

MERMAIDS

(En)Gendering Maritime Labour and Business Histories

University of Ljubljana
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ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE LECTURE

Valerie Burton (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada)

Re-Presenting Women's Maritime Past: an Historian's Keynote for the Mermaids Conference

Our conference is an unprecedented opportunity to further understanding of gender inequalities in past, present, and future maritime societies. Extractive, productive, and consuming activities connected with the sea have long been normalized as male. What might we learn from the changes wrought by economic individualism and industrial capitalism in fishing, shipping and trade and of their particular significance for women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? How did women live their lives, move in local, national, and global arenas, and register historical time so that they might aspire to material recognition without being trapped in the social, economic and cultural orthodoxies of their day? And, following on, how might mindfulness to the orthodoxies of our own era influence our discussions?

Gender scholars before us broke new ground in treating women's agency. Pre-millennium I joined other feminists in treating the rules and norms established at the margin of sea and shore. From limited and partial sources, we made our point by revealing women exceeding, contesting, transgressing, and transforming those rules and norms. "Intersectionality" is indicated in the conference call as the cue to conceiving fresh challenges, but its pluralistic, anti-foundational, and identity-based persuasions are best identified with a broader epistemic shift. Abandoning the pursuit of "out there" truths, many scholars have embraced reflexivity as a means to displace the particular forms of subjectivity produced in hegemonic neo-classical and colonial discourses. Dismayingly, however, women's cause has not held up in maritime history, not in its mainstream where post-objectivist reflexivity used with feminist intent has been judged no match to quantitative argument. This is where I raise my key discontent: the determinate path of liberal political economy that explains women's economic activity as developmentally residual is still implicit. Most clearly is it seen in the summary treatment of ports. A quite different politics -- that of Marxist-inspired scholars -- gains from this elision. It does so by avoiding illuminating the heterosexual contract as a labour relation. Yet reversing the paradigm provides no resolution: all things do not belong in the market as the neo-liberals of our present would contend. The emergence of a politics that models the rationality of the market as the means of achieving welfare objectives indicates that making self-maximizing female agents the heroines of port life

is unwise.

Teasing out how the stops and gaps in almost fifty years of work on women in ports might be the result of a real failure of feminist analysis and how far it results from passive or more aggressive opposition is a tall order. It is a sobering task to set at the door of a new generation: the early career researchers who well know the precarity of the neo-liberal academy. This is where I stress what I bring to the conference from my longevity as an historian of the British imperial merchant marine and, more particularly, where I indicate the significance of a life-long and still evolving project. "Spanning Sea and Shore" has benefitted from unparalleled opportunities to work with archivists, students and with non-professionals, latterly using web-based communication. An uninterrupted career as an educator and researcher with access to the finest archives of labour and business has paid off with unparalleled insights. But it will help my audience better appreciate their character to know that the title was my response to the conceptual demands of tracing women's activities in an English port after containerization and cruise ship operations had erased their traces from inner-city ground. There I came to appreciate how global economic processes were articulated in the local political-cultural contingencies of a female port presence. I saw what needed changing in the teleological and overly mechanistic explanation of the nineteenth century's industrialized and capitalized merchant shipping if we were to see how gender played into the relationships among consciousness, opportunity and maritime social change. But with the greater part of my career having been spent away from metropolitan Britain and in a post-moratorium Newfoundland I have also been caused to deliberate on what the ecological crisis in fishing of global dimension puts us in need of saying about women in maritime business and labour.

1st SESSION

Women into the Deep. Labour on Board and Surrounding

Tomas Nilson (Halmstad University, Sweden) & **Aneli Blom** (Maritime Museum in Gothenburg, Sweden)

'Hard Work and Sweet Love': The Leisure Life of Women Stewardesses on the Swedish American Line during 1960-70s

Our proposed paper will deal with the experiences of female employees of the Swedish passenger carrier Swedish-America Line (SAL) during the 1960-and 70s. From an extensive interview material and from contemporary letters and written recollections, we will show these women from both a labour perspective – working conditions, work tasks, work camaraderie – but mostly from a leisure perspective – parties, social companionships and sexual relations.

Most of the female employees at SAL worked as stewardesses, a group mostly tasked with cleaning cabins, but woman also worked as hairdressers, nurses, receptionists and waitresses.

Parallel with long hours of exhausting work, an extensive social life took place with parties and socializing with other groups within the crew. On many occasions, stewardesses forged relations with officers, that often tended to become sexual in nature. Such relationships lasted for the whole trip. A ship has often been compared to a total institution as perceived by the sociologist Erving Goffman. In a total institution, customary limits between sleep, work and leisure are deconstructed: all aspects of life occur at the same place, together with others, and according to a predefined plan. Others have described a ship in terms of a foucauldian Heterotopia, a free zone where deviant behavior is tolerated. Gay men employed by passenger carriers found the ship a place where an outgoing homosexual lifestyle was tolerated (Stanley/Baker and Nilsson).

The same goes for the Finnish historian Tapio Sjöholm. In a paper he describes what he

labels “a bachelor culture”, where lasting heterosexual relations took place between different categories of the crew while the ship was at sea. Those ended back in port. The characteristics of such a relation was its asymmetrical nature. Our proposed paper intends to show that female employees at SAL had a social life very similar to gay men described by Stanley/Baker and Nilsson, and that the very social boundaries a total institution is made up of, was transgressed through sexual relations with officers, and therefore part of the bachelor culture Sjöholm has described. The passenger ship could then be seen as both a total institution and a heterotopia.

Kathy S. Mason (University of Findlay, USA)

A Woman's Place is in the Lighthouse: U.S. Light Keepers on the Great Lakes

In the late nineteenth century, American women had few lucrative job opportunities, and the majority of women in the United States did not work outside of the home. Most wage-earning women were unmarried and employed in low paying, gender specific domestic work. Even educated women from middle-class backgrounds were often limited to teaching for respectable employment. Nonetheless, a handful of women on the Great Lakes were able to secure federal lighthouse keeping positions, even though light keeping generally was viewed as a middle or lower middle class male occupation.

The majority of female keepers in the United States were the widows or the relatives of male lighthouse keepers. Often, a widow received an appointment in sympathy for her reduced circumstances after the death of her lighthouse keeper husband. Also, federal officials could assume that the relatives of a male keeper were familiar with the responsibilities of tending a light station because they often served as assistants to the keeper in an unofficial capacity. Lighthouse keeping became a socially acceptable occupation for a few women in the nineteenth early twentieth centuries because their duties, including cleaning apparatus and facilities, receiving visitors, demonstrating concern for the lives of others, and expressing a devotion to duty, were often compatible with white middle class notions of virtuous womanhood and domesticity.

Justine Cousin (University of Caen Normandy, France)

Titanic Stewardesses across Gender Roles

20 Titanic stewardesses were a minority compared to the 908 total crew members, yet their stories remain mostly untold. Most of them were not professional maritime workers. Their daily work in the catering department mixed both physical and psychological duties. It was very different depending on the department in which they were hired, from a female companion in the first class to a single woman who had to learn to all third-class women how to behave properly – including eating and washing. They had multifaced positions as opposed to the usual male specialized ones in the catering department. As members of the crew, they had to follow a rigid discipline both ashore and, on the ship, from the White Star Line company and the official authorities at the time. They belonged to the least-loved ship department aboard steamships and were unskilled low-waged workers. Housekeeping and personal service were deemed feminine and the stewardesses had a specific uniform in order to be noticed by the other passengers and members of the crew. The work was based on gender hierarchies which divided the colonial and metropolitan society between man and woman. All the other people than white middle-class and ruling men were considered as dirty, emotional and weak. As such stewardesses suffered from a horizontal and vertical segregation; they had very few possibilities of internal promotion as women workers. Such characteristics were similar to the society of the time and may explain why some many of them survived through the Titanic sinking – since they were first considered as women and second as maritime workers.

John Odin Jensen (University of West Florida, USA)

(En)gendering the Inland Seas: Sailing Women and Domestic Labor Afloat and Ashore in Industrializing America 1870-1910

Between 1870 and 1910, hundreds of Great Lakes cargo ships hired women as cooks every season. Indeed, as the Great Lakes region industrialized on land and water, women filled between 20 and 40% of the cook billets on sail-powered and towed cargo vessels. Formally employed on otherwise all-male cargo vessels, and unrelated to the captains, female cooks were not the seafaring women scholars have described (cfr: Thomas, 2013).

Biographical data culled from 350 shipwrecks and maritime incidents suggest that women boat cooks typically began as domestic servants in homes. For personal reasons, they sought out or were recruited for maritime employment. This often occurred through the brokering of women operated employment agencies called “intelligence offices” that provided labor to employers in the local maritime and domestic service labor markets. While women boat cooks remained “domestic servants” as official “seamen” (*Wolverton v. Lacy 1856*), they had some legal protections and earned higher wages than in comparable positions onshore. The ship, however, was a dangerous workplace. Death and serious injury from shipwreck or other accidents were far too common and occurred at significantly higher rates for women than men.

Previous scholars of women at sea in the 19th century have focused on the experiences of captains' wives and the employment of stewardesses on steam passenger vessels (cfr: Maenpaa, 2004; Stanley 2004; Steel, 2008; Coons, 2008, Thomas, 2013). This paper expands the boundaries of women's employment at sea during the 19th century beyond passenger steamers into the otherwise male world of merchant sail. The inclusion of thousands of previously overlooked employed seafaring women blurs the lines between gender and labor categories at sea (ships employed both men and women as cooks) and reveals overlapping maritime and domestic service labor pools and practices in the Great Lakes port cities of industrializing North America.

2nd SESSION

Undines. Women, Fisheries and Maritime Communities

Tanja Petrović (Institute of Culture and Memory Studies – ZRC-SAZU, Slovenia)

Women in Fish Canning Factory in the North-eastern Adriatic during Yugoslav Socialism

Based on the ethnographic research and insights from archival and historiographic sources, this paper discusses the meanings and implications of inclusion of significant number of women into labour force of the fish canning factories on the Adriatic coast in socialist Yugoslavia. It offers an insight into main socially relevant discursive registers in which these female workers are situated, such as modernization, mobility and women's emancipation as dominant tropes of socialist industrialization, but also perceptions relying upon strictly defined gender roles, insider-outsider dynamics and the local logic of social differentiation. The paper also asks about the ways this gendered industrial labour in socialism is remembered today, and observes it in the broader context of female participation in industrial labour in Yugoslav socialism.

Ariana Dominguez Garcia (University of the Balearic Island, Spain)

Women's Social Capital in the Traditional Small-Scale Fishing Communities of Mallorca (Spain)

Women have been active actors in the configuration of traditional small-scale marine fishing communities worldwide. In the case of Mallorca (Spain), women have carried out a wide range of tasks related to the sea: fishing, fish sale, transport of catches, and

maintenance of boats and fishing equipment, among many other activities. However, the significance of women in the maritime communities of the island went beyond mere economic aspects and women also played a crucial social role and generated social capital among fishing communities. This presentation aims to address most of the women's economic activities recorded in 20th-century fishing communities of Mallorca. Nevertheless, this research mainly seeks to put into value women's agency and the central role played by women in the maintenance of social cohesion and solidarity ties, transfer of knowledge, trustworthiness, and resilience among local fishing groups.

To this end, a multiproxy approach focused on Oral History and Visual Anthropology has been applied. In addition, other sources of information such as archives, video recordings, and legislation have been also considered. Our results reveal, on the one hand, that the development of different learning and knowledge transfer dynamics -articulated through women in domestic spaces- were crucial for the maintenance of the family and the fishing tradition. On the other hand, the diverse female activities carried out in the public domain (e.g., fish sale) were also essential at maintaining and strengthening the social ties generated among the families that composed the fishing community. Last but not least, women were also in charge of most of the social connections established between the fishing community and people as a whole.

Luisa Muñoz Abeledo (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

Gender and Labour Markets in Maritime Industries: a Century of Labour History in Spanish Fish Canning Sector

In this paper I will explain the evolution of the labour market in Spanish fish-canning industry by the end of the ninetieth century and along the twentieth century. I will show the labour market segmentation by gender focusing on labour contracts, work organization and wages. The labour segmentation by gender contributed to the fish canning industry development, but also to the local and family economies. Labour contracts in the fish-canning industry had been mainly temporary for female and permanent for men through the ninetieth and twentieth centuries. Spanish fish-canning, a sector mainly directed to the international market, has based its competitive advantage in a cheap female labour with temporary contracts, among other factors, such as good quality product and low fish price. Canning entrepreneurs used to hire predominantly women, who made up the majority of the labour force in fish canning industry. Women worked seasonally and their labour contract conditions were worse than those of men.

This paper uses the linkage of many different sources -nominal population censuses, wage books, interviews, letters of many canning companies, notarial records, several documentations from canning unions- in order to investigate the labour market segmentation in the Spanish fish-canning industry in the period 1880 to 1980. The paper will explore some social and economic factors that explained why women had been placed on the second segment of the labor market in the fish canning sector. I will focus on the study of fundamental labour aspects such as gender occupational segregation, earning differences and types of contracts offered to workers based on sex.

Alexandra Lee Yingst (University of Iceland, Iceland)

The Quality of Life of Women in the Icelandic Fish Processing Industry

In Iceland, women have played a significant role in fisheries throughout the centuries, but their presence in the industry today is overlooked. They have different roles and experiences than men do in the sector and in the community, and paying attention to these differences could improve management that could benefit both society and the workers themselves. In the Westfjords of Iceland today, most women involved in the fisheries sector are involved in fish processing, and many of the workers are women from

other countries. This study compares and contrasts the lives of Icelandic women and women from other countries, such as Poland and the Philippines, who are involved in the fisheries sector in the Westfjords of Iceland. Through interviews (n=10) and surveys (n=93), this study both qualitatively and quantitatively describes the lives of women involved in these sectors in the northern Westfjords region. The results show that there are significant differences between the quality of life of women from different countries involved in the fisheries sector, with Icelandic women having a higher quality of life than women of other nationalities and with Polish women having the lowest quality of life. This study also shows what it is like for immigrant women to live in the Westfjords of Iceland where the language and climate can be completely different from what they are used to. Information gained from studies like this can contribute necessary and important local knowledge about the quality of life of women involved in fisheries so that communities in the Arctic and subarctic can become socially sustainable.

3rd SESSION

Gendering the Waterfront. Women, Ports, and Gender Roles in Maritime Labour

Andrew MacDonald (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)

From Mermaids to Barmaids: Fabular Women in Southeast African Ports, 1870s-1940s

Building on recent overlaps between imperial and gender history, this paper explores the history of colonial barmaids in the Anglophone and Lusophone ports of Southeast Africa from the 1870s to the 1940s. Exploring episodes in the lives of English and Dutch/Afrikaans speaking barmaids in Durban, Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) and elsewhere on the eastern littoral, and using newly discovered sources in southern African police archives, a three-fold argument is developed. First, barmaids were a significant, and contested, aspect of waterfront life in this part of the Indian Ocean, offering fantasies of love, family and sex to transient male clientele. Second, barmaids developed sophisticated and profitable migration and recruitment networks. Within certain structural limits, they negotiated economic opportunities, took risks and some turned the experience into a kind of business which gave them more reward than that offered to many other seafaring women. Third, the ports' barmaid business presented moral ambiguities to colonial gatekeepers: despite their small numbers, barmaids ultimately had a disproportionate effect on evolving migration control policies in the region.

Antonia Morey-Tous & Andreu Segui-Beltran (University of the Balearic Islands, Spain)

Present and Absent Women. Gender and Labour Market in the Balearic Mediterranean Waterfront (ca. 1930)

Female work has focused traditionally on land rather than in the sea. However, despite the waters have been a space traditionally and theoretically reserved to men until recent dates, women's contributions to the maritime economy are beyond doubt. Hence, the interest to explore the female role in the waterfront. And, more precisely, to study it in the Balearic Mediterranean coasts during the first third of the 20th century. That is, an insular space surrounded by the sea, which has deserved few studies from a gender viewpoint. Research has demonstrated women had a remarkable role in other maritime communities. We depart from the same conviction for the Balearic coasts between 1920-30. However, official sources and, more precisely, registers of inhabitants might not contain references to that. Therefore, we propose to inquire which occupations women practiced in maritime districts in order to clarify these doubts and answer two questions. First, to what extent women were silenced officially under a reference to "their labors"

as housewives? Second, when they could go further that, which occupations they practiced concerning maritime activity? To answer these questions, we will consider not just the influence of the family, through factors such as their parents or husband occupation, the household structure, and the geographical origin, but also personal facts, such as their age and literacy level. The study will analyze these questions from a compared perspective, searching for similarities between distinct locations and their particularities.

Gila Hadar (Haifa University, Israel)

'La Serena': Mermaids on the Thessaloniki Sea Shore

The mermaids in the Mediterranean that enchanted Odysseus and the seafarers were also known and depicted in the Jewish tradition. "There is a fish in the sea that called Sirena half and up as a figure of a virgin woman and half and down as a fish pattern that sings in a voice so pleasant..."

One of the most popular Judeo-Spanish songs among the Jewish exiles that settled in the Ottoman Empire was the song about unfulfilled love "la serena".

In this lecture I'll focus on the dynamics of the life experiences of women, daily life, voices, labour issues and leisure time in the tempestuous port city of Thessaloniki between the years 1900-1944. I will examine the process in which gender, class and ethnic identities were created amongst the female Jewish women; in what ways their entrance into the work force influenced how they conceived themselves both in their private and public spheres; how this connected to issues of family and sexuality and to communal and ethnic interests, and how they became from mermaids to creative, constructive and struggling women.

Pirita Frigren (University of Turku, Finland)

Contributing to the Maritime Economy on Shore: Merchant Sailors' Wives in the Finnish Port Cities in the 19th Century

The paper discusses the domestic and gendered aspects of merchant shipping in the nineteenth century Finland. It asks how ordinary seamen's wives and widows contributed to the maritime community, especially through their economic agency.

In Finland, the beginning of nineteenth century witnessed remarkable growth of deep-sea sailing and freight cargo business, which also increased the seafaring population in port cities. Families were often split because the journeys could take even years. This made women's role as town citizens important although legally their position as lower-class women made them subordinate to men and upper social classes, such as ship-owners and captains. Earlier studies have highlighted the demographic consequences of seafaring, that is, more female-headed households and increased competence of women in maritime communities (e.g., Polónia 2009). Domestic dimensions of shipping have also been looked from the viewpoint of the economic struggle that losing a male breadwinner to the seas caused for many women and if local institutions supported the vulnerable families (e.g., Frigren 2020; Van der Heijden & Van den Heuvel 2007; Herndon 1996). Here I take a special concern on the various kinds of jobs and livelihood methods that seafarers' spouses performed. Although poor townswomen did not have right to run any business or artisanal trade that they would like (because of the prevailing guild monopolies) seafarers' spouses can be found in performing various tasks that were simultaneously linked to maritime economy. Roughly, they can be divided in a) services that maintained the conditions maritime labour (e.g., providing housing, care work, laundry, selling food, tavern keeping) and b) to shipping-related household industries (e.g., spinning hemp yarn for sails, producing export products). I show how women's economic agency which is often hidden in the

sources can be revealed with micro-historical approach and cross-reading of various archival documents of the local authorities.

4th SESSION

An Officer and a Gentle[wo]man. Gender, Navies, and Hierarchies

Jeremy Young (Valor International Scholars, South Korea)

Women in the War Navies in the 18th Century

The French and the British Royal navies in the second half of the 18th century are arguably the biggest and most complex war machines of their time. With the study of naval recruitment in the two countries, it was highlighted that both those organizations were chronically short of men and had to resort sometimes to violent or unpopular measures such as impressment. However, despite the shortage, the French and the British admiralties took strict measures to prevent women from being on board their warship as illustrated by the French order of the 15th of April 1689 relative to the navy and most particularly article 35: "His Majesty forbids the officers of his vessels to take women on board to spend the night there or for longer." In England, there was also a series of regulations regarding the case of women on board warships since 1533 with other regulations reinforcing the interdiction in 1731 and 1750. This often explains why most women are absent from muster books in both France and Britain, leading for some historians to conclude that the war navies in the second half of the 18th and in the beginning of the 19th centuries were almost exclusively male populated. This presentation aims to dispel some of those conclusions and show that the war navies were more feminine than what some sources would have us believe. Leaving aside the wives, daughters or other feminine guest of the captains and admirals, it is possible to identify three main categories of women on board warships: the prostitutes who were unofficially tolerated by the Navy, the wives of some warrant officers who were mostly ignored by the admiralties, and finally the women passing as men and serving as sailors or marines. This paper will also try to look at both France and Britain to see the similarities between the two navies.

Nadja Terčon (Pomorski muzej-Museo del Mare 'Sergej Mašera' in Piran-Pirano, Slovenia)

Sava in Jolanda: prvi slovenski in jugoslovanski izšolani pomorščakinji (Sava and Jolanda: the First Slovenian and Yugoslav Women Trained Seafarers)

The author will briefly present the life story of Sava Kaluža and Jolanda Mažer, nee Gruden, the first two Slovenian-Yugoslav trained seafarers who sailed professionally on merchant ships. She wrote both stories, based on years of research into post-World War II seafaring and numerically well-preserved documentary material, in her book SAVA and JOLANDA: The First Slovenian-Yugoslav Seafarers: Women and the Sea and Slovenian Women's Entry into the Male World of the Maritime Profession. The book was published by the Maritime Museum "Sergej Mašera" Piran - Pirano (Piran 2020, reprint 2021). The daughters of the two women seafarers also contributed to the book.

It will present their decision to go to maritime school, their schooling and service, and highlight their importance. The stories will be shown in the context of the time and the situation. It will also touch upon the role of women in seafaring in the past and the stereotypes still held about women in the idealised and mystified image of the distinctly masculine seafaring profession. Women's connection to the sea has been known throughout history, most notably as the life companions of seafarers, their mothers or daughters, or as passengers on passenger ships. The belief that seafaring is a rough, demanding business that has nothing to do with a woman's delicate body and her gentle

and compassionate feminine soul, created only to care for her fellow human beings, has been held for a very long time.

Sava's and Jolanda's enrolment in a men's school, attendance at school, graduation, cadetship, lieutenant exam, employment on the ships of Jugolinija and Splošna plovba mark the beginning of the entry of Slovene and Yugoslav women into the traditional male profession. They were emancipated girls, pioneers of something new and modern women of their time. They were breaking new ground in a completely new field. They were interesting to the social authorities and their belief that even a delicate girl could do all the most demanding physical work, which had been considered exclusively for men until then. Their schooling and service were beginner's, but they later set an example for many girls who decided to go to naval school. At the end of 1952, the naval authorities decided to disembark them, and they ceased to sail on the ships of the Jugolinija. Both were connected with the sea and seafaring and vessels for most of their lives, but each in their way. Sava Kaluža worked, most of her working life, for the Slovenian maritime company Splošna plovba Piran, while Jolanda Gruden married a seafarer and became the seafarer's wife. Motherhood and caring for their family anchored them on the coast.

Elin Jones (University of Exeter, UK)

Domesticity Below Decks: Gender, Space and Domestic Labour on the Eighteenth-Century Warship

The lower deck of the naval ship has been envisaged by historians as an undifferentiated rabble; an unforgiving cheek-by-jowl arena which fostered an intemperate and muscular masculinity. This paper elucidates the strategies, routines and practices by which men made homes on the lower deck for months and years at a time, and in doing this complicates how maritime labour was experienced and understood. Far from being an undifferentiated public arena, this paper finds that seamen negotiated the lower deck as a constellation of social, emotional and domestic spaces, which they moved through and settled in over the course of the day.

The rituals, relationships and routines which invested their lives with meaning are explored here through the lens of domesticity below deck. Investigating domestic rituals and relationships can, I argue, tell us much about the experience of maritime labour and the expectations of labouring and working masculinities more broadly. Through exploring the terminology maritime labourers used themselves to describe their transient domestic arrangements, and by assessing the micro-history of the lower deck, it is possible to glimpse not just a raucous and undifferentiated public, but an alternative form of homosocial domesticity, which was invested with considerable meaning by its practitioners.

Helen Berry (University of Exeter, UK)

Marginal Economies: Jewish Traders, 'Bum Boat' Women and the Supply of Goods and Services to Ordinary Seamen in the British Royal Navy, 1770-1830

This paper explores how ordinary seamen were supplied by traders working on the margins of the maritime economy around the British Isles during the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. These traders were distinctive in their use of a network of so-called 'Bum boats', small vessels that docked alongside warships moored especially in dockyards along the south coast of England. With shared customary and legal restrictions on the range of occupations available to them, Jewish traders and working women were able to engage informally in supplying naval vessels with 'necessaries' such as sailors' clothing, and 'luxuries' including alcohol, pocket watches, and other small consumables, often synchronised with payments of prize money and wages. There was a strong pre-existing link between Jewish retailers in

second hand clothing and pawnbroking, particularly in London: the supply of sailors with clothing or 'slops' on ships was an extension of this economic activity. Services such as moneylending, sex work and safeguarding movable goods until sailors returned to shore were offered by Bum Boat women. The risks of the Admiralty tolerating this 'invisible' and informal supply chain, it is argued, were balanced by their utility.

5th SESSION

"Call me Ishmael[a]". When Class, Gender, and Ethnicity Matter

Shai Srougo (Haifa University, Israel)

Ethnicity and Masculinity in Cargo-Handling Services: A Jewish Male-Dominated Space in the Port of Thessaloniki

The waterfront of Ottoman Thessaloniki in the first decade of the twentieth century was a Jewish, male-dominated space. Upon arrival in Thessaloniki Bay, the first workers that passengers would encounter were Jewish barge operators and stevedores, and upon landing – Jewish porters and carters. Both Jewish masculinity and the use of the sea as a source of livelihood challenges the conventional narrative according to which in different port cities of the Mediterranean, Jewish economic activities were less associated either with physical strength or with maritime occupations. The occupational remoteness of Jewish communities from the sea is oddly manifested in the appellation of 'port Jews'. Lois Dubin, who coined this term, uses it to refer to Sephardic great merchants who dealt in international trade and resided in port cities but did not engage directly in maritime activities. However, Thessaloniki, with its Jewish maritime population, was different.

In this presentation I will first discuss how the combination of global masculine work culture (the pre-mechanized reality of cargo handling, the strenuous work) and Ottoman masculine work culture (teamwork, brotherhood and kinship/intimacy in hiring practices, and bawdy and raw jargon) facilitated the dominance of the Jewish male presence in the cargo-handling process of this Ottoman port city for centuries. In addition to the conditions which enabled the establishment of a Jewish masculine monopoly in the port of Thessaloniki, I will also present the reproduction of this hegemony/monopoly in Greek Thessaloniki of the 1910s-1920s. In view of the Hellenization of the port labor market, i.e., the efforts of the Greek government to replace Jewish longshoremen with Greek longshoremen, the preservation of family-based crews was a major principle underpinning the reproduction of this Jewish monopoly.

Erica Mezzoli (WeCanIt – University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Set of Queens. Women Shipowners in the Upper Adriatic, 1879–1923

The paper aims to present the main characteristics of female ownership of three different kinds of vessels used for three different purposes and/or types of navigation from 1879 – year of the reorganisation of the Austro-Hungarian maritime law – to 1923, the date that marked the beginning of the Kingdom of Italy's official sovereignty over those territories. This choice lies in the will to analyse the presence of women in different segments of maritime capitalism, in different socio-economic contexts and different maritime areas of the Empire. Concerning the latter aspect, the communication will be based on the logs of the two Imperial *Governo Marittimo* (one in Trieste-Trst and the other one in Rijeka-Fiume) in which all information relating to vessels flying the Austro-Hungarian flag – including those relating to ownership – was recorded.

As for Rijeka-Fiume and its seaboard (*Litorale Ungaro-croato*), the attention will be focused on the ocean-going vessels. With regard to the *Österreichisches Küstenland*, particularly the situations of Trieste-Trst and Kvarner-Quarnaro, offshore navigation ships will be subject

to examination. Finally, the maritime district of Trieste-Trst will be considered. Here the choice fell on fishing boats for reasons of socio-economic and spatial nature. Unlike the other two types of ships, a fishing vessel is strictly a means of production. The analysis of the characteristics and distribution of the ownership of this particular type of “manufacturing equipment” can tell us a lot about the features of the economic fabric of the maritime communities (here intended as coastal localities) which, in our case, were part of that vast and opaque “imperial periphery” of which only little is still known.

Jordi Ibarz Gelabert & Mònica Borrell-Cairol (University of Barcelona, Spain)

Maritime Labour Market and Appearance of Women in Dock Work in Spanish Ports at the End of the 19th Century

Based on the previous research carried out on the work of women as dock workers in Spanish ports (Ibarz & Borrell, 2020) we have been able to establish that this played out only in the ports of northern Spain and during a limited period. This basically happened between the last quarter of the 19th century until the end of the First World War, when women were progressively expelled from these tasks and dock work was redefined as something exclusively male. In that same research we have shown the absence of conflict between men and women to work in the same occupation in loading and unloading for most of the period. Now, our work proposal tries to explore the hypothesis that the appearance of women dock workers had some relationship with the characteristics of the labour market of the ports in which it occurred. We will especially consider the possible existence of a maritime labour market characterized by the absence of men in it, since they would be mostly engaged in navigation and / or deep-sea fishing. We will also explore the general characteristics of the labour market in these ports in relation to the lack of work for these women, or in any case, to the scarcity of suitable jobs for them. The research will focus on defining the characteristics of the labour market of the northern ports of Spain at the end of the 19th century and, to a lesser extent, comparing them with some cases of Spanish Mediterranean ports where women did not work as dock workers.