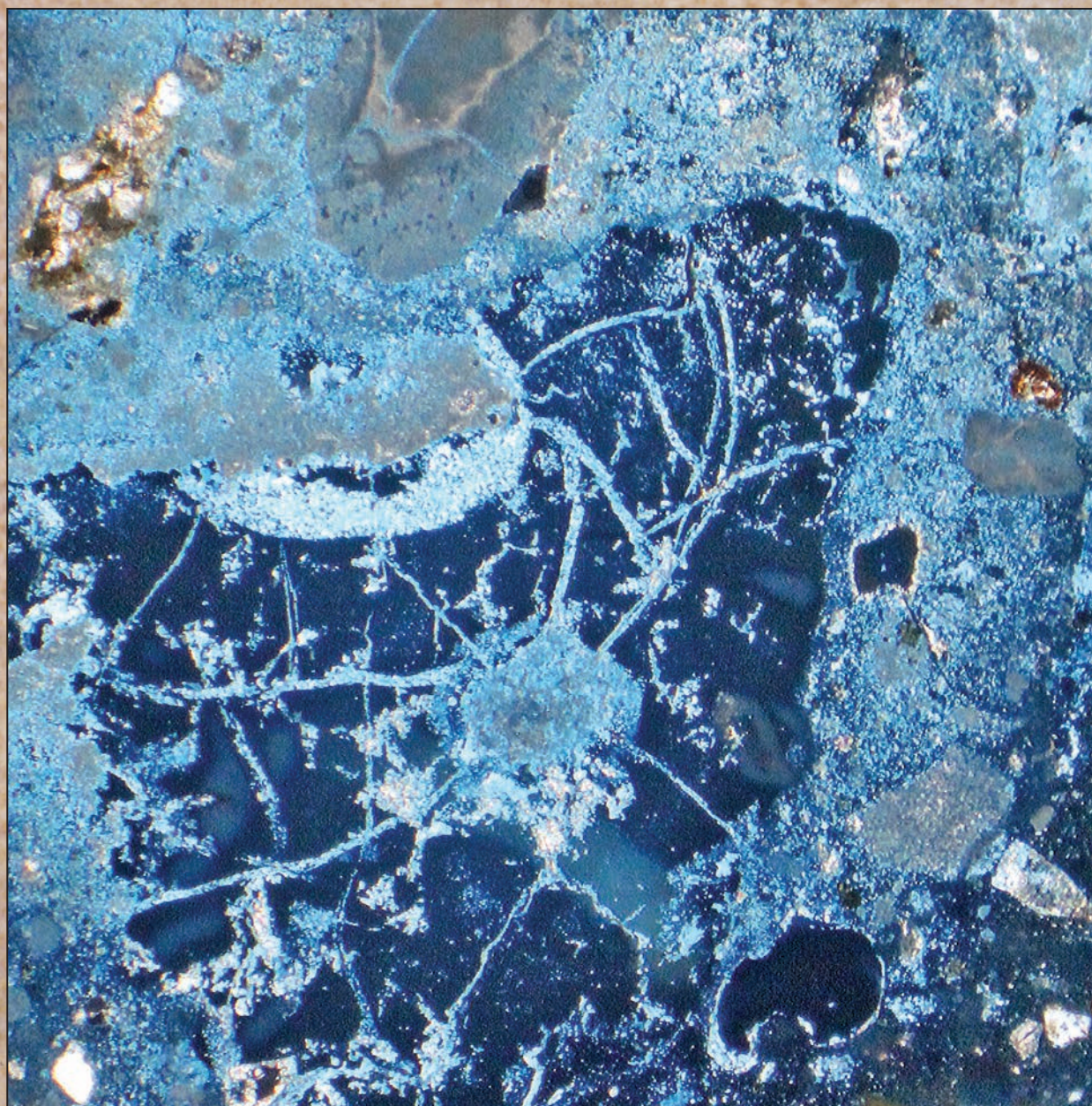


ANNALES

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Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies
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SAFE WATERS.
AUSTRIAN SEAFARERS BETWEEN CHARITY AND WELFARE, CA. 1850–1920

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to highlight the characteristics and criticalities of the measures aimed at “ensuring” the “safety” of Austrian seamen, their families and the communities to which they belonged from the so-called Gründerzeit of the 1850s to post-WWI. Since seafaring exposed the workers and their families to the risk of poverty, the charitable foundations represented a pillar on which the Austrian shipping sector rested. In the last decades of the 19th century, the Austrian seafaring industrial revolution changed the scenario, not the seafarers’ welfare regulatory framework. In the meantime, seafarers’ socio-economic role and public image underwent a sort of transilience.

Keywords: Social security for seafarers, compulsory work-related injury insurance, compulsory sickness insurance, Austrian shipping industry, industrial breadwinner masculinities

ACQUE SICURE.
I MARITTIMI AUSTRIACI TRA CARITÀ E PREVIDENZA SOCIALE, C. 1850–1920

SINTESI

L’articolo vuole mettere in evidenza caratteristiche e criticità delle misure rivolte a garantire la “sicurezza” dei marinai Austriaci, delle loro famiglie e delle comunità a cui appartenevano dal Gründerzeit degli anni ‘50 del XIX secolo al primo dopoguerra. Poiché il lavoro marittimo esponeva sia i lavoratori che le loro famiglie al rischio di povertà, le fondazioni di beneficenza rappresentavano uno dei pilastri su cui poggiava il settore della navigazione commerciale. Negli ultimi decenni del XIX secolo, la rivoluzione industriale marittima austriaca cambiò lo scenario ma non il quadro normativo previdenziale per i marittimi. Nel frattempo, il ruolo socio-economico e l’immagine pubblica dei marittimi subirono una sorta di transilienza.

Parole chiave: Previdenza sociale per marittimi, assicurazione obbligatoria contro gli infortuni sul lavoro, assicurazione sanitaria obbligatoria, industria armatoriale austriaca, mascolinità del capofamiglia in età industriale

Today, as in the past, seafaring is one of the riskiest and most dangerous professions.¹ When the “well-being” of this particular type of worker is taken into consideration, it is necessary to juggle a large number of variables: the alternation between different modes of production, the (unbalanced) interdependence between classes, the dominant cultural and moral frameworks and, finally, the (unequal) relations of power and economic dependence between genders. The fact that the multinational Austro-Hungarian state was not a maritime empire – and therefore its maritime sector was tiny – does not make things easier. On the contrary, this circumstance forces us to confront, even if only indirectly, the present-absent element of national affiliation when dealing with forms of social and political citizenship in the Habsburg Empire (Judson, 2018).

The aim of the following pages is to trace the evolution and highlight the characteristics and criticalities of the measures aimed at “ensuring” the “safety” of the Austrian seamen, their families and the communities to which they belonged. Alongside the analysis of the functioning and socio-economic role of charitable foundations in favour of seafarers, the focus will be on two aspects in particular: the labour welfare regulatory framework – also related to seafaring – in the Austrian part of the Monarchy, and the issue concerning the prosperity and security of the waterfront, specifically that of Trieste. Concerning the former, given its self-explanatory nature, it is not necessary to bring any legal or legislative facet forward here. As for the waterfront – or “sailortown”, although the two terms do not always wholly overlap – it was both the liminal environment where a specific frontier society – i.e., the lower strata of the urban-maritime population – lived, worked and spent its leisure time (Milne, 2016, 2, 63 et passim; Beaven et al., 2016, 7), and a space of strategic importance within the framework of the mercantile activities of a port city (Fingard, 1982, 8). Clearly, that space – that “frontier” – was a reason for great control anxieties on the part of the authorities and economic stakeholders. In that context, alongside policing, an important instrument of disciplining and repression of sailortown communities was represented by charity activities and welfare measures.² Also, like any other socio-economic and labour *milieu*, a sailortown and its populations are not al-

ways identical. They adapt to various solicitations and absorb all the consequences brought about by socio-economic, institutional, political, and, finally, technological transitions. In this regard, it is important to remember that the proletarianised seafarers of the age of steam were anthropologically different from their older brothers on sailing vessels (Burton, 1999, 92; Nilson, 2016, 79; Beaven, 2016). Moreover, a waterfront is also a place where the given womanliness’ and manliness’ patterns were constantly (re)negotiated and normalised according to class and politics demands and where charity and welfare measures might play a pivotal role to that effect (Burton, 1991 and 1999; Milne, 2016, 75; Dennis, 2011). As we will see, not even Trieste’s waterfront was unaffected by those dynamics.

AUSTRIAN SEAFARING AS A BOY

On 24 April 1854, at the Augustinian Church in Vienna, the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I married the Duchess of Bavaria Elisabeth, the eternal Sissi. It was the wedding of the century. In a polished Vienna, the wedding celebrations lasted a week. Many subjects of the newly-wed imperial couple wanted to celebrate the happy event, and some chose to donate sums of money to charities. This generalised impulse of generosity also involved charitable foundations in favour of the Austrian seafarers. The fact was reported by the trade magazine *Rivista Marittima* which, considering the uniqueness and importance of the circumstance, decided to dedicate a long article to the charitable organisations (*pii Istituti*) of the Austrian merchant marine.

In the piece, one can read:

The retribution in old age of the labours, which during the years of vigour and robustness wear down man to the advantage of society and its single members, has always appeared to be an obligation of humanity and dutiful gratitude. Thus, the poor knows that once unable to work, he can aspire to the offering of charity. Knowing that he is entitled to mercy after honourable service, he bears more gladly his condition; he acknowledges and respects the inscrutable decrees of the Almighty with greater resignation and sets out to work with hope and courage. (ASTs-GM, 1157, 5541)

1 This article was written within the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie project “We Can Do It! Women’s labour market participation in the maritime sector in the Upper Adriatic after the World Wars in an intersectional perspective” (acronym: WeCanIt; grant agreement no. 894257; host institution: University of Ljubljana).

2 In this work, it is impossible to account for the vast literature on the nexus between charity/welfare measures and seamen and sailortown control and vigilance. To name a few: Fingard, 1978; Press, 1989; Williams, 1991; Kennerley, 2002; Kennerley, 2016; Nilson, 2016; Cadge & Skaggs, 2018.

Therefore, it seems that the working class had to accept its condition of the “working poor”: it was simply an ineluctable fact, established even by God. There was no way out, no possibility of improvement or redemption beyond the “charity of the rich ones” (cf. Fabi, 1984).

On the other hand, the *grandeur* of the wealthy Austrian classes – particularly the merchant one – is almost understandable. We are at the very beginning of what is known as *Gründerzeit* (ca. 1848–1873), the golden age of the Austrian (and German) “rich ones”. After the turmoils of 1848 and in contrast with the political claims of the Springtime of the Peoples, major institutional reforms – especially of an economic nature – were implemented in the Empire. First of all, serfs were emancipated (*Gudentlastung*). Then, a formal customs union between Austria and Hungary was implemented, easing the domestic tariff system. Finally, a Ministry of Commerce in Vienna and chambers of commerce all over the Austrian territories were established (Good, 1990, 210). For these reasons, many would agree with Eduard März when he observed that the 1850s represented the beginning of the industrial age of the Empire (März in Rudolph, 1990, 135).

As far as commercial shipping is concerned, it had its fulcrum in Trieste, the emporium-city and free port of the Empire. However, in this case, the economic revival began earlier than in other imperial territories. Trieste’s *Vormärz* was characterised by the establishment of three economic giants that would affect the maritime and mercantile activities of the Empire in the following decades: the *Imperial Regia Privilegiata Compagnia di Assicurazioni Generali Austro-Italiche* in 1831, the *Österreichischer Lloyd-Lloyd Austriaco* in 1833 and, finally, the *Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà* in 1838. Concerning the maritime sector, the reformist climate of the 1850s concretised, especially on the institutional side, with the establishment of the *Central Seebehörde* (*Governo Centrale Marittimo*) in Trieste in 1850.³

In contrast, there were no changes to the working conditions involving the merchant ships’ crews. In the Austrian Empire, maritime work was regulated by the Political and Navigation Edict

(*Editto Politico di Navigazione Mercantile Austriaca*) issued by Empress Maria Theresa in 1774, and it remained the main legal framework regarding the rights and duties of the crew until the dissolution of the Empire in 1918. Thus, much of the treatment reserved for seamen depended on the captains and ship-owners.

As for the seafarers and the alms they “earned” after a lifetime of work, the aforementioned *Rivista Marittima*’s article specifies:

This debt of gratitude is particularly felt towards sailors who, since childhood, renounce motherly caresses to give themselves to the harrowing ordeal of a life full of deprivation. Exposed to the thousands of dangers inherent in their profession, they sail the seas quickly passing from torrid to glacial areas. Bold individuals who face the wrath of the elements shaken by storms are capable of any generous action. At the end of all this wear and tear, these men have only enough to support their families without being able to count on the benefit of their savings, which are absorbed by the need for honest recreation imperiously required by the long abstinence of sailing. (ASTs, GM, 1157, 5541)

Such a generous and compassionate approach towards seafarers must undoubtedly be due to the joyful atmosphere of the celebrations of the imperial marriage. In this regard, it should be noted that we know practically nothing about the attitude of the imperial authorities towards seafarers and very little about the characteristics of the Austrian sail-ortowns. However, Lucio Fabi’s fresco of poverty and charitable institutions in 19th-century Trieste can give us some clues as to how the authorities attempted to control and repress the class – i.e., the working class and the so-called “underclass” or, in other words, the Marx’s *Lumpenproletariat* – to which the seafarers belonged.

As for Trieste during the “roaring ’50s”, Fabi notes the complete absence of the municipal ruling and merchant classes in matters relating to assistance to the poor. It seems that the *Statthalter* (Governor/Lieutenant) – the highest imperial city and Littoral’s (*Küstenland*)

3 The *Central Seebehörde* was established in 1850 in force of ordinance no. 178 (BLI, 1850, 178) of the Ministry of Commerce – thus by direct will of the baron von Bruck, founder in 1833 of the *Österreichischer Lloyd-Lloyd Austriaco*. It was the “intermediate” institution between the Ministry of Commerce and the imperial maritime socio-economic entities. It was competent in all matters relating to the merchant marine, e.g.: navigation regulations, police and medical port offices, shipbuilding, fishery, registration, assistance and education of seafarers, implementing maritime laws, etc. The *Ausgleich* of 1867 also affected the organisation of the imperial maritime sector. That year, the city of Rijeka was annexed to the Hungarian crown as a “special body” (*corpus separatum*), making the city the port of Hungary. This circumstance led to the establishment in 1870 of a twin institution of the Trieste’s *Seebehörde* in Rijeka (*Magyar Királyi Tengerészeti Hatóság iratai - Pomorska oblast za ugarsko-hrvatsko primorje - Governo Marittimo per il Littorale Ungaro-Croato*) with jurisdiction over the Hungarian-Croatian riparian areas. More information on port organization and maritime health in the Austrian part of the Empire in Terčon, 1993.

authority – was the only institutional figure to deal with the issue, constantly urging the municipality to help the poor with their “pertinency” (*Heimatrecht*) (Fabi, 1984, 131–132).⁴

As for the “Fathers of the City” (i.e., the municipal council members), their attitude ranged from open hostility to smug paternalism towards the poor, especially if they were young and a little daredevil. Their aversion to “wandering kids” (*ragazzi girovaghi*) was such that it led them to implement forms of “institutional crimping”.⁵ From the minutes of the meeting of the Major Council of Trieste dated 15 June 1849, we learn that the municipal Public Security Committee – together with the Police Directorate and the Harbour Master – had created a task force whose purpose was “to remedy the just complaints of the population, in particular of the merchant class, for the thefts that occur during the unloading of vessels and barges, both at sea and on the waterfront; and to prevent theft in general and guarantee the security of the property”. The third point on their measures list ordered that, “as established by the current mercantile code, the compulsory embarkation of boys without any occupation on merchant ships has to continue with full energy”,⁶ and that the public authorities should have taken action with the military authorities “so that the Royal Navy will take Trieste’s boys as deckhands” (AGCT, 5 C.1-1849, 5107). However, some were making more sophisticated – and hypocritical – proposals. During the same session, councillor Luigi Lutschaunig submitted his plan to solve the “wandering kids” problem. Like his colleagues, he was worried about the lack of safety in the streets of Trieste sailortown, not so much for the damage that this circumstance could cause to trade “as for the consequent corruption of customs that ensues for the idle youth”. However, Lutschaunig wished

to make one point clear: he did not want this youth – “who are mostly made up of young delinquents” – to be punished. On the contrary, he wanted “to give them a way to get an honest crust of bread”. Thus, he wrote:

I take the liberty of proposing [...] to have an old warship stationed permanently in our port with duties of harbour guard and, at the same time, asylum for those low-class youngsters who mainly loaf around all day in our streets. This harbour guard should be considered a forced or voluntary shelter. In the first case, a lad caught in the act of theft would be detained or punished in some way to be established and, later, transferred aboard some warship – eventually, this should be the subject of a specific regulation. In the second case, when a young man volunteered, declaring that he wanted to dedicate himself – either out of desire or out of need – to seafaring, he should find immediate shelter there. [...] I humbly believe that such a measure would result in two good things. On the one hand, our seafaring would acquire a reinforcement of good seamen over time and on the other, without resorting to acts of severity [sic!], society would be enriched with useful men who, without such a provision, would perhaps have become its abomination. (AGCT, 5 C.1-1849, 5107)

Perhaps, few other cases taken from historical sources can fit so well with Goffman’s definition of a “total institution”,⁷ where issues relating to the “assistance” of vulnerable or at-risk individuals, public safety – even “decorum” –, social exclusion and coercion are intertwined inexorably and perversely.

4 The Austrian Empire never had a single Poor Law common to all domains. However, all the imperial provinces shared the *Heimatrecht* (pertinency, residence) framework, which represented the basis for all forms of assistance to the needy (Glaser, 1912, 246). It was introduced by the Provisional Municipal Law (*provisorische Gemeindegesetz*, issued on 17 March 1849) and then confirmed by law no. 26 – in particular by § 2 – of 1862 (Kiefer & Schausberger, 2009, 43; BLI, 1862, 26). However, *Heimatrecht* was definitively systematised in law no. 80 of 1863 (BLI, 1863, 80). The law guaranteed the right of undisturbed residence in a municipality and assistance in destitute circumstances from one’s municipality of residence (§ 1). Section four of the law dealt with the municipalities’ obligation to provide for the poor. In particular, it ordered that: assistance was limited to subsistence and the provision of medical care in the event of illness (§ 24); the poor unemployed, if able to work, could be forced to work (§ 26); a municipality was obliged to take care of poor “foreigners” (non-residents) in a state of need (maintenance and medical care) or to provide for their burial in the event of death, but it could later ask for compensation from the municipality of residence of the poor in question (§§ 28–31). As for poverty data, in 1889, the year in which the two Austrian framework laws of the workers’ security system were approved, the 10,940 institutions for the poor in the Cisleithania assisted 288,742 people (112,190 men, 39%; 176,552 women, 61%) (Statistik, 1889, XLII).

5 Crimping or “sailor thieves” – a phenomenon also known by the exotic expression “shanghaiing” – was the practice of kidnapping men to make them serve as sailors on merchant ships.

6 The Political and Navigation Edict (*Editto Politico di Navigazione Mercantile Austriaca*) of 1774 and the subsequent legal provisions that supplemented it – i.e., the regulatory framework on which the Austrian merchant marine was based until the end of WWI – did not order anything of the kind of course.

7 “A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work [in our case also education] where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life” (Goffman, 1961, XIII). It is worth highlighting that a similar process of seamen criminalisation and the implementation of a naval system of disciplines were also taking place at the same time in Germany (Gerstenberger, 2001).

The “Fathers of the City” told us how many low-rank seafaring careers started and how – using the *Rivista Marittima* words again – many Austrian “sailors, since childhood, renounce motherly caresses to give themselves to the harrowing ordeal of a life full of deprivation”. Seafaring was a “high-risk” profession, full of hardships in many respects indeed. It constantly exposed the worker – in most cases, a male worker – and his family to the risk of poverty. Therefore, turning to a charitable foundation during one’s working life was expected, and it became necessary when one stopped working due to old age. As for seafarers’ families, seeking help from this kind of institution was almost an unavoidable fact in the event of the head of the household’s death. In this context, alongside labour and capital, charity can be considered the “third pillar” on which the Austrian seafaring rested.

THE CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

Usually, welfare and social security measures can be implemented under a public regime through state legal instruments which regulate and organise social policies; otherwise, they can be actualised through commercial means, i.e., by contracts concluded with an insurance institution. In the latter case, the market has the leading role. However, things worked differently for the Austrian seamen of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Until 1913, there were no laws to protect these workers in the event of illness or injury in the workplace. Indeed, some of them could turn to insurance companies to secure health and workplace accident insurance policies and, perhaps, even old-age pensions.⁸ Nevertheless, in general, this category of workers and their families had to resort to other bodies in case of need: the charitable foundations.

The two main relief foundations of Austrian seafaring were *Pio fondo di marina Austro-illirico* (*Österr.-illyr. Marine-Unterstützungsfond*) and *Pio fondo di marina dalmato* (*Dalmatinischen Marine-Unterstützungsfond*). The *Pio fondo di marina Austro-illirico* originated in the brotherhood of Saint Nicholas in Trieste as early as 1588. In 1783 brotherhoods were abolished, but that of Saint Nicholas was allowed to remain, with the name *Istituto di marina*. It was suppressed during the French occupation but reactivated in 1814. As far as Dalmatia is concerned, the *scholae* of Saint Nicholas and Saint John of Nepomuk⁹ existed

there since the early modern period; they had the same purposes as the brotherhood of Saint Nicholas in Trieste. In 1820, probably in Zadar, an *Istituto di marina* similar to that of Trieste was founded for Dalmatia (ASTs, GM, 1163, 4430).

After establishing the *Central Seebehörde* in Trieste in 1850, both foundations were administered by this new government body. After the creation of the second Maritime Government in Rijeka with jurisdiction over the Hungarian-Croatian riparian areas in 1870, the framework would remain stable until the 1920s: the *Pio Fondo di marina Austro-illirico* for Trieste, Istria and the Kvarner islands; then, the *Pio Fondo di marina dalmato* for Dalmatia.¹⁰

The people selected to receive a subsidy followed a bottom-up process. In the first instance, grant applications had to be submitted to the relevant local commission. Those bodies were made up of three ship-owners and three sea captains chosen from the members of the local merchant class; finally, the local port captain chaired the gathering. After an initial screening, applications for subsidies were passed to the Central Commission for the administration of the two relief foundations – composed of delegates from the Chambers of Commerce of the Littoral and Dalmatia – at the Maritime Government (*Seebehörde - Governo Marittimo*) in Trieste. The Central Commission had the final say and could order the subsidy payments of between 10 and 40 *Kronen* per month (ASTs, GM, 1160, 4820; cf. 1161, 32291). Naturally, this system was not without its faults. In 1911, 38 seafarers of Mali Lošinj – including at least six captains – communicated to the Maritime Government their discontent regarding the composition of *Pio fondo* local commission. They reported that the commission, which had been established for years at the local Harbour Master’s Office, did not respect the characteristics prescribed by the regulations (Maritime Government’s notice no. 2570, 14 April 1871). It also included people who were not – and had never been – merchant captains or ship-owners such as, for example, a town clerk, a pharmacist, and a wine merchant. For this reason, the petitioners requested that the commission be dissolved (ASTs, GM, 1160, 4820).

As for resources, they were drained mainly by fines for fishery violations, with surtaxes on tonnage and port taxes, and finally from donations. Most of the resources obtained through those methods were invested in state bonds or other financial products (e.g.,

8 It is important to mention that some shipping companies had their welfare funds. In 1848, the Austrian Lloyd established the *Istituto pensioni per gli impiegati della Società di Navigazione a Vapore del Lloyd Austriaco*, whose purpose was to provide its members’ widows and orphans with pensions or other forms of economic support (Babudieri, 1964, 78).

9 From the 16th century onwards, the cult of Saint John of Nepomuk spread very quickly in Central and Eastern Europe. The patron of Bohemia, Saint John is also the protector of all those related to labour activities on waters (sailors, fishermen, millers, etc.) (Hupaló, 2019, 21). For a general overview of the role of faith, beliefs, and superstitions within the maritime world, see Gambin, 2014.

10 It is important to underline that the territorial jurisdiction of the two *Pio fondo* was not rigid. Since the first half of the 19th century, the *Istituto di Marina* of Trieste also subsidised seafarers from other maritime provinces of the Empire (Babudieri, 1964, 77).

Table 1: Pio fondo di marina Austro-illirico beneficiaries per gender and age.¹¹

Year	Men	Men - %	Women	Women - %	Minors	Minors - %	Total
1854	432	62%	261	38%	–	–	696
1894	410	39%	617	59%	16	2%	1,043
1897	410	39%	617	59%	20	2%	1,047
1899	382	37%	619	60%	22	3%	1,023
1902	427	37%	688	60%	37	3%	1,152
1905	438	35%	749	60%	57	5%	1,244
1907	425	34%	779	62%	59	4%	1,263
1909	545	35%	880	58%	85	7%	1,510
1911	591	36%	957	58%	104	6%	1,652
1913	656	36%	1,047	57%	131	7%	1,834

Table 2: Pio fondo di marina dalmato beneficiaries per gender and age.¹²

Year	Men	Men - %	Women	Women - %	Minors	Minors - %	Total
1894	68	43%	89	57%	–	–	157
1897	68	42%	93	58%	–	–	161
1899	65	36%	112	63%	2	1%	179
1902	42	30%	93	66%	5	4%	140
1905	42	29%	92	65%	8	6%	142
1907	52	33%	96	61%	10	6%	158
1909	95	37%	141	55%	21	8%	257
1911	120	33%	201	56%	37	11%	358
1913	113	33%	187	55%	38	12%	338

Prestito della città di Milano 1866, lottery loans, and other debentures) to get annual financial incomes. Although they were intended as a protection instrument for (male) seafarers, as reported in the tables below, and at least starting from the last years of the 19th century, both foundations assumed an essential role in supporting seafarers' families (widows and orphans) in the event of the male breadwinner's death.

Pio Fondo di marina Austro-illirico and *Pio Fondo di marina dalmato* were not the only relief foundations to which seafarers and their families could turn in times of need. In 1919 a further four smaller

foundations established by Trieste's merchant class members also existed in *Venezia Giulia* (Julian March). They were *Fondazione Erminia ved. Bussoli*, favouring two sailors' widows of Trieste and Piran; *Fondazione Giuseppe ed Antonia coniugi Clivio*, which provided two scholarships for students of the Trieste Nautical Academy; *Fondazione Federico Deseppi* for fishermen; and finally, *Fondazione Marco Domenico Garofolo* for seamen, their widows and orphans of Trieste and the islands of Silba and Lošinj. The capital of these smaller foundations was managed by the Maritime Government of Trieste

11 Source: ASTs, GM, 1157, (year 1854) 5541, (year 1894) 7081; 1158, (year 1897) 7016, (year 1899) 7526; 1159, (year 1902) 6920, (year 1905) 13267; 1160, (year 1907) 18402, (year 1909) 15555; (year 1911) 26950; 1161, (year 1913) 16881.

12 Source: ASTs, GM, 1157, (year 1894) 7081; 1158, (year 1897) 7016, (year 1899) 7526; 1159, (year 1902) 6920, (year 1905) 13267; 1160, (year 1907) 18402, (year 1909) 15555, (year 1911) 26950; 1161, (year 1913) 16881.

Table 3: Assets and returns of Austrian seafarers' relief foundations in 1923.¹³

Foundation name	Net asset (nominal value)	Net return (nominal value)
Pio fondo di marina Austro-illirico	1,021,500 Lire and 523,680 Kronen	170,000 Lire
Pio fondo di marina dalmato	373,000 Kronen	2,500 Lire
Fondazione Federico Desepi	400 Lire	20 Lire
Fondazione Giuseppe ed Antonia coniugi Clivio	8,900 Lire and 1,800 Kronen	445 Lire
Fondazione Marco Domenico Garofolo	24,000 Kronen	920 Kronen
Fondazione Erminia ved. Bussoli	1,000 Lire	50 Lire

(ASTs, GM, 1163, 4430).¹⁴ As regards the beneficiaries' selection, the criteria were established by the foundations' statutes. Usually, applicants had to produce a certificate attesting to their condition of indigence and good morals, evidence of the duration of the service aboard, and any other document that could support their application. In some cases, as already mentioned, candidates had to prove they were originally from a specific locality. However, in other cases, the statutory instructions are much more "detailed". For example, one of the two scholarships, *Fondazione Giuseppe ed Antonia coniugi Clivio*, was intended for an applicant from Bakar, preferably belonging to the Imoquina or Schnautz families (AST, GM, 1164, 5964). The statute of *Fondazione Marco Domenico Garofolo* also had a "familyist" purpose – sometimes, in business or trade organisations, it is considered a facet of "social capital" (cf. Jones, 2012, XI). Even in that case, the beneficiaries not only had to be from a specific locality, but they also had to demonstrate some degree of kinship with the prominent Marco Domenico Garofolo (ASTs, GM, 1157, 10411). So – since she could prove she was Garofolo's first cousin – the widow Anna Pizzoli from Mali Lošinj was able to secure a subsidy from *Fondazione Marco Domenico Garofolo* for many years (ASTs, GM, 1164, 8920).

It is essential to highlight that these foundations maintained their functions even after the approval of the seafarers' social security scheme in 1913, during the war and the post-WWI transition.¹⁵ In 1921, the Italian *Cassa invalidi della marina mercantile* extended its authority also over the Julian March (GU, 221, Royal Decree 1921/1231) and, in 1929, *Pio fondo di marina austro-illirico*, *Pio fondo di marina dalmato*, and *Pio fondo di marina per Fiume e Seni* were absorbed into the Italian *Cassa Nazionale delle Assicurazioni Sociali* in force of the Royal Decree 24 January 1929 no. 158 (LF-II, 1837, 1893). In this way, the ex-imperial relief foundations for seafarers ceased *de facto* to exist. However, despite the currency's devaluation due to rapid inflation in the post-WWI period, as seen from the table below, some foundations still had considerable assets and returns in 1923.

THE AUSTRIAN WORKERS' SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME

Between 1887 and 1888, the Imperial Council issued the two laws that formed the framework of the Austrian workers' social security system. The first, approved in December 1887, was the law concerning the extension¹⁶ of workers' insurance against workplace accidents (BLI, 1888, 1), and, in March of the following

¹³ Source: ASTs, GM, 1164, 5964.

¹⁴ Before the outbreak of WWI, there were more charitable foundations which dealt with the assistance of seafarers and their relatives in need. There were also, for example: *Fondazione Francesco Giuseppe I* to support Istrian seafaring; *Fondazione Scaramangà* favouring the widows and orphans of the Littoral seafarers; *Fondazione Maria ved. Tercig* to support sailors' widows.

¹⁵ Moreover, in 1916 in Vienna, a specific relief committee was established to subsidise seafarers, fishermen and their families in a state of poverty due to the war (ASTs-CPT, 19, 17525 ex 1916). Also, it is worth mentioning the charity that, in a private capacity, some tycoons of the Austrian shipping industry did for the families of its employees in such a difficult moment. From June 1915 to June 1922, Diodato Tripcovich paid 200 *Kronen* (later 200 *Lire*) per month to the widow and orphans of the engine driver Paglietach. Tripcovich stopped the subsidy in July 1922 following a lump sum of 2,400 *Lire* (ASTs-ST, 198).

¹⁶ The first chapter of law no. 1 of 1888 bears the wording "insurance extension", but it is a bluff aimed at making it appear that Germany has beaten the times in social policy matters. The "precedent" to which the law of 1888 implicitly refers is the law of 1854 on mining (BLI, 1854, 254). The ninth and tenth chapters of the latter law explicitly addressed the issues relating to relations between workers and employers (§§ 200–209) and social security (§§ 210–214). As for the latter aspect, the law obliged the mine owners to set up brotherhood relief funds to support miners in need, their widows and orphans (§§ 210; 212; 214). For their part, miners were obliged to contribute to the fund (§ 211). Although these provisions were very far-sighted – representing the framework of the following measures for workers' social security – they were designed solely to improve working and living conditions and to prevent forms of revolt of a specific category of workers subjected to particularly strenuous work.

year, the law regarding workers' insurance in case of illness was also approved (BLI, 1888, 33). Following the German social policy scheme, the Austrian social security system was the second to be implemented worldwide.

As for the Austrian context, it is important to underline that the adoption of compulsory workers' insurance was intended to protect workers and their families in the event of loss or reduction of wages due to circumstances that prevented or diminished the worker's ability to work (Manuale, 1919, 9).¹⁷ As regards specifically the insurance for accidents at work, the Austrian "General Civil Code" (*Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* – ABGB) established that involuntary damages must also be compensated (§ 1306) and that the burden of proof was on who had suffered the damage (§ 1298). However, in some cases – such as railway accidents – the burden of proof was reversed. In Germany, before work-related accident insurance, the shifting of the burden of the proof applied to the whole large-scale industry (Manuale, 1919, 10). Therefore, beyond the political question of anti-socialist action, it seems that in Germany, the adoption of the law against accidents at work had also found a not-insignificant reason in the will to overcome the existing legal practices, which did not favour the industrial sector at all.

The subject of the Austrian occupational accident scheme (BLI, 1888, 1) was the compensation for damage deriving from an injury or death of the insured (the employee) following an accident at work. Similarly, the subject of workers' illness insurance programme (BLI, 1888, 33) was granting subsidies in case of illness and covering burial costs in the event of the insured's death. Both laws were in force on all territories of Cisleithania and required that all businesses owners such as factories, shipyards, transport and logistic facilities (e.g., port warehouses), construction sites, and other trades¹⁸ must ensure all employees, without any distinction of duties, gender, or citizenship. So, it was not essential to be an Austrian citizen or have the "pertinency"/residency in a specific place to benefit from the two insurances. Both laws guaranteed the right to sickness and accident allowances simply because of a subordinate employment contract with an Austrian business. If the person entitled to com-

ensation for injury was a foreign subject or permanently resided abroad, the insurance institution could compromise on the annuity and liquidate the insured with a good exit administered at one time (BLI, 1888, 1, § 42). The basis of both the allowances and the insurance premiums was the worker's actual salary. The latter also included piecework, benefits in kind, cost-of-living subsidies and tips if they were used to complete the fixed salary. So, the type of remuneration was irrelevant for insurance purposes. Paying the premiums to the insurance institutions was the employer's responsibility. If specific categories of businesses were not obliged to take out insurance, entrepreneurs could still choose to insure voluntarily. Regarding workplace insurance, in the event of the insured's death, the law also provided for the survivor's pension up to 20% of the accrued indemnity (BLI, 1888, 1, § 7). So, to sum up, both insurances consisted of the simple fact that a certain amount was taken from the salary of the employee, which the entrepreneur had to pay to the public/state insurance institutions. In the event of a worker's illness or accident at work, the state provided compensation, also for the next of kin in the event of the insured's death. The latter is not a circumstance to be taken for granted.

A final important aspect related to the 1887–1888 laws approval worth mentioning was the one related to bureaucracy. First of all, new public bodies were established: the District sickness funds (in Italian *Casse distrettuali per ammalati*) and the Institutes for insurance against accidents at work (in Italian *Istituti d'assicurazione per gli infortuni sul lavoro*).¹⁹ Then, a public official class specialised in social security matters gradually began to be created. As for our seafarers, they remained excluded from any form of protection in the event of illness or workplace injury. Ten years after the approval of the laws and the creation of the institutions mentioned above, those public officials complained that all their proposals and recommendations to improve the social security system were never incorporated by the government authorities. In particular, they criticised the fact that law no. 168 of 1894 extended the insurance against accidents at work to workers such as chimney sweeps and stonemasons. However, it completely disregarded seafarers, despite the fact they were among the categories of workers

17 Besides the laws regarding workplace accidents and health insurance, those that regulated the compulsory workers' insurances in force in Cisleithania were the following: concerning miners' relief funds no. 127 of 1889, no. 14 of 1890, no. 3 of 1892 and no. 178 of 1892; regarding white-collar, old-age pensions no. 1 of 1907; about damages caused by a car no. 162 of 1908; relating to compensation no. 29 of 1909; regarding some specific construction workers no. 96 of 1912; concerning seafarers no. 24 and 25 of 1913; about miners no. 523 of 1917; reform of the law on accidents at work (1/1888 and 168/1894) no. 363 of 1917; and finally, the reform of the law on health insurance (33/1888 and 39/1889) no. 457 of 1917.

18 For example, law no. 168 of 1894 extended the insurance's obligation to cleaning companies too.

19 It is worth remembering that the territorial jurisdiction of the Institutes for insurance against accidents at work of Trieste extended over its territory, Littoral, Carniola and Dalmatia (Statut, 1913).

most at risk, and the provision would have been met with favour from the ship-owners (Rapporto, 1900, 3). In 1905, their frustration reached its limit. In the Ministry of the Interior reform programme dating back to the previous year, seafarers continued to be excluded from any provision. The Ministry justified this exclusion because it was complicated to equate seafarers with other workers and, before proceeding with the approval of the social security schemes in their favour, first an organic revision of the legislation on commercial navigation was necessary. It is worth mentioning that public officials (sarcastically) welcomed the fact that at least the Government had taken “an insignificant step” forward, that is, that it moved “from absolute denial to theoretical recognition” of the seafarers’ social protection issue (Questioni, 1905, 45–46).

THE AUSTRIAN SEAFARERS’ SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME

Already in 1853, understanding the economic scope of the issue, the Chamber of Commerce – still named *Deputazione di Borsa* – of Trieste solicited the opinions of the seafarers’ class about the measures to be taken to avoid the loss of goods and human lives in the event of sea accidents along the Austrian coasts. Among the various measures, a commission of experts chosen within the Navy and among the members of the port authorities, insurance and shipping companies suggested the creation of a “Shipwreck Institution” based on the British model,²⁰ the execution of periodic seaworthiness inspections of the vessels and the free distribution among the captains of an Italian translation of the *Traité de sauvetage par Conseil* (ASTs-DBCCIT, 34, 553).²¹ Nevertheless, the political authorities did not seem to adopt the proposed measures.

About 30 years later, in Germany, moves towards adopting social policy measures would become more pressing and influential. The Austrian seafaring class immediately grasped the famous message of Kaiser Wilhelm I to the *Reichstag* of November 1881 on social security. In December of the same year, a commission created for the purpose submitted to the attention of the Maritime Government of

Trieste a proposal for a compulsory old-age pension scheme for the seafarers of the Austrian merchant marine also be extended to sea fishing fishermen.²² Again, the proposal came to nothing. Given the context, it is reasonable to suppose that other events and circumstances proved to be more persuasive.

On the night of 14 April 1912, in the waters off the coast of Newfoundland, the largest ocean liner in service at that time – described as “unsinkable” by the international press – the steamer “Titanic” collided with an iceberg. It sank in less than three hours, causing the death of more than 1,500 people. It is regarded as one of the deadliest peacetime maritime disasters in history. The “Titanic” sinking was also a workplace accident of international significance (ca. 685 crew members lost their lives) and a big scandal that had major consequences within the global maritime capitalism of that time. Although it is not appropriate to go into detail, suffice to say that the families of the crew members who perished during the disaster asked for compensation from the ship-owner, the White Star Line company. It was the British Workmen’s Compensation Act of 1897 that made the survivors and relatives of the crew members that passed away eligible for compensation from the shipping company, not the state (Moses, 2018, 162–163). Anyway, less than a year after the “Titanic” tragedy, protection in the event of illness and accident in the workplace was finally extended to Austrian seamen.²³

On 11 February 1913, both the law on compulsory health insurance (BLI, 1913, 24) and the law concerning compulsory injury insurance (BLI, 1913, 25) for seafarers and fishermen were issued. They followed the structure, intentions and modalities of the two previous framework acts and, also in the seafarers’ case, in the event of a worker’s illness or an accident at work, the state provided compensation. Both laws ordered the businessperson – i.e., the ship-owner, the representative of the ship-owner’s consortium or the shipping company owing vessels flying under the Austrian flag – to insure the subordinate workers, regardless of their duties or rank aboard, gender, nationality or citizenship.²⁴ The obligation was not limited to commercial shipping but also included the crews of training and science

20 In all likelihood they meant the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck.

21 Most likely they were referring to de Godde de Liancourt, 1841.

22 The old-age pension programme designed for seamen and fishermen was simple and functional. It provided a compulsory contribution equal to 5% of the annual income. So, considering that a sailor earned an average of 200 *Forint* and a merchant captain about 500 *Forint* in a year, the contribution should have been 10 and 25 *Forint* respectively. At the age of 60, a sailor would have acquired the right to receive an annual allowance of 120 *Forint* and a captain of 300 *Forint*, in both cases 60% of the annual income. Austrian seafarers and fishermen working on foreign-flagged vessels could have voluntarily contributed to the pension fund (ASTs, GM, 1163, 3633 ex 1881).

23 Similarly, in June 1913, the law establishing the invalidity fund of the merchant marine (*Cassa invalidi della marina mercantile*) was approved in Italy too (GU, 167, law 1913/767).

24 Exceptions for the insurance of foreign subjects if employed only temporarily were allowed (BLI, 1913, 25, § 3).

ships and sport boats (ASTs, GM, 827, 32573).²⁵ As far as accident insurance was concerned, diseases such as cholera, plague, yellow fever and beriberi were equated to injuries (BLI, 1913, 25, § 3). In the case of seafarers, the law provided for the survivor's pension in case of the insured's death, both in the event of a shipwreck and for the vessel's disappearance (BLI, 1913, 25, §§ 4-5). A particular branch of the Institute for Accidents at Work of Trieste dedicated to the seafaring workforce had jurisdiction over all the Austrian vessels, shipping companies and ship-owners' consortia.

The law that insured seafarers in case of illness did not differ from the framework scheme dating back to 1888. The most interesting aspect of health insurance for seafarers concerns its organisational and institutional aspects. The law provided that a vessel crew had to be insured at the district sickness fund of the locality where the vessel was registered (BLI, 1913, 24, § 5). However, this provision seemed challenging to implement. Thus, shipping companies and ship-owners created their company sickness funds, organising them into a federation (*Federazione delle Casse Marittime di Malattia della Marina Mercantile*) whose headquarters was in Trieste. At the end of WWI, and following the extension of the jurisdiction of the Italian *Cassa invalidi della marina mercantile* to the newly acquired territories, the social partners of the Venezia Giulia commercial navigation (for employers, the *Federazione degli Armatori della Venezia Giulia*; for workers, the *Federazione della Gente di Mare*) decided to accept the conditions of the Italian collective contract for the recruitment of seafarers. From this circumstance arose the need to follow the "Italian model", creating something similar to what in Italy was called "business fund" (*cassa d'esercizio*) (ASTs, GM, 837, 1649). So, in 1921, the general sickness fund for seafarers in Julian March (*Cassa Generale di Malattia per Marittimi nella Venezia Giulia*) was created. Similarly, the Institute for Accidents at Work of Trieste's maritime branch was no longer functional in the post-war scenario. Therefore, in 1920, the Mutual insurance consortium for seafarers' work-related accidents (*Sindacato d'assicurazione mutua per gl'infortuni della gente di mare*) was established in Trieste.

Both 1913 Austrian seafarers' insurances became fully operational on 1 January 1914. They had only 6–7 months to test their effectiveness, and then the scenario and the priorities would change drastically.

TRIESTE WORKING-CLASS HERO: THE "IRON SAILOR"

With the roar of the "guns of August", Trieste immediately began to bleed dry of people (Fabi, 1996, 16, 61; Scartabellati, 2006, 161), jobs (Fabi, 1996, 20; Manenti, 2015, 78–80) and capital (Mezzoli, 2015). Following the entrance of the Anglo-French naval forces into the Adriatic basin on 13 August 1914, Trieste military authorities ordered the city's military evacuation too (Marzari, 1992). In 1915, Italy entered the war, a circumstance that led to the expulsion or internment of almost all of the city's Italian population (*regnicoli*). In the third year of war in 1916, war-weariness was beginning to be felt significantly, in Trieste as elsewhere. In particular, food shortages, the deterioration of working conditions and the rise in prices due to inflation resulted in civil and industrial unrest throughout the Empire. The situation also worried the military, who feared that a possible home front collapse could affect the soldiers' willingness to fight (Obinger, 2018, 78–79). In that desolation, a (working-class) hero was needed.

On the eve of WWI, Trieste was a *great city/* port, the fourth largest city in the Empire (Cattaruzza, 1979, 5). It was also a synthesis of the political-economic architecture and of the moral and material culture that the 19th century produced in its breathtaking race towards *progress*. In that context, some had run better and faster than others, namely the maritime industry and, particularly, the shipping sector (Cattaruzza, 2002, 176–178). From 1879, the year that marked the beginning of the merchant marine reform process, to the eve of WWI, Austrian industrial navigation (i.e., steam navigation) experienced an amazing evolution. The tonnage of Austrian commercial steam shipping increased sevenfold, and the number of registered seamen nearly tripled. It is indeed appropriate to say that in the context of the Austrian capitalist economy, a seafaring industrial revolution was taking place.

The proscenium of that formidable success was Trieste. Here the tonnage of the commercial steam navigation grew by five times, and the seafaring workforce more than doubled. In 1912, more than two-thirds of the tonnage of Austrian industrial shipping and its workforce – which consisted mainly of men – were concentrated in Trieste. Moreover, 60% of Austrian steamers also had Trieste as their home port.

25 An interesting aspect of the seafarers' social security laws is that they used different criteria from the Austrian framework law on merchant marine (BLI, 1879, 65) to distinguish between different types of maritime navigation. The 1913 laws distinguished between "small" (vessels less than 50 gross tons) and "large" navigation (vessels over 50 gross tons). Since the laws provided for the compulsory registration of all Austrian maritime enterprises with the Institute for Accidents at Work of Trieste, we know that the size of the Austrian merchant marine on the eve of WWI was 759 units: 410 businesses related to the "large" navigation and 349 businesses related to the "small" one (Rapporto, 1915, 3).

Table 4: Austrian industrial navigation.²⁶

	1879	1890	1900	1912
Steamers	101	135	199	394
Tonnage	60,139	87,474	190,620	422,368
Crew	2,432	2,857	3,919	6,667

Table 5: Trieste's industrial navigation.²⁷

	1879	1879 - %	1890	1890 - %	1900	1900 - %	1912	1912 - %
Steamers	93	92%	113	84%	127	64%	236	60%
Tonnage	59,932	99%	84,584	97%	156,482	82%	324,357	77%
Crew	2,391	98%	2,707	95%	3,207	82%	5,025	75%

In this picture, it is also necessary to mention the extraordinary increase in industrial production and commercial traffic that crossed the city in the same years (Cattaruzza, 2002, 176–184), a circumstance also due to Trieste's intermodal transport system.²⁸ As an example, in 1913, only in the area of the free port of Trieste (617,000m², five docks, 3,100m of quays) 2,146 vessels (both steam and sailing ships; overall 3,042,403 tons) docked to unload the goods they transported (Statistica-Statistik, 1913, 149). A trade of this magnitude naturally represented a significant opportunity for ashore maritime work, first for the (male) workers who dealt with loading and unloading goods from the ships' holds, then also for the shipyards' workers. As Joy Parr highlighted in her study on Ontario's industrial communities, the "specialisation" of a community in a particular type of economy (i.e., one-industry community) also has consequences in its inner workings regarding class and gender relations (i.e., jobs' sex labelling and "gendered" communities) (Parr, 1990). As for our case, it is possible to affirm that, considering its economic characteristics, Trieste was a "working-class" and "men's city" during the last decades of the 19th and the first of the 20th centuries at least. At the same time, in the "West" a direct interdependence between industrial capitalism and patriarchal gender relations was settling down: the male sole-breadwinner paradigm was establishing itself as the dominant working-class family model (Rose, 1986, 114; Soccombe, 1986, 54). As Valerie

Burton has shown, seafaring labour – maybe, the entire spectrum of maritime work – is particularly receptive to the interactions between modes of production, relations among social classes and power relationships between genders. The development of industrial (i.e., steam) navigation, and the subsequent formation of social relations shaped by industrial capitalism, exposed seafarers to a greater extent to the norms and conventions of the ashore communities. Thus, more or less wittingly, in the late 19th–early 20th century, also seafarers – and the other maritime workers – gave credit to the male sole-breadwinner industrial capitalist *diktat* (Burton, 1991, 180–181, 189 et passim).

During WWI, most of the activities related to commercial shipping and fishery stopped. The issue of the social security system for seamen was no longer on the agenda. Now, pre-war seamen, fishermen and maritime workers were infantrymen on the battlefields or sailors of the imperial navy. As in other cases other than Trieste and the Littoral, women, children, and the elderly were "only" wives, children and parents to support before the war. They belonged only to the private sphere. However, with the prolongation of the war, the question relating to the livelihood of those people's categories assumed a public and "strategic" character.

At the beginning of July 1916, posters began to appear in the city announcing an unusual event for Trieste (cf. Benco, 1919a, 181): the inauguration of the "Iron Sailor" (*marinaio in ferro*), one of the many nail men (*Nagelmänner*) erected in the

26 Source: Statistica-Statistik, (year 1879) 6; (year 1890) 6; (year 1900) 12; (year 1912) 12.

27 Source: Statistica-Statistik, (year 1879) 3; (year 1890) 3; (year 1900) 3; (year 1912) 3.

28 The port of Trieste was connected to the railway in 1857.

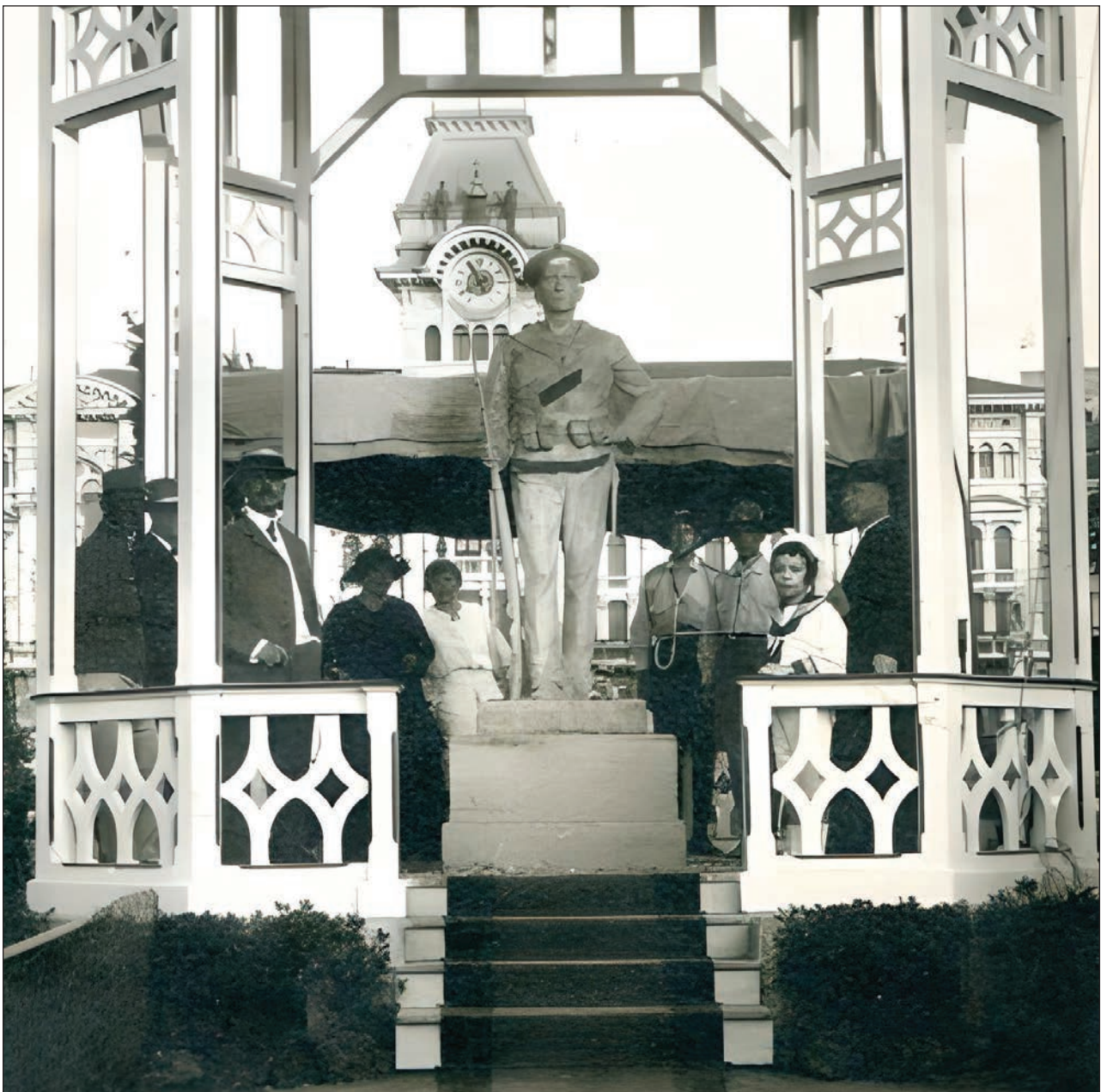


Figure 1: Inauguration of the “Iron Sailor” nail man (Trieste, Piazza Grande, 9 July 1916) (Source: CMSPCT-SZ, f. 10, it. 19).

Austro-Hungarian and German Empires during WWI.²⁹ The occurrence scheduled on 9 July 1916 in Piazza Grande (now Piazza Unità d’Italia) was promoted by the “Società Triestina Austria” as-

sociation. According to their intention, the “Iron Sailor” was “destined to [become] destination of pitiful pilgrimage by those citizens who, with the corresponding offering of their forces, would like

29 They were wooden monuments in which nails of iron, silver or gold were hammered in exchange for offerings, later donated to charitable cause (Bellucci, 1919, 1–34). Interestingly enough, in the Ottoman Empire, a “wooden cannon” – called “Souvenir of Bravery” in Turkish *Hâtra-i Celâdet Topu* – was established during WWI too. In November 1915, the activists of the Association for the Support of Needy Soldiers’ Families (*Asker Âilelerine Yardımcı Hanımlar Cemiyeti*) were granted permission to install a wooden canon in Istanbul’s Beyazıt Square. Also in this case, contributors could drive a nail into the monument in return for an offering. The proceeds would have been donated to the families of the soldiers, particularly the *muinsiz aile*, the soldiers’ families whose sole male breadwinners were enlisted (van Os, 2011, 269; Akin, 2014, 22 et passim).

Unter den Auspicien der Societä Triestina Austria	Auspice la Societä Triestina Austria	Pod pokroviteljstvom težaskega društva „Avstrija“
Matrose in Eisen	Marinaio in ferro	Železni mornar
zu Gunsten des	pro	u prid
Witwen- und Waisenfonds der im Kriege gefallenen triestiner	fondo orfani e vedove dei triestini caduti in guerra.	zalogu za vdove in sirote v :: vojni padlih tržačanov. ::
Goldnagel . . . Kronen 5.—	Chiodo d'oro . . . Cor. 5.—	Zlati ključ . . . Krone 5.—
Silbernagel . . . „ 3.—	Chiodo d'argento . . „ 3.—	Srebrni ključ . . . „ 3.—
Eisennagel. . . „ 0.50	Chiodo di ferro . . „ 0.50	Železni ključ . . . „ 0.50

Figure 2: Flyer in German, Italian and Slovenian showing the prices of the nails for the “Iron Sailor” (Source: CMSPCT-DT, 15).

to pay due tribute to the heroism of the brave ones who, as an unshakeable bulwark, stand in defence of Trieste and the great homeland”. All proceeds would be donated to the relief foundation in favour of the widows and orphans of Trieste’s conscripts (BCAH-SM, 14).

The day following the inauguration, the front page of the newspaper *La Gazzetta di Trieste* read:

It was time! Trieste, the kind city whose big heart wins over anyone who visits it. Trieste, which for its traditions well deserves the appellation of ‘most faithful’, could not wait any longer. It could not be inferior to its sister cities in Austria and not possess its “iron man” and express, even in this form – a visible and material symbol – its iron will for victory and sacrifice. Now she had it! [...] In the middle of Piazza Grande’s garden, in an elegant kiosk painted in white with red trimmings, a virile figure of a sailor stands, with his eyes turned towards the sea and his weapon at his foot. [...] The handsome sailor, whom an artist’s hand raised here in front of us in the centre of the city of Trieste, must be for us a symbol of our defensive strength.³⁰

30 *La Gazzetta di Trieste*, 10 July 1916: La solenne inaugurazione del “Marinaio in ferro”, 1.

31 *La Gazzetta di Trieste*, 10 July 1916: La solenne inaugurazione del “Marinaio in ferro”, 1.

Naturally, all the civil and military authorities of the city participated in the celebration, “along with people made up of citizens of all classes”.³¹ The occasion was ecumenical, both from the point of view of class belonging and national affiliation. For its “iron man”, Trieste was called to mobilise as a unique community of people. After all, nothing different could be expected from “Societä Triestina Austria”, an association that had as its first statutory purpose the “union and solidarity among people of chaste customs and patriotic sentiments”, at least formally, independently from any other identity attribute (Societä, 1907, 3). In any case, due to the peculiarities of the city’s economic system and labour market, that “handsome sailor” – who as a civilian would undoubtedly have been employed in the maritime sector – could have been the son, the brother, the betrothed, the husband or, finally, the father of any Triestiner regardless of national affiliation.

However, it must be said that at least a part of Trieste forgot its “iron man” over time. In May 1918, someone wondered what happened to the monument and addressed the question to a newspaper, likely the socialist newspaper *Il Lavoratore*. The answer, which appeared in the column “Petty correspondence” (*Piccola posta*), was blunt and harsh:

“We know nothing of the miserable end of the ‘Iron Sailor’, which was... wooden!”.³² This response was noticed by a reader who decided to entrust the information he had about the “Iron Sailor” to another newspaper, *La Gazzetta di Trieste*. So, we learn that the “iron man” was currently placed in the spaces of the Trieste’s War Exhibition (*Esposizione di guerra*) and that, thanks to that charity mode, more than 35,000 *Krone* had already been raised. The editorial staff of *La Gazzetta di Trieste* also decided to reply, asserting that they could not understand how some were unable to see around the “Iron Sailor” “a swarm of children whose greatest support – the father – is gone anymore and that, weakly supported by mourning mothers, extend their hands in supplication towards that symbol”.³³ From that moment on, there was no further news on the “Iron Sailor” until the end of October 1918, when the city uprisings marked *de facto* the end of WWI in Trieste. During these uprisings, the crowd tore its “iron man” to pieces in the same square where his effigy was unveiled. The remains were then burned and thrown into the sea (Benco, 1919b, 127; F-CMSA, 8963).

Trieste’s “Iron Sailor” was not the only “iron man” of WWI. Also in 1916, Jack Cornwell, a 16-year-old working-class boy gave a lesson of gallantry and manhood to the entire British Empire. However, in this case, we are rather dealing with a “golden boy”, where the hero is the “son of the nation”: the one boy’s heroism and sacrifice stood for the martyrdom of a whole valiant generation of young men (Conly, 2009, 160–192). In contrast, Trieste’s “Iron Sailor” was the material portrayal of the manly and mature “call of duty”. It was the prototype of the working-class hero and male (sole) breadwinner who, in peacetime, had the responsibility of feeding and supporting his family while, in times of war, was called to defend the safety of the whole community to which he belonged and that the war put in danger. Therefore, in this context and in the case of Trieste’s “Iron Sailor”, it seems that other forces were at play and had taken over, unlike the Czech scenario depicted by Tara Zahra where, during the conflict, “each nation only cares for its own” (Zahra, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The relationships that bind philanthropists and the poor are complex and perverse, and the case of charitable activities in favour of the Austrian seafarers and their families during the 19th and early 20th centuries is no exception. In our case,

they went far beyond the “mere” relations between classes determined by economic power relations but involved cultural, moral and even “population politics” variables. They are perfectly situated within the framework of power relations depicted by Stuard Woolf, where the poor were only partially one of the products of the socio-economic context of reference. Rather, as Stuart Woolf noted, the poor were poor also because they were “drawn that way” by the elites. Moreover, “the essence of this construct was the acceptance by the poor themselves of a condition of dependence on others” (Woolf, 1986, 63). As we have seen from the article in *Rivista Marittima*, the charity was aimed precisely at helping the working poor to accept with greater resignation – and, at the same time, to work more and better – their condition of poverty as desired by God. However, before the elites could spare any loose change, it was necessary to take a preliminary step: to separate the “deserving” poor who, due to their moral qualities, had earned charity from the “undeserving” ones who, for the good of the community, had to be removed, ostracised, possibly, locked up (Woolf, 1978, 1062–1063). In this regard, it seems that in Trieste in the mid-19th century, for some of those “undeserving” poor, the practice was that of being kidnapped and put to forced labour by city institutions. That labour was seafaring, and it represented the first form of “charity” that young, male and a little “hot-headed” individuals received from the city elites. In this way, those young men began a hazardous, precarious, poorly paid and badly reputed profession. A job that would have required constant recourse, in particular by his family members, to the support measures offered by the charitable foundations set up, financed and administered by the same elite who had previously marginalised him and aggravated his socio-economic condition.

Priorities change over time, regardless of the will of a few influential people. Although the Spring of Peoples in Austria faded immediately, after 1848 everything was different in the Empire. Moreover, in the second half of the 19th century, a new sensibility towards workers’ agencies and the state’s role in dealing with social issues emerged in Europe (Moses, 2018, 57). As noted by Michael Keating, welfare can also represent an essential instrument for the territorial integration of a state. In particular, because “it provided equal standards of service across the national territory, [...] aimed at compensating for economic change and drawing underdeveloped territories into the national economy” (Keating, 2021, 331). Regarding the economic

³² *La Gazzetta di Trieste*, 8 May 1918: Contro la carità, 2.

³³ *La Gazzetta di Trieste*, 8 May 1918: Contro la carità, 2.



Figure 3: 1 Kronen stamp, whose proceeds would have been donated to the Royal Imperial relief found for Austrian military widows and orphans. In the image, the wording “The fallen heroes for the Homeland” (Source: AST-GM, 1163, 15634).

unification of the Imperial territories, in 1775, Maria Theresa created the Cisleithanian common market, and one of the most significant reforms of the years 1848–1849 was the establishment of the customs union between the Austrian and the Hungarian territories of the Empire (Komlos, 1983, 29, 25). In that context, the laws relating to the workers' social policy scheme of 1887–1888 – in force on all the Cisleithanian territories – were conforming to that spirit, representing a piece in the picture of the Austrian post-1848 "revolution from above". In this case, however, it was not the market or capital at the centre of the political and governance agenda but labour. Moreover, as Julia Moses noted, "industrial modernity, characterised by factory work, male breadwinners and urban living, created new social problems that requires novel solutions" (Moses, 2016, 3). Nevertheless, Austrian seafaring labour was not even touched by that wave. Again, it appears that the safety and well-being of the seamen and their families remained dependent on the will of, in the words of Karl Polanyi, a certain "society that was not subject to the laws of the state, but, on the contrary, subjected the state to its own laws" (Polanyi, 1944, 116).

When, in 1914, WWI broke out, the social security programme for seafarers had just been approved. So, it was no longer an item on anyone's agenda; in any case, the war was bringing about other and new issues that were higher priority. On the one hand, the war represented a total upheaval of reality; on the other, some daily life realities found themselves in the circumstances of showing their most pertinent face. Besides, some issues took on new meanings too. This is the case for Trieste and, in general, Austrian seafarers who saw themselves being transfigured into the nail man "Iron Sailor", Trieste's WWI "iron man". Trieste's "Iron Sailor" indeed represented a male figure with

somewhat rough manners, but also gallant because he was courageous and loyal; bold and, at the same time, reassuring because he was considered solid and reliable; finally, politic and of-the-people at the same time because he was "ecumenical" from the point of view of national affiliation. The "wandering kid" who had to be captured, embarked by force and, therefore, removed for the common good of the 1850s during WWI had become the stable working-class family man and sole male breadwinner "next door" who was fighting to preserve the common good, everyone's security and well-being, and the *status quo* too. Thus, between the 19th and 20th centuries, we witness a dramatic twist in the masculinity of the Austrian seafarers, and of those of Trieste in particular: from embodying the "immature" – i.e., in need of charity due to poverty, thus unable to support themselves and their family – and marginalised masculinity of the mid-19th century urban underclass, to representing a typology of those that Raewyn W. Connell identifies as "men of reason" (Connell, 1995, 164–181), so, in our case, complicit masculinity to the hegemonic patriarchal culture. The degree and quality of the transience are astounding. The question of how close to reality this construct was and how much it resulted from ideology is a matter that needs further research. Anyway, what is certain is that the war brought to light and magnified a process underway before the outbreak of the conflict. As Valerie Burton noted, industrial (i.e., stem) shipping capitalism restructured seafarers' masculinity and breadwinner roles (Burton, 1991, 196). This observation seems to be true also for the case of Trieste and Austrian seafaring. The reasons for this circumstance must be explored in the new mechanisms and exigencies of a social, economic and cultural nature triggered by the extraordinary exploit of the Austrian and Triestine shipping industry of the last decades of the 19th century.

VARNE VODE. AVSTRIJSKI POMORŠČAKI MED DOBRODELNOSTJO IN SOCIALNO ZAŠČITO, OKOLI 1850–1920

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POVZETEK

Namen članka je izpostaviti značilnosti in kritične točke ukrepov, namenjenih zagotavljanju "varnosti" avstrijskih pomorščakov, njihovih družin in skupnosti, ki so jim pripadali, od Gründerzeit v petdesetih letih 19. stoletja do zgodnjega povojnega obdobja. Delo v pomorstvu je v številnih pogledih zelo tvegan poklic. Zlasti v preteklosti je delavca, običajno moškega, in njegovo družino, nenehno izpostavljalo tveganju, da zapadejo v revščino. Obračanje na dobrodelne ustanove v času delovne dobe in ob odhodu iz službe zaradi starosti je bilo zato nekaj običajnega. Kar zadeva družine, je bilo iskanje pomoči pri tovrstnih ustanovah skoraj neizogibna okoliščina v primeru nezmožnosti glave družine za delo. Zato lahko, poleg dela in kapitala, dobrodelne ustanove štejejo za tretji steber, na katerem je slonel trgovski ladijski sektor v avstrijskem cesarstvu. V zadnjih desetletjih 19. stoletja se je v Avstriji zgodila prava pomorska industrijska revolucija, ki je korenito spremenila družbenogospodarsko okolje, ne pa tudi okvira socialne varnosti pomorščakov. Kljub temu sta se družbenogospodarska vloga in javna podoba pomorščakov spremenili.

Ključne besede: Socialna varnost pomorščakov, obvezno nezgodno zavarovanje pri delu, obvezno zdravstveno zavarovanje, avstrijska ladjedelniška industrija, moškost poglavarja družine v industrijski dobi

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