city of Salzburg by the early fifteenth century. Stockfish were named in books of recipes from southern Germany from the mid-fifteenth century. But stockfish was still unknown south of the Alps and the Pyrenees. The earliest evidence for cod in the south points to it having arrived in the southern Spanish ports by 1500: cod remains dated to about 1500 were found in kitchen waste from a monastery in Seville, while cod was for sale in Andalusian markets by 1503.³⁶ However, the traditional name given to cod in Spain and Portugal – *bacalao*, *bacalhau* – and in Italy – *baccalà* – both derive from medieval Flemish *bakkeljaw*, a metathesis from the earlier form *kabeljaw*, recorded first in 1163 and which gave its name to French *cabillaud*.³⁷ And this was not stockfish, but salted cod, which we can presume was imported in Flemish vessels or had at least been loaded in Flemish ports. It had certainly not come from Norway. It was only when cheaper salt first became available there in the late seventeenth century that the production of saltfish began. *Klippfisk*, the Norwegian name for fish salted and exposed on rocks to dry, was not made in Norway before 1691.³⁸ Before then, therefore, the cod exported from Norway was all wind-dried stockfish.

If the first cod to be taken to Spain and Portugal came from the north-east Atlantic, it was soon overtaken by imports of salted cod from Newfoundland. The generally damp climate meant that stockfish could not be produced there, so that all the north American cod had to be salted before it could be transported to Europe. There are uncertainties in the

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 348–9.

36 Richard Hoffmann, "Frontier Foods for Late Medieval Consumers: Culture, Economy, Ecology", *Environment and History* 7 (2001), pp. 131–167, at p. 145.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 153, and p. 167, n. 101.

38 *Store norske leksikon*, "Klippfisk", <https://snl.no/klippfisk> (read 5.01.2025).

chronology of the exploitation of the Newfoundland fishery. The first recorded landing in England of cod from north-west Atlantic waters was in 1502, only five years after the expedition of John Cabot in the service of King Henry VII of England that discovered Newfoundland. But there is a strong argument that the Bristol merchants, eager to find new sources of cod in the Northwest Atlantic, had been sending out expeditions for years, had perhaps visited Greenland, and indeed had found their way to what was probably Newfoundland as early as 1481. It may be that the exploitation of the cod stocks of the Grand Banks had begun earlier than is generally reckoned to have been the case.³⁹ At any rate, cod came into Europe from Newfoundland in ever-increasing quantities after 1500, and by the end of the century far eclipsed the production of cod from Norwegian and Icelandic waters. Already by 1550 the Newfoundland fishery had passed the northern fisheries, producing some 100 000 tons per year, a figure which rose steadily until it had passed 250 000 tons annually in 1750.⁴⁰ Records from the first two decades of the seventeenth century show that English merchants were active in shipping Newfoundland cod as well as herrings and other commodities to Marseilles.⁴¹

Further: when did preserved cod come to northern Italy and specifically to Venice? A key factor was the decline in imports to Venice of salt fish from the Black Sea, and Lane asserts that by 1500 Venetian merchants were searching out new sources of supply of food. But that did not mean they began to import the stockfish that was a staple commodity of the northern trade network; when Venetians at last turned to cod, it was cod from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.⁴² Luigi Messedaglia, after a thorough search through all manner of sources for the words *stoccafisso* and *baccalà*, concluded that cod did not come to Italy before the

39 D.B. Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America, 1481-1620* (1974), Chapter 1, "The Argument for the English Discovery of America 1480-1494", pp. 5-23.

40 Poul Holm *et al.*, "The North Atlantic Fish Revolution (ca. AD 1500)", *Quaternary Research* 108 (2018), 92-106, at pp. 93-4. <https://doi.org/10.1017/qua.2018.153>.

41 Colin Heywood, "Beyond Braudel's 'Northern Invasion'? Aspects of the North Atlantic and Mediterranean fish trade in the early seventeenth century", *International Journal of Maritime History*, 26 (2014), pp. 193-209, at pp. 200-6.

42 Lane, *Venice*, p. 304.

sixteenth century, and then only sporadically. Towards the late seventeenth century it was more widely known, becoming a firm feature in Italian cuisine in the eighteenth century.⁴³

In certain parts of Italy, including the region around Venice, *baccalà* is also known as *stoccafisso*, and Norwegian stockfish is preferred to salt cod. This suggests there was a change in the import trade from Newfoundland cod to cod from Norway and Iceland during the early modern period. Myths of stockfish imports from Norway in the fifteenth century, in the wake of Querini's misfortunes, will only make it more difficult to identify when, how and why that transition came about.

43 Luigi Messedaglia, "Da una novella di Franco Sacchetti e dal *Viaggio* di Pietro Querini alla vera storia del baccalà in Italia", *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* (Anno accademico 1952-53), Tomo CXI, Classe di scienze morali e lettere, pp. 1-27. Messedaglia's arguments were summarised for Norwegian readers by Halfdan Koht, "Når kom norsk tyrrfisk fyrst til Italia?", *Historisk Tidsskrift* (1954), pp. 24-6. Marit Lange's criticisms of Messedaglia and Koht in "Når kom norsk torrfisk til Italia?", *Historisk Tidsskrift* (1979), pp. 89-97 are mistaken. She bases her argument largely on the assertion that Querini's use of the word *stoccafisso* demonstrates that he already knew the correct Italian word (which must therefore have already been in use in Venice in the 1430s), thus failing to acknowledge that as a loanword taken from the languages of northern Europe Querini could have learnt it anywhere. Her further criticism of Messedaglia's research on the grounds that he considered both *stoccafisso* and *baccalà* together, when they are two different products, is not relevant when the question is one of the introduction of preserved cod, of every sort, into Italian cuisine.

THE DISCOVERY OF QUERINI'S TRAVEL IN THE NORWEGIAN PUBLIC

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On Saturday 21 August 1982, some 400 people out of the isle of Røst's total population of 800 inhabitants convoyed from the main island to Sandøya, to commemorate Pietro Querini and his shipwrecked crew, having 550 years passed since the unfortunate men of the Venetian crew landed on Sandøya. Fifty years earlier, the inhabitants of the small municipality of Røst had taken the initiative to erect a memorial on Sandøya in commemoration of the shipwrecked men.¹ But when did the Norwegian public invent the memorial commemoration of the shipwrecked Venetians? In which years can we find traces in the Norwegian public of the history of the cultural encounter between the southern and northern Europeans in 1432?

This presentation aims to shed light on the first traces of the story of the shipwrecked men and to see how it has been narrated and received, represented and revitalised through the years among the Norwegian audience. Is there any significant pattern in the way the memory is kept alive today and have these commemorations in Norway been the same through the times?

FIRST PUBLIC NORWEGIAN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT QUERINI – 1763

In recent years, the Norwegian National Library has digitalised almost all publications aimed at the Norwegian public, including newspapers, articles in books and journals, as well as manuscripts, radio programmes and books. Consequently, this material has been made accessible to historians and others, and gives unique insight into how different matters were projected into the public debate and when they were published. When

1 NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), 23.08.1982: https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digipogramrapport_10031740.

it comes to newspapers, they also give insight into the periods of raised interest in the public debate. So, by focusing on the digital platform of the Norwegian National Library one can envisage the tendencies in the representations of the Querini affair in the Norwegian public in the last 400 years.² The search for the keyword “Querini” provides almost 900 hits for this word in books published in Norway since 1688. In addition, there are hits for the word “Qverini”, “Quirini” and “Qvirini”, indicating that the story of Pietro Querini has been told by people, but using the wrong pronunciation. The search engine also has an issue with the printed gothic font, which suggests the likelihood that even more hits could be found on the topic. On the other hand, there is the risk of finding many hits for other individuals related to the Querini family in Venice, a family that delivered many prominent members throughout the centuries.

To conclude, by looking into the relevant hits for “Pietro Querini” in the national library’s platform, we can take a deep dive into the representations of the history of the shipwrecked men’s stay at Røst.

The first historian to deal with this event was the Dano-Norwegian historian Gerhard Schønning (1722-1780), who was born in Buksnes, Lofoten.³ He was a member of the *Royal Norwegian Society of Science and Letters* in Trondhjem/Nidaros, the town which is called Trondheim today. As the first modern Norwegian historian, Schønning published the story of the shipwrecked Venetians in the then-dominant colonial language – Danish – and his work was printed in Copenhagen in 1763.⁴ This version was also to become the starting point for later studies, as I will try to demonstrate later. The book about the man whom he named “Petri Qvirini” and “Petrus Qvirinus” was published by the most important academic and scientific institution in Norway of that time, the *Royal Norwegian Society of Science and Letters*. As the first Norwegian-born historian and originating from Lofoten, he possibly knew the story about the Venetians from his childhood days in the islands, although this is not certain. Neither do we know

2 Search after “Querini” in the bokhylla.no homepage of the Norwegian National Library: [Søk i Nettbiblioteket her](#) | [Bøker](#) | [Aviser](#) | [Bilder](#) | [Tidsskrift](#) | [\(nb.no\)](#).

3 Det Trondhiemske Selskabs Skrifter (trykt utg.). 1763 Vol. 2 (nb.no).

4 Gerhard Schønning: Beretning om den Venetianske Edelmands Petri Qvirini Skibbrud og Ankomst til Øen Røst i Nordlandene. Ao 1432, in *Det Trondhiemske Selskabs Skrifter*, Vol 2. Kjøbenhavn 1763, 95-157.

much about the distribution of the book, nor the numbers printed. What we do know is that the Trondheim *élites* had the book in their possession: in the proceedings for the settlement of an estate after the death of a local higher official, Peder Nordahl, in 1788, the book was found in Nordahl's library. However, Nordahl was a scholarly man, strongly connected to the academic environment in the town of Trondheim.⁵

The story that Schønning referred to was translated from a German book on the events, by Hironymus Megiser, entitled *Septentrio Nov. antiquus, oder: Die Neue Nort – Welt. Rc. Leipz., 1613*. He also made reference to another two stories in addition to that by “Petri Qvirini”, namely those by “Christopher Floravant” and “Nicolaus Michele”⁶ (Nicolò de Michele and Cristofalo Fioravante).

Although Schønning did not have direct access to the German book, he obtained a transcript from the library of Copenhagen by a friend from Northern Norway, the priest Anders Dass (1675-1736).⁷ Dass was in Copenhagen to finish his magister programme in the capital city of the Dano-Norwegian realm, before returning to Nordland where he was to become a priest. The magister, in 18th century Denmark, can be considered to be a doctoral programme of the time.⁸

Schønning's narrative of the events was supported both by Querini's story and the narrative of Fioravante and Michiele, demonstrating the contradictions in their stories through footnotes.⁹

In the late 19th century Hjalmar Pettersen produced a bibliography of publications on foreigners travelling in Norway: in this bibliography, reference was made to translations of Querini's travels in publications printed in Scotland in 1811 and in London as early as in 1625. However, these were publications not commonly known by Norwegians. But what was

5 Consul Chr. Thaulow: Personhistorie for Trondhjems by og omegn I et tidsrum af circa 1 ½ aarhundrede (omfattende ca 1300 personer), afsluttet omkring 1876, Trondhjem 1919, 530-531; [Peder Tønder Nordahl – lokalhistoriewiki.no](http://PederTønderNordahl-lokalhistoriewiki.no).

6 Gerhard Schønning: Beretning om den Venetianske Edelmands Petri Qvirini, 95-96.

7 Gerhard Schønning: Beretning om den Venetianske Edelmands Petri Qvirini, 97.

8 Oddvar Vassveit: Mesternes herlige titel i herlighet pastoren pryder – Prester med magistergraden i 1600- og 1700-tallets Norge, in *Kirke og Kultur*, Vol. 121, utg. 3, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1504-3002-2016-03-08>.

9 Gerhard Schønning: Beretning om den Venetianske Edelmands Petri Qvirini, 98-101.

the level of literacy in Norway in the 18th century? Although most of the books published by foreign editors were not read by the common people, it is estimated that books in Danish were read by 90% of Norwegians by the end of the 17th century, dependent on social status, of course.¹⁰

I must underline that there was a simultaneous strong oral tradition on Røst referring to the Venetians' journey in 1432. It was the population of Røst who took the initiative to commemorate the event in 1932, as well as to organise the ceremony in 1982. The chairman of the Dante Alighieri Society in Norway (a cultural Association dedicated to enhancing Italian culture in the world), Jens Chr. D. Schive underlined, during a radio interview by the Norwegian Broadcasting Cooperation in 1982, that he had learned about the story of Querini and his crew as a kid growing up in Svolvær, Lofoten, which indicates a strong regional oral tradition.¹¹

In Schives' view, it was important to commemorate the event as an exemplary demonstration of Norwegian good virtues, including their humanitarian attitude and friendliness, virtues also upheld by Schøning some centuries earlier.¹² He also underlined the role of benevolence as a contrast to moral decay, true virtues of his fellow northerners. Schive was a cultivated high school language teacher, who knew the Italian culture and language through academic studies as well as travels to Italy. He considered himself a "patriot" and this specific aspect was an important part of the content in the commemoration made by the coastal population. They were used to helping people in need when misfortune and accidents struck.¹³

ANNE HELNESS' STUDIES OVER TRAVELOGUES

The Norwegian academic Anne Helness (University of Oslo) later underlined these visions in her studies of three different travelogues.¹⁴ By

10 Jostein Fet: *Lesande bønder. Litterær kultur i norske allmugesamfunn før 1840*. Oslo 1996. 43.

11 NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), 23.08.1082: https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digiprogramrapport_10031740.

12 NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), 23.08.1082: https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digiprogramrapport_10031740.

13 NRK (the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), 23.08.1082: https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digiprogramrapport_10031740.

14 Anne Helness: *En Skipbruddberetnings sirkulasjon gjennom tre tidligmoderne kunnskapsprosjekter*, in *Slagmark*, #81, pp. 51 – 69.

analysing and comparing three different narratives on Querini's travel (*Navigazioni et viaggi* by the Venetian Giovanni Battista Ramuiso (1559), the *Hakluytus Posthumus* by English Samuel Purchas (1625) and finally *Beretning om den Ventianske Edelmands Petri Qvirini Skibbrud og Ankomst til Øen Røst i Nordlandene* by Gerhard Schøning (Kbh. 1763)), she found that there were certain plots in the narrative meant for the public in the three different realms.¹⁵ Ramusio's Venetian perspective was built around a Venetian Odyssey, where the daring Venetian sailors' story intersected two paradigms of knowledge and ideas. The shipwreck narrative was about the Venetian travellers being the first to explore different parts of the globe, as well as constituting an Odyssean example of heroic exploits.¹⁶

In the English example of the story, Samuel Purchas sought to give the reader moral building blocks for Bacon's new knowledge project. It all was God's grace and providence in a work which is otherwise filled with English attempts to find the sea route to the East via the North Cape.¹⁷

In the case of Schøning's version, Helness again underlined the exemplary history writing, the shipwreck that became a story about the remains of the Norwegian virtues he sought to document in his other works.¹⁸

REVITALISATION OF QUERINI DURING THE BUILDING OF THE NATION-STATE – 1850

Thus, it is unsurprising that the story of Schøning also became important during the late 19th century, a period of national romantic nation-state building. The whole century had been marked by a new interest in all things "Norwegian" after the dissolution with Denmark and the foundation of a new constitution for the nation-state of Norway. Now, the new state was to establish its own built culture, this time using science, research and education. The new Norwegian University of Oslo was es-

15 Anne Helness: En Skipbruddberetnings sirkulasjon, pp. 63-64.

16 Anne Helness: En Skipbruddberetnings sirkulasjon, pp. 56-58.

17 Anne Helness: En Skipbruddberetnings sirkulasjon, pp. 58-61.

18 Anne Helness: En Skipbruddberetnings sirkulasjon, pp. 61-62.

tablished in 1812 and now scientists of all kinds started mapping the territory, collecting its culture, history and language, as well as registering its geography, glaciology, flora and fauna.¹⁹

In the search for national characteristics of the nation and its inhabitants, the history of its people became a foundation wall for building the nation-state. Consequently, Schøning's old story about Querini was one of the most profound witnesses of previous Norwegian virtues, as were all the travelogues of foreign travellers to Norway throughout the centuries. Hjalmar Pettersen's bibliography *Norway – uddrag af ældre og nyere forfatteres skrifter (extracts of former and contemporary writers' publications)* (1880) thus became important as a starting point of this new discovery of the nation and its inhabitants.

Schøning's story could then contribute to give some proud ideas about former glory, which were valuable historical material to make Norwegians proud of their national history. It gave a useful understanding of the late-medieval Norwegian society, sources from a period before the 400-year darkness of the union under Danish rule. From art and culture one can see clearly how the Middle Ages were a particularly rich and noble period to use as the heritage of modern Norway during national romanticism: *Leiv Eiriksson discovers America* was painted by Hans Dahl (1849-1937); Urban Wråkberg highlighted polar explorations, a growing nationalist activity among Norwegians in the 19th and 20th century, as a continuation of the "viking raids", now into the unknown, white spots of the globe.²⁰

However, Querini's journey became part of the national stories about the nation and its people – like this publication about former and contemporary writers on Norwegian topics. The role of science was to describe the nation in all its aspects.

This was also a period when the Querini family's name became more popular among common Norwegians. The most significant contribution to this knowledge came from the printed press, particularly the

19 Jan Eivind Myhre: *Norsk historie 1814 – 1905*, Oslo 2012, 58-66.

20 Urban Wråkberg, *Vetenskapens vikingatåg. Perspektiv på svensk polarforskning 1860-1930*, Stockholm 1999.

newspapers that most Norwegians at the time read. The polar expedition of the Duke of Abruzzo, known as the *Stella Polare* expedition (1899-1901), aligned with the polar achievements made by Norwegians during that era, such as Fridtjof Nansen's exploration of Greenland (1888) and the Polar Sea (1893-1896). Common Norwegians had a deep fascination with Arctic records and many observed that Francesco Querini, a descendant of Pietro, was aboard the *Stella Polare*. The expedition was to start in Oslo on September 12, 1899, leading it to be discussed by Norwegian media that autumn. Francesco's participation fell in line with the other exploratory expedition by Pietro, in 1432; Francesco even managed to beat the Norwegian polar hero Fridtjof Nansen by 35–40 kilometres in his attempt to reach the North Pole, unfortunately dying during the record attempt.

When Umberto Nobile flew across the site where Francesco lost his life with the airship *Italia* in 1928, he sent a telegram to the city of Venice in commemoration of brave Francesco Querini.

However, it was Amund Helland (1846-1918) who was to reinterpret the story of the Venetian shipwrecked men, when he started out on the voluminous set of books on Norway's land and people, *Norges Land og Folk* (1885-).²¹ The set was about different Norwegian regions and their nature, living conditions, everyday life as well as the history of the different parts of the country. In the volume on Nordland County of 1908, Helland found place for a new version of the story of Querini and the Venetian crew's visit to Nordland and put it into a historiographic context. Helland's rediscovery of Querini was now based on the Florentine Antonio di Chorado de Cardini's version of the story. He also criticized Schøning for using a transcript of the German translation by Hieronymus Megiser (1554-1618/19), the *Septentrio novantiquus* (1613), because of all the German's misinterpretations that had been transferred into his Dano-Norwegian translation (1763). Later interpretations of Schønings' text consequently conveyed the former errors and misinterpretations

21 Amund Helland: *Norges land og folk*. Topografisk-statistisk beskrevet, XVIII, Nordlands Amt, Topografisk-statistisk beskrivelse over Nordlands Amt, Anden del, Den almindelige del, Kristiania 1908, 865-908.

in new narratives about the events. The exception from this traditional narrative was the Norwegian medievalist Gustav Storm (1845 – 1903), whose criticism of the sources was meticulous.²² While working in a library in Rome, Storm obtained a copy of Chorado de Cardini's account, which he brought back to Norway and Oslo. He even held a lecture presenting the source publicly in the Norwegian Geographical Society in Oslo during the 1890s.²³

Then the translation from Italian to Norwegian was made by Amund Sommerfeldt, Helland's nephew. He held a solid education in classical languages like Greek and Latin, and the story of the events on Røst in 1432 achieved a vital place in Hellands' volume 18 of the new series.²⁴ More than 50 pages were allocated to the story and the background of the different versions of the story of the two narratives: the version of "Piero Qverini" or "Qverino" and the version of "Cristofalo Fioravante" and "Nicolo de Michiele". Helland also informed that there was a manuscript of Querini's story both in Venice and in Florence, and that the manuscript of Fiorovante's story was to be found in one manuscript in Mantova and in another three such texts in Florence.²⁵

QUERINI IN THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF RØST

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Querini's story seems to have been firmly rooted among the population of the Northern part of Norway. Myths about Southerners stranded along the shores of the Norwegian coast were widespread. During the heydays of the most social Darwinist and racist research during the 1920s and 1930s, scientific reports made by some researchers underlined that around 30% of the Northerners of Troms County were considered of the "Alpine race", from southern Europe.²⁶ This was a significantly different ethnic group from the

22 Ottar Dahl: [Gustav Storm – Norsk biografisk leksikon \(snl.no\)](https://snl.no/Gustav_Storm).

23 Olaf Amundsen: *Aftenposten*, 5 January 1932, 1, 5.

24 Amund Helland: *Norges land og folk. Topografisk-statistisk beskrevet*, XVIII, Nordlands Amt, *Topografisk-statistisk beskrivelse over Nordlands Amt, Anden del, Den almindelige del*, Kristiania 1908, 865 – 908.

25 Helland: *Norges land og folk*.

26 Halvdan Bryn: *Troms fylkes antropologi*, Kristiania 1922, 69, 96, 163.

Sami population, so even scientists contributed to spreading ideas and myths about a southern connection between the Mediterranean Europe and Northern Norway.²⁷ Amund Helland claimed that “stories about the stranded Italians” were still circulating, stories that Helland found valuable even though they were kept alive nearly 500 years later.²⁸

During the commemoration at Røst in 1932 a local fisherman, Torstein Jensen, confirmed the lively tradition of myths and sagas about the Italians: “Oh yes, the story about the Italians has been told from father to son”. Asked by a journalist of the Oslo paper *Aftenposten* if there were any descendants from the Italian sailors on Røst, he added: “Oh yes, there are indeed, on my father’s side I am a descendant of the man Querini stayed with”.²⁹

One famous journalist in the socialist paper of Trondheim, Harald Langhelle, provoked some of the readers in the North by claiming that there were ancestors of the Italians in Røst, but we will come back to that later. Nevertheless, there were initiatives in the island of Røst among some of its political and cultural *élites* to do something more with the memory of the events of 1432. The 500th anniversary was approaching and it appeared to be the right time to mark the occasion with a monument and an appropriate commemoration ceremony. They were what someone later called the “memory agents”: they were part of the initiators behind a memory policy, or what could be considered as cultural memory in a broader sense. One of the initiators was Mathias Skaar (1869–1944) and the other was Helge Georg Helgesen (1826–1947). Helgesen had a small business and was one of the founding fathers of the conservative party on Røst, while Mathias Skaar had a similar background as a businessman in the fish trade.³⁰ Helge Helgesen’s obituary underlined his strong interest in the development of tourism and his eagerness in providing information about the nature and birdlife on Røst.³¹ He was

27 Halvdan Bryn: *Troms fylkes antropologi*, 163.

28 Amund Helland: *Norges land og folk*, 867.

29 *Aftenposten*: July 15, 1932.

30 *Nordlandsposten*: October 26, 1929.

31 *Nordlandsposten*: April 16, 1947.

well known among scientist studying the birdlife around the isles, considered skilled and well informed when it came to science and knowledge. However, he did not always gain any profit from his interests and was not always understood by his fellow villagers.³² Helgesen surprised all the spectators present at the unveiling of the Querini monument by addressing the Italian participants in Italian, a language normally not spoken by Norwegians, nor learned in Norwegian schools. Helgesen was both thankful to the local contributors, as well as to the county governor Olaf Amundsen, who had been a central participant in the planning and funding process. Helgesen also addressed the Italian guests, “the great Italian people” to whom he paid respectful homage.

Skaar explained that the initiative, among others, wished to erect the monument at the place where the shipwrecked men were considered to have landed 500 years earlier, and to put up an epitaph on the monument with a text of a certain content to commemorate both the population of Røst and the Italian guest. The plan involved translating the text into English.

*On this location the Italian Pietro Querini
landed with the remaining crew
6 January 1432
The citizens of Røst erected this stone in 1932*

After the events that had occurred 500 years earlier, a bond of friendship was established between the small outpost by the Arctic sea – Røst – and the Italian sailors. The monument was an additional consolidation and fortification of this bond, Helgesen underlined. He then handed the chair to Olaf Amundsen, the county governor of Nordland. By connecting the story both to the nation and to the region of Nordland, Helland paved the way for the story to be both a story of regional importance for Nordland County, as well as for the nation.

In an article written in the national conservative paper *Aftenposten* in January 1932, Amundsen stated that the decline in the fisheries at Røst had made the locals even more eager to promote tourism as a business

32 Lofotposten: April 22, 1947.

opportunity for the islanders. Hopes appeared to be set on rekindling the interest in the story of Querini and his men among the Italians, by erecting the monument there.³³

Two local steamers, one from Svolvær and one from Bodø, took some 250 spectators to the event, including the county governor, Olaf Amundsen, who was given the honour to unveil the monument, after delivering a rather modest speech that dealt with the sad history of the shipwrecked men, nine of whom found their deaths in the island. However, he underlined the “very sympathetic testimonial of Røst and the conditions here in these days”. The monument was a reminder of the 500th anniversary. The story about the journey had become a monument, and due to its “reliability and trustworthiness” this monument had gained a place in the history of Norway and the Nordic region. If not for this testimonial, we would not have sufficient historical knowledge about the whereabouts of the islanders. He then addressed the obvious element of the story: how the Venetians enjoyed the benefits of the hospitality of the islanders. He then traced a line between Querini and the fishermen who risk their lives at sea, explaining how the locals had erected a monument in remembrance of the fishermen who had perished. Furthermore, the monument served as a symbol of renewed solidarity, brotherhood, and understanding between the two groups.

On board the ship, a photographer documented the events. His photographs are of high quality and include a lot of the islanders, capturing the atmosphere on the historic day in an artistic manner.

The Italian Ambassador to Norway Alberto de Marsanich was also present during the ceremony on Røst. His speech was translated to Norwegian and published in two of the newspapers after the event. His speech focused on the humanity shown to the Venetians at Røst in 1432. He also underlined the connections between Norway and Italy seen in a historical perspective, among others tracing a comparison with the sad fate of one of Pietro Querini's relatives, Francesco, who died during the polar expedition in the north in 1899. De Marsanich also addressed the dead

33 Olaf Amundsen: *Aftenposten*, January 5 1932, 5.

Italians commemorated by the monument, telling them that the lion of San Marco now was guarded by a greater Italy under the protection of the King and Il Duce.³⁴

VOICES OF CRITIQUE AND DEBATE

One of the local papers in Bodø – *Bodø Tidende* (*Bodø Times*) – had a more critical approach to the commemoration at Røst in the summer of 1932. The liberal party published a local newspaper in Bodø too, and the editor of the paper was the former Secretary of Justice and Member of the Supreme Court, Haakon H. Evjenth. When he heard about the commemoration of “Qurini” and his men, his paper wrote a short comment under the title “When bad navigation is to be honoured”.³⁵ In the list of prominent guests present at the planned ceremony, the paper underlined, there were several clerical notables. At the end, they rhetorically asked if it not was more appropriate to erect a memorial of honour in commemoration of the fishermen from Nordland. In comparison to the storm-racked Italians who had done nothing for the island of Røst, there was a certain glory connected to the fishermen.³⁶ The paper could not see any positives in the cultural encounter with the Italians, concluding ironically that “as some kind of publicity for Røst the idea was splendid”, but that the memorial should be put up at *Utrøst*, the imaginary place known from the folk stories.³⁷

The impertinent article in the liberal left paper of Bodø did not pass without comment. In this period, it was custom for newspapers to debate different perspectives on different matters publicly: consequently *Nordlandsposten*, the conservative paper, replied to *Bodø Tidende*, stating that the liberal paper held an ill-natured and tasteless attitude towards the commemoration. The comment held a tendency towards southern European sailors, that probably held root in the contemporary debates in Norway; however, *Nordlandsposten* claimed that the navigators and

34 Norges Handels og sjøfartstidende, 1930, 1 August.

35 Bodø Tidende, 24 May 1932, 2.

36 Bodø Tidende, 24 May 1932, 2.

37 Bodø Tidende, 24 May 1932, 2.

sailors of southern Europe during the 15th and 16th century held a strong reputation as skilled experts in their field. The travels of Columbus, Diaz, Vasco Da Gama and Magellan could have all ended in misery if they had lost the rudder.³⁸ Querini's trip was marked by extraordinary hardships and misfortunes demonstrating the exceptional personality of Querini.³⁹ The paper also addressed the sarcasm of Bodø Tidende, requesting its support towards the efforts of the population of Røst to promote tourism, rather than negatively criticising their efforts to gain some more income from tourism, due to the decline in the local economy since 1917.⁴⁰ The critique of the religious side of the commemoration in 1932 was also an aspect of Nordlandsposten's comment about the whereabouts of "Petter Querinius". The monument was to commemorate "human endurance under extremely harsh circumstances", where "mental superiority, deep religious faith and submission to Gods will" were vital, as well as benevolence and humanity.⁴¹

At this stage of historiography, the debate took a new turn. One of the former editors of Bodø's socialist paper, Nordlands Fremtid, in the editorial board of the newspaper Arbeideravisen (The Workers paper) in Trondheim, joked freely about the newfound interest in the Norwegian Italian heritage. In a comment in the Trondheim paper, he, *Henry Harm* (Harald Langhelle), not only questioned the lack of seamanship of the shipwrecked men, but also rekindled the rumours about the genetic material of the islanders of Røst, noting that the Venetians did not only kiss the skirt hem of the rescuers on the isle of Røst, directly accusing the Venetians of getting some of the locals pregnant.⁴²

The comic provocation from the socialist journalist in neighbouring Trondheim resulted in a momentary comment from a local historian, M. Jakobsen, from the town of Sandnessjøen in Nordland County. He started a fact-finding study to declare that the genetic material of the

38 H: Nordlandsposten, June 11, 1932, 2.

39 H: Nordlandsposten, June 11, 1932, 2.

40 H: Nordlandsposten, June 11, 1932, 2.

41 H: Nordlandsposten, June 11, 1932, 2.

42 Harry, Arbeideravisen, July 30, 1932, 5.

people on the island was indeed of Norwegian descent, mostly ascending from the Salten and Helgeland region, concluding that they all were “full-blooded Norwegians”. In his study, he also asked whether it could be possible to commit adultery in the late medieval society or not. His conclusion was that the church discipline of 1432 would have prevented it. However, there was a period in the 1830s when French ships visited Røst, so if there by chance was to “float foreign blood” in the veins of the people of Røst, that could be one reason for it.⁴³

When Henry Harm read Jakobsen’s report, his first comment was that it was all just “race biological nonsense” from men with “brain concussion”.⁴⁴ Bodø Tidende also published Jakobsen’s article.⁴⁵ Their comment on this debate had already been published one month earlier. There had been photographers who wanted to go to Røst to document the occurrence of the “Venetian type of people”, which in editor Evjen’s eyes was considered a ridiculous idea.⁴⁶

NEW INTEREST COMBINED WITH NORTH NORWEGIAN REGIONALISM

Hits on Querini in Norwegian newspapers and journals registered in the National Library illustrate a new turn in the interest in the narrative on the shipwrecked men from Venice in the 1970s. The renewed interest after WWII relates to the newfound regionalism of Northern Norway, where all things related to the history of the northernmost region of Norway was of interest for the layman as well as for the researcher or student, especially with the establishment of the new regional university in 1968. The foundation of the institution coincided with the political and cultural growth in the interest for all issues related to the northernmost region of Norway – North Norway. Just like the growth of the new independent nation-state of Norway in the early 20th century had stirred a new interest in the history of the nation, the new regionalism

43 Helgelands Blad, July 26, 1932.

44 Harry, Arbeideravisen, July 30, 1932.

45 Bodø Tidende, July 28, 1932.

46 Bodø Tidende, July 28, 1932.

created a brand new interest in regional history from the early 1970s. It all culminated in the 1990s with a growing interest in literature, culture, language and history: as a natural result of this revitalisation of the regional history, historians and scholars of the new regional University of Tromsø searched for regional narratives like the story of Querini.⁴⁷

The hits for the word Querini in Norwegian newspapers show that the newspapers in Nordland are dominant in their eagerness to keep the story of Pietro Querini's travel alive through the local papers. In 1982, for the 550th anniversary, a new commemoration took place at Røst, again with guests from Italy. The celebrations were a sign of fraternity between Norwegians and Italians, one Tromsø-paper claimed in the title to a half-page picture of the Italian ambassador to Norway, Franco Feretti, and his wife, flanked by the Norwegian and the Italian flags in front of the monument. The Vice-President of the Veneto-region, Tecchio Candida was also present, "smiling radiantly".⁴⁸

The local journalist Knut Hoff of the Bodø-based paper *Nordlandsposten* later published an article about the unsung polar hero Francesco Querini, whose story came to his knowledge through a nurse in Bodø who was corresponding with some friends in Venice. Hoff's report also mentioned the monument to Francesco in Giardini della Biennale in Venice, where he was depicted with his dogs.⁴⁹

However, that summer it was not only local papers in the north of Norway that commemorated Querini: one journalist from the Norwegian Broadcasting Association, NRK, dedicated a thirty-minute program to the commemoration. Among others, participants included Jens Schive, the president of the Norwegian-Italian association, as well as the Mayor of Røst, Mandor Arntzen. The Norwegian ambassador to Italy, Leikvam was also invited to the program and so was the local priest from Røst, Leif G. Nilsen.⁵⁰

47 Drivenes, Hauan og Wold 1994; bokhylla.no (National Library database about publications in Norway).

48 Tromsø, August 2, 1982.

49 Knut Hoff, "Den ukjente Querini het Francesco og var lege", in *Nordlandsposten*, December 31, 1982.

50 NRK, Querini-jubileet. 550 år på Røst, August 23, 1982, [Querini-jubileet. 550 års jubileum på Røst. Querini-jubileet. 550 års jubileum på Røst.](#) (seen Februar 6, 2025).

Nevertheless, this was not the first time Querini aroused the interest of the Norwegian audience. The Norwegian broadcasting association had been present already in the commemoration at Røst in 1932: not many owned a radio in Norway at that time, however Norway was one of the countries with a growing interest in the media, with claims that around 20% of the people in Norway held a radio licence in the early 1930s.⁵¹ Sunday afternoon of 10 July 1932, at 6 pm. the Røst programme went on air with a lecture on Querini's adventurous journey in 1432 by the local bookseller from Bodø Helge Freder. Both speeches of Mayor Skaar and of the County Governor Amundsen were broadcast. The production was presumably in the hands of the regional radio reporter in Bodø Leif Jensson, who was given more than one hour transmission time on a day in which most Norwegians had some leisure time.⁵² By celebrating Querini in 1932, the history of the Northern region literally amalgamated with the national history. With the newfound interest in the case during the 1980s and after, the regional role of the story of Querini became more profound. It was the people from the North – the Northerners – who lead the way in showing their hospitality towards the shipwrecked men. It all fell in line with the virtues expected from the increasingly self-confident northerners, who not only had got their university, but had also managed to arouse a growing interest in all things northern, culminating from the 1970s. Today, cultural festivals, colleges and universities, cultural institutions, a growing use of the regional language and folklore have become evident, in what has been described as the north Norwegian regionalism and patriotism. North Norway became a well-identified region and the narrative about the good virtues of the Northerners became part of the identity building process.⁵³

51 Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Hallo, Hallo! Kringkastings historie i Norge 1920-1940*: Bind 1, Oslo: Cappelen 1999.

52 *Dagbladet*, July 8, 1932.

53 Steinar Aas: *Å eg minnest! Nordlændingernes historie 1862 – 2012*, Stamsund: Orkana, 2012.

NEW TURNS IN THE NORWEGIAN COMMEMORATION OF QUERINI'S VISIT

At the turn of the 21 century, the immense interest in globalism, particularly through Europe's new tendency to embrace the "European dimension", brought the quest for a common European culture or heritage into the open. Consequently, the story of Querini and his men emerged as a new reservoir of "Europeanness", with new common European virtues and values at the forefront of its study. One prominent example is the publication of Frédérique Laget *S'adapter à la mer*, which tend to focus on the visiting Venetian's reflections on, among other aspects, the religious relation between the then catholic Arctic and the southern catholic. Another reflection from the south is the contrast between the harsh and unfriendly conditions under which the northerners live, and their mildness and friendliness towards the visitors.⁵⁴ These are also some of the reasons why Norwegians have been sympathetic to the story about Querini. It highlights some of the values that many Norwegians and Europeans holds as common important contemporary human values.

The European perspective adds a new dimension to the story, making it more than just an episode in the lives of some individuals on a remote Arctic Island or a group of sailors and tradesmen from Venice. It provides unique insights into the minds of people along Querini's route, offering small but vital information about ideologies, belief systems, religious and cultural attitudes in a surprisingly interconnected European universe of the late Middle Ages. This is why the story of the shipwrecked men continues to offer valuable lessons for contemporary Europeans.

In the small community of Røst, there has been a deliberate effort to incorporate the history of Querini into the development of the society, its culture and identity. This process began with Helgesen and Skaar in the 1920s and continues today with new generations utilising the Querini story, making it a local narrative for Røst, a regional story for Nordland County, and a national story for all Norwegians. Additionally, it serves as

54. Frédérique Laget: *S'adapter à la mer* [Texte imprimé]: l'homme, la mer et le littoral du Moyen âge à nos jours, actes de la journée d'études organisée à Nantes le 11 avril 2013 / [par le Centre de recherche en histoire internationale et atlantique; le Réseau des chercheurs en histoire environnementale]; textes réunis par Frédérique Laget et Alexis Vrignon

a transnational and bilateral narrative between Norwegians and Italians, as well as offering a reminder of European common values.

In recent times, there has been a growing interest in utilising the story as a cultural tool, with some even aspiring to transform it into a European cultural icon or to create an opera based on the Querini story performed in Venice. This endeavour symbolises the story's return to its origins and reflects a profound interest in using it as a means of cultural expression. There is an ambition to establish a European cultural route cantered around the Querini story, following in the traces of the travellers. The story of the Querini expedition of 1432 is obviously not forgotten in Norway.

THE TRAVEL DIARY OF *MESSER PIETRO QUERINI* (*VAT. LAT. 5256*)

Initial Investigations into the Manuscript's History¹

Daniela Di Pinto
Vatican Apostolic Library

INTRODUCTION²

The present study begins with an analysis of Manuscript *Vat. lat. 5256*, which includes the travel diary written by Pietro Querini³ and archived in the Vatican Apostolic Library.⁴ The analysis of the manuscript in its entirety has allowed the formulation of an early assumption concerning its original form. The Venetian nobleman set out on his journey in 1431 bound for Flanders: however, following a series of misfortunes, he and part of his crew landed in the Lofoten archipelago in Norway; after spending several months on the island of Røst, he made his way back to Venice. Within this framework, this investigation will attempt to reconstruct the history of the manuscript.

1 The translation of this article from Italian into English was carried out by Dr. Vittoria De Boni.

2 The Norwegian branch of the Società Dante Alighieri invited me to deliver a cycle of eight lectures under the title "Norway in the Documents of the Vatican Apostolic Library", in each of its eight committees located in Oslo, Stavanger, Halden, Trondheim, Bergen, Kristiansand and Røst. The present study constitutes a more in-depth investigation based on the paper presented on that occasion. I wish to express my gratitude to all the Norwegian committees for their warm reception of the project and for their generous hospitality.

3 For biographical information on Pietro Querini, to be supplemented by bibliographic references regarding the voyage (see note 5 below), reference may be made primarily to Francesco Surdich, "Querini Pietro", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 86 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2016), 33-35.

4 Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Library (hereafter BAV), *Vat. lat. 5256*, ff. 42r-55v. The manuscript is available for consultation, together with a brief bibliography, at: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat_lat.5256, last accessed 1/9/2024.

MESSER PIERO QUERINI'S TRAVEL DIARY IN THE SOURCES

Pietro Querini's voyage⁵ started in Venice on board his ship, the Querina, with an intermediate stop in Candia before heading to the Flanders. We have little information about him⁶ and what we do know is related to his travel endeavours and his life, primarily in the political sphere, once he had returned to Venice. Born into a patrician Venetian family,⁷ he was the son of Francesco Querini and Daria Morosin, and had three brothers.⁸ On 2 September 1422, his father Francesco enrolled him in the Balla d'Oro, thus confirming that his son Pietro was more than eighteen years

5 For the principal bibliographic references concerning Pietro Querini's voyage, see notes 3, 6, 19, 30-36. For further research, the relevant bibliography is extensive; I refer the reader to the following works: Michele Giuseppe Canale, *Storia del commercio, dei viaggi, delle scoperte e carte nautiche degli italiani* (Genova: a spese della Tip. sociale, 1866), 337-339; Gaetano Branca, *Storia dei viaggiatori italiani* (Roma: G. B. Paravia, 1873), 110-113; Amat di San Filippo, Pietro. [Pietro Querini] "1: Biografia dei viaggiatori italiani colla bibliografia delle loro opere", in *Studi bibliografici e biografici sulla storia della geografia in Italia, pubblicati per cura della Deputazione Ministeriale istituita presso la Società geografica italiana*, (Roma: Tip. Elzeviriana, 1875), 58-60; Cesáreo Fernández Duro, "Viaje impensado à Norvega en el siglo XV", *Boletín de la Sociedad geografica de Madrid* XXI, n. 5-6 (1886): 367-374; Gustav Storm, "Venetianerne paa Røst i 1432.", *Det norske Geografiske Selskabs Aarboeg* VIII, (1896-1897): 39; Antonio Morosini, *Chronique d'Antonio Morosini: extraits relatifs à l'histoire de France, pub. pour la Société de l'histoire de France, introduction et commentaire par Germain Lefèvre-Pontalis, texte établi et traduit par Léon Dorez [...]* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, II. Laurens succ., 1901), Vol. 3 370-373, Vol. 4 360-363; Anders Bugge, "Venetianerne i Lofoten i det 15. Aarhundrede", *Kringsjaa. Redigert af Chr. Brinchnann*, Bind XXVIII, (Juli-Desember 1906): 33; Salvatore Sibilia, *Italiani nella Svezia: 1000-1800: saggio di ricerche sulla genialità italiana* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1943), 17-24; Luigi Messadaglia, *Da una novella di Franco Sacchetti e dal "Viaggio" di Pietro Querini alla vera storia del baccalà in Italia* (Venezia: C. Ferrari, 1953), 1-27; Emilio Salgari, *Verso l'Artide con la Stella polare* (Milano: Fabbri, 1968), 64 ss.; Silvio Zavatti, *Uomini verso l'ignoto: gli esploratori del mondo* (Ancona: Bagaloni, 1979), 327; Cecilie Wiborg Bonafede, *La Norvegia in Italia: scritti sulla Norvegia ed i norvegesi* (Oslo: Univ., 1981), 252-259; Luigi De Anna, "Il viaggio settentrionale di Pietro Querini nella redazione ramusiana", *Miscellanea di Storia delle esplorazioni* XV, 1990: 57-102; Paul Oskar Kristeller, "5[1]: Accedunt alia itinera III and Italy III: Sweden to Yugoslavia, Utopia, Supplement to Italy (A-F)", in *Iter Italicum: a finding list of uncatalogued or incompletely catalogued humanistic manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and other libraries* (London: The Warburg Institute, Leiden [etc.]: E. J. Brill, 1990, 518b, 519a, 520b, 521a, 600a, 632a, 632b, 633; Maria Serena Mazzi, *Oltre l'orizzonte: in viaggio nel Medioevo* (Cavallermaggiore: Gribaudo, 1997), 79 n. 34, 137-138, 154 n. 156, 169, 269-271, 276 nn. 70-71; Arnold Barton, *Northern Arcadia: foreign travelers in Scandinavia, 1765-1815* (Carbondale, Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University press, 1998), 7; *Il mito e la rappresentazione del Nord nella tradizione letteraria* (Roma: Salerno, 2008), 44, 48, 116; Nathalie Hester, *Literature and identity in Italian baroque travel writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Paolo Cossi, *1432: il veneziano che scoprì il baccalà*, 2nd revised and expanded edition (Milano: Hazard, 2010); Otello Fabris, *I misteri del ragno: documenti e ipotesi sulla storia del baccalà* (Vicenza: la Vigna, 2011); *Figures du Nord: Scandinavie, Groenland, Sibérie* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012); Thorsten Fischer, "Europa und der ferne Norden. Wahrnehmungen und Vorstellungen im frühen und hohen Mittelalter", *Periplus* 23, (2013): 166-182; Pietro Querini, *Culo mundi: viaggio del magnifico messer Piero Quirino gentiluomo vinitiano* (Patti: Pungitopo, 2015); Marco Firrao, *La Storia della Querina nelle tavole del maestro Franco Fortunato* (Roma: Il Mare Libreria Internazionale, 2016).

6 For information on Pietro Querini's political life, see *Mostra dei navigatori veneti del Quattrocento e del Cinquecento [...]* (Venezia: Officine grafiche C. Ferrari, 1957), 59; «*Infelice e sventurata coca Querina*», i racconti originali del naufragio dei Veneziani nei mari del Nord, edited and annotated by Angela Pluda (Roma: Viella, 2019), 13.

7 *Ibid.*, 13.

8 Surdich, "Querini Pietro", 33.

of age.⁹ His birth may therefore be dated to the early fifteenth century, more precisely around 1402. He embarked on his political career several years after his return to his homeland and it lasted for roughly a decade until his death. On 8 October 1438 he was elected into the *Rason vecchia*¹⁰ and the following year, on 29 September 1439, he entered the Senate.¹¹ He was once again elected to the Senate on 7 August 1446.¹² On 14 September 1448, he is still reported as having a seat in the Senate but an annotation beside his name also records his death.¹³

His first port of call in the island of Crete on 25 April 1431 was tarnished by the death of his only son,¹⁴ whose health was already frail:

“[...] zorni 5 avanti el mio partir de Candia, dove onerai la dita nave, el nominato mio fiol pasò de questa vita, sichè asai io me ne condulxi parendomi che a sì fato tempo Dio me avesse onfeso. Oh quanto e quale fu la mia zezità et ignoranzia che de sì fato prinzipio me reputaxe lesò!”¹⁵

[five days before my departure from Crete [Greece], where I had loaded the aforementioned ship, my named son passed from this life. This event caused me much sadness and disorientation, as it seemed that, at that time, God forgive me. Oh, how much and what was my blindness and ignorance that from such a favorable fate I considered myself injured!]

This occurrence left a deep mark on Pietro's soul, “l'animo mio rimase implosso”,¹⁶ nonetheless, he resolved to continue his journey. The vessel set sail towards the Strait of Gibraltar and arrived in the city of Lisbon where it docked to make provisions of food and goods, and to carry out some repairs on the ship before proceeding towards Cape Finisterre.

9 Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Avogaria di Comun., Balla d'Oro*, reg. 1, c. 177v; Surdich, “Querini Pietro”, 33; *Mostra dei navigatori veneti*, 59; Pietro Donazzolo, *I viaggiatori veneti minori. Studio bio-bibliografico* (Roma: Società geografica italiana, 1927), 26-27.

10 Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Segretario alle voci, Misti*, reg. 4, f. 27r.

11 *Ibid.*, f. 99r.

12 *Ibid.*, f. 117v.

13 *Ibid.*, f. 122v.

14 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5256, f. 42r.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

The ship then suffered a terrible shipwreck that caused extensive damage and the demise of numerous crew members. One group of castaways abandoned the ship on board a lifeboat, relying on currents and winds in the hope of reaching Ireland: however, they were driven further north, between the Shetland and the Faroe Islands in Norway. The survivors miraculously landed on an uninhabited island of Norway's Lofoten Archipelago, Sandøya. Several days later, Querini and the eleven surviving crew members were rescued by some fishermen and taken to the island of Røst, where they were welcomed into various households and where they remained for several months. Once the harsh winter was over, they resumed their journey home in May,¹⁷ partly by ship and partly over land, eventually making it back to Venice.¹⁸

The tale of the journey is enshrined not only in the manuscript conserved in the Vatican,¹⁹ but also in two manuscripts archived in the Marciana Library:²⁰ *Ms. It. XI, 110* (7238) is acephalous and mutilated as it lacks both *incipit* and *explicit* from which one might obtain specific information on the scribe and its dating.²¹ The other manuscript²² *Ms. It.*

17 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5256, f. 52r.

18 Pietro Querini's return voyage to Venice is cited in: Morosini, *Chronique d'Antonio Morosini*, Vol. 3 370-373, Vol. 4 360-363.

19 The transcription of the manuscript in BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5256, ff. 42r-55v was published in «*Infelice e sventurata coca Querina*», 37-67.

20 Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, *ms. It. XI, 110* (7238), ff. 25r-46v. The manuscript of ff. 21 presents as acephalous and mutilated and was included in miscellaneous 15th-17th century pamphlets previously owned by Jacopo Morelli. For a description of the manuscript, see *Mostra dei navigatori veneti*, 59-60: "Ms. cartaceo, 4° (mm. 295 x 130), sec. XV, ff. 21, mutilo in principio e in fine". For the bibliography on the manuscript, see Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigationi et viaggi raccolto gia da M. Gio. Battista Ramvsio, et hora in questa nvova editione accrescivto [...]* (In Venetia: Appresso i Giunti, 1583), 199v-206r; Giuseppe Pennesi, "Viaggio del Magnifico messer Piero Quirino gentiluomo vinitiano", *Bollettino della Società geografica italiana* XXII, (1885): 812-835; Donazzolo, *I viaggiatori veneti minori*, 27.

21 «*Infelice e sventurata coca Querina*», 18.

22 Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, *ms. It. VII, 368* (7936), ff. 1r-28r. The 15th century manuscript (sheet, in 8°, 200x140) comprises ff. 28, preceded and followed by eight and ten blank sheets, writing in round cursive characters with incipit and initials in red. At f. 1r includes the coat of arms of the scribe, Antonio Vitturi di Andrea. For the description, including the transcription of *incipit* and *colophon*, I refer to *Mostra dei navigatori veneti*, 60 and "81: Venice, Marciana: Mss. italiani, classe 7 (nn. 1-500), compiled by Pietro Zorzanella, posthumous edition by Giulio Zorzanella", in *Inventari dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia: opera fondata dal prof. Giuseppe Mazzatinti*, [edited by] Albano Sorbelli (Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1956), 119-120. The text was published with some inaccuracies by Carlo Bullo, *Il viaggio di m. Piero Querini e le relazioni della Repubblica veneta colla Svezia* (Venezia: Antonelli, 1881), 55-71, with additions from Ramusio, "Naufragio del sopradetto messer Piero Quirino descritto per Cristoforo Fioravante, & Nicolo di Michiel, che vi si trovarono presenti", in Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, 206r-211r, the modern edition is Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. IV, edited by Marica Milanese (Torino: Einaudi, 1983), 79-98; the transcription of the full manuscript with textual analysis has been published in: «*Infelice e sventurata coca Querina*», 17-24, 26-27, 29-30, 69-87. For bibliographical

VII, 368 (7936), entitled “Naufragio della Coca Quirina”,²³ provides the narration by the two travel companions, Cristofalo Fioravante, a navigator, and Nicolò de Michiele, a scribe:

“[...] Cristofalo, omo de consiglio, e ser Nicolò de Michiele, scrivàn della infelice e sventurata coca Querina [...]”²⁴

[Sir Cristofalo, a navigator, and Sir Niccolò de Michiele, the scribe, about the unfortunate and ill-fated coca Querina]

It was transcribed by the Florentine humanist Antonio di Corrado de Cardini;²⁵ it includes both *incipit* and *explicit* from which we learn that the scribe, Antonio Vitturi, dates his transcription to 8 October 1480 in Venice in the parish of San Simeone Apostolo.²⁶ The scribe's signature and the date, that is subsequent to the events described, suggest that this manuscript is based on an earlier version that has not yet been identified.²⁷ The earliest ever known reference to Pietro Querini's voyage dates back to the fifteenth century, not long after the journey itself, and appears in Fra' Mauro's²⁸ world map dated approximately 1450, where at the side of the word “Norway” there is the indication:

“In questa proui(n)cia de noruegia scorse misier piero querini come è noto.”²⁹

[In this province of Norway, Messer Piero Querini traveled, as it is known.]

references, in addition to the texts cited, see: Pennesi, “Viaggio del Magnifico messer Piero Quirino gentilhuomo vinitiano”, 814, note 1; Donazzolo, *I viaggiatori veneti minori*, 26-27; *Non solo spezie: commercio e alimentazione fra Venezia e Inghilterra nei secoli XIV-XVIII* (Venezia: Lineadacqua, 2016), 42.

23 The title is derived from the guard sheet, see Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, *ms. It. VII, 368 (7936)*, [f. 2v].

24 Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, *ms. It. VII 368 (7936)*, f. 1r.

25 *Ibid.*, f. 1r.

26 *Ibid.*, f. 28r

27 See: «*Infelice e sventuratta coca Querina*», 17-24, note 20.

28 Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, *Mappamondo di Fra Mauro*, historical record and bibliographical information at <https://bibliotecanazionalemarciana.cultura.gov.it/la-biblioteca/il-patrimonio/patrimonio-librario/il-mappamondo-di-fra-mauro>, last accessed 1/9/2024.

29 The transcription is published by Pietro Falchetta, *Storia del Mappamondo di Fra' Mauro: con la trascrizione integrale del testo* (Rimini: Imago, 2016), 84, 242.

The text of the tales of the voyage³⁰ have been handed down through a number of printed works: the most significant is by Giovan Battista Ramusio, secretary of the Council of Ten,³¹ contained in the second volume of *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi*,³² where the author's hand and intervention is revealed as a necessary means to make the text more appealing to the reader,³³ thus deviating from the original text. The publication also includes the account provided by Querini's two travel companions, Cristoforo Fioravante and Nicolò di Michiele. An extract is included in a book dated 1613³⁴ and in Forster's edition of 1788,³⁵ and lastly in Zurla's study.³⁶

VAT. LAT. 5256

The manuscript is conserved in the Vatican Latin collection (*Vat. lat. 5256*³⁷) and is a composite volume assembled in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, described in the sixth tome of the Ranaldi in-

30 A romanticised version of the journey, nevertheless drawn from manuscript sources, is present in Pietro Querini and Nicolò de Michiele and Cristofalo Fioravante, *Il naufragio della Querina: Veneziani nel circolo polare artico*, edited by Paolo Nelli, afterword by Claire Judde de Larivière, 2nd ed. (Roma: Nutrimenti mare, 2018), translated from the French: Pietro Querini and Nicolò de Michiele and Cristofalo Fioravante, *Naufrages. textes traduits du venitien et postface par Claire Judde de Larivière*, (Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2005). Also drawing from the manuscripts Mario Spagnol and Gianpaolo Dossena, *Avventure e viaggi di mare: giornale di bordo, relazioni, memorie* (Firenze: Salani, 1995), 13-24; a romanticised version of the text was published in Franco Giliberto and Giuliano Piovan, *Alla larga da Venezia. L'incredibile viaggio di P. Q. oltre il circolo polare artico nel '400*, preface by Marino Zorzi (Venezia: Marsilio, 2019).

31 See "Dal Rinascimento al barocco" Vol. 6, in *Storia di Venezia* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1994), 176.

32 See Ramusio, "Viaggio del magnifico messer Piero Quirino gentiluomo vinitiano. Nel quale partito da Candia con Malvagie per ponente l'anno 1431, incorre in uno horribile et spaventoso naufragio, del quale alla fine con diversi accidenti campato, arriva nella Norvegia et Svetia Regni Settentrionali", in Ramusio, *Secondo volume delle navigazioni et viaggi*, 199v-206r. The modern version is published in Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, 47-77, 79-98, Norwegian translation in Kare Fasting, *Skip uten ror; frit etter P. Q. beretning om den ulykkelige ferden fra Kreta tilt Røst i Lofoten vinteren 1431* (Bergen, 1950).

33 See "Infelice e sventurata coca Querina", 24-33.

34 Hieronimus Megiserum, *Septentrio novantiquus, oder Die neue NortWelt [...]* (Leipzig: in verlegung Henning Grossen des Jüngern, 1613), 178-270.

35 J.R. Forster, *Histoire des découvertes et voyages faits dans le nord* (A Paris: Chez Cuchet, 1788), 331.

36 Placido Maria Zurla, *Di Marco Polo e degli altri viaggiatori veneziani più illustri dissertazioni [...]*, vol. 2 (In Venezia: co' tipi Piccottiani, 1818), 64, 185, 265-273.

37 For bibliographical citations on the manuscript collected from 1968 to 2011, I refer principally to the BAV collections: Marco Buonocore, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana: (1968-1980)*, Vol. 2. (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1986), 1179; Massimo Ceresa, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana: (1981-1985)* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1991), 560; Massimo Ceresa, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana: (1991-2000)* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2005), 674. For the bibliography of exhibition catalogues see Claudia Montuschi, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana in cataloghi di mostre: (1998-2015)* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2017), 94.

ventory.³⁸ The dating of the manuscript's assembly finds confirmation in its presence in the seventeenth century catalogues and its absence in the earlier ones, while the binding dates back to a later period and falls within the complex rebinding campaign arranged between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries on codices of earlier acquisition.³⁹ The manuscript is covered in reddish-brown leather, with simple linear frames impressed in gold outlining both the front and the back boards. It shows stitching on five cords with decorations in the compartments of the spine: the uppermost bears the coat of arms of Pope Pius VI Braschi (1775-1799),⁴⁰ while the last has the emblem of the Cardinal Librarian Franciscus Xaverius De Zelada, who administered the library between 1779 and 1801.⁴¹ The second compartment has the embossed shelfmark 5256, while the third and fifth sections have simple floral decorations embossed in gold. Considering the date of the librarian's death and the date of the Pontif's election in 1775 and bearing in mind the painstaking binding operations, the date of the cover can be placed at the end of the 1700s.

38 See *Inventarium Manuscriptorum latinorum Bibliothecae Vaticanae, Tomus Sextus, Vat. lat. 4889-6025*, pp. 100-101 [consultable in BAV, shelfmark Sala cons. Mss. Rosso 306], the original is manuscript *Vat. lat. 15349*, pt. 6, pp. 100-101. The inventory can be consulted in: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/INV_Sala_cons.mss.306.rosso, last accessed 1/9/2024.

39 The boards of what were considered more important books were covered with reddish-brown leather covers, while the boards of paper manuscripts or those considered of lesser importance were covered with natural parchment; gold decorations were reserved only for coats of arms and shelf marks in the spine panels. The binding of manuscript *Vat. lat. 5256* is similar to that of *Vat. lat. 907*, see Antonio Manfredi, "I Vaticani latini nel secolo XIX. Dispersioni, acquisizioni e inventari. Una prima ricognizione", in *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, V: La Biblioteca Vaticana dall'occupazione francese all'ultimo papa re (1797-1878)*, edited by Andreina Rita (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2020), 446, fig. 1.

40 Pope Pius VI, 21 February 1775 - 29 August 1799, see Ambrogio Maria Piazzoni, "Roma e il Papato dall'età napoleonica a Pio IX", in *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, V*, 23. For the Pontiff's biography, to be integrated with the numerous entries present in Italian biographical dictionaries and in the principal repertoires, I refer essentially to Marina Caffiero, "Pio VI, papa", in *DBI*, Vol. 84, (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2015), 1-22.

41 Franciscus Xaverius de Zelada, Cardinal Librarian from 15 December 1779 until his death on 19 December 1801; see Maria Christine Grafinger, "Regolamenti, modalità di accesso, frequentatori e consultazioni: i documenti", in *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, IV: La Biblioteca Vaticana e le arti nel secolo dei Lumi (1700-1797)*, edited by Barbara Jatta (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2016), 424, sheet 2: "il breve con la nomina è conservato in Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, *Segreteria dei Brevi*, Sec. Brev. 4361, ff. 52rv, 58r". For the Cardinal's biography I refer mainly to Marco Emanuele Omes, "Zelada, Francesco Saverio de", in *DBI*, Vol. 100, (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2020), 633-636; for the role of cardinal librarian I refer to Jeanne Bignami Odier, *La bibliothèque Vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI: recherches sur l'histoire des collections de manuscrits*, avec la collaboration de José Ruyschaert (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1973), 184.

The history of the Vatican Latin fund⁴² is indeed complex: in addition to being what is still considered as being an “open”⁴³ fund, it includes a first grouping of Library’s primigenial collection, known as the ancient fund (*Vat. lat.* 1-4888⁴⁴), followed by the acquisitions made in the seventeenth century (*Vat. lat.* 4889-7058⁴⁵). Within the first set of seventeenth century acquisitions (*Vat. lat.* 4889-5435) described in tome VI of the Rinaldi inventory,⁴⁶ dating approximately 1636,⁴⁷ there are 1137 shelfmarks recorded, which mainly correspond to single volumes. Within this impressive group of shelfmarks, studies have allowed the identification of consistent and homogeneous blocks,⁴⁸ while others are apparently void of any connections. In the section *Vat. lat.* 5043-5435 (identified as the third large block of the acquisitions), only a few homogenous groups were identified based on their provenance and they include the manuscripts from Aldo Manuzio.⁴⁹ Many manuscripts within this series were positioned based on height and structure; they include: *membra disiecta*, booklets, quires that had long been stored as individual entries, short

42 For general information relating to the Vatican Latin fund, I refer principally to Antonio Manfredi, “Vaticani latini”, in *Guida ai fondi manoscritti, numismatici, a stampa della Biblioteca Vaticana*, vol. 1, edited by Francesco D’Aiuto and Paolo Vian (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 2011), 623-640.

43 To date, the fund includes 15521 shelfmarks, many of which are articulated in multiple sections; the survey refers to September 2024.

44 The manuscripts *Vat. lat.* 1-4888, XV-XVI cent., constitute the so-called ancient fund that has been broadly described by Assunta Di Sante and Antonio Manfredi, “I Vaticani latini: dinamiche di organizzazione e di accrescimento tra Cinque e Seicento”, in *Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, III: La Vaticana nel Seicento (1590-1700): una biblioteca di biblioteche*, edited by Claudia Montuschi (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2014), 461-482, scheda 1; see also Manfredi, “Vaticani latini”, 623-626.

45 It should be considered that *Vat. lat.* 4888-7058, acquired in the 17th century, constitute one third of the acquisitions made from the origins of the BAV until the end of the 17th century: see Di Sante and Manfredi, “I Vaticani latini: dinamiche di organizzazione e di accrescimento tra Cinque e Seicento”, 482-502; Manfredi, “Vaticani latini”, 626-628.

46 The sixth tome of the Rinaldi inventory *Vat. lat.* 4889-6025, see *supra* note 38, was completed in 1636, and contains the acquisitions made between the end of the pontificate of Paul V (1605-1621) until the middle of the pontificate of Urban VIII (1623-1644); for a thorough description I refer to Di Sante and Manfredi, “I Vaticani latini: dinamiche di organizzazione e di accrescimento tra Cinque e Seicento”, 482-486. For the history of the BAV between the two pontificates, also see Bignami Odier, *La bibliothèque Vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI*, 99-135.

47 *Ibid.*, 482-483, note 139; Bignami Odier, *La bibliothèque Vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI*, 112.

48 Some gatherings have been identified among shelfmarks 4889-5435 and are reported as examples: *Vat. lat.* 4889-4915 acquisitions principally of juridical nature; *Vat. lat.* 4916-4963 excerpts of Latin manuscripts by Guglielmo Sireto; *Vat. lat.* 4964-5008 second series of acquisitions; *Vat. lat.* 5009-5042 manuscripts of the writer and theologian Cristóbal Cabrera (1513-1598); *Vat. lat.* 5401-5427 manuscripts with ownership note of the Rota prelate Francesco Peña. For the investigation and analysis of the partitions see essentially Manfredi, “Vaticani latini”, 627 e Di Sante and Manfredi, “I Vaticani latini: dinamiche di organizzazione e di accrescimento tra Cinque e Seicento”, 482-484, sheet 3.

49 *Ibid.*, 483, sheet 3.

series of annotations that had accompanied broader works and collections,⁵⁰ that were later joined in bound volumes for better preservation,⁵¹ the current knowledge of which does not allow the definition of criteria for their final classification.⁵² As a result, a group of shelfmarks were set up to include collections of single medieval manuscripts and especially manuscripts from the fifteenth century, in times when printing was not widespread,⁵³ thus establishing factitious seventeenth century collections.⁵⁴ As a result, it is plausible that the genealogy of the *Vat. lat. 5256* manuscript can be enumerated amongst such instances.

Based on an initial, general assessment, the manuscript emerges as a composite work, constituted of ten distinct sections, all datable between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, all differing in content and type without any apparent specific connection. It should also be noted that there is a divergence in the numbering of the units compared to the description provided in the seventeenth century inventory.⁵⁵ The codex consists of one parchment quire and nine paper quires. The manuscript has undergone various restoration treatments, the first of which dates to 1953, with no prior interventions recorded.⁵⁶ All quires present a full-page *mise en page*, with the exception of the first that differs in the support, the parchment, and in the text that is arranged in two columns, while the writing in the various texts also differs. The description of the different parts will prove useful to understand and make suggestions as

50 *Ibid.*

51 See Manfredi, "I Vaticani latini nel secolo XIX", 446.

52 Di Sante and Manfredi, "I Vaticani latini: dinamiche di organizzazione e di accrescimento tra Cinque e Seicento", 484.

53 *Ibid.*

54 The study on manuscript *Vat. lat. 4223*, a factitious collection, whose arrangement is datable between the late 16th and early 17th century, inserted in the fifth tome of the Ranaldi inventory at the end of a section of biblical books 372.373, 378, underlines how this practice was employed also for other manuscripts with different content and purposes, albeit preceding the manuscript examined in this study; for an in-depth assessment, see: Antonio Manfredi, "S. Ambrogio nella Vaticana di Niccolò V e il *Vat. lat. 4223*", in *Ambrosiana, Hagiographica, Vaticana: studi in onore di Mons. Cesare Pasini in occasione del suo settantesimo compleanno*, edited by Ambrogio Maria Piazzoni (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2020), 367-388.

55 See *supra* note 38. The inventory does not report the number of sheets in the codex, suggesting that the numbering was attributed after the addition of the new binding in the late 18th century.

56 See BAV, *Arch. Bibl.* 305: register n. 5 of the Restoration Laboratory provides this annotation for f. 23r "Week 5-10 January 1953. [...] *Vat. lat. 5256-4702-5223-1270* some sheets were added". Later restoration interventions made in the 2000s were carried out in view of the pre-digitalisation project or of exhibitions, in 2011, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2021 and 2024.

to the original structure of Querini's diary. The manuscript is rather small in size (230x160 mm) and thickness (ff. II, 184, III mod. num.). Leaves are manually numbered to replace older foliation methods in some sections of the text. The volume has never been described in its entirety.⁵⁷

I (ff. 1r-10r)

"Opusculum gestorum Joannis Procita contra Regem Carolum Siciliae", 58 membr., inc.: "Se volete ascoltare".

This is the only quire in parchment, with a two-column *mise en page*: it presents large module initials in the frame and the text has its own original internal numbering by leaves (ff. 1-10). Layout: f. 1 col. mm. 6x18, inter-column space mm. 10, 36 lines. The *libellus* is written by a single writing hand belonging to the Gothic tradition. Prickings are present in the parchment in ff. 7r, 8r and 12r: the first in the left column, the second in the right column, the last on the lower margin and are probably from the parchment treatment process; ff. 10v-12v are blank and in parchment; on f. 12rv there are sketches and annotations, possibly suggesting reuse.

II (ff. 13r-41v)⁵⁹

⁶² B. Odorici de Utino ord. min. Historia de utibus, et conditionibus diversorum gentium, et de martyrio quatuor fra(tr)um minorum [...],⁶⁰ sheet,

57 A first summary description of the manuscript, with some flaws and inaccuracies in the identification of textual parts and in their numbering, is reported in Lucio Monaco, "I volgarizzamenti italiani della relazione di Odorico da Pordenone", *Studi mediolatini e volgari* 26, (1978-79): 191-192.

58 The titles reported refer to the 17th century inventory, see BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, p. 100. The booklet includes "Storia di Gianni da Procida e della ribellione siciliana del 1282"; see Monaco, "I volgarizzamenti italiani della relazione di Odorico da Pordenone", 191; edited by Vincenzo Di Giovanni, *Giovane da Procida e il ribellamento di Sicilia nel 1282 secondo il codice vaticano 5256* (Bologna: Tipi Fava e Garagnani, 1870), extract from Vincenzo Di Giovanni, "Giovane da Procida e il ribellamento di Sicilia nel 1282", *Il propugnatore: studi filologici, storici e bibliografici* 3, n. 2-3 (1870): 360-390. The dissemination of the printed version of the text by Di Giovanni is cited in Francesco Zambrini, *Le opere volgari a stampa dei secoli XIII e XIV*, 4th ed. with appendix (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1884), coll. 603-604, 974.

59 A specific study of Odorico da Pordenone's *Relatio* and its presence in manuscripts, including an examination of the testimonies of the BAV, has been published in: Monaco, "I volgarizzamenti italiani della relazione di Odorico da Pordenone", 191-192: inc. (ornate initial): "Conçossia cossa che per molti sia nar-ratto et detto diverse nuove et stranie cosse de le usanze del mondo et de' conditione et de li litti, dove e ad intendere et sapere io, frate Orricho [...]", expl. f. 41v: "Et de di in di me dispongo de vivere et de morire secondo la volontade de Dio. Amen". The manuscript is cited also in other investigations, see: Giulio Cesare Testa, "La città di Pordenone e i manoscritti della Relatio", *Il Noncello: rivista d'arte e di cultura*, 55, (1983): 162, 176; id., "Bozza per un censimento dei manoscritti della Relatio", in *Odorico da Pordenone e la Cina*, edited by Giorgio Melis (Pordenone: Ed. Concordia Sette, 1983), 121, 129-130; Pacifico Sella, "Odorico da Pordenone O.F.M., *Relatio*", in *L'arte di Francesco: capolavori d'arte italiana e terre d'Asia dal XIII al XV secolo*, edited by Angelo Tartuferi, Francesco D'Arelli (Firenze, Milano: Giunti: Firenze Musei, 2015), 362-363.

60 See BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, p. 100.

cursive writing, inc. written in red: “Libro de stranie et maravegiosse chosse le qual vide frate Odorigo de Forioli de l’Ordine di Santo Franciesscho, le quale lui vide oltre il mare de le tre Indie [...]”; ornate initial inc. “Conciossia cossa che”.⁶¹

Large module initials are inserted into the frame; the colours used are alternately red and blue, the text has its own original internal numbering by leaves (ff. 1-29), full-page *mise en page*. The *libellus* provides the text of the *Relatio*⁶² – known as *Iter o De Rebus mirabilibus*⁶³ – by Odorico da Pordenone.

III (ff. 42r- 55v)

“⁶⁴ Petri Quirini naufragium Italicum”,⁶⁴ sheet, inc.: “Avegna che la frazelità umana”, full-page *mise en page*; f. 56v presents calligraphic exercises on the recto; f. 57r bears the title “Beato Odorico latinam[...] scritto”; f. 58r, in parchment, bears the title “Trattato di frate Odorico di Frioli et naufragio del magnifico messer Piero Quirini”; along the full length of the inner margin there is a register of gatherings and on the verso there are some manuscript notes.⁶⁵

IV (ff. 59r-78v)⁶⁶

“⁶⁷ Eiusdem eadem Historia Latina”,⁶⁷ sheet, inc.: “Licet multa et varia”,⁶⁸ full page *mise en page*, the text has its own original internal numbering

61 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5256, f. 13r. The reproduction of f. 13r and f. 41r are published in the record edited by Sella, “Odorico da Pordenone O.F.M., *Relatio*”, 362-363.

62 In addition to this exemplar in the BAV, other Italian manuscripts conserved include the text by Odorico: *Urb. lat.* 1013, ff. 3r-28v; *Barb. Lat.* 4047, ff. 89rb-98va; *Barb. Lat.* 4048, ff. 28r-42r see Testa, “Bozza per un censimento dei manoscritti della Relatio”, 130. The manuscripts are also described by Monaco, “I volgarizzamenti italiani della relazione di Odorico da Pordenone”, 189-191, 206-208.

63 *Ibid.*, 179.

64 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, p. 100.

65 According to Monaco: “della ricetta per *Pulvis sunifera* vergata della stessa mano che ha scritto i ff. 13-41”, see Monaco, “I volgarizzamenti italiani della relazione di Odorico da Pordenone”, 192.

66 For bibliographical citations on this text in the BAV collections published between 1968 and 2011, see Buonocore, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana: (1968-1980)*, 1179; Ceresa, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana: (1981-1985)*, 560; Ceresa, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana: (1991-2000)*, 674. For citations in exhibition catalogues, see Montuschi, *Bibliografia dei fondi manoscritti della Biblioteca Vaticana in cataloghi di mostre: (1998-2015)*, 194: “Odorico da Pordenone O.F.M (1286?-1331), *Relatio*, XIV-XV secolo”, in *A Oriente: città, uomini e dei sulle vie della seta*, edited by Francesco D’Arelli, Pierfrancesco Callieri (Milano: Electa, 2011), 134, and Sella, “Odorico da Pordenone O.F.M., *Relatio*”, 362-363.

67 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, p. 100.

68 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5256, f. 59r.

by sheets (ff. 1r-20v) and includes the “Relatio itineris fr. Odorici” in Latin⁶⁹; f. 79rv blank.

V (ff. 80r-91r)

⁶⁵ Bonifatij Montij de dictis et factis Macchionis Michaelis Veneti, et Cypri Gubernatoris Italici”,⁷⁰ sheet, inc.: “All.mo [...] sig. Giulio Savorgnano, governatore generale della militia del Regno di Cipri, sopra alcuni detti, et fatti del clarissimo sig. [...] Marchion Michele, cavalier, et procuratore di san Marco, mentre lui era Capitano Generale della Serenissima Signoria di Venezia”, full page *mise en page*; the text has its own original internal numbering (ff. 1r-8r), f. 91v blank.

VI (ff. 92r-95r)

⁶⁶ De dieta Imperiali”,⁷¹ sheet, inc.: “Questi sono gli articoli mandati al Re di Francia”, full-page *mise en page*, f. 92r bears the title “Copiato dalla stampa. Novelle vere della dieta Imperiale fatta a Spira, tradotti nuovamente di lingua francese in Italiana”.

VII (ff. 96r-118v)

⁶⁷ Cardinalis Poli discursus pacis”,⁷² sheet, inc.: “Essendo io mandato”, full-page *mise en page*, f. 96r bears the title “In nomine [...]. Discorso della pace fra il Re et la maestà Cesarea”, f. 119rv blank.

VIII (ff. 120r-126v)

⁶⁸ Josephi Compagni [...] de vera origine Caroli V Imperatoris”,⁷³ sheet, inc.: “Ecco che io vi mando”, full-page *mise en page*; f. 120r bears the title “La origine di Carlo V Imperatore”. In this quire, f. 125rv is blank, f. 126 has been placed between ff. 120 and 121, an obvious mistake in re-composing the

69 This quire of the manuscript, described as *Vat. lat.* 5256b, was included in the census of Odorico's works in Latin; in addition to this text, the BAV conserves other texts in Latin manuscripts: *Ott. lat.* 2087, *Barb. Lat.* 2558, ff. 182r-254v, *Barb. Lat.* 2559, ff. 209r-304r, the latter two are cited by Testa, “Bozza per un censimento dei manoscritti della Relatio”, 121.

70 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, pp. 100-101.

71 *Ibid.*, f. 101.

72 *Ibid.*, f. 101. For the bibliographical references on this text, see: Thomas F. Dunn, “Cardinal Reginald Pole and Codex Vaticanus Latinus 5970”, *Manuscripta Saint Louis* 22, n. 2 (1978): 75.

73 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, p. 101.

gathering during the restoration and binding stage; f. 126v states “L'origine di Carlo quinto”, proving that the sheet closed the quire by stating its title.

IX (ff. 127r-150r)

“⁶⁹ Placidi Ragazzoni Relatio ad Venetos de Regno”,⁷⁴ sheet, inc. “Nella prima parte”, full-page *mise en page*; f. 127r bears the introductory title to the quire “Relationi del [...] Placido Ragazoni”, the text has its own internal numbering (ff. 1r-23r); ff. 150v-162v blank.

X (ff. 163r-184r)

“¹⁰ Narratio belli inter Turcum, et Sophi, de Anno 1553 et 1554”⁷⁵ sheet, inc.: “Successo de la guerra che il gran turcho fecece [...]”, full-page *mise en page*; the text has its own internal numbering (ff. 1r-22r).

PROPOSED CHRONOLOGICAL PLACEMENT

The third quire of the manuscript, *Vat. lat.* 5256, ff. 42r-55v, contains an account of the travel diary and is the first source attributable to Querini himself, although it is still hard to date and there are suggestions that the text might have been written before the end of the sixteenth century. The BAV has another manuscript in its archives, *Urb. lat.* 855, that includes citations from Querini's voyage (“Viaggio di Piero Quirini sotto la tramontana per mare, et per Norvegia per terra”⁷⁶ and “Viaggio di Pietro Quirin di Fiandra, Inghilterra, et Castiglia”⁷⁷) in a compendium of several travels. Nevertheless, apart from the title of the voyage in the volume, there is no further reference thereto. The codex is dated between 1576 and 1625 and it is recorded in the Stornajolo⁷⁸ inventory.

74 *Ibid.* For the bibliographical references on this text, see: Ermenegildo Camozzi, “IV Centenario della elezione di Gerolamo Ragazzoni a vescovo di Bergamo (1577-1977): la Oratio ad Sacrum Collegium de Summo Pontifice subrogando e lettere inedite”, *Bergomum* 51, 1-2 (1977): 42.

75 BAV, *Vat. lat.* 15349, pt. 6, p. 101.

76 BAV, *Urb. lat.* 855, f. 79r. The manuscript and the annexed short bibliography can be consulted at: <https://digi.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Urb.lat.855>, last accessed 1/9/2024.

77 *Ibid.*

78 See Cosimo Stornajolo, “t. 2. Codici 501-1000”, in *Codices Urbinae Latini* (Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1912), 519: “855. Saec. XVII, chart., mm. 270x204, ff. III, 530. *Libelli et relationes variae de rebus historicis et politicis*. 2 (f. 66). ‘Pio Rodolfo’, [...]; subnectuntur (f. 79) memoriae itinerum septem: *Viaggio di Piero Querini sotto la tramontana, et per Norvegia per terra – Inghilterra e Castiglia*”.

Querini's diary begins *ex abrupto*,⁷⁹ without a title and without a date: the text is drafted in Venetian dialect, using a language which was more similar to how merchants and sailors would have spoken in those days⁸⁰:

“Avegna che la frazelità umana ne fazi inclinevoli a varii pensieri et opere reimpresibile, tamen nui debiamo, partizipando de singular grazie e benefizii, nel'intrinsigo laudar lo nostro benefattore et etiandio per ogni modo magnificarlo et a devozion de cristiani et altre nazon esemplo manifestar le miraculoxe sue opere, che a moderni in suo aiutorio a tempi de importabile adversità porgo, adonca nel fin dito io Piero Querini de Venesia me ho proposto a futura memoria de cui serà a vera cognizione de scriver e con vera verità manifestar quele, et in che parte del mondo sono le adversità e infortuni mi sopravene, che per lo corso che disposizione de la volubel rota l'ofizio del qual, come abiamo per li longi esperimenti, si è in un movimento el qual subito infinire et converso, e molto più quelli poneno ogni sua speranza in essa memorata fortuna, ni debio tazere ma più efficace dechiarir le premisione anzi miracolosi secorxi che eso piatosissimo Segnor Idio verso la mia indegna persona e de altri diexe fosomo del consorzio et compagnia de 68 morti.”⁸¹

[Despite human fragility, which renders us prone to various reproachable thoughts and actions, we should, upon receiving singular graces and benefits, internally praise our benefactor, as well as in every way magnify his making, for the devotion and example of Christians and other nations, to manifest his miraculous works, I present them to modern people in his assistance in times of unbearable adversity. For this purpose, I, Piero Querini of Venice, with the aim of preserving these experiences for the future, have set out for those who will come to write from personal knowledge and manifest with true truth which and in which part of the world we faced adversities and misfortunes. Because of the course that the fickle wheel of fortune follows, the work of those who trust in it, as we have seen in many examples, is in a constant movement of beginning and ending, and those

79 See «Infelice e sventuratta coca Querina», 18.

80 The main publications dealing with linguistic aspects and to which I refer are: *ibid.*, 17-34, glossary of maritime terms 89-92; Luigi De Anna, “Un'appendice Lessicale al “Corpus” Queriniano”, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 93, n. 2-4 (1992): 347-363.

81 BAV, Vat. lat. 5256, f. 42r.

who place all their hope in this famed fortune should not be blamed. But more effective is to declare the prior miraculous aids that the most merciful Lord God granted to my unworthy self and to ten others who were part of the group and company of 68 dead.]

By all means there is an *explicit*, which nevertheless does not provide any information on the scribe, nor does it bear the signature of Querini himself, or any other element suggesting that it might be autographic. It does state the year of the events narrated and that they ended in 1430, highlighting a mistake in the transcription of the same, since the journey began in April 1431, as written on the first page of the text,⁸² and ended the following year upon his return to Venice and not in 1430 as reported:

“[...] secondo la premision di la rubrica sopra scritta in dita orazion, che cuxi in parole dize cui dirà la orazion sotoscritta divotamentie avanti el cruzifiso zorni 40 a zenochi nudi dimandando al Salvatore coxa onesta e saudito serà, e cusi la dixe, la qual comenza cuxi: “Dulzissime Iesu Criste Domine Deus verus er cetera”. La mia dimanda contene in parole e s’era che el Signor mi conzedexe tornar a caxa mia sano e aritrovar i mei in simel stado, et ita inveni, sichè laude e grazie inzesabile e benedizione sia referido al Signor mi secula seculorum. Amen.

Fenito è lo libro del naugrafio del nobil omo miser Piero Querini in nel ano 1430.”⁸³

[according to the promise stated in the rubric of that prayer, which says: “Whoever recites the following prayer devoutly before the crucifix for 40 days on their knees, asking the Savior for an honest thing, shall be answered.” And thus, I recited it, which begins like this: Dulzissime Iesu Criste Domine Deus verus et cetera [Sweetest Jesus Christ, true Lord God, etc.]. My request was that the Lord would grant me to return home safely and find my loved ones in good health, and so it happened. Therefore, endless praise and thanks and blessings be given to the Lord forever and ever. Amen.

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Ibid.*, f. 55v.

Finished is the book of the shipwreck of the noble man miser Piero Querini, in the year 1430.]

The corrections added along the margins⁸⁴ on several pages of the text might suggest the *modus operandi* of a scribe rather than of an author,⁸⁵ as does the presence of cancellations⁸⁶ which could imply that the author may have intervened personally in revising the text, or lead to the idea that the text was not a final version, was not yet defined and was therefore subject to amendments.⁸⁷

In the last leaf of the quire, f. 56, a watermark is visible: it represents a Greek cross detectable only by part of one arm crossed on its extremity by a vertical line. The binding stitches do not allow a complete view of the watermark, nor is a secure attribution permitted by examinations carried out on the most important repertoires.

An interesting consideration relates to f. 58 in the manuscript in limp parchment with the title “Trattato di frate Odorico di Frioli et naufragio del magnifico messer Piero Quirini”, that would suggest the existence of an original and independent quire that includes the text by Odorico da Pordenone and the text by Querini: it is therefore a paper quire, with a parchment cover, first bound together (ff. 13r-78v) and subsequently dismembered. This assumption is confirmed by the sequence of texts recorded in the seventeenth century inventory⁸⁸ that differs from the current one: indeed, the fourth quire “³ Eiusdem eadem Historia Latina”⁸⁹ is number three in the seventeenth century numbering, while the third quire “⁴ Petri Quirini naufragium Italici”⁹⁰ was fourth in the original se-

84 *Ibid.*, ff. 42r, 43rv, 44r, 44v, 45r.

85 See «*Infelice e sventuratta coca Querina*», 17-24.

86 BAV, Vat. lat. 5256, ff. 47v, 49rv, 50r, 51r, 53v, 55r, 56v.

87 Pluda suggests that the text may refer to an early report drafted by Querini who, as the owner of the ship, was held accountable before the Venetian government and was required to justify the loss of the goods he had been entrusted in reference to procedures relating to insurance coverage. In line with this suggestion, the presence of terms, such as “reader” or “listener” hints to the fact that the text was intended for public reading, but still in a preliminary and *in fieri* stage that required further revision before its solemn reading, see «*Infelice e sventuratta coca Querina*», 21-22.

88 See *supra* note 38.

89 BAV, Vat. lat. 15349, pt. 6, p. 100.

90 *Ibid.*

quence. This reconstruction allows us to plausibly infer that there was an original quire, with its parchment cover, that included the first text by Odorico, followed by the second text in Latin: this suggestion is corroborated by the presence of f. 57r entitled “Beato Odorico latinam scritto”, that serves as introduction to the second text by Odorico and reflects the size and the margin measurements of the quire at the beginning of f. 59; and finally there is the text of Pietro Querini's diary. The codicological review of the codex proves that f. 58 was anchored to the manuscript's newly replaced binding: it might have remained loose and was added later on in a position adjacent to the text mentioned in its title. This operation appears to have been performed without conducting a codicological or textual examination of its parts.⁹¹ The mispositioning of the quires might have occurred between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries under Cardinal Librarian Franciscus Xaverius De Zelada, according to the dating of the binding. The current numbering present in the codex is also a later addition after the realisation of the current binding, clearly subsequent to the unstitching and restitching of the codex since, as already mentioned, in the seventeenth century inventory there was no foliation in the codex. Another mispositioning is detectable in the eighth quire, where the current foliation is: ff. 120, 126, 121-125: f. 126 was placed between ff. 120 and 121, as an evident mistake while recomposing the quire during restoration and binding activities. The presence of f. 58 suggest that the gathering with Pietro Querini's diary might have arrived in Rome, where it was bound together with the text by Odorico da Pordenone, a friar of the Minor Orders, known for his travels in Asia which originated his prestige and fame.⁹²

CONCLUSIONS

There are several research assumptions potentially offered by Querini's

91 My gratitude goes to the Head of BAV's restoration lab, Angela Nuñez Gaitan, for allowing me to analyse the manuscript.

92 For Odorico da Pordenone's biography, reference should be made to Andrea Tilatti, “Odorico, da Pordenone”, in *DBI*, Vol. 79, [v. www.treccani.it] last accessed 1/9/2024.

text and there are many different levels of interpretation that have yet to be explored. The text represents the main and privileged observation point, that has withstood the centuries, of Pietro Querini's voyage. In this context, an attempt has been made to specifically reflect on its provenance and its final placement in the Vatican Latin Fund. Observed through the lenses offered by the documents, we have retraced some steps of the collection's establishment up to its seventeenth century design. Indeed, although the documents have been investigated to research the provenance of the text, the assessment performed has not led to anything final in terms of geography and timing. One exception is the suggestion that it came to the BAV collection as a single quire, together with the text by Odorico da Pordenone, with which it shares the travel theme.

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Adam Greenwood has been a life-long admirer of the Renaissance, a passion that led him to pursue an MA and nine years of doctoral study at University College London. He later became a secondary school teacher and currently teaches French, Spanish, Latin, and Classics in London. In his spare time, he enjoys translation work – none more delightful, he notes, than the Querini project, a previously unknown gem of the Renaissance that he discovered with great enthusiasm.

PIETRO QUERINI'S JOURNEY, THE MAP

In **blue** the outward journey by sea.

In **red** the Pietro Querini's return journey by land.

In **orange** Cristoforo Fioravante e Nicolo de Michiel's return journey.



