

**2007 New Researchers in Maritime History Conference
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ABSTRACTS**

Session One

English Mariners' Religious Culture and their Interactions with Islam

Sarah Parsons, University of Exeter

Interaction between English mariners and merchants and the Muslims of the Mediterranean was important in terms of economic trade and in terms of the English public's awareness and opinion of Muslims. Mariners and merchants had the most actual contact with Muslims, and had a chance to see beyond the stereotypes the English public held about Muslims.

There were three main ways mariners and merchants interacted with Islam – as slaves, as converts, and as free men trading. Those held as prisoners and slaves had a strong inclination to view Islam and Muslims negatively and one must be careful of source bias, especially regarding captivity narratives. Interaction of English Christian converts to Islam tended to be more complex, reflecting not only the multiple reasons men could have for converting, but the varying depths of those conversions. For those who stayed Christian and stayed free, a mix of rhetoric regarding general encounters with Islam, and more sensitive accounts regarding personal interaction, typifies English mariners' relationship with Islam.

Interactions were based on wealth and on a varying dynamic of peace and violence. The reactions of English mariners and merchants grew from their differing interactions with Islam and Muslims, varying from positive reactions involved in working relationships to the negative reactions of slaves trying to maintain their hope and their cultural identity among the 'enemy'.

The Sixteenth Century Overseas Trade of Somerset

Duncan Taylor, University of Bristol

The Sixteenth century was a period of immense change as global trading relations became established for the first time following the European discovery of the New World, and the opening up of maritime routes to Asia. Studies of trade in this period have tended to concentrate on the larger ports such as London or Bristol, and the trade of the more minor ports, such as those of Somerset, has not been comprehensively assessed. The advent of information technology allows for the extensive and detailed information contained in surviving customs records to be analysed on a statistical basis. This reveals trading relationships and trends which cannot be discerned from a simple reading of the manuscripts. Some of these will be outlined in the paper. However, customs records have long been recognised as an inadequate guide to the underlying trade which took place, for the simple reason that not all goods were declared to customs. This paper therefore also considers how a separate source can be used to corroborate the information contained in the customs accounts, thereby adding to our understanding both of the extent of trade, and of how it was undertaken in this period.

The Sailors' Apprehension for God's Obvious Design

Dr Concepcion Saenz-Cambra, Birkbeck College

In the summer of 1588, Philip II of Spain launched a great Armada for the invasion of England. For the Spanish monarch, it was God's obvious design, but, as it will now be revealed by new manuscript sources, the Spanish sailors were somewhat less than willing to join Philip's Catholic crusade.

For the first time ever, thanks to the generosity of Mr David Karpeles, we can now read about the arduous recruitment process for the Spanish invasion force from the personal accounts of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, commander of the "Great Armada;" an opportunity to gain an insight into the intricacies of the assemblage of the most memorable and epochal fleets in Early Modern History.

The Spanish sovereign appointed his cousin, the 7th Duke of Medina Sidonia, to command the fleet. Medina Sidonia immediately began hoarding munitions and equipment, but was not ready for the storm that was to be conjured up. By the end of February 1588, he had chartered 131 vessels, and filled them with guns and ammunition, and food for the 30,000 soldiers, but the Armada was still missing the most essential element: sailors.

With three months left before the launch, only 95 sailors had joined the Armada, not even one third of the expected number. Why were they not joining? How did the commander feel about it? What effect did this have on the troops? With the help of these new sources, all these questions will be answered.

Session 2

The Naval Manoeuvres of 1888

Nick Taylor, University of Exeter

This paper is about the significance of the introduction of annual Naval Manoeuvres in the Royal Navy from 1887. The Victorian navy confronted unprecedented technical change while never fulfilling its primary role, engaging a major enemy at sea, and the myth of the 'Dark Ages of the Admiralty' and of a Fleet basking in the "long, calm lee of Trafalgar" remain influential in accounts of these years. But the Royal Navy at the end of the century was clearly not in a state of torpor or decline, the Fleet of the 1890s was well-equipped and tactically alert. In discussing the early Naval Manoeuvres it is argued that they represent both a symptom of - and a catalyst for - improvements in operational efficiency. The Royal Navy can be seen to be grappling with the implications of new technology for tactics and strategy and beginning to confront the need for administrative change in the Admiralty, particularly in its intelligence function and the machinery for mobilisation for war. Against a background of persistent war scares, the decision to allow journalists to embark for the manoeuvres gave the late-Victorian public an unprecedented insight into their navy and the resulting publicity provided a decisive impetus to the agitation for increased naval expenditure and the rationale for the Two-Power Standard. The paper will also touch briefly on some related contemporary themes, as diverse as British planning for defence against invasion, representations of modern naval war in fiction and some neglected figures of the Victorian Navy.

War Custom or War Crime? - The Naval Bombardment of undefended Towns in the 19th Century

Jan Martin Lemnitzer, London School of Economics

The shelling of coastal towns by warships, even when undefended, had been a feature of maritime warfare ever since naval gunnery had become powerful enough to destroy entire cities. However, from the 1850s onwards, this practice fell into disrepute after US and British actions drew harsh international criticism. By the Second Hague Peace Conference it was banned. The history of the debate proves to be a link between Victorian attitudes on the killing of civilians and the modern concept of 'collateral damage'.

While in the 1850s the bombardment of fishing villages in Finland had been justified by the *London Times* as a necessary means of allowing ordinary citizens to participate in the rigours of war, by 1866 the bombardment of civilians in Valparaiso was regarded as reprehensible. This was even true when directed against civilians in 'uncivilised' countries, as was shown by the public outcry following the bombardment of Canton in 1856. Despite this naval commanders continued to use this method for decades after that, primarily in remote parts of Africa, despite the unease of some naval officers.

However, in 1884 the French Jeune Ecole endorsed the practise as the best means of attacking Britain in a potential war, leading to intense debate among naval officers and international lawyers of both countries. This eventually led to the decision of the Second Hague Peace Conference to outlawed naval bombardment of undefended towns yet included an article that allowed for the bombardment of military objectives in undefended towns by naval forces. This new rule would later have profound implications for the nature of modern war when it became applicable in air warfare, too.

The Irish Marine Service and the Defence of Eire during the Second World War **Padraic Ó Confhaoila, National University of Ireland**

This paper studies the Irish state's efforts to protect itself from seaborne attack during the Second World War. The foundation of the various services responsible for the protection of Irish waters and approaches will be detailed. These include the creation of a Coast Watching Service to provide warning of unauthorised incursions by belligerent vessels and aircraft into the territory of the state. The Port Control and Examination Service were also established in a bid to ensure full compliance with the international laws governing neutrality, to ensure that Irish ports were not used for warlike purposes.

It will also detail the development of an Irish Marine Service, tasked with the seaward defence of the state and the securing of its territorial waters. The evolution of the Irish Coast Defence Artillery units over the course of the war will also be covered as it will show how the Irish state sought to protect its most vulnerable ports and harbours. As these were the arms of the Irish Defence Forces tasked with the direct defence of Irish waters, their activities provide the core of the paper with greater attention being given to the Marine Service. The difficulty of acquiring a naval force, at such short notice, during a global conflict will be shown.

It should prove interesting to those who are entirely unaware of the scope of the defensive preparations of the Irish Free State and their nature.

Session Three

Eighteenth Century London Merchant Circles in Wapping: Joseph Banfield Falmouth Coastal Agent

Ken Cozens, Greenwich Maritime Institute, University of Greenwich

This paper provides an overview of the operations of the eighteenth century London partnership of Camden, Calvert & King, merchants, who were trading from 1760 – 1824. The group were major ship-owners engaged in the West India trade, who had a diverse number of global operations which received patronage through many of its local Wapping connections. The success of the group was based upon the efficiency of small partnership which encompassed differing elements of entrepreneurial spirit, acute business acumen, and maritime expertise, used to best effect.

The paper will further consider the important role of the coastal agent. In this case Joseph Banfield of Falmouth, who acted in this capacity for Camden, Calvert & King. In considering these regional mercantile networks one question raised will be did they provide further business opportunities? Also what can we learn from these connections? By combining genealogy, family, and social history this on-going study, will provide an insight into the workings of an 18th century merchant network. Once completed it will provide a far more detailed account of Joseph Banfield and Camden, Calvert & King's business operations, and help identify more of the groups UK regional associations.

Trusted regional agents such as Joseph Banfield were immensely important to merchants such as Camden, Calvert & King. They were mostly reliable, hard-working intelligent men of substance, who could provide services locally which were of great use to a groups overall success, providing the necessary 'edge' in the competitive maritime world of international trade.

Swedish Shipyards and their Social Stratification in the 19th Century

Christina Kjellson, Mid Sweden University (Mittuniversitet)

Trade and shipping became one of the most important businesses in the beginning of the nineteenth century, very much due to the fast growing population. Companies were organised in different ways, for example local merchants could found a stockholding company. In official source material, these companies mostly are being presented as rather small, concerning the hired personal. Yet in the companies' records another picture is shown. Many more persons worked for the shipbuilding companies. These individuals were in the official material classified as peasants and crofters and shipbuilding brought in additional income. This discrepancy has focused attention on the importance of the shipyards' role in the local economy. This research mainly considers two things. One is to get an understanding of the companies' role in the economic structure and the other more important question deals with the agency in this context, by analysing both owners and workers.

The case-study chosen is Wifstavarf in Timrå a company that was founded 1798 and built ships until 1870s. The vessels were built for foreign trade and sailed to South Europe, North Africa, Brazil and North America. The company had wide contacts with trading houses and local commissionaires across Europe. In Timrå at the yard the owners, directors, inspectors, shipbuilding master, quarter men, timber men and workers lived and worked together. These included an overwhelming majority of women, young adults and many children. By analysing the social stratification it shows an interesting picture, relatively unknown, of the complexity in the interactions amongst the population that were involved in Swedish maritime business.

Armstrong's Triumph over the *Constitucion*: Government Contractor Relationships
David Humphreys, Independent Researcher

Descriptions of the events of 1903/4 when Britain bought the *Constitucion* and *Libertad* - being built by Armstrong and Vickers for Chile - renamed *Triumph* and *Swiftsure* – often focus on the diplomatic issues around Britain's aim of preventing the purchase of the battleships by Russia or questions of the technical suitability of the ships for the British navy. This paper will focus on less public negotiations and networks used by the various commercial companies involved and will argue that the final outcome, with the Japanese navy strengthened by European technical expertise, owes much to the determination of these companies to further their own as well as British national interests.

The Selborne Papers at the Bodleian Oxford reveals the important role of Anthony Gibbs and Son, a trading company headed by a British MP, commissioned by Chile to sell the battleships and later to sell Argentina's armoured cruisers building in Italy. They had to balance their commercial interests in South America with political interests at home. The Rendell Papers at the Tyne and Wear Archive highlights Armstrong and Vickers manoeuvring to gain influence and orders in Japan, involving the Foreign Office in their rivalry. The outcome, with Armstrong acting on Japan's behalf to purchase and deliver the two Argentine cruisers - just in time for the start of Russo-Japanese war in February 1904 - and also gaining an order for a second battleship from Japan when only one (from Vickers) had been planned, demonstrates their commercial skill and tenacity.

Session Four

Royal Navy Coastal Motor Boat Operations 1916-1925
Mark Brady University of Portsmouth.

Over 100 Coastal Motor Boats (CMB) – the Royal Navy's first Motor Torpedo Boats (MTB) – were completed during the Great War era; but though their participation in the raids on Zeebrugge (1918) and Kronshtadt (1919) is well-known little is published concerning their other activities between Summer 1916 and the decision to 'mothball' the surviving CMBs in 1925.

To an extent the initial reason for ordering the boats was a revival of the 2nd Class Torpedo Boat concept of the 1880s. But in reality there were problems, and their work was dogged by technical problems inherent to the original operational concept and the resultant Thornycroft design.

The apparent success of the Kronshtadt Raid appeared to validate the original concept and the position of Thornycroft as design-leader in the early 1920s seemed unassailable despite intra-RN acknowledgement that the firm over-emphasised fair-weather speed at the expense of seakeeping. The Admiralty recognised the wisdom of encouraging other firms, but in the economic climate of the early 1920s failed to do so. So the RN persisted in development work with Thornycroft CMBs until 1925 but never overcame the various limitations of the design. Ironically the RN stopped CMB development at around the same time as the Germans commenced work upon their 'S-Boot' which was far the most successful MTB design of the 1939-45 War.

This study breaks new ground with in-depth analysis of all CMB operations 1916-18 using the records of Vice-Admiral Dover and Commodore Dunkirk; and also of development work in the period 1920-25. It is an example of RN technical and tactical innovation 1916-19 which the service was subsequently unable (or unwilling) to follow-up during the 1920s.

The China Station, the Large Cruiser and British Capital Ship Development, 1890-1905
Scott M. Lindgren, University of Salford

The pre-Dreadnought era is one of the least well served in modern naval history. The popular belief is that the dreadnought types were in fact ‘revolutionary’ and this is in many ways a dangerously inaccurate assumption that ignores many of the events in the preceding era.

The Royal Navy’s China Station is little considered today as a significant factor in the evolution of the British capital ship. Yet it was the lynchpin of the British Empire’s strategic position in the Western Pacific, and in numerical terms surpassed the size of the prestigious Mediterranean Fleet some years earlier. Major units deployed to the region tended to be at the cutting edge of contemporary naval technology. A key question is to what extent did the requirements of this region influence the development of the British capital ship during this time, and did this influence find further fruit in the vessels of a later generation?

This paper reassesses the assumption that the battleship was the dominant, or indeed, the Royal Navy’s only possible type of capital ship in this era. It will demonstrate how the utility of such vessels began to dwindle as it was understood that the requirements of the major foreign stations, and particularly, the China Station, were better served by the new breed of large, swift armoured cruiser then emerging with the *Cressy* class. It will also reflect upon the concept of the fast battleship, with the *Canopus* class, specifically designed for operations in the Far East. Were these vessels the earliest indications of a true hybrid, fusing features of the armoured cruiser and battleship into one type suitable for all the needs of the Empire, and did they provide a significant link to the later dreadnought types?

Media Representations of Naval Wives and Families at the Time of the Falklands War
Victoria Gibbins, University of Portsmouth

From the onset of the Falklands conflict, in April 1982, the media sought to fill pages and programmes with news and discussions. This began with a focus on military and political aspects of the crisis. However, with the government imposing strict reporting constraints, the media became more interested in the ‘human interest’ aspect which included reports on service wives and families.

A preliminary search of the secondary sources reveals that the historiography focuses on the military and political aspects of the war; virtually no mention is made of wives and families. On the rare occasions when naval wives were presented in the media they rarely had a voice and did not speak for themselves. We learn nothing about these women apart from their role as ‘supportive wife’, their lives are only important enough to report because their men are absent and making news.

As the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Falklands approaches it is interesting to revisit the media’s representation of naval wives to determine what it tells us about the media, government and the use of language and imagery at the time. More importantly, with the use of oral testimonies, how did the wives themselves feel about the way the media portrayed them?

This paper, using both primary and secondary sources, will reveal that the media in 1982 utilised strong representations of gender divisions. They achieved this by using grand historical narratives (parallels with the Second World War and Nelson), symbolism and imagery.