

A Poetic History of the Oceans

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A Poetic History of the Oceans

Literature and Maritime Modernity

By

Søren Frank



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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*This book is dedicated to my parents,
Aase Marie Frank (in loving memory) and Jens Peter Frank*



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A note on translations: With only a few exceptions, I cite from the English translations of non-English sources, and if I have modified the translation, I state it in the footnote. Whenever I quote from a non-English text and I reference the original title in the footnote, it is my own translation.

A note on titles: As noted above, I usually cite non-English sources in their English translation. However, when referring to non-English translated titles in my book, I sometimes use the English title (e.g., *Toilers of the Sea* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*), sometimes the original title (*Les Travailleurs de la mer* and *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*), the latter because I wish to maintain a multilingual dimension in the book.

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Endorsements

“Combining a capacious vision of the long history of oceanic narratives in Western culture with incisive analysis of recent scholarship in the “blue humanities,” *A Poetic History of the Oceans* provides an excellent overview of oceanic literature and culture. At this book’s core lies a brilliant reading of *Moby-Dick* as model for four distinct historical iterations of Western imaginations of the sea. In reading Melville’s novel as simultaneously theocentric, anthropocentric, technocentric, and geocentric, Frank shows how this American classic opens onto global vistas. Beyond an innovative analysis of the English-language canon, however, this book also brings Scandinavian writers and texts forward into their rightful places as oceanic pioneers. The introduction of figures such as Jens Munk, Jonas Lie, Martin Andersen Nexø, and Siri Ranva Hjelm Jacobsen suggests how much scholars and readers can learn from this book.”

Steve Mentz, Professor of English, *St. John’s University*, New York, USA

“*A Poetic History of the Oceans* has compelling qualities: a fascinating topic, incredible erudition, an innovative, wide-ranging approach, and a seductive, reader-friendly style. The quality of the scholarship is remarkable, both concerning the works examined and the thinkers and literary critics that are consulted and cited. Given the superb treatment of the topic, the wealth of information, and the theoretical insights, Frank’s book could very well become a classic in its field.”

Thomas Pavel, Professor of Romance Languages, Comparative Literature, Committee on Social Thought, *University of Chicago*, USA