

**S. 12. 5. – THE AGE OF STEAM**  
**Chair: Gelina Harlaftis**  
(IMS-FORTH)

## *Sigval Bergesen, Stavanger – A strategic ship-owner for a new shipping era?*

LIV RAMSKJAER (Norwegian Museums Association)

### **Abstract**

In the later part of the 1800s both the shift in technology, and change from sail to steam, and the general economic development challenged the shipping companies and their trades and the need to make changes grew. During the last decades of the 19th century new types of ship-owning companies and new ship-owners and new types of shipping companies and ship-owners appeared in the shipping industry along with changes in organizing and ownership in shipping. This challenged the public opinion on how shipping companies were normally run.

The startup of the Sigval Bergesen Company in 1887 is one of several examples the development of a new type of ship-owner. The shift from sail to steam, from part-company to limited companies and from the single ship company to the multi-ship company was key elements in this development. This paper will examine the founding and startup strategy of the ship-owner Sigval Bergesen and the strategic choices in developing the shipping company primarily in the first formative decades. Central questions will be: How did he establish the firm? What role did different types of chartering, as time charter, play in the construction of the shipping company? How did Bergesen make use of the networks and possibilities in the general economy and technological development? What was the strategy in building the company? Which factors influenced the choices? What were the key success factors in building a new ship-owning company?

### **Keywords**

ship-owner, Bergesen, multi-ship company, time-charter, trades

### **Biography**

Liv Ramskjaer is Secretary General of the Norwegian Museums Association since June 2013. She was earlier Senior Adviser in the section of museums in Arts Council Norway (2007-2013), and Chief Curator at The Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology, Oslo (1996-2007). Ramskjaer is an historian and has contributed to books dealing with maritime history and history of technology, business and industry. Topics of earlier works are Norwegian shipping, history of electricity, development of chains for distribution of gasoline. Presently she is studying the production and utilization of plastic materials in modern Norway, 1945-1990. Her latest articles on this topic from 2011 is dealing with the earliest years of the development of the Norwegian plastic boat industry and on packaging, marketing and consuming goods wrapped in plastic in the 1960s Norway.

# *Consequences Imponderable and Incalculable: Gender, Steam, and Seapower in the Second British Empire*

JULIA STRYKER (University of Texas at Austin)

## **Abstract**

“Space is killed by the railways,” Heinrich Heine wrote in 1843, but the annihilation of space observed by nineteenth century commentators applied no less to steamships and the sea than to railways and the countryside. The spread of steam technology shrank the great Atlantic “to half its breadth” and dried “the great lakes of the world” to ponds. As this annihilation was more than metaphysical, its drying-up of oceanic space was more than metaphorical: steamships altered the oceanic landscape by transmuting life at sea to something much more like life on land. Increased regulation of shipboard life partially accomplished this, but the perceived annihilation of the previous way of life – exclusive to sailing ships – completed it. For the British Empire, as steam helped power the expansive imperialism of the late-nineteenth century, it finalized a century-long process through which shipboard space became an extension of imperial space.

This extension of imperial space shifted the foundations of the empire. The Second Empire began a maritime empire, built by iron men and wooden ships. The death of the Age of Sail initiated a cultural crisis that would see the sea recast from a male-dominated but ultimately natural environment into an exclusively masculine crucible for a specific kind of British virtue. Thus the mythology born of this crisis wrote women out of maritime history. Women had, however, always gone to sea – much as had men – as necessity dictated. The nineteenth century would see women to go to sea in ever-greater numbers, and with ever-greater visibility. What changed was not their presence, but how their presence became problematized, not only by a legal regime increasingly concerned with propriety, but by a national imaginary challenged by a change in its foundational technology. Examining women’s work at sea, its cultural impact, and legal scaffolding reveals the Second Empire’s shift from a maritime to a terrestrial empire.

## **Keywords**

19th Century, Britain, Gender, Technology, Empire

## **Biography**

Julia Stryker is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin. Her interests include Britain and empire in the nineteenth century, gender, labor, and culture, and the digital humanities. Her current research examines women working at sea in the nineteenth century.

## *“Clydebuilt”: the transformations of Glasgow’s shipbuilding trade in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

TRI TRAN (University of Tours)

### **Abstract**

“Clydebuilt” is a well-known phrase denoting precision marine engineering, associated with some of the most famous vessels of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries built on the river Clyde in Scotland. This paper, focused on a leading Clydeside shipyard, will attempt to analyse the complex professional relationships forged during the 19<sup>th</sup> century between the men who built the ships, ie the skilled workers in the engineering and shipbuilding trades, and the industrialists who ran the shipyards. The argument of this paper, which deals with one of Britain’s most famous shipyards, that of J. & G. Thomson, later John Brown, is that beyond the pay and conditions granted to the men, the yard’s management used several strategies in order to increase the support and productivity of their workforce.

### **Keywords**

Britain; Glasgow; shipbuilding; John Brown; engineering

### **Biography**

Tri TRAN (PhD, Habilit.) was educated at the Sorbonne University, Paris, and holds a PhD from this institution. He is currently Associate Professor in British history at the University of Tours (France). He has published a book about British several papers about British maritime history in *Revue d’Histoire Maritime*, *The Mariner’s Mirror*, and has given talks at major international maritime conferences, such as the 2013 Conference “Navy & Nation, 1688-Present”, hosted by the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK, and the 2016 IMEHA International Congress of Maritime History, at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia.