Introduction

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The long nineteenth century marked people's everyday life in Europe and beyond through the many structural changes occurring at every level, be it political, economic, social, technological, or institutional. The transition from sail to steam and the industrialization of shipping and shipbuilding, were among the main phenomena that primarily took place, affecting traditional sectors such as wooden shipbuilding, maritime trade, and the economy of the sailing ship, as well as the auxiliary trades. The advent of steam navigation introduced new types of professions both on board and ashore, and a new type of organization for shipping enterprises. It also introduced a new type of business organization, which was more demanding in terms of capital, management, and labour. Steam navigation companies needed agents and offices in ports, and a type of staff previously unknown to the shipping industry. Working with new materials and processing methods necessitated new knowledge from new types of professions, including engineers, boilermakers and so on, which led to industrialized shipbuilding. This industrialization also affected port cities, and led to the necessity of technological change in infrastructures. Thanks to the regularity that only steamers could offer, the introduction of passenger shipping transformed the lifestyle of ordinary people, and linked many previously distant places in a sustained manner. All these processes influenced sailors, their families, and others outside shipping, altering the rhythms and patterns of their everyday life.

_Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition_ explores the transition from sail to steam navigation and its effects on seafaring populations and maritime transport systems in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea between the 1850s and the 1920s. More specifically the research focuses on three broad but interlinked axes of analysis, namely: i) maritime labour; ii) maritime communities; and iii) the cargo and passenger shipping business, aiming to provide a comprehensive approach to the subject. The advent of steamship navigation revolutionized people's lives on a global scale and brought about structural changes, with an important impact on the means and modes of transport, the organization of business and labour, and on communication. In the Mediterranean, this phenomenon had strong repercussions on seafaring labour practices, on the socio-economic fabric of the maritime communities, and on the evolution of the shipping business. However, there is no comprehensive picture of
the manifold transformations that the transition to steam roused in this sea region, despite the importance of the Mediterranean in the world economy over the modern and contemporary era. The transition from sail to steam in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea has received very little attention by current scholarship. In most of the few existing cases where it does appear, the transition is approached from the national perspective and without embracing in the discussion the multiple above-mentioned aspects of the phenomenon. The transition to steam is also markedly understudied in literature concerning other geographical areas. In fact, most of the works devoted to Europe and North America deal exclusively either with the age of sail or with the advent of steam and the developments on modern shipping. The works of Gopalan Balachandran on Indian seafarers in the period of globalization (1870–1945) and of Enric Garcia Domingo on Spanish sailors are perhaps among the very few, if not the only, examples dealing with the transition from sail to steam in seafaring labour. Therefore, so far, there is no work to treat the subject of the transition from sail to steam in a transnational and comparative way nor in a


comprehensive approach. *Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition* instead examines the aforementioned axes of analysis of labour, communities, and shipping through the comparative dimension of the Mediterranean and Black Sea maritime loci and its people. It spans from Barcelona and the Spanish Levant coasts, to Marseilles and the Provençal ports, to Genoa and the Ligurian littoral communities, east to Trieste and the Dalmatian coasts, and the islands and coastal communities of the Ionian and Aegean seas up to Odessa, the informal maritime capital port of the Black Sea. The research also encompasses a variety of topics on these three axes of analysis: on seafaring labour from deck to engine and catering crews, dockworkers and fishermen, old and new hierarchies, wages and the welfare system; on maritime communities from industrialized ports and neighbourhoods to resilient sailing ship maritime communities in a profoundly changing world economically as well as politically, with great repercussions; and on the shipping business, from shipowners of merchant sailing ships to joint stock companies of passenger shipping, and to tramp steam shipping firms.

*Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition* is also innovative in many ways. Firstly, because it addresses the question of the transition from sail to steam in both aspects of seafaring life, at sea and ashore, in a dual perspective never explored before by Mediterranean maritime history. Secondly because it connects the eastern and western Mediterranean, thus far studied almost independently of each other, providing a comparative analysis by enhancing the historiographical dialogue, and ultimately bringing to light very interesting results on common processes, practices, mechanisms, norms, and customs of Mediterranean seafaring, which up to now were considered as national or local particularities. Thirdly, because it investigates important questions and topics of maritime labour, communities, and shipping, that have so far remained understudied or fully unexplored by the current historiography. Fourthly, because research of some of these relatively unexplored topics or questions have been enabled here by new and innovative methodological processes and tools through interdisciplinary cooperation and interaction with informatics science.

*Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition* is a book that concerns the results of the above-mentioned ERC STG research project SeaLiT.4 Research was carried out through a variety of primary and secondary sources written in wide-ranging languages, including Spanish (Castilian and Catalan), French, Italian, Greek, Ottoman, Russian, German, and English. The main part of the research was based on primary sources not previously utilized and studied. The

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types of sources explored encompass lists and registries of the seafaring labour force, namely crew lists, payrolls, and maritime workers registries, including shore labourers like shipyard personnel or dockworkers. Demographic sources, like population censuses, civil registers, or death registers comprise another category of sources concerning population data useful for port and community analysis, which can also be combined with the seafaring labour data for cross-reference and more holistic comprehension of Mediterranean Seafarers. Business records, like account books, yearly balance sheets, annual company reports, letters, and ship logbooks compose another broad category of sources that enable the examination of single ship performance, namely voyage turnover, costs, freight rates and profits, as well as of the entire shipping firm. Port and ship registries are another type of source that enables us to investigate different issues regarding changes in maritime and ship technology, merchant fleet evolution and development, as well as trends in shipping specialization (long distance trade, coastal trade, and fishing). All these sources about people, ports and communities, ships and shipping firms, are processed through various stages in the systems created by the CCI/ICS/FORTH group, who are partners in the project. Three applications, “Research Space”, “Ship Voyages” and “Ship Operation Services” provide to historians the instruments to create queries that enable a thorough and detailed analysis. The results of the queries from these applications do not just offer answers or hints to the questions, but actively contribute to the explanation of historical questions, and are organically amalgamated in the narrative (especially in chapters 1, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13). The methodology followed in this book combines the quantitative results and qualitative conclusions from the above-mentioned digital instruments with other qualitative evidence resulting from non-processed material (newspapers, memoirs, minutes of the assembly of a company’s shareholders). This combination is pervasive in all chapters, and offers a comprehensive interpretation of the trends shown in the numbers, behind which there is an effort to catch the reality, the contemporary views and mentalities of the people experiencing the effects of the transition from sail to steam. Another main methodological approach of the book is the combination of macro and micro-historical analyses. Especially in chapters 1, 8, 9, and 13, both approaches are harmoniously integrated into the narrative; the examined macro-historical


trends on the effects of the transition are enhanced by micro historical examples of *Mediterranean Seafarers*. However, one of the most important contributions of this book is its comparative dimension. The examination of a broad set of similar questions from case studies of different areas and countries of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea offers a more complete and deeper understanding of the effects of this revolutionary phenomenon, the transition to steam navigation.

The transition from sail to steam for the labour at sea is analysed through case studies from Spain, Italy, and Greece, all of them understudied regions in this regard. While for Spain the monograph of Enric García Domingo stands as the only comprehensive contribution on Spanish maritime labour in the nineteenth century, in the two other countries the historiography of the subject is almost non-existent. García Domingo, El mundo del trabajo.

Luca Lo Basso, the most prolific author on seafaring labour in the Italian states, concentrates mostly on the pre-industrial period, while in Greece the only studies on the subject concern the inter-war and Second World War period. In this book, Domingo, Lo Basso, and Alkiviadis Kapokakis (chapters 1 to 3) examine common questions on the evolution of Mediterranean maritime labour in the period of the industrialization of ships and shipping, such as the institutional framework, the assessment of maritime population, the changes in the professions, labour conditions, wages, the new hierarchies on board, as well as trade unionism. The analysis of the above-mentioned cases reveals another neglected dimension of Mediterranean maritime labour: the obligatory registration of all maritime professions (including all those involved in shipping, shipbuilding, fishing, and the related industries) by the naval or state authorities. In the case of Spain, France, and Italy it was the navy that demanded this procedure in order to control and administer a necessary pool of manpower. In Greece, this

7 García Domingo, *El mundo del trabajo*.
registration was not intended for military use, and was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Merchant Marine. It is interesting to see how these institutions, in some countries—like Spain and France, where they dated back to the ancien régime—staggered and were even abolished, as in Spain, due to industrialization and the liberalization policies of the second half of the nineteenth century. In Greece however, in contrast, they were instituted as an instrument of the modernization of the sea worker’s registration and control.

Another almost unexplored topic is that of the welfare and pension system of sea workers in the Mediterranean. *Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition* opens the discussion on this highly important subject by examining the transition from the guilds and the mutual aid societies of the pre-industrial period, to the established state-created and administered worker’s pension and insurance funds. The creation of such institutions was a priority for the modern state in both of the examined cases: in the Kingdom of Sardinia and then in the unified Italy (Andrea Zappia in chapter 4); and in the Greek Kingdom (Kapokakis in chapter 3). In fact, the political class of the most advanced pre-unitary Italian state, which had created such a fund already in 1816 (albeit more akin to a mutual aid society’s aims and structure), took care to establish this welfare system in Italian territory as soon as unification took place.

In Greece, the Seamen’s Pension Fund, founded in 1861, stands as one of the oldest seafaring workers’ pension funds in the world (in the modern sense of the social welfare system), being still active today and retaining its name, aims, and structure. The analysis of maritime labour, however, takes into consideration not only sailors—namely captains, officers, seamen, engineers, stokers, and other ranks on board the ships—but also categories of maritime workers outside long-distance shipping, like dockworkers (Jordi Ibarz in chapter 5) and fishermen (Daniel Muntané in chapter 6). Jordi Ibarz analyses the great transformations in the handling of cargo at one of the biggest Mediterranean ports, Barcelona, with its extended links to oceanic trade, namely: the political and economic context of liberalization and industrialization that affected the guild system in the middle of the nineteenth century; the new modes of control of the production; the process of modernization at the end of the century; and the effects on the status of dockworkers. Daniel Muntané explains a similar process in the case of fishermen on the Spanish Levant, starting however from the end of the guild system and analysing the formation of fishermen associations and the union movement in parallel with the modernization of the fishing fleet and of fishing techniques.

The examination of maritime communities is based on a selection of case studies across the Mediterranean, which so far have been either totally unexplored (Ottoman Chania, Barceloneta, Camogli) or occasionally touched by
studies written exclusively in the national language (Galaxidi, La Ciotat).10 These selected places were chosen not only based on existing research, but also because they represent significant, as well of diverse, character case studies of maritime communities in which the transition to steam had a different impact. Barceloneta (Eduard Page Campos in chapter 7), a neighbourhood on the edge of the big port of Barcelona, with its own distinctive maritime character since the middle of the eighteenth century, also experienced the great transformations resulting from the industrialization of shipping and shipbuilding that affected the occupations, and consequently the demography and socio-economic life, of its population. La Ciotat in Provence (Kalliopi Vasilaki in chapter 8), a small seaport with a great tradition of sailing ships, became the first great industrial shipbuilding complex of France, transforming a traditional maritime community into an industrial district and company town, with drastic and lasting demographic and socio-economic effects.11 In Camogli and Galaxidi (Leonardo Scavino in chapter 9 and Katerina Galani in chapter 10), small but vibrant maritime communities with a large number of long distance sailings ships in their registry, remained faithful to the tradition of sail up to the time when steamships dominated most of the trade routes. Scavino shows how, after decades of profitable trading with the Black Sea and then with the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, Camogli seafarers in the twilight of the sailing ship era left the community either to work on foreign ships or to immigrate to the nearby large port of Genoa, or to South America, along with other Ligurians at that time. In Galaxidi, a similar pattern was followed. Galaxidi, one of the most important Greek maritime communities and the second-most successful shipyard in Greece with established links on Black Sea routes, lost its eminence during the transition to steam. As Galani explains, the Galaxidiots tried to invest in steamships but failed, and continued their seafaring tradition working on other Greek steamships and emigrated to the growing first port of Greece, Piraeus, to build new socio-economic relations and hierarchies in a developing urban environment. Last but not least, Ottoman Chania in Crete (Petros Kastrinakis in chapter 11) offers an exemplary case of a maritime community of a growing port that was dominated by Muslims. This


11 Clemens Zimmerman (ed.) Industrial Cities. History and Future (Interdisciplinary Urban Research 2) (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013).
Muslim maritime population did not make the transition to steam, but also struggled to remain in Crete due to political circumstances, while, in parallel to this, foreign actors came into the port of Chania as part of the international steamship communication circuit.

In shipping, the transition to steam is examined through two branches: the cargo and passenger shipping. In cargo or tramp shipping the focus is given to two neglected subjects: ship operation and navigation (Delis, chapters 12 and 13). Despite the large amount of work devoted to tramp shipping, research has focused mostly on the strategy, structure, and network of the shipping business, on the types of trade and markets the shipping firms were involved in, and other aspects, but not on ship operation. This latter fundamental aspect, examining the day-to-day working of the ship namely routes and cargoes, the running or operational costs, the accounting system, the ship’s performance and profitability that determine the state of progress of the shipping business—have attracted very limited attention; the only works found are by Gordon Boyce.12 Very much related to ship operation is the subject of navigation, namely the trade routes, the navigation patterns, the duration, and the condition of the voyage, including the events at sea and ashore, and how all these factors were affected or evolved from sailing ships to steamers. Irrespective of the high importance of this topic, still no research has been done on it within maritime history scholarship. The only works that touch on the subject are those of climatologists based on thorough investigations of sailing ship logbooks, who, while searching for evidence for the past climate, also managed to contribute to other aspects of the history of navigation.13


Passenger shipping is an extensively researched subject, especially for British, North American, as well as North European companies. However, the Mediterranean and Black Sea steamship companies are not so well-explored, and whatever exists is written in national languages. The novelty of *Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition* on this subject is first the study of three very important passenger steam navigation companies of the area who so far have been neglected: Austrian Lloyd, the Russian Steamship Navigation and Trading Company, and the Hellenic Steam Navigation Company. These companies represent relevant attention-grabbing cases for studying comparisons in public policy in the modernization of seaborne communications. They are connected with the expansive aspirations of two empires, the Hapsburg Monarchy and the Russian, and a small newly-created kingdom, Greece. The analysis of these case studies aims to bring forward the discussion of the role of the state in supporting and establishing steam navigation in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and to bring out comparisons with British, American, and French companies. Delis in chapter 14 analyses the role of the state and the


contribution of the Hellenic Steam Navigation Company in the modernization of Greece’s seaborne communications, by examining the fleet, the lines, and the economic performance of the company, in combination with the comparative international context of other contemporary steam navigation companies. Matteo Barbano in chapter 15, in a similar tune, shows how Austrian Lloyd expanded in terms of fleet and lines in parallel with a growing dependency on state support and control. Anna Sydorenko in chapter 16 offers a quite different story, by investigating a totally understudied subject, that of the Russian Steamship Navigation and Trading Company. Her work tells the story of the efforts of the state in the foundation of a steamship company that gradually expanded by promoting the commercial interests of the shareholders, while at the same time maintaining the support of the state.

This extended research project across the Mediterranean has been supported and expanded, for the first time to my knowledge, by an interdisciplinary cooperation between historians and IT engineers (Fafalios et al., chapter 17). The contribution by informatics in Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition is not only limited to the building of tools for the insertion and processing of the data, but goes beyond this, by opening up a cooperative interaction for the better understanding, use, and analysis of historical metadata. This constitutes a new path in historical research, which, through innovative interdisciplinary methods, offers new points of view, fresh approaches, and original ways to comprehend historical questions. These innovative ways become very clear with certain questions in particular, like the analysis of navigation patterns through the Ship Voyages visualization maps (chapter 13), or the combination of a macro and micro-historical approach to the data concerning the numbers of sailors and their individual careers through the Research Space platform (chapters 1, 7, 8, 9).

Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition investigates new or neglected topics, introduces novel methods and approaches, and inaugurates new discussions in maritime history. Ship operation and navigation, sea workers’ welfare systems, state policy and steam navigation companies in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, are among these topics that may expand out to further research, not only within the history of the “inner sea” but also beyond. Further research using the new tools and methods created in the project also await researchers.

who are willing to explore aspects of seafaring labour, ships and fleets, demo-
graphic and occupational questions on the maritime population, and shipping
firm economics (routes, cargoes, costs, profits). Comparative studies on com-
mon questions across different countries may also profit from the theoretical
background and the empirical evidence of the book. New discussions have
already begun on past research on specific aspects of certain subjects, like the
history of navigation,¹⁸ which continues at present with the engaged scholars
and may develop further in cooperative terms. Similarly, other subjects of the
book also encourage the opening of an academic dialogue, like the worker’s
welfare state or trade unionism, the transformation of seafaring societies, or
structural changes in shipping management. Above all, it is the creation of a
new conceptual framework on the transition from sail to steam navigation that
can play a constructive role in the exploration of other Seafaring Lives in the
Mediterranean and Black Sea, as well as in different societies and in other parts
of the world.