



Sources and Resources in the Maritime Labour History of the Mediterranean

Second Workshop of the ERC Starting Grant 2016 project

Seafaring Lives in Transition.

Mediterranean Maritime Labour and Transport during Globalization

1850s-1920s

BARCELONA, 15-16 JUNE 2018



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Seafaring Lives in Transition



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15 june

9h30' - 11h 30'

First session. General approaches to the transition to the sail to steam

Dr. Olivier Raveux

(Telemme/ CNRS/ University Aix-Marseille)

Archives and Data on Navigation and Seafaring Societies of Provence in the Nineteenth Century

This paper intends to take stock of the main archives and data that researchers specializing in the history of navigation and seafaring societies can gather and use to study the case of Provence. Certain documentary collections already well identified make it possible to highlight very qualitative aspects or to establish numerical series at a given time or over the long term. This is particularly the case, for example, of the captains' logbooks, very rich in information of any type, or even crew lists, which make it possible to draw lists of wages of personnel on board. These archives will be mentioned, but in a rather brief way, because our intervention will rather focus on presenting more original documentary collections and will demonstrate the relevance and interest of their collection or study. The focus will be on sources that emanate from the civil and commercial courts which took as a subject or background the world of the sea. Their study shows how the changes in navigation during the nineteenth pushed the law to better define the role and the place of the actors of the maritime world. It allows the historians to understand the evolutions, the breaks and the new social or administrative constructions by means of this legal material. The communication will also focus on ship operating accounts, which bring to the researchers commercial results, social structuring and business operations in the world of the sea. The angle of approach proposed here is primarily economic. Finally, this picture, with a broad outline of the archives on coastal and maritime Provence, will end with a review of the careers of embarked personnel, whether in the context of companies (the Messageries Maritimes) or in that of maritime registration. (census of seafarers who had to serve in the French navy). This source offers a double advantage. First of all, it is undoubtedly the one that makes it possible to draw the most interesting figures in the long run. At the same time, it is of a very qualitative nature because of the wealth of information it contains and the slices of maritime life that it allows to reconstitute finely. Between serial history and micro-history, the analysis of career records of seafaring employees is very promising.

Dr. Jordi Ibarz

(University of Barcelona)

& Dr. Enric García Domingo

(University of Barcelona/ Maritime Museum of Barcelona)

Sources and archives in the research of the transition from sail to steam: the Spanish case

In our paper we will discuss about the state of the art of the different researches that we have carried out during the first stage of SeaLit project. We have visited different archives, in Barcelona and in other places. Our paper has two parts. In the first part, we will describe the work in progress regarding the type and nature of sources found. In special, we will focus on the roles of navigation; this is, so far, one of the most important sources for our study. We will show the methodology that we have use in their analysis. We will evaluate the amount of data collected and the rest of research that has to be completed. In the second part, we will assess the results of the different archives that we have visited, especially those of Viso del Marques, Archivo Naval de Cartagena, Maritime Museum of Barcelona, and other minor archives. Finally, as a conclusion, we will discuss about the diverse difficulties of the work in process with the sources.

Dr. Paolo Calcagno

(University of Genoa)

“Old” vessels and “new” steamships on the eve of the Italian Unification: a comparison through crew agreements of Genoa and Savona maritime departments

As far as concern Liguria’s shipping movement, the first half of the 19th century passes in full continuity with the previous centuries, those of “ancient regime”: navigation, shipping funding, relationships between owners and captains, and between captains and sailors, everything is marked by continuity and tradition. Even on the eve of the Italian Unification most of the Ligurian marine was composed by wooden ships, moved by the winds. During 1850s, in Genoa only the 37% of the total tonnage is covered by steamships; even worse, Savona, the second port (for total movement) in the region, had to wait the 1880s, when dates the development of the new dock, to see the first steamships landing at its harbour. However, even if the steamships overrun against sailing ships is completed in the last two decades of the 19th century, the years immediately before the Unification are more attractive due to the opportunity to study at the same time “old” vessels and “new” steamships, a few nautical miles far from each other: the first seem to be engaged in the traditional routes sailed since the Middle Ages, managing short and medium distance cabotage mostly connected with primary goods; the latter used to cross the oceans, in order to carry passengers who were seeking for new fortunes. Crew agreements corresponding to the years 1856 and 1858, from Genoa and Savona, will let us to underline the deep differences between these two experiences, by comparing ship-building sites, ship-ownerships, the crew compositions, payments and, indeed, the destinations.

15 june

11h 45'-13h45'

Second session. Operational dimension: payrolls and other

Dr. Apostolos Delis

(Institute of Mediterranean Studies/FORTH)

Operating Greek cargo steamers in the early 20th century: how to approach the construction of data from the sources

The paper is about the work in progress with the Greek sources, mainly from the island of Andros and few from other maritime places like Oinousses at the north-eastern Aegean. So far, the work consists in the insertion of data for three types of sources: a) Ship logbook, b) Account book and c) Payrolls. The three types of sources belong to Greek cargo steamers of the early 20th century. All contribute and complement our knowledge about the day-to-day practices and realities on board as well as the financial matters in the operation of a cargo steamer. The three types of sources are extremely complex, especially ship logbooks and account books, and present serious difficulties in their approach in the insertion of data. However, they can reveal very important aspects of the economic and social life of the seafarers and may become a very useful instrument of research and historical analysis, once the difficulties in the construction of data are solved.

Dr. Luca Lo Basso

(University of Genoa)

Changes in maritime labour conditions on board of the merchant ships: the enrolment lists, from the Parliamentary Commission in 1881 to the International Sailor Conference in 1920

This contribution aims to advance a first and partial interpretation for some of the changes occurred within maritime labour conditions from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th. Indeed, the most critical period for Italian sailing shipping, that led to a gradual reconversion to steam navigation, let us to observe some changes and the “proletarization” of maritime labour; Genoa represents the observation field here proposed, due to the analysis of a sample of enrolment lists, extracted from Genoese Logbooks. This analysis will be combined with the demands expressed by trade-unions and ship-owners societies held in Genoa in 1920. Beginning with this, we will follow a return journey to the moment when these changes started from: the widespread adoption of steamships and the crisis, though yet to become final, of traditional sailing world, that up to that time has been ruled by enrolment mechanisms and aboard work conditions more in continuity with the “ancien régime” typical of the industrial era.

Dra. Anna Sydorenko

(Institute of Mediterranean Studies/FORTH)

Creating the image of Odessa's port seafarers using data system FastCat

Doing research on “Maritime Odessa” during the period of the transition from sail to steam I found out that the most unexplored subjects are seafarers and dock workers. Therefore, in this stage I have decided to prioritize the study of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of life on board and ashore. From the archival material already collected from the Odessa State Archives two key sources can enlighten partly the problem: the payrolls of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trade Company and the First national all-Russian census of the Russian Empire. Processing materials from these two sources through data entries to FastCat has proved an extremely useful tool to pursue particular research questions and examine various issues. Thus, the aim of this paper is to present the customized templates and archival data that had been inserted and to indicate the way they can categorize, deconstruct and reconstruct seafaring labour on board and ashore. In addition, the database helps to identify the problems of recreating the patterns of the maritime labour market of Odessa.

15 june

16-18h30'

Third session. Sources and methods for the study of maritime communities

Dra. Katerina Galani

(Institute of Mediterranean Studies/FORTH)

The impact of technological innovation on traditional maritime communities. Methodological concerns and some preliminary results

My paper revolves around Greek Shipping during the transitional era of technological innovation, and focuses on the case study of Galaxidi, a traditional maritime community of the 18th century, which failed to make the transition to steam despite a vivid shipping activity throughout the 19th century. Upon the completion of the first year of the SeaLit project, the first aim of the paper is the presentation of the archival material that was collected during the past year, placing emphasis on methodological issues concerning the digitization and analysis of the data. Furthermore, the paper will offer some first preliminary results from Galaxidi. One of the main issues raised is the social impact of technological transition on maritime communities and the use of diverse archival data in order to probe it.

Third session. Sources and methods for the study of maritime communities. (continue)

Kalliopi Vasilaki

(University of Crete/ Institute of Mediterranean Studies/ FORTH)

The sources for the study of La Ciotat's maritime community (1835-1914)

The port of La Ciotat was, in the second half of the nineteenth century, one of the most important modern shipbuilding centers of French Mediterranean. From 1836, and primarily after the establishment of Messageries Maritimes' shipyards in the port in 1851, La Ciotat produced a large number of steamships and the city experienced a great transformation. Today, numerous archival institutions in France maintain an extensive number of primary sources that compose a fascinating corpus, valuable both for quantitative and for qualitative analysis aiming to reconstruct La Ciotat's history. Nevertheless, despite its importance, La Ciotat's maritime community remains understudied. In this regard, the main aim of this study is to illuminate the past of La Ciotat's maritime community using the available archival material. To this end, firstly, I will present the collected archival material related to the social impact of the transition from sail to steam and the understanding of the character of La Ciotat's maritime community. Secondly, particular attention will be paid on significant resources for their importance in the research on maritime communities. For instance, I will examine the archives of 'The Inscription Maritime', the institution that enrolled seamen into different ranks in order to recruit them in the military naval service during wartimes. The seafarers' registers as well as the annual reports for the condition of the French ports constitute a material of primary importance for a social analysis of a maritime community.

Eduard Page

(University of Barcelona)

Sources and archives for the reconstruction of a urban-maritime community: La Barceloneta, 1840-1900

The register of deaths of the Civil Register of Barcelona was the main source explained in the last year's lecture I carried out in the workshop held in Rethymo. The insertion of its data has been the major fulfilled objective of the research project since then. Meanwhile, the register of entrances and exits of the civil hospital of the city has arose as the main complement of the register of deaths to achieve the understanding of the sociodemographic evolution that the district experienced during the transition from sail to steam navigation. In this lecture I expect to explain the nature, potentialities and problems of both sources as well as the research strategy developed, the questions I aim to ask them, the methodological limitations they present and the process of insertion of data in the FastCat system. Concurrently, the work with other sources has been initiated, in order to both go in depth with the general transformation of la Barceloneta and to study the particular change of the shipbuilding activity, central for the maritime economy of the district during the sail era, and the strategies carried out by its actors to deal with the emergence of steamships. I aim to summarize the typology, nature and utility for my project of the documentation I've worked with up until the meeting to face these goals. Notarial archives, institutional and administrative sources –as the City Hall or the Navy- and Barcelona commercial guides are some of the types of documents addressed. To conclude the lecture, I expect to expound a general assessment around the first year of the research project and draw the main lines of development planned for its second year.

Leonardo Scavino

(University of Genoa)

Family ties and kinship inside a seafaring community: ship-owners, captains and sailors from Camogli (1850-1865)

Since its early days, industrial revolution led to several changes within shipping world, that, on a technical level, has been transformed by the introduction of steam engines aboard, and more indirectly, at the same time it stimulated and suffered from the effects of globalization, that reshaped completely the traditional connections and the whole transport sector. However, these transformations and changes did not appear and establish everywhere at one time: indeed, every country, city or town involved in shipping business developed its own way to face the challenges of modernization. In the course of this process, seafaring towns seemed to be less open to embrace radical changes: as a perfect illustration of this pattern, here is presented the case of Camogli, a seafaring town lying 30 kilometres far from Genoa. The contribute, heavily based on the cross-reading of crew agreements and the maritime workers' books, held in Genoa State Archives for the most decisive years of Camogli's shipping movement (1840s-1870s), aims to present the maritime careers, and the usual recruitment methods of this seafaring community: within this framework, we will try to highlight and put an emphasis on the strength of traditions and the persistence of "ancient régime" practices, particularly concerning how family ties and kinship held a crucial role in all the maritime activities of this community. Ship-owners dynasties, co-existence of members of the same family covering different roles on board, parents-in-law relations between owners and captains, even wives aboard: following some specific ships along their navigations in the Mediterranean, from the Black sea up to the Atlantic shores, all these features will be presented and discussed.

18h30'-20h Keynote Lecture.

Dr. Jari Ojala

(University of Jyväskylä)

Young lads and old tars - Age polarization and skill among Nordic sailors, 1750 - 1950

There have been relatively few studies on what roles age and skill play in the professional development of labor force. Many economic studies on the recent era suggest that technological advances may decrease the demand for labor as a whole, and older workers – who might not be able to master the new technologies – in particular. This presentation analyzes the age structure of Swedish and Finnish sailors from the mid-18th to the mid-20th century, which features major conflicts and rise of globalization, as well as institutional and technological changes. We argue that the proportion of the youngest men with low skill level increased during the age of sail (i.e., the older technology), whilst the share of medium-skilled men declined. The average age and, thus, experience (and skill), in turn, increased significantly during the early 20th century as steam (i.e., the newer technology) replaced sail also in Nordic shipping. This was due to the fact that the youngest and least skilled seamen were no longer hired on board steam ships. Moreover, this development was a sign of the emerging professionalization of sailors: To be hired in a vessel was no longer just a temporary gig for the youth rather than a serious career opportunity. We use the Nordic shipping industry as a case study to contribute to the broader discussion of age polarization during an era of major technological changes and urge caution in interpreting future trends from the most recent era alone.

16 june

9h 30'-11h 30'

Fourth session. Institutional sources for the study of the maritime labour history

Alkis Kapokakis

(University of Crete/ Institute of Mediterranean Studies/ FORTH)

Sources for the study of the Maritime labor in Greece, 1850-1920

The subject of this research is the Greek seafarers that worked on Greek-owned ships during the second half of 19th century until 1920. In particular, we are interested in naval labor in relation to the development of the Greek fleet's business operations and technological developments. We examine, among other things, the structural and qualitative changes brought about by the transition from sail to steam to the Greek-owned sea-going shipping, and especially to the structure of labor relations. The technical division of labor on the ship, the creation of new specialties and the reduction or disappearance of others. Workers' daily routine and working conditions in general. The main purpose of this study is a comprehensive approach of working on the ship. That does not mean that we comprehend work on the ship just as a static measure. Our aim is to delve into the labor relations on ships, examining not only their economic dimension but also, and mainly, as holistic social relations. To understand the importance of the labour relations in seafaring, we have to take into account both the international framework in which these sailors were working on, as long as the as the level of development of production relations. Also, we have to take into account the institutional framework of their home country, their geographical and social origin. Therefore, we consider it necessary to investigate the institutional framework concerning labor relations and the relevant legislation on maritime labor: laws, royal decrees, documents from the Greek Mariners Pension Fund (NAT). These kinds of sources are useful for understanding not only the institutional framework, but also the developments and needs that follow the introduction of new technologies. Of course, at this point, we must investigate whether there was compliance with the laws. Secondly, our interest heading towards the local press of certain areas with strong commercial activity and shipping companies. For example, local newspapers from Piraeus and Syros provide on a daily basis information for the traffic of the major ports of the Greek kingdom, regarding the construction of new ships and other relevant information for seafarers.

Daniel Muntané

(University of Barcelona)

Maritime associations in the Spanish Mediterranean during the transition from sail to steam (1850-1920)

The doctoral thesis “Maritime associations in the Spanish Mediterranean during the transition from sail to steam (1850-1920)” is in its first year of investigation. It is not intended to be limited to a traditional history of the labour movement for maritime associations; instead, it is hoped that it will be able to introduce new contributions to the theoretical framework of New Labour History. Even so, the scarce historiography published makes the accomplishment of this objective difficult and requires, in the first place, the construction of a traditional history based on the chronology of the labour and social conflicts, and the most noteworthy figures and leaders of these. Thereafter, we can introduce new contributions to the field, like, for example: the role of owners’ associations (“la patronal”); so-called “yellow” trade unions; associations beyond trade unions (mutual aid societies, “montepíos”, professional bodies, etc.); or those entities not comprised strictly of workers. The difficulty of a scarce specific historiography requires the use of secondary sources referring to the labour and union movements located in the geographic setting investigated. The review of this literature allows for the determination of which newspaper sources can be consulted, as well as help identify the archives to be researched, essentially, the municipal, civil government, and commerce archives.

Andrea Zappia

(University of Genoa)

Maritime labor and assistance in the papers of the Cassa Invalidi della Marina mercantile of Genoa (1861-1913)

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of sudden changes for Mediterranean shipping, heavily influenced by the massive increase of the use of metal instead of wood and the gradual shift from sailing to steam. Such radical changes in the physiognomy and functioning of the boats required a significant rethinking of the workforce employed on board, with the appearance and the affirmation of new professional figures, for example that of the stoker. My research focuses on an institution that appears particularly interesting for the study of these changes in life and work on board, the «Cassa Invalidi della Marina mercantile of Genoa». With the law of July 28th, 1861 the previous «Cassa di risparmio e beneficenza della Marina mercantile» was suppressed and supplanted by five local authorities called «Cassa Invalidi della Marina mercantile» of Genoa, Livorno, Naples, Palermo and Ancona. For the organization of the new institutes, the Government kept unchanged the capillary system of the structures of the «Cassa di risparmio e beneficenza della Marina mercantile», only renaming the old governing bodies. Applications for pensions, dowries and annual grants were addressed to local committees and were examined by a committee appointed by the Board of Directors, which formed a list of possible beneficiaries with the requests presented. The committee proposed the list – accompanied by a report and subsequent observations – to the Board of Directors, which proceeded to reject or accept the applications presented by a resolution voted by a majority. The documentary production of this institution – acts of the deliberative organs, accounting books, lists of pensioners and subsidiaries, entirely preserved at INPS historical archive in Rome – represents a true mine of information about the daily life of the maritime, an original and privileged observatory that allows to highlight aspects related to social, maritime and labor history.

16 june

11h 45'-13h45'

Fifth Session. Structural dimension: traffic, ships and ports

Matteo Barbano

(Institute of Mediterranean Studies/ FORTH)

Sources for the study of the Austrian Lloyd: research perspectives

The history of Austrian Lloyd is one of the brightest examples of the massive impact that the new steam navigation technology had not only on shipbuilding industry, but also in redefining the economic role of a Mediterranean city: Trieste. Due to steam, it became a pivotal point for the mobilization of passengers, goods and mails along an axis that – from 1893 – reached its maximum extension, with regular lines to Brazil and Japan. Despite the marked pre-eminence of this steam navigation company on the global maritime scene from the second half of the Nineteenth century, the Austrian Lloyd is still under-studied by international historiography. The aim of this paper is to present some of the main sources collected from the Company's archive. They will be used in this research project to build a database with the objective of drawing a double profile of the Austrian Lloyd: on the one hand I will try to quantify in detail the maritime traffic and its evolution between 1836 and the outbreak of the First World War; on the other, I will focus on the protagonists of the Triestine navigation, collecting data about the composition of the crews that served under the Lloyd's pavillion.

Dr. Brendan von Briesen

(University of Barcelona)

The Spanish Sea Registry: navigating changes in construction, ownership, tonnage, and propulsion

This project-initiating investigation looks at the Official Sea Registry of Spain (“Lista Oficial de Buques de España”) from 1870-1925. This official registry was created by the Spanish Government using ownership registrations and was generally published yearly (with few exceptions) to manage the merchant (and military) fleet. Accessible copies (pdf format of printed tomes) cover ten-year spans and could be expanded to include five-year intervals. The available data will be entered into the SeaLit web-based database platform. While there are some changes in the types of information presented (generally more information available over time), the fundamental aspects continuously cover: place and person responsible for construction; place and ownership of registration of the named and uniquely coded vessel; tonnage; type of propulsion (sail or steam); and similar data. The eventual purpose of using this source is to be able to trace the development of important characteristics of the fleet: key individuals and locations of construction (development of industry), ownership (concentration of capital), changes in tonnage and propulsion (technological change). It is hoped that the information can be correlated with Sea Registries in other SeaLiT investigations.

Petros Kastrinakis

(University of Crete/Institute of Mediterranean Studies/ FORTH)

Sources for the study of the Ottoman port-city of Chania during the 19th century. Some preliminary thoughts on their importance for the future of the research

This presentation aims to point out the sources, which have been discovered until now, concerning my dissertation over the Ottoman port-city of Chania during the 19th century. A port that was already vital in the 18th century for the exportation of olive oil and soap to Marseille and to the capital Istanbul. The research aims to explore the role of the port of Chania in the economy of Crete and its position in the Mediterranean in the period of the transition from sail to steam navigation in the nineteenth century. The population structure, the professions, the commodities, the port infrastructures and its workers, the commercial linkages and the shipping mechanisms along with the role of the Cretan Muslims, as captains and ship-owners, almost unique in the Aegean shipping of that transitional period, are the main topics of this study. The Ottoman sources that have been discovered until now are coming from the Turkish Archive of Chania in Crete and have to do with commercial books, which were probably recorded by the local customhouse in Chania and consist of information concerning the ships arriving at Chania, their captains, their cargos and their destination. In addition, there are notarial sources, which include information about the sales of ship shares. Moreover, there are court registers and commercial court registers that can offer us information concerning disputes between ship-owners and merchants, but also between workers in the port. During this study, there will be a research on the Prime Minister’s Archives in Istanbul (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri) about Ottoman documents that concern the port of Chania, which, along with the European consular reports, will probably enlighten my research.

16 june

15h30'-17h30'

Sixth Session. Cultural informatics and the databases for the study of maritime labour

George Bruseker

(Center of Cultural Informatics/ICS/FORTH)

& Korina Doerr

(Center of Cultural Informatics/ICS/FORTH)

SeaLit Information Management Progress Report

Following up on the initial plans presented at the first SeaLit meeting, this presentation will deliver a progress report on the information management strategy and implementation in the SeaLit project. It will report on the use of FastCat, demonstrating new functionalities and their use, as well as provide a first demonstration of the ResearchSpace platform for searching the integrated datasets generated by the project.

Korina Doerr

(Center of Cultural Informatics/ICS/FORTH)

& George Bruseker

(Center of Cultural Informatics/ICS/FORTH)

FastCat Hands On Session

This session will provide practical hands on advice with regards to the use of the FastCat recording system. In particular it will provide advice and examples on advanced template design, particularly regarding complicated, less structured primary data sources, using event modelling techniques. Additionally, best practice advice on how to get the most out of FastCat as a recording system will be delivered.

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