

**S. 13. 3. – SEALIT III: MEDITERRANEAN MARITIME
COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION**
Chair: Apostolos Delis
(Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH)

Panel Abstract

The panel focuses on the effects of technological innovation on the socio-economic structure and mentality of maritime communities across the Mediterranean. The transition to steam affected the lives of entire maritime communities in a holistic way. Embedded in the pre-modern economy of the sailing ship, these communities were now ushered by the steamship in a novel and more demanding socio-economic system. This system affected the means and modes of production (e.g. professional and technical skills, capital investment, business organization), as well as social stratification.

These developments led to the decline of old as well as the rise of new ports and maritime centers in the Mediterranean. On the whole, they almost altered the existing culture around shipping and seafaring life. Therefore, research will pay particular attention to the ways of adjustment, resistance, the success or failure of seafaring people and communities to integrate and operate in a new economic environment introduced by merchant and liner shipping and which promoted economic and social integration to a degree never before attained in the Mediterranean. The case studies that will be presented in the Panel SeaLiT III are all ongoing research of PhD dissertations of the Universities of Genoa, Crete and Barcelona and include the case studies of:

- the maritime community of Camogli in Liguria, that had not been able to industrialize its fleet
 - the small port of La Ciotat in Provence, that became an important center of industrial shipbuilding in southern France,
- And
- the maritime district of Barceloneta, which was integrated in the industrialization of the port of Barcelona in the nineteenth century, but with profound social transformation.

Keywords

maritime communities and ports, maritime labor, emigration and immigration,

Transformation without transition: the evolution of the maritime community of Camogli (1830s-1890s)

LEONARDO SCAVINO (NAVLAB/University of Genoa)

Abstract

In addressing the transition from sail to steam in navigation through the evolution of a maritime community which failed its transition, the present paper aims to underline the wider set of transformations triggered by a mere technological improvement. In this regard, the case of Camogli may contribute significantly to the intended analysis, due to its own history in which, after it had faced an extraordinary growth during the “golden age of sail” (1830-1870), had to reassess its activities in relation to steam competitiveness. Indeed, in the period when steamers were first deployed in deep-sea navigation, the ship-owning elites of Camogli, despite their outstanding importance in the international shipping market, lacked the instruments to make the transition, due to their inability to access maritime credit. Unable to invest in steam technology but willing to maintain their position within the international shipping, the maritime elites of Camogli adopted different measures to counter the steamships’ growing influence. First, they redirected the routes, from the Mediterranean to the oceans, to establish themselves in liminal traffics of low-value bulk commodities, such as rice, timber, nitrates and guano, whose freights were lower than what steam technology could afford at the time. Secondly, in order to sustain the increasing costs of maintenance of maritime business, the ship-owning class clustered more than before, thus promoting capital concentration which inhibited upward social mobility.

The extension of routes, the neglect of customary mechanisms to manage maritime credit, ownership and labor, together with the admission into the international labor market, altered dramatically the social and economic status of the community and its inhabitants, leading the way to serious transformations in onboard and ashore labor and social relationships – a wide range of arguments which are at the core of the proposed paper.

Biography

Leonardo Scavino (Genoa, 1993) is a PhD candidate in the Department of History, Philosophy and Antiquities (DAFIST) at the University of Genoa, and a member of NavLab, coordinated by Prof. Lo Basso, since January 2017.

His main research interests involve the Mediterranean maritime history, and, particularly, the economic and social relations between Western and Eastern Mediterranean (including the Black Sea). Within SeaLIT project, he focuses on a specific seafaring community located in the Ligurian area, Camogli, and he studies its maritime, economic and social evolution from 1850s to 1920. He holds a Master’s degree in Historical Sciences (University of Genoa, 2017) and a Bachelor degree in History (University of Genoa, 2014).

The port of La Ciotat in the second half of the nineteenth century: from a traditional maritime community to an industrial shipbuilding centre.

KALLIOPI VASILAKI (Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH)

Abstract

La Ciotat, a small port situated between Marseille and Toulon, famous for its skilled captains and sailors, experienced an important technological breakthrough with the introduction of steam in navigation. In 1851, the French shipping company of Messageries Nationales (later Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes) with postal, passenger and commercial lines, purchased the shipyards focusing on the construction of a modern and competitive fleet. The introduction of steam power had a profound impact on La Ciotat, concluding, inter alia, to alterations of its maritime community. In this regard, this paper aims to describe the impact that the introduction of new technologies had on the maritime community of La Ciotat in the period between 1851 and 1914. The mutation process of its character will be examined through two main aspects: the demographic trends and the evolution of urban space.

In a first step, the analysis will be focused on three primary sources all interconnected between them: the nominative lists of the inhabitants of La Ciotat the years 1831, 1851 and 1911, the registers of the seafarers in La Ciotat the second half of nineteenth century, and the registers of workforce entries in the shipyards of Messageries Maritimes from 1851 to 1911. The data of those sources are elaborated in the framework of the ERC research project SeaLiT: Seafaring Lives in Transition, Mediterranean Maritime Labour and Shipping, 1850s-1920s. In a second level, the paper will examine the qualitative sources related to port infrastructures and urban transformation. Both levels of analysis may contribute to explain how the transition to steam in French Mediterranean and the transformation of La Ciotat's port into a modern shipbuilding centre affected its maritime community in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Biography

Kalliopi (Popi) Vasilaki is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Crete and a Ph.D Fellow of the ERC STG 2016, SeaLiT project in the Institute of Mediterranean Studies (IMS/FORTH), since July 2017.

Her research focuses on the study of the maritime communities in French Mediterranean, in particular in the ports of La Ciotat and Cassis, from 1850 to 1920.

She holds a Master's degree in History (School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences/Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2012), and a Bachelor degree in History and Archeology (University of Crete, 2010).

The Ottoman port of Chania, Crete, during the transition from sail to steam (1830-1913)

PETROS KASTRINAKIS (PhD student, University of Crete-IMS/FORTH)

Abstract

My 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 port was already vital in the 18th century for the exportation of olive oil and soap to Marseille and to the capital of Ottoman Empire Istanbul. The research focuses on various issues such as the population structure of the port-city, the distribution of 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 being involved in the internal trade of the Ottoman Empire at that time. The research is based mostly on Ottoman sources coming from the Ottoman archive of Chania in Crete and the President's Ottoman Archives in Istanbul (*Cumhurbaşbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri*).

The current proposal focuses on the transformation of the role of the port in the 19th century through the study of the registers held by the local customs house in Chania and consist of information concerning the ships arriving at Chania, their captains, their cargos and their destination, in cross reference with the information from the British and French consular reports. The paper will also examine the orders from the central Ottoman state concerning infrastructure works in the port, on the impact of the technological change on the local communities (christian, muslim, jewish) and the way it affected their investment in shipping and commerce. In that case, the local ottoman mixed court registers and commercial court registers can offer us information concerning the shipping and merchant activities of the communities through disputes between ship-owners and merchants and between captain and the crew. In the same way, the petitions of the communities to the local government for establishing steamship companies can also provide us information about how the introduction of steam power affected the activities of local communities in the island of Crete.