

S. 11. 3. – SEALIT I: THE SEALIT RESEARCH PROJECT
Chair: Gelina Harlaftis (IMS-FORTH)

Panel Abstract

Seafaring Lives in Transition, Mediterranean Maritime Labour and Shipping, 1850s-1920s (SeaLiT) is an international research project funded by the ERC Starting Grant 2016. SeaLiT started in February 2017 and has a duration of 5 years. The project is hosted at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies, of the Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas, Rethymno, Crete. In the project also participate as partners the Universities of Barcelona, Genoa and the Centre for Cultural Informatics/ICS/FORTH, Heraklion. The project explores the transition from sail to steam navigation and its effects on seafaring populations in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea between the 1850s and the 1920s. In the core of the project lie the effects of technological innovation on seafaring people and maritime communities, whose lives were drastically altered by the advent of steam. The project addresses the changes through the actors, seafarers, shipowners and their families, focusing on the adjustment of seafaring lives to a novel socio-economic reality. It investigates the maritime labour market, the evolving relations among shipowner, captain, crew and their local societies, life on board and ashore, as well as the development of new business strategies, trade routes and navigation patterns. The project offers a comparative perspective, investigating both collectivities and individuals, on board the ships and on shore in a number of big and small ports from Barcelona up to Odessa, in the Black Sea.

In the Panel SeaLiT I will be presented:

- An overview of the objectives, questions, topics, methodology and ultimate goals of the project
- A challenging and innovative interdisciplinary engagement between historians and IT experts, on methods and tools not used up to now in the historical research with the adoption of semantic data technology, and
- How the transition from sail to steam affected the state policy towards maritime labor in Spain in the end of the nineteenth century.

Keywords

ERC Research Project, Transition from sail to steam, Mediterranean and Black Sea, Interdisciplinary collaboration of IT experts and Historians

Seafaring Lives en route. Objectives, work in progress and perspectives in Mediterranean Maritime History.

APOSTOLOS DELIS (Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH)

Abstract

Seafaring Lives in Transition, Mediterranean Maritime Labour and Shipping, 1850s-1920s (SeaLiT) is an international research project funded by the ERC Starting Grant 2016. The project explores the transition from sail to steam navigation and its effects on seafaring populations in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea between the 1850s and the 1920s. In the project, participate research assistants, PhD students, Post Docs as well as senior scholars. The broad categories of research topics include: a) maritime labor, b) maritime communities and ports and c) shipping with emphasis on the passenger steam navigation.

SeaLiT is based on unexplored sources that have hitherto not been systematically used in Mediterranean maritime history. SeaLiT researchers have collected so far a very wide array of categories and of types of sources from several archives and libraries of Mediterranean and Black Sea countries written in different languages such as Greek, Russian, Ottoman, Italian, French and Spanish.

In this vast amount and typology of archival material, we can distinguish two broad categories in terms of processing: those containing qualitative and those containing quantitative data. For this latter category CCI/ICS/FORTH has designed a system that is composed of the following parts: data entry, post processing of digitized data, mapping to the semantic schema, “research space” semantic network database.

In a new interdisciplinary engagement between historians and IT experts, on methods and tools not used up to now in the historical research the project’s aim is to offer typical outputs of academic work as well as innovative research tools:

- A collective volume
- Six Ph.D. dissertations
- An open access archival and bibliographical corpus, and,
- An open access Semantic Network Database.

Biography

Apostolos Delis studied Ancient History in the Universities of Siena and Bologna (BA), Maritime Archaeology and History in the University of Bristol (MA), and he took his PhD thesis in 2010 in the Ionian University. In 2010-11 worked as a post doc researcher in the University of Nice and from 2012 in the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/ FORTH. In September 2016, he won the ERC Starting Grant 2016 “Seafaring Lives in Transition. Mediterranean Mari-

time Labour and Shipping during Globalization, 1850s-1920s". He is author of a monograph on Mediterranean Wooden Shipbuilding, and he has published in journals and collective volumes such as *European Review of Economic History*, *Urban History*, *International Journal of Maritime History*, *History of Technology*. His research interests lie in the maritime economic and social history, history of technology of the sailing ship, the shipbuilding industry, port history and the institutions of shipping business.

Advanced IT Tools for Historical Research with Archival Material

PAVLOS FAFALIOS (Center for Cultural Informatics, Institute of Computer Science Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH))

Abstract

Historical research using archival sources typically starts with a research hypothesis and the formal structure of the data that needs to be extracted and transcribed from the sources. Current practice is nearly exclusively using spreadsheets or simple relational databases to organize the data as rows with multiple columns of related parameters. This form offers itself for direct quantitative analysis under varying parameters, which may consequently be used for the scholarly interpretation of causes and impacts. The problems of this practice are the high dependency of the transcribed data on the initial research hypothesis, the lack of representation of the details from which the registered relations are inferred, and the difficulty to revisit the original sources of transcribed facts for verifications, corrections or improvements. The CCI has been developing in cooperation with the SealIT project a highly advanced and innovative tool set for a more effective support of such kind of research that allows for (1) a much richer representation of source transcripts, as publishable, reusable resources in their own right; (2) direct connection of data to provenance and digitized images of sources at all stages of data processing; (3) complete, consistent management of the scholarly disambiguation of the identity of referred entities (places, persons, things) and multilingual terminology within and between sources; and (4) the integration and concatenation of facts from many sources into a coherent “semantic network” for seamless exploration and quantitative analysis even of indirectly related facts. The development is based on continuous validation by the SealIT partners. The implementation process has finished steps 1-3 and is in the final stage 4, currently prototyping the semantic network and customizing it for the research questions of the SealIT project. CCI is committed to support these tools as Open Source solutions in the long term.

Maritime Labour in Spain: Workforce in time of transition, 1850-1920

JORDI IBARZ / ENRIC GARCIA DOMINGO (T.I.G./University of Barcelona)

Abstract

At the end of the XIX Century, as transition from sail to steam consolidated, the features of the workforce in Spanish maritime industries changed at different levels. For instance, the organization through Matrícula de Mar, an Ancien Régime seamen's register, aimed to control sea workers as a source to man the Navy, switched to Inscriptio Maritima, a new way of organizing workforce in order to provide men to the navy through a new and more rational military service. From the geographical point of view, the origin of most of the seamen also changed, as people from some regions (Catalonia, for example) almost disappeared from the merchant marine and remained only in the fishing fleet. Other changes affected professions, migrations, etc. Using the Catalan maritime community as a field of research and a set of different sources, both civil and military, in this paper we will discuss about the general configuration and characteristics of maritime workforce of Catalonia in a time of technological and social changes.

Biography

Jordi Ibarz (Barcelona, 1962) is a professor of Modern History at the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Barcelona and member of the research group "Work, Institutions and Gender". His main research interests are on labour history, especially that referring to dock workers and glass workers.

Enric García Domingo (Barcelona, Spain, 1962) has a degree in History (Universitat de Barcelona) and a Doctorate in Modern History (Universitat de Barcelona), and he is interested in Maritime History in a broad scope. His dissertation topic was on labour in the Spanish Merchant Marine in the transition from sail to steam, 1834-1914.