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**The Virgin Hodegetria Iconography in the Crown of Aragon
in the Early Modern Period
Canons, Allotropies and Variants**

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This paper aims to present iconographic modifications of the Virgin Hodegetria representations in the Crown of Aragon (a composite monarchy extended from Southern Italy to the Iberian Peninsula) in the early modern period. The time span ranging from the mid-15th to the early decades of the 16th century is the crucial period for the wide-range spread of the Hodegetria cult between East and West, and during which period occurred an iconographic and worship transfer that produced allotropies and variants. It is only after the fall of Constantinople that new ways of representing the Hodegetria appeared on the Italian Peninsula and in Sicily, along with the Holy icon replicas: the depiction which was set as a standard is the one with two old men (Calogeri) carrying on their shoulders the chest with the Hodegetria, sometimes as an icon, sometimes as a real body. Because of her commitment as protector against the enemy, the Virgin Hodegetria was invoked by all professionals related to the sea and so, during the 16th century, occurred two transfer phenomena: her identification with *Madonna del Buon Cammino* and her determination as protector against the Barbary slavery. It is through these new operational functions that the cult spread beyond the traditional "Byzantine" Southern Italy regions, such as Liguria, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands and the Iberian Peninsula. These new functions entailed new iconographic standards depending on the geographical location and the activity of Mendicant orders (Augustinians, Franciscans, Mercedarians) and confraternities.

Keywords: Hodegetria, *Itria*, iconographic modifications, iconographic transfers, Southern Italy, Sardinia, 16th-century paintings, 17th-century paintings, wooden sculpture

From Constantinople to the Italian Peninsula

The cult of the Hodegetria of Constantinople, its importance and its meaning, has been studied in many essays from an art historical and iconographic point of view. This contribution does not aim to analyse the Byzantine origin of this specific Marian iconography or its dissemination during the Middle Ages, but rather it is to analyse the different iconographic examples of the Virgin Hodegetria during the modern period throughout the western Mediterranean.¹ In this regard, it should be noted that this contribution is the first result of research that is still in progress and aims to follow the spread of the cult of the Virgin Hodegetria in its path to the far west of the Mediterranean, through the modifications that its iconographic representations incurred between the 16th and 18th centuries. The cult of the Virgin Hodegetria derives from the veneration of the icon of the Virgin and Child kept in the monastery of Hodegon in Byzantium. Sources dating back to between the 11th and 15th centuries, attest to the presence of the holy icon in the monastery from at least the end of the 10th century, while a 14th-century interpolation informs us about the presence of the Hodegetria icon on the walls of Constantinople during the Arab siege in 717.² Every Tuesday, the Hodegetria icon was brought to the square in front of the monastery for a holy ritual, as it was considered miraculous and invoked as "Guide of the Way" by the population. In 1186, during the attack on Constantinople by the rebel John Branas, the Emperor Isaac Angelos put his trust in the Virgin to defend the city and decided to display the icon on the walls. From this moment on, the icon assumed a new role as protectress of the Emperor and, by extension, of the whole of Constantinople. The hagiographic production

began attributing miracles of city defence to the Virgin.³ As the Turkish offensive grew in voracity between the 14th and 15th centuries, the Virgin Hodegetria, “Mother of Constantinople”, was invoked as the protectress of Christian populations that were enslaved by Muslims, and the cult of the Virgin spread beyond the Byzantine Empire. The icon was destroyed in 1453 following the conquest of the city by the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II.

Michele Bacci, who has written about the subject on various occasions, stressed that the notoriety of the Holy icon of Panaghia Hodegetria in the West dates back to at least the mid-13th century, while in the 15th century the first legends appeared about the arrival of the icon in Italy from Constantinople and from the territories of the old Byzantine Empire. Bacci also notes that during the same century, the term of invocation “Madonna of Constantinople” appeared mostly in southern Italy as a “cultured” form of the more popular Virgin Hodegetria, whose origin is still unsure and should be investigated in the “Greek” regions of the peninsula: Apulia, Lucania and Calabria.⁴ The fame of Hodegetria, according to sources, was strengthened between the end of the 15th century and the early 16th century due to the arrival of Albanian and Greek Orthodox communities in central and southern Italy.⁵ During this period, all of southern Italy was part of the Crown of Aragon⁶ and the arrival of these communities was favoured on numerous occasions by the Aragonese sovereigns: in the 15th century by Alfonso V the Magnanimous (Calabria) and his son Ferrante (Apulia, Molise) as a reward to the Albanian General George Castriot Skanderbeg and his Greek, Albanian and Slavic troops, for the military aid provided against the French invasion led by John II of Anjou;⁷ in the 16th century by Ferdinand II the Catholic (Abruzzo and Molise at first, then Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily) in exchange for the support for his policy of administrative reform of the State also at the local level.⁸

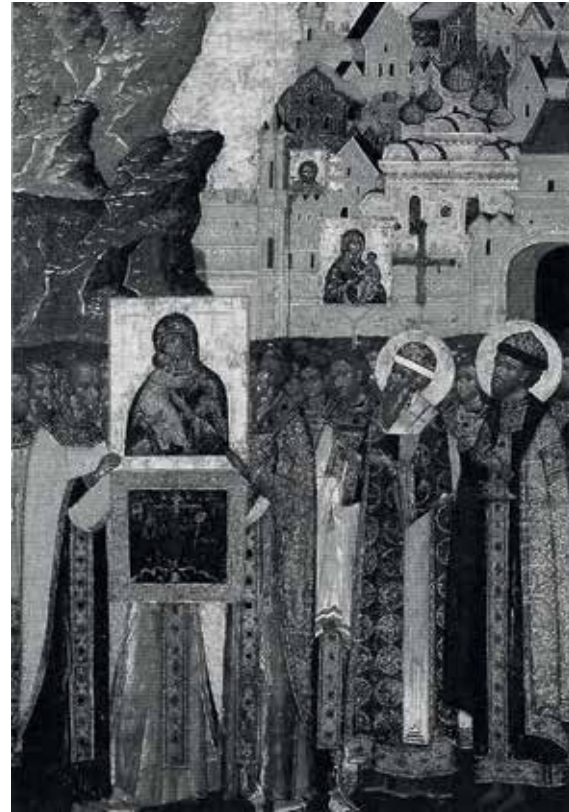
Anna D. Russakoff has conducted an interesting study about the arrival of Byzantine icons on the Iberian Peninsula. She believes that the icons had already arrived in the 13th century and were linked to the arrival in Valencia of the Byzantine Princess Anna Constanza Lascaris in 1269. She also points out that the King of Castile Alfonso X the Wise collected and codified in writing a series of canticles that recount the miracles of the Virgin and that one of these manuscripts of *Cantigas* (canticles), written between 1271 and 1280, included illustrations of the icons of Mary.⁹ However, to my knowledge, there are no traces of the spreading of the cult of Hodegetria in the Iberian Peninsula in such an early time and therefore there is no reason to believe that the subsequent evidence from the 17th century is due to an uninterrupted tradition dating back to the 13th century. The first documented traces of the Hodegetria in the Iberian Peninsula are contained, as noted by Alexei Lidov in his essays on the Hodegetria spatial icon,¹⁰ in the *Chronicle of Pedro Tafur*, written in the 1450s based on his travels during 1437, and in that of Ruy González de Clavijo, who stayed in Constantinople in 1404 but whose report was published in Spanish only in 1582.¹¹

There is no reason to doubt that the period ranging from the mid-15th century to the first decades of the 16th century, is the crucial period during which the cult of Hodegetria spread most significantly between East and West. In this period the main iconographic and cultural shifts occur, giving birth to allotropies and variants of the image. It was only after the fall of Constantinople that the new ways of representing the Hodegetria appeared, together with the replicas of the holy icon, on the Italian peninsula and in Sicily. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that this happened in the same period as the spread of the legend of the miraculous rescue of the icon from the Ottoman destruction of Constantinople, and of its transfer to Italy, where many communities claimed to preserve an authentic example of the icon.

The legend tells us that two Basilian monks from Constantinople (the so called Calogeri)¹² saved the icon from destruction, hid it inside a chest and boarded a ship. Then the ship was wrecked off the coast of Italy, and they managed to swim to the shore with the precious chest. The similarity of this legend with others is quite clear, especially with the story of the venerated icon of the crypt of Saint Nicholas of Bari. However, recent studies have shown that this was an 18th-century invention.¹³ Regardless of what were the actual origins of this and other similar legends, there is no doubt that their existence reflects echoes of the Tuesday rite – as claimed by Lidov – supported by some “historical” references.¹⁴ In fact, the western canonical iconography of the Virgin Hodegetria,



1 *Madonna d'Itria*, 1644, engraving (from: Samperi, 1644, p. 492bis)



2 *The meeting of the Virgin of Vladimir*, 17th century, State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (from: Lidov, 2004, fig. 13, p. 299)

i.e. representing the two Calogeri carrying the chest with the Hodegetria on their shoulders (fig. 1), has its remote prototype precisely in the Tuesday rite. The visual differences are due to the misunderstanding arising from the considerable period of time that elapsed between the ritual and that moment, and to its re-semantisation as a shift of the icon from one side to the other of the Mediterranean. This phenomenon is similar to that recorded by Lidov in relation to some Russian images from the 17th century (fig. 2) where the “podium” (*podea*), on which the holy icon is placed, plays an important role. In western paintings, this kind of podium is reinterpreted and transformed into a chest, or an ark.¹⁵ The geographical origin of this “new” iconography is located in southern Italy and Sicily, where several chapels and churches were named after the Virgin Hodegetria starting from the 1520s, while the first confraternities dedicated to her date back to the period after the Council of Trent, firstly in Apulia and Sicily.¹⁶ The first paintings of this type also date back to the 1520s and this development depends on a number of factors.

The first factor was the intensification and upsurge of the Turkish offensive along the coasts of the Western Mediterranean, which was marked by several attacks and raids that were also often extended to the inland, and by privateering wars run by Barbary pirates aimed at plundering and kidnapping Christian slaves.¹⁷ The battles that the Christian powers – and the Spanish Empire in particular – had to fight against the Turks were countless during that century all the way up to the battle of Lepanto. In the regions that were most exposed to the Ottoman raids, people relied on the protection of the most powerful and specialised saints and invocations of the Virgin Mary against these types of dangers; among these, there was also the Virgin Hodegetria (often referred to as Virgin of Itria; in Italian: *Madonna dell'Itria*), which was invoked against the Muslim enemy from the time of the miracle at the end of the siege of Constantinople by the Sultan Murad II in 1422. By virtue of this particular specialisation, the Virgin of Itria was relied on by all professions related to the sea: sailors, fishermen, merchants, fish and naval entrepreneurs. In the 16th century two transfer phenomena occurred concerning the Virgin of Itria: the first was her transformation or identification with *Madonna del Buon Cammino* and sometimes, by extension,

with Our Lady of Navigators (*Madonna dei Naviganti*); the second one was the invocation as the liberating force against slavery by the Barbary enemies. It is, in fact, through these new operational functions that the cult spread beyond the traditional Byzantine regions of southern Italy, such as in Liguria, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands and the Iberian Peninsula.

The second factor was the action of the mendicant orders, in particular that of the Hermits of Saint Augustine, a refined and intellectual missionary order, but also, to a lesser extent, the Observant Franciscan and Mercedarian (Order of Our Lady of Mercy and the Redemption of the Captives) orders. In fact, even in the Augustinian devotion a new specialisation of the Virgin of Itria occurs in addition to and without replacing her protection against travel dangers: namely protection against the plague. The precise moment and place in which this Augustinian association (Virgin of Itria protector from the plague) took place is not known, but I believe that some useful elements may emerge from the study of the devotion towards Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, the first Augustinian friar to be sanctified (in 1446), invoked against the plague and shipwrecks. It is possible that the Augustinians and worshippers of Saint Nicholas associated the Saint's powers with those of the Virgin of Itria in their prayers. This could explain why the Virgin of Itria became protectress of shipwrecks and people affected by the plague. A trace of this link can be found in the altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin of Itria made in 1526 by Pietro Francesco Sacchi for the Church of Santa Maria di Castello in Genoa, where Saint Nicholas is represented among the other saints in the lower register (fig. 3). However, it is certainly no coincidence that the patrons (the brothers Battista, Gerolamo and Martino) were part of the powerful Botto family, whose economic interests were related to seafaring activities.¹⁸

Thirdly, we can see the role played by the confraternities, who prospered especially after the Council of Trent and contributed to the exceptional development of the cult of the Virgin of Itria during the 17th century. It is thanks to their action and devotional practices that the demand and production of both sculptural and pictorial artwork dedicated to the Virgin of Itria increased significantly, as such devotional practices involved the presence of a dedicated altar or chapel inside the ecclesiastic building. Furthermore, the Council directives on the works of sacred art, and in particular about the licences approved for the representation of the image of the Virgin in its various invocations, contributed to the formation of specific iconographic canons.

Before we discuss the characteristics of this canonical iconography, I would like to make reference to the invocation Madonna of Constantinople (Italian: *Madonna di Costantinopoli*), which in principle had the same cultural value as the invocation Virgin of Itria, i.e. referring to the Virgin of the Hodegetria Icon who had performed miracles for the city of Constantinople, and was relied on for protection against infidel enemies. At one point in history though, the cult of the Madonna of Constantinople acquired a specific specialisation for which the Virgin was invoked for protection against natural disasters. The origin of this functional conversion was found in Naples, where a legend dating back to the late 16th century attributed the miracle of the end of the plague in 1575 to a copy of the Hodegetria Icon on a fresco (fig. 4), which was miraculously recovered intact under the rubble of its chapel. Subsequently, the Virgin invoked as Madonna of Constantinople, to whom a church was dedicated in 1586 in Naples, ended the famine of 1596 and 1603, the eruption of Vesuvius in 1631 and the plague epidemic in 1624 and 1656. The legend of the miraculous power of the Madonna of Constantinople probably originated from the historical events during 1528, when the city of Naples attributed to her the deliverance from the plague and famine caused by the French siege. Historical sources reported that in 1523, the Greek community in Naples, dedicated the altar of the chapel of Our Lady of the Greeks in the church of San Giovanni Maggiore to the Madonna, but there is no trace of the painting contained in the chapel.¹⁹ As for the iconographic aspect, I would like to point out that the fragment of fresco, which is now in the main altarpiece of the church of Santa Maria of Constantinople does not refer to the holy icon of Constantinople but it represents instead the Virgin in her physical form (acting on an historical level and not as a simple icon) in a way that would soon become canonic during the century. The oldest example of which I am aware is the picture painted around 1519 by Andrea Sabatini da Salerno for the convent of Saint Francis of Eboli, one of the most important spiritual and intellectual centres in the kingdom (fig. 5).²⁰ Other examples can be found in an illustration of 1631 (fig. 6), in which the Virgin is represented

as Queen of the patron saints of Naples,²¹ in a painting of the same year by Giovanni Ricca for the church of San Francesco in Sant'Angelo in Fasanello²² (fig. 7) and in the painting that Mattia Preti produced in 1657 (fig. 8) for the church of Sant'Agostino degli Scalzi (now Santa Maria della Verità) in Naples.²³ It should be noted that this church belonged to the Augustinians – the order experienced a major expansion during the 16th and 17th centuries, and there is clear evidence of its devotion to the Madonna of Constantinople in the 16th century not only in Genoa and Naples, but also in the Marche region, more precisely in Tolentino, where inside the basilica of San Nicola da Tolentino there was a chapel dedicated to her, and in the church of the Augustinian convent of Massignano, whose altar was adorned with a painting of the Madonna of Constantinople with Saint Augustine and his mother Saint Monica.²⁴ On the other hand, in Sicily there are records of two Augustinian convents entitled to the Virgin of Itria at the start of the 17th century in Mazara and Marsala.²⁵

In conclusion, the iconography of the Madonna of Constantinople refers to the Virgin Hodegetria of the Constantinople icon, but in a different form, which is why I think it is appropriate to use the term allotropy. The fact that the invocation of the Madonna of Constantinople has a more “cultured” meaning than that of Virgin Hodegetria, as claimed by Bacci,²⁶ is also proven by the rarity of popular artistic representations, such as wooden statues, which are frequent, conversely, in the iconography representations of the Virgin of Itria.

In the artworks representing the Virgin of Itria located in southern Italy and Sicily, where the standard was set, one can ascertain that not all the works have the same composition, but include slight variations. The invariable element of the image is the chest which supports the icon (fig. 1) or the figure of the Virgin (fig. 9). Even the figures of the Calogeri holding the chest have variations such as in their clothing or in the composition of the context around them. Other characters often appear in the scene, such as Saints in holy conversation or worshippers and members of the confraternity in adoration of the Virgin (fig. 10). This iconography, which has a “popular” connotation, is also reproduced in wooden sculptures, where the subjects and elements of the scene are reduced to the minimum required for understanding the message (fig. 11).

In the middle of the Western Mediterranean – Sardinia

The popularity of such iconography is also clearly evident in Sardinia, another realm of the Crown of Aragon and of the Spanish Empire. Sardinia was a province in the Byzantine Empire until the 8th century, when it became isolated after the fall of the Exarchate of Africa (698) and of the Exarchate of Italy (751), which makes it possible that the island also knew about the fame of the icon called Hodegetria. However, there is no evidence to prove this possibility. In fact, despite the presence of eastern orthodox monks at least from the 7th century, and despite the continued exposure to Muslim attacks throughout the Middle Ages, there is no proof of the cult in written documentation, toponymy or any other sources.²⁷ The first evidence of the devotion to the Virgin of Itria appears in 1543 in the dedicatory inscription on a bronze bell in the rural sanctuary of Gavoi, in the mountainous inland of the island.²⁸ The answer to the question about the spreading of the cult to an isolated and inaccessible area, far from the coast, must be sought in the political and economic history of the island. During the 16th century, Sardinia was a prime target for Barbary raids along the coasts and in the fertile plains. Up until 1572, the Kingdom did not have a static defence system (coastal towers) and the small military fleet was almost always committed to serve the Empire in naval battles throughout the various parts of the Mediterranean. The only alternative that the populations of these areas had in order to escape the attacks, was to seek shelter in mountainous areas and rely on the protection of the Virgin and saints. This movement of populations from the villages of the plains towards the small inland villages is a typical phenomenon of this period.²⁹ The risk was also extended to the numerous sheep-rearing communities of the central mountainous areas, which practised transhumance.³⁰ It is precisely as a result of these two phenomena (depopulation and transhumance) that the transfer between the Virgin of Itria and *Madonna del Buon Cammino* occurs: the manifestation of the Virgin accompanies the populations on their journeys towards safer locations, in the beginning as protectress against infidels and as a slave liberator, then as



3 Pietro Francesco Sacchi, *Virgin Hodegetria with Saints John the Baptist, Antoninus of Florence and Nicholas of Tolentino*, 1526, Church of Santa Maria di Castello, Genoa



4 *Madonna di Costantinopoli*, early 16th century, Church of Santa Maria di Costantinopoli, Naples (photo: M. Salis)



5 Andrea Sabatini, *Santa Maria di Costantinopoli*, c. 1519, Museo diocesano San Matteo, Salerno



6 Giovanni Orlandi, *La Madonna di Costantinopoli*, 1631, engraving (from: Clifton, 1993, fig. 9-10, p. 361)



7 Giovanni Ricca, *Madonna di Costantinopoli with Saint Januarius and Saint Blaise*, 1631, Church of San Francesco, Sant'Angelo a Fasanella (from: Porzio, 2015, p. 54)



8 Mattia Preti, *Madonna di Costantinopoli*, 1657, Museo di Capodimonte, Napoli (Wikimedia Commons)



9 Antonello Riccio, *Madonna dell'Itria*, early 17th century, Church of Santa Caterina, Messina (Wikimedia Commons)



10 Sofonisba Anguissola, *Madonna dell'Itria*, 1579, Church of Santissima Annunziata, Paternò



11 *Madonna dell'Itria*, 1st half 17th century, Archdiocese of Agrigento



12 Bartolomeo Castagnola (attrib.), *Nostra Signora del Buon Cammino*, c. 1598-1611, Church of Santi Lorenzo e Pancrazio, Cagliari (© Archivio Ilisso, Nuoro)

guide on the way.³¹ Another transfer phenomenon is what happens due to the professionals related to the sea, such as sailors, fishermen, merchants, and especially owners of tuna nets – the latter were almost all of Sicilian origin – and consists in the assimilation of the Virgin of Itria to *Madonna del Buon Cammino*, and then of *Madonna del Buon Cammino* to Our Lady of Navigators.³² Illustrative evidence of this process is the oil painting on canvas *Madonna del Buon Cammino* (c. 1598-1611; fig. 12), kept in the Church of the Saints Lawrence and Pancras in Cagliari (referred to as Church of Buon Cammino during the Aragonese period): the Madonna with Child is depicted standing between Saint Nicholas of Bari and a holy martyr while looking downwards and holding out her hand to a pilgrim; on the right side there is a kneeling woman with an infant. In the lower register of the painting there are four ships sailing on a stormy sea, one of which is about to be shipwrecked. The dedicatory inscription identifies the pilgrim as a merchant who survived the drowning, as confirmed by the luminous appearance of the Madonna with Child among the stormy waves.³³ The iconographic model of this scene comes from the illustration of *The Virgin of Bonaria between Saints Cecilia and Eulalia* (fig. 13), dating back to 1595, which shows, in one of the scenes surrounding the central image, the Madonna and Child rescuing a vessel struck by a storm. This painting, commissioned by Antioco Brondo, father superior of the Mercedarian Order of Cagliari, and depicting the Order' vicissitudes and arrival in Cagliari of the revered wooden statue of Our Lady of Bonaria, allows a direct connection to be made between the Mercedarian Order and the Virgin of Itria. This is possible because the engraving visualizes the iconographic overlapping between *Madonna del Buon Cammino*/Our Lady of Navigators (allotropy of the Virgin of Itria) and Our Lady of Ransom/Our Lady of Bonaria.³⁴ Another proof of the fact that the Virgin of Itria was invoked by the Mercedarians of Cagliari for the protection against the Turks can be seen in the marble holy water font in the sacristy of the Sanctuary of Bonaria (annexed to the Mercedarian convent), in which the Virgin is depicted on the chest carried by the Calogeri, according to the iconography common in southern Italy. This bas relief is the sole sculptural example of this specific iconography in Sardinia (fig. 14).

The cult of the Virgin of Itria was therefore introduced to Sardinia by the mendicant orders and trade associations connected to seafaring, especially after the Council of Trent. It is no coincidence that almost all the existing paintings containing the Virgin of Itria, mainly commissioned by the confraternities dedicated to her, represent traditional iconography from southern Italy, with the Calogeri holding the chest (figs. 15, 16, 17).³⁵ An interesting variant, which I have not actually found elsewhere, is the painting dating back to the early 17th century, kept in the sacristy of the church of Saint Anthony the Abbot in Cagliari, where the chest has become a statue carrier carried by some members of the confraternity (fig. 18), a sign of how the memory of the legend and the original meaning of the presence of the Calogeri were long gone.³⁶

Another interesting iconographic innovation, clearly deriving from a popular matrix and from a local legend, is represented in wooden statues: the Virgin Mary stands with the Child who blesses two kneeling worshippers beside her, a white one and a Moor one (figs. 19, 20).³⁷ This representation refers to the most comforting miracle that the people attributed to the Virgin of Itria: the liberation of a Christian who was captured and enslaved by Barbary pirates and the simultaneous conversion of his Saracen master to Christianity.³⁸ In this case there is no reference to the miracles performed by the holy icon of Constantinople, nor to the miraculous event of its translation to Italy, but there is a reference to an episode of the recent local history that we can read as a contextualization in the "here and now" (*hic et nunc*) of the Virgin Hodegetria actions.

The spread of the cult in Sardinia, thanks to confraternities that operated at the level of single communities, was due to the action of the mendicant orders. In 1610 the Observant Franciscans took possession of the convent and church of Our Lady of Itria in Padria;³⁹ in the same year they founded the convent and church of Our Lady of Itria in Sorso, where in 1613 they embraced the Confraternity of the same name.⁴⁰ In 1623 they founded the church and convent of Our Lady of Itria in Gadoni;⁴¹ and in 1645 the Confraternity of Our Lady of Itria in Mandas.⁴² The Mercedarians in 1619 founded a convent dedicated to the Our Lady of Itria attached to the rural church in the countryside of Muravera with the same invocation, donated to the order in 1615 by the Archbishop of Cagliari Francisco Desquivel.⁴³ The Order of the Hermits of Saint Augustine was the one most committed to the spread of



13 Martin van Valckenborch III, *Our Lady of Bonaria between St Cecilia and St Eulalia*, 1595, engraving (from: Scano Naitza, 1993, p. 125)



14 *Madonna of Itria*, 17th century, Convent of Nostra Signora di Bonaria, Cagliari (photo: M. Salis)



15 Francesco Aurelio, *Madonna d'Itria*, c. 1616-1618, Church of Sant'Antonio Abate, Cagliari (© Archivio Ilisso, Nuoro)



16 Pantaleone Calvo (attrib.), *Madonna d'Itria*, mid-17th century, National Gallery, Cagliari (from: Masala, 2008, p. 125)



17 *Madonna d'Itria*, 2nd half 17th century, Church of Nostra Signora d'Itria, Portoscuso (photo: M. Salis)



18 Giacomo Montaldo (attrib.), *Madonna d'Itria*, c. 1616, Church of Sant'Antonio Abate, Cagliari (from: Masala, 2013, p. 106)



19 *Madonna d'Itria* retable, 1680, Church of Assunta, Sardara (© Archivio Ilisso, Nuoro)



20 *Madonna d'Itria*, 2nd half 18th century, Church of Santa Maria Assunta, Selargius (© Archivio Ilisso, Nuoro)

the cult; in each one of their churches they dedicated a chapel to the Hodegetria and they encouraged worshippers devoted to her to organise themselves in confraternities and other charitable and welfare bodies. In 1607, the Order assisted with the foundation of the Confraternity (Arch-confraternity from 1625) of the Blessed Virgin of Itria in Cagliari, by donating a plot of land of the convent to build the Oratory of the Virgin of Itria;⁴⁴ in 1616 they founded the Confraternity of Our Lady of Itria in the chapel with the same name at their convent of Sanit Anthony in Pozzomaggiore;⁴⁵ in 1624 they built the convent of the Virgin of Itria in Illorai;⁴⁶ in 1632 they welcomed under the protection of the Order the Confraternity of Our Lady of Itria of Sassari;⁴⁷ in 1643 they joined the Confraternity of Our Lady of Itria of Arbus with that of Cagliari;⁴⁸ in 1667 they founded the Confraternity of the Our Lady of Itria in Vallermosa⁴⁹ and in 1697 in Sanluri and Villamar.⁵⁰ In 1512 the Prior General of the Order instituted the Province of Sardinia, which had its first seat in the convent of Saint Augustine in Cagliari, hitherto dependent on the Congregation of San Giovanni in Carbonara in Naples. The Province included the convents of the island of Sardinia, and also those on the Balearic Islands and the Kingdom of Valencia.⁵¹ As for the convents of Valencia (which in fact was the most important seat in the Province) and Palma, I would like to point out that while the 16th century sources state that the invocation was to Our Lady of Succour, the 17th century sources state that the invocation was to the Virgin of Itria. One can see the correspondence between the transfer of this dedication to the ones that happened in Sardinia from *Madonna del Buon Cammino* to Our Lady of Itria, between the late 16th and the early 17th centuries, within the devotional Augustinian environment, the Counter-Reformation and the increased Saracen attacks in the western Mediterranean. It is not a coincidence that in 1607, when the Confraternity of Our Lady of Itria was founded in the main church of the Order in Sardinia (the Sant'Agostino Nuovo in Cagliari), the foundation of the main monastery of the island consecrated to the Virgin Hodegetria was established in Majorca.⁵²

The second stage of this research in-progress concerns the forms of the devotion of the Virgin Hodegetria on the Balearic Islands and on the east coast of the Iberian Peninsula from Barcelona to Alicante.

Sources for images

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- Fig. 11 [Chiesacattolica.it/beweb http://www.beweb.chiesacattolica.it/benistorici/bene/4369022/Bottega+siciliana+sec.+XVII%2C+Madonna+dell%27Itria#locale=it&action=CERCA®ione_ecc_facce=SICILIA&da=31&frase=itria](http://www.beweb.chiesacattolica.it/benistorici/bene/4369022/Bottega+siciliana+sec.+XVII%2C+Madonna+dell%27Itria#locale=it&action=CERCA®ione_ecc_facce=SICILIA&da=31&frase=itria) (accessed 22 January 2017)

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- 2 On the analysis of the historical sources see M. BACCI, *op. cit.*, 1998 and especially C. ANGELIDI-T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *op. cit.*, 2000.
- 3 C. ANGELIDI-T. PAPAMASTORAKIS, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 382.
- 4 See in Bacci: “come forma ‘cultiva’ del più popolare Madonna Odighitria o dell’Itria”, “nell’ambito delle regioni ‘greco-italiche’ della penisola, Puglia, Lucania e Calabria”; M. BACCI, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 6.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 6 The Crown of Aragon was a composite monarchy (a confederation of kingdoms ruled by one king) created with a personal and dynastic union of the Kingdom of Aragon and the County of Barcelona and existed from 1162 to 1716. At the height of its power in the 15th century, the Crown of Aragon controlled a large portion of present-day Eastern Spain (Aragon, Catalonia, Valencian Country), parts of what is now Southern France (Rousillon), and a Mediterranean empire which included the Kingdom of Majorca (Balearic Islands), the Kingdom of Sardinia and, from 1442, the Kingdom of Naples (its territory corresponded with the whole Southern Italy – present-day regions of Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria and some areas of present-day Southern and Eastern Lazio – and the whole Sicily).
- 7 O.J. SCHMITT, *Die Albaner: eine Geschichte zwischen Orient und Okzident*, München, C.H. Beck, 2012, p. 55.
- 8 L. GIANCRISTOFARO, “Il Verde Giorgio e la Madonna Odighitria: dinamiche di due culti nelle comunità slavo-albanesi d’Abruzzo e Molise”, in: *Atti del I° Congresso Internazionale della Cultura Adriatica* (Pescara, 6-9 ottobre/Split, 20-21 ottobre 2004), M. GIAMMARCO-A. SORELLA (eds.), Pescara, Fondazione Ernesto Giammarco, 2005, pp. 51-66, especially pp. 58-59.
- 9 A.D. RUSSAKOFF, *op. cit.*, 2012, pp. 277, 280.
- 10 On the argumentation about the Tuesday rite as a liturgical and iconic re-enactment of the siege of Constantinople in 626 see A. LIDOV, *op. cit.*, 2004, pp. 285-286 and *Idem*, *Spatial Icons, op. cit.*, p. 356.

- 11 R. GONZÁLEZ de CLAVIJO, *Historia del gran Tamorlan e itinerario y enarracion del viage, y relacion de la embaxada que Ruy Gonçalez de Clavijo le hizo, por mandado del muy poderoso señor rey Don Henrique el Tercero de Castilla. Y un breve discurso / fecho por Gonzalo Argote de Molina, para mayor inteligencia deste Libro ...*, G. ARGOTE DE MOLINA (ed.), Sevilla, Andrea Pescioni, 1582; A. LIDOV, *op. cit.*, 2004, pp. 281-282; IDEM, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 350.
- 12 Calogeri - "the good old men". For the definition of this term see M. BACCI, *op. cit.*, 1996, pp. 3-12, specially p. 8, column 1, lines 8-10: "due monaci basiliani di Costantinopoli (i cosiddetti 'Calogeri', i 'buoni vecchi')".
- 13 The legend of *Translationis Historia*, written by the so-called Priest Gregorius, is first-time-published in M. CARRUBA, *Eoniade della traslazione della miracolosa Immagine di Maria SS. di Costantinopoli nella città di Bari*, Napoli, Tipografia dentro la Pietà de' Turchini, 1834; See G. PINTO, "La 'Translationis historia' del prete Gregorio", in: *L'Odegitria della Cattedrale. Storia, arte, culto*, N. BUX (ed.), Bari, Edipuglia, 1995, pp. 69-90; R. LUPOLI, "Un manoscritto trascurato della 'Translationis Historia': ipotesi sulla confezione di un falso", in: *L'Odegitria della Cattedrale, op. cit.*, 1995, pp. 91-100. The last restoration of the icon revealed that is not a Byzantine but a 18th-century repainting of an image dating to the 3rd-4th decade of the 16th century; see in: C. GELAO, "L'icona della Madonna di Costantinopoli nella Cattedrale di Bari, tra storia e leggenda", in: *L'Odegitria della Cattedrale, op. cit.*, 1995, pp. 25-35. See also J. CLIFTON, "Mattia Preti's Madonna of Constantinople and a Marian Cult in Seventeenth-Century Naples", in: *Parthenope's Splendor. Art of the Golden Age in Naples*, J. CHENAULT PORTER-S.S. MUNSHOWER (eds.), University Park Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University, 1993, pp. 336-363, especially p. 340; IDEM, "Art and Plague at Naples", in: *Hope and Healing. Painting in Italy in a Time of Plague 1500-1800*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 97-117, especially p. 104.
- 14 A. LIDOV, *op. cit.*, 2004, pp. 302.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 297. The interpretation of this iconography as evocation of Tuesday rite is also suggested by P. SAMPERI, *Icologia della gloriosa Vergine Madre di Dio Maria protettrice di Messina*, Messina, Giacomo Mattei, 1644, p. 159.
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- 17 The term "Barbary" is widely used in historical essays concerning the western Mediterranean in the 16th-18th centuries. It refers to Muslim populations that settled on the north-west coast of Africa, and competed with the Spanish Empire and with the Italian states for the naval control of that area. For further references: R.C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, The Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500-1800*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; A. TINNISWOOD, *Pirates of Barbary: Corsairs, Conquests and Captivity in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean*, New York, Riverhead Books, 2014.
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- 21 J. CLIFTON, *op. cit.*, 1993.
- 22 For this picture see G. PORZIO, "Madonna con il Bambino e angeli (Madonna di Costantinopoli)", in: *Sollevando il velo del tempo. Dipinti del Cinque e Seicento*, G. PORZIO (ed.), Napoli, Porcini, 2015, pp. 48-55, especially p. 54.
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- 30 Transhumance is the seasonal movement of people with their livestock between fixed summer and winter pastures. For further references see the term *Transhumance* in the Encyclopædia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transhumance>, 20 July 1998 (accessed 27 March 2017).
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- 32 *Madonna del Buon Cammino* is the Virgin of Itria. The cult of the Virgin of Itria dates back to 1543 and the shepherds and townsfolk fleeing from the coastal areas invoked the Virgin of Itria as the Guide of the Way, likening her to *Madonna del Buon Cammino*. She is also invoked as Our Lady of Navigators by those who go to sea.
- 33 On this painting see M.G. SCANO NAITZA, *La città di Cagliari e dintorni nell'arte sacra*, Nuoro, Ilisso, being printed. I wish to thank Professor Maria Grazia Scano Naitza who kindly made available to me this still unpublished study.
- 34 On the invocation of the Our Lady of Bonaria and Our Lady of Ransom against Turkish and sea dangers see F. CRÉMOUX, "El Mediterráneo bajo la protección de la Virgen a través de algunos tipos de relaciones de milagros en los siglos XVI y XVII", in: *España y el mundo mediterráneo a través de las relaciones de sucesos (1500-1750)*, Actas del IV Coloquio Internacional sobre Relaciones de Sucesos (Paris, 23-25 de septiembre 2004), P. CIVIL-F. CRÉMOUX-J. SANZ HERMIDA (eds.), Salamanca, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2008, pp. 113-130, especially pp. 125-127; M. BACCI, "Portolano sacro. Santuario e immagini sacre lungo le rotte di navigazione del Mediterraneo tra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna", in: *The Miraculous Image, op. cit.*, 2004, pp. 223-248, especially p. 238; M.G. MELONI, "I santuari del mare nel Mediterraneo catalano-aragonese e spagnolo (secoli XV-XVI)", in: *I santuari e il mare*, Atti del III Convegno internazionale (Santuario Santa Maria di Monte Berico, Vicenza, 15-17 aprile 2013), I. AULISA (ed.), Bari, Edipuglia, 2014, pp. 195-205.
- 35 We are referring to 17th-century paintings: three are in Cagliari - two in Saint Anthony church, and one in the National Gallery (Pinacoteca Nazionale); other three are in Saint Lawrence church in Sanluri, in Our Lady of Itria church in Portoscuso and in Virgin of Itria church in Guasila. We also have photographic evidence of another painting disappeared, painted by Andrea Lusso in 1616 for the Saint Anne altarpiece in Saint Gavinus church in Oniferi. For a presentation of the iconographic variants of this Virgin Hodegetria representation in Sardinian paintings (sometimes the Virgin is seated on the chest, sometimes she comes out from the inside; the position of the Baby, sometimes in his mother's arms, sometimes standing in front of her, sometimes even absent; the presence of other characters besides to Calogeri etc.); see: M.F. PORCELLA, "Iconografia e culto di Nostra Signora d'Itria nella Sardegna Spagnola", in: *Archeoarte*, supplement to vol. 1, 2012, pp. 687-701. On historical information about these paintings see M.G. SCANO NAITZA, *Pittura e scultura del '600 e del '700*, Nuoro, Ilisso, 1991.
- 36 The painting might have been made in 1615-1616 by Giacomo Montaldo for the Confraternity of Blessed Virgin of Itria of Cagliari. For these informations and a history (with archival data) of the Confraternity see: C. MASALA, *L'Arciconfraternita della Santissima Vergine d'Itria in Cagliari. Profilo storico 1607-1700*, Cagliari, Grafiche Ghiani, 2013.
- 37 In the Island there are at least 30 groups of sculptures with this iconography (17th-18th century).
- 38 The legend tells that a slave of Arbus asked his Saracen master to free him to attend the feast in honor of the Madonna d'Itria which was being celebrated in his village. The master, outraged by so much audacity, shut him in a trunk and lay down on it to prevent his flee, but the trunk went on the sea and brought them on the Arbus beach: in the face

- of such miracle the master converted himself. For this legend see F. DIANA, *Le leggende di fondazione dei santuari nella tradizione e nella religiosità popolari*, Dolianova, Grafiche del Parteolla, 1997, pp. 24-26.
- 39 C. MASALA, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 171.
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- 41 R. BONU, *Ricerche storiche su due paesi della Sardegna. Gadoni e Tonara*, Siena, Stabilimento grafico combattenti, 1936, pp. 35-40.
- 42 C. MASALA, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 171.
- 43 A. RUBINO, *I Mercedari in Sardegna (1335-2000)*, Roma, Istituto storico dell'Ordine della Mercede, 2000, pp. 84-90, 359-362.
- 44 C. MASALA, *op. cit.*, 2013.
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- 46 L. NECCIA, "Il convento agostiniano di N. Signora d'Itria in Illorai", in: *Analecta Augustiniana*, vol. LXI, 1998, pp. 151-170.
- 47 C. MASALA, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 169.
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 *Ibid.*
- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 On the Order of Saint Augustine in Sardinia see L. NECCIA, "La Provincia agostiniana di Sardegna dagli inizi a tutto il XVI secolo", in: *Analecta Augustiniana*, vol. LXII, 1999, pp. 359-389; *Idem*, "La Provincia agostiniana di Sardegna dal XVII al XIX secolo. Cenni storici", in: *Analecta Augustiniana*, vol. LXIV, 2001, pp. 179-268. On the Order of Saint Augustine in Spain see B. ESTRADA ROBLES, *Los Agustinos eremitanos en España hasta el siglo XIX*, Madrid, Agustiniiana, 1988.

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Ikono grafija Bogorodice Hodegitrije na prostoru Krune Aragonije u ranom novom vijeku: kanoni, alotropije i varijante

Kult Bogorodice Hodegitrije ima dugu povijest, a proizlazi iz štovanja svete ikone iz Hodegonskog manastira, koje se može datirati najkasnije u 10. stoljeće. Smatrana čudotvornom i nazivana "voditeljicom na putu" ikona Hodegitrije je svakog utorka bila iznošena na trg ispred manastira kako bi obavila čudotvorni ritual. S jačanjem turske opasnosti i opsada Konstantinopola u 14. i 15. stoljeću, Bogorodica Hodegitrija, "Majka Konstantinopola", postaje zaštitnica kršćana pred islamskom opasnošću te se njezin kult širi izvan Bizantskog carstva. Ikona je uništena 1453. nakon zauzimanja Konstantinopola od otomanskog sultana Mehmeda II. Period od polovice 15. do prvih desetljeća 16. stoljeća ključan je za značajnije širenje kulta Hodegitrije s istoka na zapad. Tad se događa transfer pobožnosti i ikonografije, u kojem su stvorene brojne alotropije i varijante. Nakon pada Konstantinopola na prostoru Italije i Sicilije pojavljuju se kopije ikone, ali i nove inačice u interpretaciji Hodegitrije usporedo s legendom o čudotvornom spasenju ikone od otomanskog uništenja i njezinoj translaciji na prostor talijanskog poluotoka, na kojem brojne zajednice tvrde da posjeduju autentičnu kopiju. Na talijanskom prostoru uspostavlja se standardni prikaz Hodegitrije koji prikazuje dva Calogeria (kaluđera) koji nose na ramenima škrinju s Hodegitrijinom ikonom. Ta ikonografska inačica svoj uzor nalazi u procesijama i ritualu koji se odvijao utorkom u Konstantinopolu, a vizualne razlike nastaju kao izraz nerazumijevanja i nepoznavanja izvornog prototipa zbog vremenske i prostorne udaljenosti. U radu se prikazuju i uspoređuju različiti primjeri ove ikonografije s prostora južne Italije i Sicilije (koji imaju zajedničku poveznicu u škrinji) te Sardinije, u kojoj se razvija zanimljiva inačica na temelju lokalne legende i tradicije. Naime, dok u drugim djelovima Italije Calogeri nose škrinju, ovdje je prikazan drveni kip Marije s malim Isusom, koja blagoslivlja dva klečeća lika – bijelca i Maura.

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