

# ***MARITIME LABOUR HISTORY WORKING GROUP (EUROPEAN LABOR HISTORY NETWORK)***

## **Newsletter No 15, 4 July 2023.**

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### **CONFERENCES**

**5th European Labour History Network. Uppsala, 11-13 June, 2024.**

It is a pleasure to invite you to a new activity. The Maritime Labour History Working Group launches a Call for Papers aimed to send a proposal for panels at the Fifth ELHN Conference will take place in Uppsala on 11-13 June 2024.

In this occasion, we propose to have at least four sessions, two of them in collaboration with other ELHN working groups.

We invite you to submit your proposals in the next weeks, so we can send a panel proposal. **Deadline for your proposals is 6 September 2023.**

Our first proposal (provisional) consists in four possible panels, which could be increased depending on the proposals that should arrive in the following weeks.

- Session 1- Military and Maritime Recruitment and the Labour Market (in collaboration with Military Labour History Working Group)
- Session 2- Gender in Fishing and Maritime Communities: Women, Labour Markets, and Family Living Standards in Coastal Europe (in collaboration with Labour and Family Working Group)
- Session 3- *Liberalization and Maritime Labour* (Maritime Labour History Working Group)
- Session 4 - Maritime Labour and Social Mobility (Maritime Labour History Working Group)

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Jordi Ibarz [jordi.ibarz@ub.edu](mailto:jordi.ibarz@ub.edu) or Enric Garcia [delavelaavapor@gmail.com](mailto:delavelaavapor@gmail.com).

## **9th IMHA International Congress of Maritime History. 19- 24 June, 2024**

The congress will be hosted by the IMA (Institute of International Maritime Affairs), affiliated with the Korea Maritime & Ocean University, and the Korean Association of Maritime History, on August 19 – 24, 2024, in cooperation with KASPS (Korean Association of Shipping and Ports Studies) and WCMCI (World Committee of Maritime Culture Institutes), the academic consortium of research institutes for maritime culture in East Asia. The venue is at Korea Maritime & Ocean University, Busan, Korea at Korea Maritime and Ocean University.

The main theme is Oceans: Local Mobility, Global Connectivity, and the aim is to address multiple aspects of the relationship between humans and the oceans. As with previous IMHA congresses, the meeting in Busan adopts a broad conception of maritime history, treating it as an interdisciplinary field that covers all historical periods, all regions of the world and all aspects of human interactions with the seas.

Papers will therefore be welcomed on a wide range of research areas, chronological periods and regions of the world. We welcome submissions by young, mid-career and senior scholars alike, whether working on individual projects or in larger research groups. The Programme Committee also welcomes proposals for full panels and roundtables.

Participants are invited to submit a proposal in English of up to 500 words indicating the scope of their paper, panel or roundtable. This should be accompanied by a biographical note of up to 150 words, plus contact details and institutional affiliation if needed. For panels and roundtables, we require a short biographical note for each participant. It is expected, that proposers of papers, panels or roundtable are members of IMHA or becoming a member when submitting their proposal. **Deadline for Proposals: December 1, 2023**

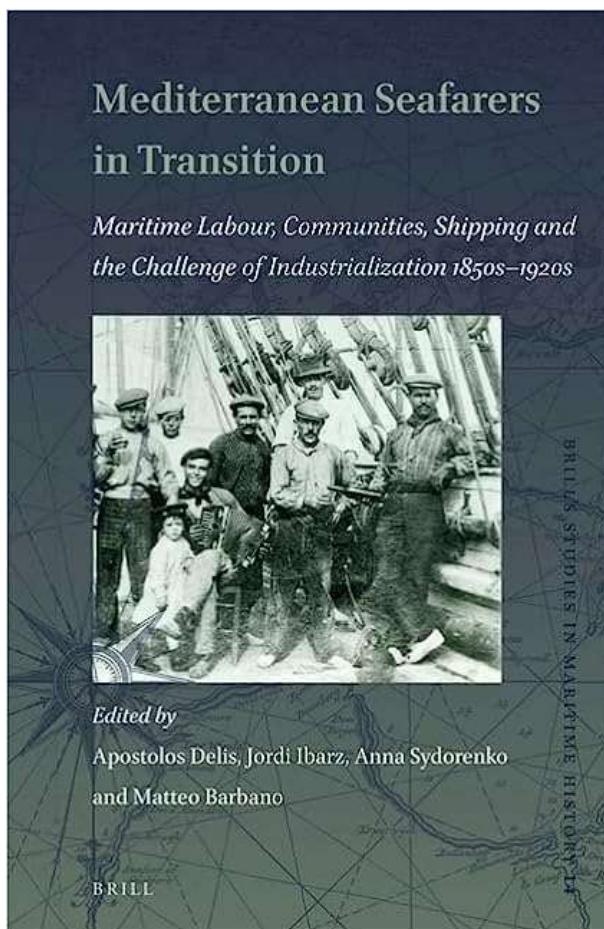
Papers from the Congress will be considered for publication by the International Maritime History Association in the International Journal of Maritime History.

You will find more information at [www.imha2024.com](http://www.imha2024.com), and you could contact [9th.imha2024@kmou.ac.kr](mailto:9th.imha2024@kmou.ac.kr).

## BOOKS

**Apostolos Delis, Jordi Ibarz, Anna Sydorenko, Matteo Barbano (Editors). *Mediterranean Seafarers in Transition: Maritime Labour, Communities, Shipping and the Challenge of Industrialization 1850s -- 1920s (The Brill's Studies in Maritime History, 14)***

This volume discusses the effects of industrialization on maritime trade, labour and communities in the Mediterranean and Black Sea from the 1850s to the 1920s. The 17 essays are based on new evidence from multiple type of primary



sources on the transition from sail to steam navigation, written in a variety of languages, Italian, Spanish, French, Greek, Russian and Ottoman.

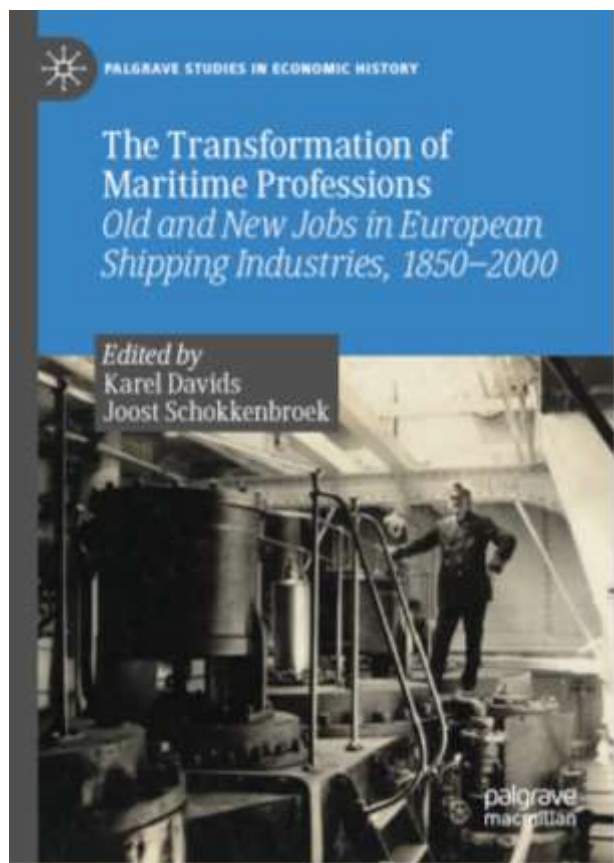
Questions that arise in the book include the labour conditions, wages, career and retirement of seafarers, the socio-economic and spatial transformations of the maritime communities and the changes in the patterns of operation, ownership and management in the shipping industry with the advent of steam navigation. The book offers a comparative analysis of the above subjects across the Mediterranean, while also proposes unexplored themes in current scholarship like the history of navigation.

Contributors are: Luca Lo Basso, Andrea Zappia, Leonardo Scavino, Daniel Muntane, Eduard Page Campos, Enric Garcia Domingo, Katerina Galani, Alkiviadis Kapokakis, Petros Kastrinakis, Kalliopi Vasilaki, Pavlos Fafalios, Georgios Samaritakis, Kostas Petrakis, Korina Doerr, Athina Kritsotaki, Anastasia Axaridou, and Martin Doerr.

(Karel Davids and Joost Schokkenbroek, ed.). *The Transformation of Maritime Professions. Old and New Jobs in European Shipping Industries, 1850–2000*. Palgrave Studies in Economic History. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27212-7>

Since about 1850, the merchant ship saw more radical change in a hundred years than in the five centuries before. The transition from sail to steam and from steam to oil, the replacement of wooden ships by those of iron and steel, the rise of specialised passenger shipping and the growing regulation by government authorities all led to drastic changes in labour conditions, labour relations and composition of crews. Ships became bigger and faster and the ratio of average gross registered tonnage (GRT) per man increased. Seamen, including captains, more and more turned into employees of shipping companies.

Changes in motive power, communication techniques and position-finding technologies, together with the rise of passenger transportation as a separate branch of the shipping industry, thus led to the creation of new tasks and functions on board as well as to the marginalisation or disappearance of traditional jobs and skills. Much has been written about the effects of these major changes on trade routes, duration of voyages, transport costs and prices of commodities. Consequences for employment and the structure of wages as well as shifts in the social and ethnic origins of crews and the rise of seamen's organisations and professionalisation processes

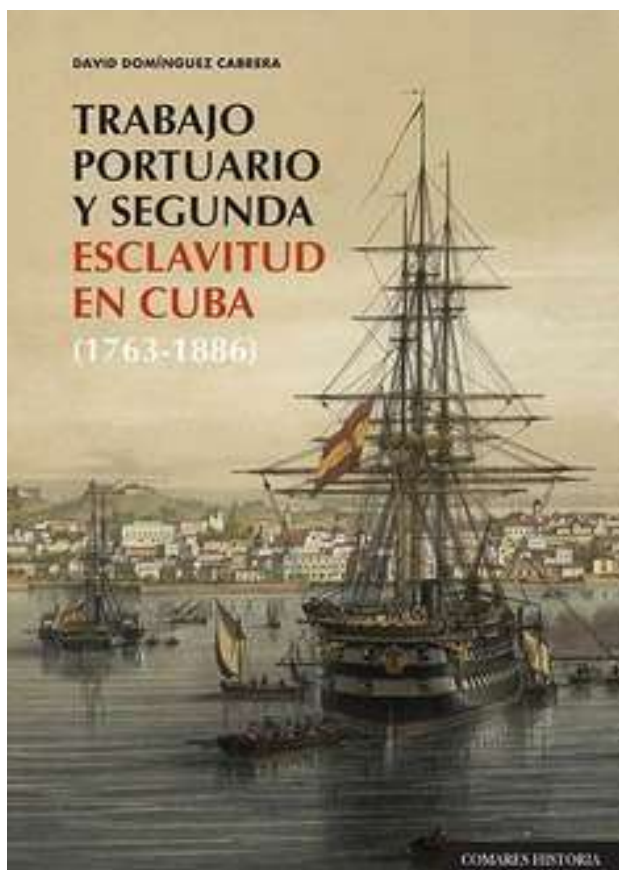


have been the subject of various studies, too. It is remarkable, however, that the impact of those big changes on social relations on board and ashore has been far less investigated—not so much on a national level, let alone in a wider, international context. This is the very subject of the book before you, which deals with 'old' and 'new' jobs in European shipping industries between approximately 1850 and 2000.

The impact on social relations will be studied in a variety of jobs, which represent different parts of the maritime labour force. Some of these jobs formed part of what might be called the 'front office' on board, namely the setting where crew members came in regular contact with passengers. Stewards, pursers and stewardesses are notable examples in this group. Other jobs can be considered as part of the 'back office', which dealt with navigation, maintenance and the propulsion and handling of the ship.

This volume aims to address several questions concerning 'old' and 'new' jobs in European shipping industries after 1850. The most important ones are: What were the implications of the changes described above in terms of payment, recruitment, status, skills, career prospects or gender relations? How did relations between employees in 'old' and 'new' jobs develop over time? To what extent and in what ways did employees in 'new' or 'old' jobs experience a process of professionalisation? And what was the effect of changes on board on social arrangements ashore, for example, in terms of residential patterns or the establishment of training facilities?

**David Domínguez Cabrera. *Trabajo portuario y segunda esclavitud en Cuba (1763-1886)*. Granada, Editorial Comare, 2023. ISBN: 978-84-1369-564-8**



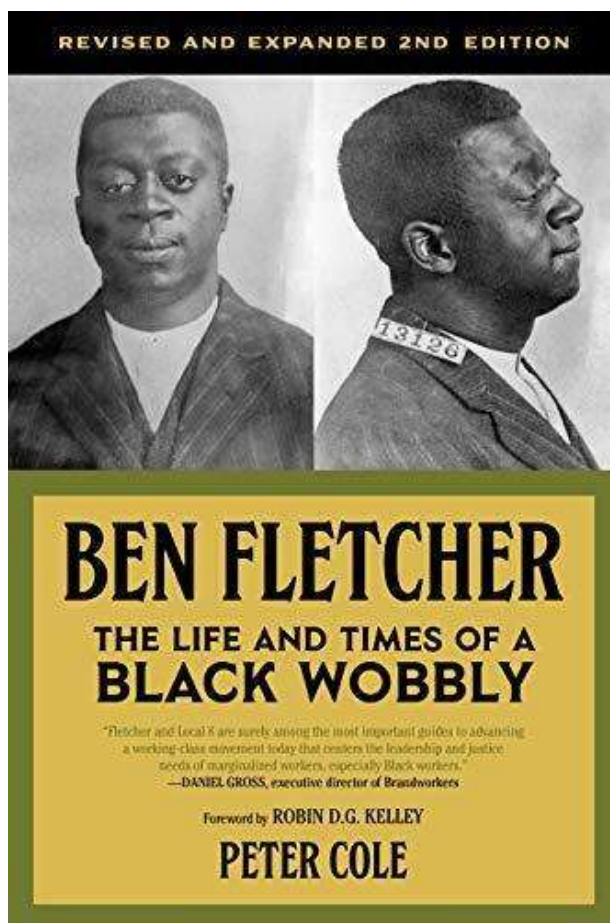
The massive entry of enslaved Africans and the large-scale implementation scale of a plantation economy backbone, in the mid-nineteenth century, a sugar business geography in western Cuba. As well as industrialization of the ingenuity and the railway development were determinant for its vertiginous expansion, the warehouses built from 1840, optimized freight transport operations, which radically transformed its marketing. Sugar articulated a complex network of relationships that transcended the borders of the plantation and was replicated in the main export enclaves. This book examines the urban dimension of the second slavery



in the sugar ports of western Cuba in the context of expansion, and consolidation, of the Atlantic plantation economy. Explore with private interest work regimes, their organizational dynamics, in a scenario of constant structural transformations and multiple conflicts for control of the labor force. It also assumes the centrality of the processes port racialization to explain the formation of a culture of survival work that transcended the end of slavery in the 1880s. This Study offers a new look at the Cuban agro-export complex of sugar, in which the boxes and bocoyes, the enslaved Africans and the coolies, the sacarocrats and their business know-how share the limelight in a work landscape as relevant as the mill: ships, docks and warehouses.

**Peter Cole. *Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of a Black Wobbly.***

In the early twentieth century, when many US unions disgracefully excluded black and Asian workers, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) warmly welcomed people of color, in keeping with their emphasis on class solidarity and their bold motto: “An Injury to One Is an Injury to All!” *Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of a Black Wobbly* tells the story of one of the greatest heroes of the American working class.



A brilliant union organizer and a humorous orator, Benjamin Fletcher (1890–1949) was a tremendously important and well-loved African American member of the IWW during its heyday. Fletcher helped found and lead Local 8 of the IWW’s Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union, unquestionably the most powerful interracial union of its era, taking a principled stand against all forms of xenophobia and exclusion.

For years, acclaimed historian Peter Cole has carefully researched the life of Ben Fletcher, painstakingly uncovering a stunning range of documents related to this extraordinary man. *Ben Fletcher: The Life and Times of a Black Wobbly* is the

most comprehensive look at Fletcher ever to be published. It includes a detailed biographical sketch of his life and history, reminiscences by fellow workers who knew him, a chronicle of the IWW's impressive decade-long run on the Philadelphia waterfront in which Fletcher played a pivotal role, and nearly all of his known writings and speeches, thus giving Fletcher's timeless voice another opportunity to inspire a new generation of workers, organizers, and agitators. This revised and expanded second edition includes new materials such as facsimile reprints of two extremely rare pamphlets on racism from the early twentieth century, more information on his prison years and personal life, additional recollections from friends, greater consideration of Fletcher from a global perspective, and much more.

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## **SEAFARERS' DAY**

Last 25 June was the Seafarers' Day. Perhaps, for the years to come, we, maritime labour history professionals, should be involved in this celebration, linking past and present. Any idea will be welcomed.

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## **DRASSANA, JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY**

We invite you again to send your proposals to *Drassana, journal of the Museu Marítim de Barcelona*. This is a veteran journal, but in the last years the editors had worked discreetly to turn the journal into a quality publication, gradually fulfilling all the requirements of a scientific journal. *Drassana* focuses on the Spanish and Mediterranean issues, and now it is published in digital format, on an Open Journal System platform. You can access it directly through the link: <https://revistadrassana.cat/index.php/Drassana>.

Contributions will be welcomed. Although it is a Catalan journal, it publishes articles in Catalan, Spanish, English, French and Italian.

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## PhD DISSERTATION

On Friday 5 May the PhD student Daniel Muntané Pueyo defended his thesis *Fishery Associationism in the Spanish East in the transition from sailing to motor (1864-1923)*, directed by Dr Jordi Ibarz. The court awarded him the grade of Excellent Cum Laude.

The thesis is a necessary research on the world of fishing from the abolition of the guilds in 1864 to the coup d'état of General Primo de Rivera in 1923. The scenario is a process of liberalization coinciding with the introduction of new fishing gear, such as the "Bou" (trawling gear with two lateen sail boats) which cause radical changes in the fishing world. Later on, the introduction of the motor, the control for the commercialization of fish and the contradiction between general and local interests also play an important role in the thesis. The geographical framework covers most of the Maritime Department of Cartagena, that included Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands) in terms of the subject of study.

Daniel Muntané is a member of the group dedicated to the history of maritime work, which is part of the consolidated research group Work, Institutions and Gender.

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***PLEASE SEND US INFORMATION ABOUT BOOKS, RESEARCH IN PROGRESS, EXHIBITIONS, CONFERENCES OR ANY SUBJECT THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST FOR THE GROUP. NEW INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.***

***IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL TO US AND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS WILL BE DELETED FROM THE LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.***

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