# Mercenary gentlemen? The transnational service of foreign quarterdeck officers in the Royal Navy of the American and French Wars, 1775-1815*

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## Abstract

In the late eighteenth century, like most European fleets, the British Royal Navy still employed some foreign officers. This phenomenon, almost completely unexplored, seemingly embodies a contradiction between the national and the transnational meanings of honour. Using archival and printed sources, this article examines the foreign presence, or lack thereof, in four distinct categories of 'quarterdeck' officer: commissioned officers, 'young gentlemen' (aspirant officers), surgeons and assistant surgeons, and a final miscellaneous group fulfilling special tasks, sometimes ashore. The peculiar values attached to the officer class, and the relative social and occupational positioning of these four categories, serve to test the real motives behind 'national' acceptance and exclusion: beyond the opposing discourses of gentlemanly and professional cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and patriotic duty, loyalty, and emerging anti-mercenarism on the other, the levels of foreign presence among Navy officers should be explained mainly with reference to supply and demand on the international labour migration market. The distinction between natives and foreigners was culturally and politically meaningful in a wartime context, and strategically deployed by various actors to regulate access and exclusion, but it can also operate as a red herring for the social historian. This has broader implications for the way in which we conceptualise honour, patriotism, and the nation at the turn of the nineteenth century.

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In August 1801, near the end of the French Revolutionary Wars, the British Admiralty had misplaced a Russian. The Lords Commissioners, prompted by the Russian ambassador, urged the Navy Board to 'endeavour to discover in what manner Lieutenant Goloskenoff, a Russian Officer, serving onboard the *Argo* in the year 1799, has been disposed of'. After about a week of investigations, the Navy Board reported that Goloskenoff had entered HMS *Argo* in August 1798 'for a passage to Lisbon, by Admiralty order', had been discharged from it on 22 June 1799, joined HMS *Santa Dorothea* two days later, 'and appears to have been living, onboard, on 31st August 1800, the date of the last Muster Book received' from the ship. The Admiralty immediately notified the Russian ambassador, and then wrote to the Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, under whom the *Santa Dorothea* was deployed, ordering him to check 'whether he is onboard her, or if not, what is become of him'.[1] Unfortunately, the last muster book for 1800, which the Admiralty only received in September 1801, bears a small note next to Theodore Goloskenoff's name: 'drowned [at] Mahon' on 6 December.[2] The young officer was dead, and for almost a year nobody noticed, because nobody even knew that he was in the service – or cared about it.

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[1] Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich [N.M.M.], ADM/B/202, Board of Admiralty, In-Letters, August-November 1801, Navy Office to Evan Nepean, 4 Sept. 1801.
[2] The National Archives, Kew [T.N.A.], ADM 36/14388, Muster Book of HMS *Santa Dorotea*, Nov.-Dec. 1800, n. 882.

At first sight, this may appear peculiar, for various reasons. A Russian gentleman, we shall see, was absolutely not meant to be in the British fleet, in the immediate aftermath of diplomatic rupture in 1800. The *Santa Dorothea* was also not an inactive ship rotting away somewhere in the back of beyond: between 1800 and 1801 it led the successful blockade of Savona, rescued the Duke of Savoy and the gallery of Florence from the French, transported troops to Egypt, managed Tripoline neutrality, and captured several prizes.[3] The foreigner Goloskenoff was in a crucial theatre of war and at the centre of the action, yet seemingly hidden to the Admiralty's eye. His story simultaneously casts light on the workings of the state and on the meanings of 'national' delimitations.

The service of foreign officers in the late eighteenth-century Royal Navy was a complex, infrequent, and often informal affair, of which we still know relatively little. I use the term 'foreign' unsubtly, as most contemporary naval sources deployed it: someone who came from abroad, more often than not legally alien and culturally 'other'. By 'quarterdeck officer', I mean the commissioned sea officers, the trainee 'cadets', and those of the warrant officers who enjoyed unrestricted access to the wardroom and quarterdeck of naval vessels – the three groups, in short, which could claim gentlemanly status.[4]

Certainly, the British Admiralty's *Regulations and Instructions* were not very welcoming to foreign gentlemen: the captain of a Royal Navy vessel, they stated in 1790, 'is not… to entertain any Foreigners to serve in the Ship, who are Officers, or Gentlemen, without Orders from the Admiralty'.[5] By 1808, the rules had become even stricter: a captain was not to permit 'any Foreigners, who are Officers or Gentlemen, being received on board

[3] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Jan.-June 1858, p. 220.
[4] For an in-depth social analysis of these categories see: E. Wilson, *A Social History of British Naval Officers, 1775-1815* (Woodbridge, 2017), esp. ch. 8 on 'gentility'.
[5] *Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea*, 13th edn (London, 1790), pp. 31-2.

the Ship, either as passengers, or as part of the crew, without orders from his Superior Officer, or the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty'.[6] Espionage and betrayal were obvious concerns, as was foreign influence more generally. Official regulations, however, were by no means assiduously followed if practical reasons suggested otherwise. Admiralty oversight, as in the case of Goloskenoff, existed alongside a complex substrate of personal connections, individual decisions, but, most importantly, I argue, a transnational professional employment market, in which national allegiances often worked as mere rhetorical enhancement, overlaid onto a basic structure of supply and demand. In this context, the Navy serves as an excellent case study for examining the utilitarianism behind fluid constructions of honour, patriotism, and national belonging at the turn of the nineteenth century. After discussing the historiographical background, and the reasons why the employment of foreign officers was not unacceptable *a priori*, this article will use different categories of officer, and their relative social and occupational positioning, to test the real motives behind national acceptance and exclusion.

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Historians have identified important strands of cosmopolitanism in the daily lives of the eighteenth-century British elites, ranging from taste and attitudes to a shared 'European' intellectual milieu.[7] More specifically, European Army and Navy officers are often seen as all rather similar to each other, a transnational 'community' and professional class, with analogous training, values, etiquette, concepts of honour, and even joint experience of service

[6] *Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea* (London, 1808), p. 145.
[7] See e.g.: L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1996), pp. 177-9; S. Barczewski, 'Is Britishness always British? Country houses, travel and the cosmopolitan identity of the British elite in the eighteenth century', in *The British Abroad since the Eighteenth Century, Volume 1: Travellers and Tourists*, ed. M. Farr and X. Guégan (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 38-55.

in various forces – part of what Stephen Conway has termed 'military Europe'.[8] Throughout the century, the professionalization of officer corps proceeded in most countries (albeit at differing rates), overlaying and sometimes eventually replacing older, equally shared ideals of nobility; this was particularly apparent in navies, where the skills required were intrinsically professional.[9] 'Honour', however, intended as a code of conduct and badge of social belonging, retained paramount importance, despite some changes of guard in the social composition of the military and naval ranks, and transformations in what honourable conduct itself entailed.[10] Honour is the principle which underlay the concept of parole for enemy officers who were captured, or the many friendly dinners and sports between the victors and the vanquished, as the bodies of the killed were still warm.[11] A few days after the bloody battle of the Glorious First of June, in 1794, the British midshipmen aboard HMS *Defence* went ashore to play a game of cricket with the French prisoners, and even bought one of them a new hat when he destroyed his own in an attempt to catch the ball.[12]

At the same time, this very concept of honour in theory made the boundaries between services impassable, because its origins in the etiquette of the military aristocracy partly tied

[8] S. Conway, 'The British Army, "Military Europe", and the American War of Independence', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, lxvii (2010), 69-100, esp. pp. 69-70, 85-95; *Eighteenth-Century Naval Officers: A Transnational Perspective*, ed. E. Wilson, A. Hammar and J. Seerup (Cham, 2019); Wilson, *Social History*, pp. 174-83.

[9] E. Wilson, J. Seerup and A. Hammar, 'The education and careers of naval officers in the long eighteenth century: an international perspective', *Journal for Maritime Research*, xvii (2015), 17-33; Wilson et al., *Eighteenth-Century Naval Officers*; Wilson, *Social History*, esp. pp. 159-61; T. Roeder, 'Professionalism and training of Army officers in Britain and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1740-90', *Marine Corps University Journal*, ix (2018), 74-96. On the continued military importance of the nobility see, however: C. Storrs and H. M. Scott, 'The military revolution and the European nobility, c. 1600-1800', *War in History*, iii (1996), 1-41.

[10] N. A. M. Rodger, 'Honour and duty at sea, 1660-1815', *Historical Research*, lxxv (2002), 425-47; Wilson, *Social History*, pp. 196-202. On the social background of these developments in Britain see: Colley, *Britons*, ch. 4. On British Army officers' honour see: A. N. Gilbert, 'Law and honour among eighteenth-century British Army officers', *The Historical Journal*, xix (1976), 75-87.

[11] On parole see: R. Morieux, 'French prisoners of war, conflicts of honour, and social inversions in England, 1744-1783', *The Historical Journal*, lvi (2013), 55-88.

[12] W. H. Dillon, *A Narrative of My Professional Adventures (1790-1839)*, ed. Michael A. Lewis (2 vols., London, 1953), i. 148.

it with obligations to King and (later on) Country. Further, the centralization and nationalization of militaries proceeded apace in the eighteenth century, removing some (if by no means all) of the traditional opportunities for officers' transnational service.[13] In 1792, upon receiving employment applications from some Dutch captains, hostile members of the French Naval Committee wondered whether it was 'natural to think that an officer who has proven worthy of his motherland, and who has the right to expect her recompense for his talents and services, so lets himself go as to request employment with a foreign power': in Revolutionary France, devotion to the *patrie* was a sacred duty and a mark of value.[14] The heightened patriotic rhetoric of the Age of Revolutions, and later of Napoleonic Europe, emphasized the importance of national loyalty, as opposed to transnational class allegiance. In this context, in Britain, the patriotic, professional, 'quasi-bourgeois' gentlemen manning naval quarterdecks became a positive model, to be contrasted with a foppish, effeminate, and corrupt foreign-loving aristocracy.[15] For naval officers, it has been argued, patriotism was both intensely heartfelt and a strategy to bolster social status.[16] Loyalty and ideological positioning always coexisted with a practical and career-focused view of the wars.[17] This

[13] Storrs and Scott, 'Military revolution', pp. 10-11, 19-20, 22.
[14] '*En effet, est-il naturel de penser qu'un officier qui a bien mérité de sa patrie, et qui par ses talents et ses services a le droit d'en attendre la récompense, s'abandonne ainsi pour demander de l'emploi chez une puissance étrangère. C'est se présenter, vous en conviendrez, sous des auspices peu favorables aux yeux de la nation qui connaît le mieux l'attachement que l'on doit à sa patrie.*': M. J. Mavidal and M. E. Laurent, *Archives parlementaires de 1787 à 1860: Recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des Chambres françaises – Première série (1787 à 1799)* (84 vols., Paris, 1879-1913 [1894]), xliv. 585-6 (5 June 1792). I found this source thanks to a mention in C. J. Tozzi, *Nationalizing France's Army: Foreign, Black, and Jewish Troops in the French Military, 1715-1831* (Charlottesville VA and London, 2016), p. 75.
[15] Rodger, 'Honour', pp. 442-7. On the gendering of eighteenth-century patriotic discourse see K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 185-205, 212-23; K. Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 36-40. Evan Wilson has demonstrated that most commissioned officers came from professional or commercial families: E. Wilson, 'Social background and promotion prospects in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815', *English Historical Review*, cxxxi (2016), 570-95; Wilson, *Social History*.
[16] Colley, *Britons*, pp. 195-9.
[17] E. Vincent Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars against Revolutionary France 1792-1802* (London and New York, 2018), pp. 186-7, 197-8.

pragmatism, however, was often obscured in rhetorical conceptualizations of military conflict, by contemporaries but even more prominently by the subsequent generations.

Sir William Sidney Smith, one of the most famous British sea officers of the French Wars, had served in the Swedish Navy during the preceding peace, when he was otherwise underemployed.[18] Writing in 1839, his first biographer (Edward Howard, ex-naval officer himself), otherwise very pleased with the 'chivalric character' of his hero, flatly condemns the 'mercenary' chapter of Smith's life. Howard especially deplores the death, in an engagement against the Swedish, of Captain Dennison, another brilliant young Englishman who was serving in the Russian Navy. Smith, at the time in the Swedish squadron, could allegedly recognize the hand of a countryman in the skilled way in which Dennison's ship was conducted, but found himself in the paradoxical position of having to fight him, and the result was a waste for their nation. It was unjustifiable, 'unnatural', and 'revolting', in the eyes of the biographer, that these gentlemen 'degraded themselves to mercenaries in a quarrel, on opposite sides, in which they could have had no patriotic, and hardly a public interest'. For the youth, he bluntly concludes, 'it is a crime against God and against man to draw the sword of the slayer in any other save their country's cause'.[19]

These were merely the first stages in the development of what Sarah Percy has termed the 'international anti-mercenary norm': over the course of the nineteenth century, transnational military service attracted increasing stigma. For states, the (overt) use of non-national military manpower consolidated as a synonym of humiliating weakness; for individuals, fighting for reasons other than the defence of their own country came to be cast

[18] For a summary of Smith's career see: R. Morriss, 'Smith, Sir (William) Sidney (1764-1840)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (2004) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25940.
[19] *Memoirs of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, K. C. B., &c.* (2 vols., London, 1839), i. 4, 35-9. On the biographer see: J. Hinings, 'Howard, Edward (*bap.* 1793, *d.* 1841)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (2004) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13894.

as utterly shameful and immoral.[20] The rhetoric of patriotism aligned with the strengthening of states' sovereignty and monopoly of violence, as they lay new claims to control their citizens' military activities, both inside and outside the national territory.[21] The American and French Wars sit on the very edge of this systemic change, and officers, because of their ideals of honour, were in some ways the vanguard target. Nonetheless, we should not fall into the trap of rhetorical and/or *a posteriori* understandings of an era in which transnational military service was overall still very possible and common.

As argued by sociologist Rogers Brubaker, when looking at social and historical phenomena we often suffer from a 'generalized coding bias in favor of ethnicity': 'the "spin" put on conflicts by participants may conceal as much as it reveals, and… the representation of conflicts as conflicts between ethnic or national groups may obscure the interests at stake and the dynamics involved'.[22] Officers' own patriotic or cosmopolitan positioning, or even belief, was not what *drove* their employment, even in a national military. Of course, the three great wars at the end of the 'long eighteenth century' were fought between states, and by then, for some of them, we can perhaps even say 'nation-states'. The scholar bypassing this fact could easily be accused of an outdated form of historical materialism, or of ignoring Ockham's Razor in a quest to do away with nations. However, such accusations do not stand if we observe the recruitment practices that were in use among virtually all contemporary European navies.

First, the late eighteenth-century Royal Navy certainly had no qualms per se when it came to the enlistment of foreigners. It recruited thousands of foreign common seamen,

[20] S. Percy, *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations* (Oxford, 2007).
[21] J. E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton NJ, 1994); B. R. Posen, 'Nationalism, the mass army, and military power', *International Security*, xviii (1993), 80-124.
[22] R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge MA and London, 2004), p. 18.

perhaps between 8 and 14% of its total manpower during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.[23] These men encountered very few legal and professional barriers to enlistment, mainly because their contribution was badly needed: the fleet, put under enormous pressure by wartime operations, faced an ongoing shortage of skilled hands within Britain and Ireland, and even from British imperial territories.[24] The situation for officers was nearly the reverse. In most cases, we shall see, Britain had *too many* qualified officers to fit them all in its ships. This, even more than reluctance to put foreigners in positions of leadership and responsibility, accounts for the latter's relatively low numbers.

Indeed, the British Army of the American and French Wars was just as multinational as the Navy, if not more: foreign regiments were usually recruited in block, and they often came with their own officers.[25] These men *were* put in leadership roles. One important difference is that, for the most part, they commanded other foreigners, rather than Britons. Would British sailors have accepted the authority of a foreign officer? We may not ever know for certain, but what we do know is that most eighteenth-century foremast men were remarkably mobile in their employment, and had frequently served in all sorts of vessels and under all sorts of flags.[26]

Moreover, other European fleets, including some long-established ones, did very well by appointing foreign officers and captains. Even the Dutch Navy, while largely officered by

[23] S. Caputo, 'Foreign seamen and the British Navy, 1793-1815' (PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2019), ch. 1.
[24] Caputo, 'Foreign seamen'; S. Caputo, 'Alien seamen in the British Navy, British law, and the British state, c.1793-c.1815', *The Historical Journal*, lxii (2019), 685-707.
[25] See e.g.: S. Conway, 'Continental European soldiers in British imperial service, c.1756-1792', *English Historical Review*, cxxix (2014), 79-106; K. Linch, 'The politics of foreign recruitment in Britain during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in *Transnational Soldiers: Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era*, ed. N. Arielli and B. Collins (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 50-66.
[26] See e.g.: J. van Lottum, J. Lucassen and L. Heerma van Voss, 'Sailors, national and international labour markets and national identity, 1600-1850', in *Shipping and Economic Growth 1350-1850*, ed. R. W. Unger (Leiden and Boston, 2011), pp. 309-51; N. Frykman, 'Seamen on late eighteenth-century European warships', *International Review of Social History*, liv (2009), 67-93.

native men, employed a handful of foreigners.[27] The officer corps of the *ancien régime* French Navy counted a fairly cosmopolitan nobility, Irish refugees, and even middle-class members who deemed it convenient to pass themselves off as foreign nobles, to bolster their social prestige.[28] In turn, a few Frenchmen rose to prominent positions in the Spanish Navy (although the personnel exchanges between the two fleets were less significant than their ongoing cooperation might suggest).[29] A sample study has shown that in the Dano-Norwegian Navy the proportion of foreign-born officers went from at least 17% in the seventeenth century to a still sizeable 8% by the end of the eighteenth.[30] Dutchmen, Germans and Britons were lured in by the prospect of being appointed at a higher rank than they could have achieved in their home fleets.[31] The Russian Navy not only sent its cadets abroad for training, but, especially early in the century, relied almost entirely on foreign sea officers and shipwrights, who were deliberately sought by the Tsars to establish a modern navy and then bring it up to international standards.[32] Even by our period, it employed many non-Russian gentlemen, notably Britons (especially Scots) and Dutchmen.[33] Some were still serving

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[27] J. R. Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (St. John's, Newfoundland, 2011), pp. 160-1.
[28] M. Vergé-Franceschi, *La marine française au XVIII^e siècle. Guerres Administration Exploration* (Paris, 1996), pp. 395-401.
[29] Vergé-Franceschi, *Marine française*, pp. 398-9.
[30] H. C. Johansen, 'Danish sailors, 1570-1870', in *'Those Emblems of Hell'? European Sailors and the Maritime Labour Market, 1570-1870*, ed. P. van Royen, J. Bruijn and J. Lucassen (St John's, Newfoundland, 1997), pp. 233-52, at pp. 249-50.
[31] G. Sætra, 'The international labour market for seamen, 1600-1900: Norway and Norwegian participation', in van Royen et al., *'Those Emblems of Hell'?*, pp. 173-210, at pp. 181, 184-5, 190-1.
[32] B. Davies, 'Russia: the officers of the Baltic fleet', in Wilson et al., *Eighteenth-Century Naval Officers*, pp. 185-212, at pp. 185-90, 198, 203; R. Murdoch, 'Surfing the waves: Scottish admirals in Russia in their Baltic context', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, iii (2010), 59-86, esp. at pp. 65-8.
[33] D. Fedosov, 'Under the saltire: Scots and the Russian Navy, 1690s-1910s', in *Scotland and the Slavs: Cultures in Contact 1500-2000*, ed. M. Cornwall and M. Frame (Newtonville MA, 2001), pp. 21-53; A. Cross, 'The Elphinstones in Catherine the Great's Navy', in *Scotland and the Slavs*, pp. 55-71; R. H. Warner, 'Greig, Sir Samuel (1735–1788)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (2004) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11480; W. R. Morfill and R. Morriss, 'Greig, Alexis Samuilovich (1775–1845)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (2004) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11478; K. L. Koziurenok, 'Голландске офицеры в Российском Военно-морском флоте (вторая половина XVIII – начало XIX в.)', in *Нидерланды и северная Россия*, ed. Y. N. Bespiatykh, I. V. Veluvenkamp and L. D. Popova (Saint Petersburg, 2003), pp.

during the Napoleonic Wars: the British among them had to be temporarily discharged from their commands when Russia went to war against Britain (1807 to 1812).[34] The Maltese fleet, lastly, was exceptional, because it belonged to the intrinsically cosmopolitan and supra-national Order of the Knights of Saint John: brethren from all '*Langues*' and every corner of Europe did 'caravan' (apprentice) service on its squadrons of galleys and warships.[35] However, the Order's ships also received and trained unaffiliated foreign officers.[36] All in all, while less so than that for sailors, the European job market for naval officers was also fairly transnational in the eighteenth century. In it, British officers were active participants and often even protagonists, and if some of them were exiled and disgraced Jacobites, others, like Sidney Smith, would go on to enter the pantheon of the most celebrated naval heroes, relatively untainted (and if anything further qualified) by their transnational service.

Finally, as we shall see, it was also the case that, in the Royal Navy, foreigners were less common in the types of officer positions where British society provided a surplus, and more common in others, often of comparable responsibility, which faced a shortage, or at any rate lower pressure. Beyond the opposing rhetorics of cosmopolitan professional fraternity on the one hand, and patriotic loyalty on the other, I argue that the levels of foreign presence among Navy officers should be explained mainly with reference to the laws of supply and demand on the international labour migration market. Further, political scientists have shown that, within specific skilled occupations, and independently of general immigration policies or demand, a normal retrenchment method adopted by 'natives' is defending and pushing for

299-324; E. Wilson, 'Britain: practising aggression', in Wilson et al., *Eighteenth-Century Naval Officers*, pp. 11-45, at pp. 29-30.

[34] Fedosov, 'Under the saltire', p. 40; A. Mikaberidze, *The Russian Officer Corps of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1795-1815* (New York, 2005), p. 257.

[35] J. F. Grima, *The Fleet of the Knights of Malta: Its Organisation during the Eighteenth Century* (San Ġwann, 2016), pp. 187-203.

[36] T. Freller, 'In search of a Mediterranean base: the Order of St. John and Russia's great power plans during the rule of Tsar Peter the Great and Tsarina Catherine II', *Journal of Early Modern History*, viii (2004), 3-30, at pp. 12-13.

'licensing regulations' that inevitably exclude the immigrant competitors sharing the same skill.[37] Early modern guilds, and especially their apprentices, an extensive literature tells us, behaved in a broadly analogous way.[38] In the naval professions, no such regulations existed at the common seaman, petty officer and even aspirant officer level, but commissions, warrants, and the examinations that lieutenants and surgeons had to sit fulfilled a similar gatekeeping function. Combined with the role of social capital in the distribution of appointments, a modicum of which remained crucial even by the end of the eighteenth century,[39] this ensured that British quarterdecks were overall fairly unwelcoming to foreigners, not so much *qua* 'foreigners', but as 'outsiders' pitched against an 'established' native professional class and cluster of social networks.[40]

Honour and gentlemanliness, and the tension between their national and transnational incarnations, were no doubt important to individuals. However, this tension can also act as a smoke screen for the social historian. In the remainder of this article I show why this is the case by examining the relative foreign presence, or lack thereof, in four distinct categories of 'quarterdeck' officer: commissioned officers, 'young gentlemen' (aspirant officers), surgeons and assistant surgeons, and a final miscellaneous group employed to fulfil special tasks,

[37] B. D. Peterson, S. S. Pandya and D. Leblang, 'Doctors with borders: occupational licensing as an implicit barrier to high skill migration', *Public Choice*, clx (2014), 45-63.
[38] The historiography is truly immense, but see e.g.: J. P. Ward, '"[I]mployment for all handes that will worke": immigrants, guilds and the labour market in early seventeenth-century London', in *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, ed. N. Goose and L. Luu (Brighton and Portland OR, 2005), pp. 76-87; J. P. Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity, and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford CA, 1997); E. Whelan, 'The guilds of Dublin and immigrants in the seventeenth century: the defence of privilege in an age of change', *Irish Economic and Social History*, xxxix (2012), 26-38.
[39] Patronage was often earned through merit, but only above a certain social 'threshold', which for example penalised officers of working class and farming origins: Wilson, *Social History*, ch. 5, esp. at pp. 110-12, 119. On patronage see also C. Beck, 'Patronage and insanity: tolerance, reputation and mental disorder in the British navy 1740-1820', *Historical Research*, xciv (2021), 73-95.
[40] I use these terms following N. Elias and J. L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems*, 2nd edn (London, 1994).

sometimes ashore. Quantitative data are not always available, but the career arcs of many individuals, and the differences between these four categories, offer precious insights.

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The most prestigious positions on naval quarterdecks were those of commissioned officers: lieutenants, commanders, post captains, and admirals. They belonged to the 'command' track of the naval profession, by far the most competitive career path.[41] Very few commissions went to people from abroad. We lack complete data on origins, but a sample of 1,500 commissioned officers reconstructed by Michael Lewis shows that the vast majority of these men were born in Britain (68% in England, 13% in Scotland and 3% in Wales) and Ireland (12%). Foreign-born men were about 4%: fifty of them came from British imperial territories, four were Hanoverians and one the son of British subjects based in Russia, but the total also included one Corsican and two Frenchmen.[42] Evan Wilson has recently conducted another sample analysis, finding that only 5% of origins were foreign, again mostly from colonial territories.[43] Several Americans in particular appear in the historical record, often men who were originally from the Thirteen Colonies before they became the United States. The most notable example is perhaps Captain Ralph Willett Miller, who was born in New York in 1762, fought on the British side in the American War, and went on to have a remarkable career in the Revolutionary Wars, including the siege of Toulon, the Corsican campaign, the Battle of Cape St Vincent (where he was Nelson's flag captain), Tenerife, the Nile, and

[41] On commissioned sea officers see: N. A. M. Rodger, 'Commissioned officers' careers in the Royal Navy, 1690-1815', *Journal for Maritime Research*, iii (2001), 85-129; Wilson, *Social History*; Rodger, *Command*, pp. 380-93, 507-27; Wilson, 'Britain'.
[42] M. Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy 1793-1815*, new edn (London and Mechanicsburg PA, 2004 [1960]), pp. 60-80.
[43] Wilson, *Social History*, pp. 16-17.

finally the siege of Acre in 1798, where he died in an accident.[44] Miller holds pride of place in the commemorative prints with portraits of all St Vincent and Nile captains, as well as in the South transept of St Paul's Cathedral, where Britannia and Victory hang his marble effigy on the branches of a palm tree. His memorial relief was paid for by his own colleagues, and sculpted by the same artist who would many years later complete Nelson's.[45] He may have been American by birth, but he was British by law and by choice.

In the aftermath of the war, the number of foreign-born officers went down further: Lewis only found six of them out of a sample of 476 men who had joined the Navy after 1815. This time they all came from British subject territories: Barbados, Canada, the newly-acquired Heligoland, the Cape of Good Hope, and Hanover.[46] The end of the war and the decommissioning of the fleet hit all Royal Navy commissioned officers particularly hard: in 1818, almost 90% of them were unemployed ('on half-pay'), many in deep debt and desperate enough to seek any kind of work – although service in foreign navies, which required leaving the British half-pay, was rarely pursued.[47]

The low and declining numbers of commissioned foreigners from outside British territories are by no means surprising. Apart from birthplace, we have little information on these officers' status. Of some, like Captain Maximilian Jacobs, we only seem to know that

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[44] S. Howarth, 'Miller, Ralph Willett (1762-1799)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (2007) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/18735; National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth, 1988/500, The Papers of the Penrose and Coode Families, 1772-c.1880, n. 5, 'Statement of Captain Miller[']s Services'.

[45] William Henry Worthington, *Commemoration of the XIVth. February MDCCXCVII* (London: Robert Bowyer, 1803), *The British Museum*, object n. 1874,0509.111 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1874-0509-111; William Bromley and William Satchwell Leney, *Victors of the Nile* (London: Robert Bowyer, 1803), *The British Museum*, object n. 1873,0809.596 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1873-0809-596; 'Captain R W Miller – Tablet (WMR 11724)', *War Memorials Register – Imperial War Museums* https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/11724.

[46] M. Lewis, *The Navy in Transition 1814-1864: A Social History* (London, 1965), pp. 41-2.

[47] M. Wilcox, '"These peaceable times are the devil": Royal Navy officers in the post-war slump, 1815-1825', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, xxvi (2014), 471-88 (pp. 486-7 on employment abroad).

they were 'of foreign extraction' (which may or may not have contributed to the mutiny that broke out in his ship in 1779).[48] However, there were two specific legal restrictions which would have affected many. First, the Test Acts required that commissioned or warranted officers take the Oath of Supremacy and Allegiance and disavow transubstantiation – a provision explicitly designed to bar Catholics.[49] Second, holding a naval commission or warrant fell under the category of an 'Office or Place of Trust, either Civil or Military', under the Crown, and as such was permanently closed to aliens, even when naturalized: this was one of the provisions put in place at the beginning of the century, under William III, to rein in royal powers and foreign influence.[50] Therefore, it is probable that most of the officers whom we have encountered, even when born outside British imperial territories, were in fact the children or grandchildren of Britons, and as such, thanks to what is legally known as *jus sanguinis*, subjects themselves.

Sufficient patronage, it must be said, could allow for rather generous interpretations of the law. We saw that Lewis's sample included Frenchmen, who were royalist refugees. It also included men from Corsica, Malta, Gibraltar, and Minorca, all places which were at some point conquered (however briefly) by Britain.[51] If a young officer enjoyed favourable connections, he could start his career in the Navy during the window of opportunity granted by British occupation, and then continue it even if his country changed hands again, which theoretically removed his subject status. Joseph Cammilleri was the son of Signor Gabriel

[48] J. Charnock, *Biographia Navalis* (6 vols., London, 1798), vi. 318; N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2004), p. 403.
[49] T.N.A., ADM 7/313, Admiralty: Miscellanea – Law Officers' Opinions, 1816-19, n. 28, 'Extract from the Statutes on the subject of Oaths of Allegiance &c. so far as relates to Officers in the Navy', 25 Feb. 1817, and n. 32, 12 May 1817; Caputo, 'Foreign Seamen', pp. 136-8.
[50] 12 and 13 Wm. III c. 2 § iii [1700], 'An Act for the further Limitation of the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject'; 1 Geo. I stat. 2 c. 4 [1714], 'An Act to explain the Act made in the Twelfth Year of the Reign of King William the Third, intituled, An Act for the further Limitation of the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject'; A. Fahrmeir, *Citizens and Aliens: Foreigners and the Law in Britain and the German States, 1789-1870* (New York and Oxford, 2000), pp. 163-4.
[51] Lewis, *Social History*, pp. 78-80.

Cammilleri, a Maltese notable who had helped the British blockade in 1798 and as a result had lost much of his property at the hands of the French. Presumably as a recompense, in November 1806, the twelve-year-old Joseph was taken into the Royal Navy, under the patronage of Sir Alexander Ball, the well-liked British minister in Malta. The boy subsequently participated in various actions, moving from ship to ship until the end of the war. In February 1815, he was duly commissioned as lieutenant. Unlike many of his colleagues, he also managed to obtain post-war employments, in a ship on the Leith station in 1819 and subsequently in a series of other vessels, until he was made commander in 1829 – a promotion which less than 12% of his cohort ever achieved.[52]

One also encounters some exceptions that went completely against the law. In January 1806, the case of twenty-five-year-old Prosper Ambrose was put to the Admiralty Board: he had just passed the examination for lieutenant, showing 'great ability'; he had entered the service at Genoa in 1796 'under the patronage of the late Lord Viscount Nelson', and served since 'with zeal and Fidelity' in several ships, including the frigate HMS *Phoebe* at Trafalgar. Unfortunately, however, he was 'a Native of Novi in Lombardy, and his Parents Germans neither of whom have been naturalized'. What was to be done? All that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty knew of him was the scanty list of ships recorded on his passing certificate, but three days later they allowed him employment as lieutenant, 'notwithstanding His parents being Foreigners'.[53] As Nelson's body lay in state awaiting the

[52] W. R. O'Byrne, *A Naval Biographical Dictionary: Comprising the Life and Services of Every Living Officer in Her Majesty's Navy, from the Rank of Admiral of the Fleet to That of Lieutenant, Inclusive* (London, 1849), pp. 161-2. He received an official mention in the Gazette under the name of 'Joseph Cammellière': *London Gazette*, n. 16540 (12 Nov. 1811), p. 2193. I am very grateful to Dr Liam Gauci for pointing me to Cammilleri's case, and his entry in O'Byrne. For the percentage of 1815 lieutenants who were ever promoted further see: Rodger, 'Commissioned officers' careers', p. 98.

[53] N.M.M., ADM/B/221, Board of Admiralty, In-Letters, Dec. 1805 - March 1806, Navy Office to William Marsden, 4 Jan. 1806. See also: T.N.A., ADM 6/104, Lieutenants' Passing Certificates, 1806, Mr Prosper Ambrose, 1 Jan. 1806. As confirmation of his Trafalgar service see the record for 'Prosper Ambrose' in B. Pappalardo, 'Trafalgar Ancestors', *The National Archives* https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/details.asp?id=11024.

funeral, it probably appeared unseemly to deny the chance of a commission to one of his bright young protégés, and a Trafalgar veteran at that. The law could wait. Ambrose went on to multiple appointments, eventually as a confirmed lieutenant, and even in the aftermath of the war he served sporadically in transports, the Coast Guard, a Portsmouth semaphore, and a contract mail steam vessel.[54] The Navy did have a space for him.

The real problem was that, in an incredibly crowded job market, foreigners were usually not as lucky as Cammilleri or Ambrose, and lacked sufficient patronage or social precedence. N. A. M. Rodger has described the pattern of sea officers' appointments and promotions as 'a succession of feast and famine', abundant during wartime mobilizations and dry in the peace.[55] Even during wartime, however, and despite the constant turnover, commissions could be scarce, because the numbers of aspirants went up, and because the Admiralty had a policy of mass promotions at the start and end of a war.[56] This meant that by the 1790s, and even more so the Napoleonic Wars, there were too many commissioned officers, especially lieutenants, for the positions available, and the pressure only increased during the conflict as more and more 'young gentlemen' passed their qualifying examination and joined the scramble. In 1782, only 61% of post-captains, 57% of commanders, and about 66% of lieutenants nominally available were actually employed. By 1800, the first two figures had gone down to 48% and 40% respectively; for lieutenants, we have data from 1805, the year of Trafalgar and the height of the naval campaign (if not of mobilisation): including shore appointments, 1,795 were serving (about 71%), which left 717 of them unemployed.[57] In 1795, lieutenants produced a printed petition, forwarded to individual MPs, complaining of the meagreness of their pay: half-pay (the retainer received by unemployed

[54] O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary*, p. 12.
[55] Rodger, 'Commissioned officers' careers', pp. 94-8.
[56] Rodger, 'Commissioned officers' careers', pp. 94-5, 103.
[57] Rodger, 'Commissioned officers' careers', pp. 99-102. See also Wilson, 'Britain', pp. 25-8.

officers) in particular was a sore point, because, through inflation, it had been reduced to 'a pittance'. If things did not change, they warned, for hundreds of officers the only solution would be 'emigration', 'to seek for that livelihood in foreign states which their own country denies them'.[58] With half-pay insufficient to support a man, let alone a 'gentleman', being left out of work had severe financial and social consequences, which in turn meant that the competition for appointments was fierce, and that the language of national service might have to make way to basic economic needs.

These, naturally, are only the men who had managed to obtain a lieutenant's commission in the first place. The Navy was crowded with young hopefuls training to become, someday, lieutenants. Unlike commissioned officers, however, these younger prospective officers provide an excellent example of a section of the quarterdeck which *was* open to foreigners.

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Joining the Navy as a 'young gentleman' (usually with the rank of volunteer first class, midshipman, or master's mate, but sometimes even rated as a common sailor to fit with muster requirements) was, except in elite frigates, much easier than the next step on the career ladder, the elusive commission.[59] Captains could choose their own young gentlemen, albeit under heavy pressure from their patronage networks, and occasionally they took foreigners. This included aliens, because a junior, non-commissioned position was easy to construe as not being a place of trust. Foreign boys offered no real competition for British

[58] *Appeal of the Lieutenants of the Royal Navy* (London, 1795).
[59] On young gentlemen see: S. A. Cavell, *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys in the British Navy, 1771-1831* (Woodbridge, 2012); S. Cavell, 'A social history of midshipmen and quarterdeck boys in the Royal Navy, 1761-1831' (2 vols., PhD dissertation, University of Exeter, 2010); Wilson, *Social History*, ch. 1.

protégés, either: the first true bottleneck of the profession came later, at the lieutenant stage – from which most of these youths would be legally excluded.

Young gentlemen are the only type of quarterdeck personnel whose origin is straightforward to reconstruct, because, unlike that of other officers, it was often reported in the ship's muster book (a list of crew members). Out of a sample of 289 young gentlemen across the period of the French Wars, I found that 16 (5.5%) were foreign-born, coming from the East and West Indies, America, Hanover, but also, in three cases, the Low Countries, plus one John Smith from Norway.[60] 18-year-old 'John' Kloppenburg from Amsterdam and 15-year-old 'John' Van De Bos from Rotterdam, judging from the surnames, were likely not the children of British fathers.[61] Less definitely a young gentleman, Antoine Douquoi, a 14-year-old captain's servant in 1802, was also born in 'Boullin' [Bouillon?], in France.[62] Samantha Cavell has constructed a separate, much larger sample: she, too, found that Britons (and indeed Englishmen) were by far the most numerous contingent, and broadly increasing by the Napoleonic Wars; however, besides imperial and American recruits, especially the more junior group of boys counted several continental Europeans – Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Swedish, Danish, German, Dutch, and even French.[63] Other mentions of individuals

[60] This sample refers to nine frigates serving in foreign stations at equal intervals during the wars. Further details of the methodology and ships can be found in Caputo, 'Foreign seamen', pp. 40-7. Please note that the sample only includes the young gentlemen who were recognisable as such from the musters, i.e. those rated 'volunteer first class', 'midshipman', or 'master's mate'. Moreover, while I have attempted to filter them out using age and previous and subsequent rating data, the total may also include some older men from the lower deck, who shared the 'midshipman' or 'master's mate' rating but were more akin to petty officers, and were not on track to ever become COs. For example, one of the men excluded was Joseph Williams, a 50-year-old American Master's Mate who had volunteered from Mill Prison, was initially rated Able Seaman, and in April 1813, after the US went to war with Britain, returned to prison by his own request. See: T.N.A., ADM 37/4214, Muster Book of HMS *Astrea*, July-Aug. 1813, fo. 4.

[61] T.N.A., ADM 36/15330, Muster Book of HMS *Jupiter*, March-Apr. 1802, fos. 25, 36.

[62] T.N.A., ADM 36/15379, Muster Book of HMS *Centurion*, Feb.-March 1802, fo. 23. He may well not have been a 'young gentleman', however, as by then the mustering of aspirant COs as 'captain's servants' had been officially abolished. On the complexities of this rating see: Cavell, *Midshipmen*, pp. 7-9, 39, 88-9.

[63] Cavell, 'Social status', pp. 206-17, 391-6.

float in the records. For example, the twenty-year-old Neapolitan Joseph Dell Carretto [*sic*] was a midshipman in HMS *Swiftsure* and then in HMS *Royal Sovereign*, fighting at Trafalgar.[64] We do not seem to find many of these boys ever sitting the examination for lieutenant. Some, like the Neapolitan Philip Thovaz, who was one of Nelson's midshipmen at Trafalgar, took the easier route of becoming a warrant officer of wardroom rank, a less crowded profession (albeit theoretically also requiring subjecthood). In 1809 he was appointed a purser, and later in life he rose to be the administrator of Nelson's old fief of Bronte, in Sicily.[65]

Most foreign young gentlemen, at any rate, do not seem to have served in the Navy individually, but rather as 'exchange students', on leave from or sent by their own navies, Britain's allies, for a set period, to improve their skill. This was a common practice across Europe: Swedish trainees, for example, went to both the French and the British navies.[66] Out of a sample of about 1,400 eighteenth-century Swedish naval officers, it has been calculated that over two fifths served abroad at some point in their career (on average when they were around twenty years old), in merchant marines or more rarely foreign navies.[67] The main destinations, apart from the Swedish merchant fleet, were Dutch, French, and British shipping, but a handful of men also went into American, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and even Maltese service.[68] Denmark, too, was at peace for most of the eighteenth century, so its naval cadets were frequently sent to learn their ropes not only in the

[64] 'Joseph Dell Carretto', in 'Trafalgar Ancestors' https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/details_print.asp?id=13199.
[65] 'Philip Thovez', in 'Trafalgar Ancestors' https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/details_print.asp?id=18073; *The Navy List, Corrected to the End of December, 1819* (London, [1820]), p. 116; L. Riall, *Under the Volcano: Revolution in a Sicilian Town* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 61-2.
[66] Wilson et al., 'Education', pp. 20, 22; A. Hammar, 'Sweden: seeking foreign waters', in Wilson et al., *Eighteenth-Century Naval Officers*, pp. 127-59, at pp. 146-8.
[67] G. Nováky, 'Swedish naval personnel in the merchant marine and in foreign naval service in the eighteenth century', in *Maritime Labour: Contributions to the History of Work at Sea, 1500-2000*, ed. R. Gorski (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 61-81. This study includes both 'officers' and 'petty officers'.
[68] Nováky, 'Swedish Naval Personnel', pp. 72-6.

British and French but also in the Dutch and Russian fleets.[69] Two case studies are particularly relevant to the late eighteenth-century Royal Navy – those of Neapolitan and Russian trainees.

During the American War, in 1779, the Neapolitan government sent around thirty young officers to the British, French, Spanish, and Swedish navies. The King of Naples and Sicily 'was very desirous of profiting of the present moment to form officers for the little marine' that he and his officials intended to establish.[70] The group that went into the British service was led by the young aristocrat Francesco Caracciolo – a famous name in Neapolitan history: he later became an admiral in the Neapolitan Navy, but sided with the Francophile revolutionaries in 1799, and as a result was hanged as a traitor, by none other than Nelson.[71] There was never any possibility that these cadets would remain in the British service. Even during their two-year deployment, they were serving indiscriminately in navies at war with one another, and some even ended up facing each other at the Battle of Cape St Vincent (1780), or shifting sides when they were captured.[72] These young men were simply seconded students, taking full advantage of their country's neutrality: their appointments were directly controlled by politicians and ministers, as diplomatic instruments, and intended to further their careers in the *Neapolitan* fleet. They were never professional rivals to their British colleagues.

Russia, too, had a solid tradition of sending cadets to train in the British Navy, beginning under Peter the Great at the dawn of the eighteenth century, and reprised by

[69] Wilson et al., 'Education', p. 26.
[70] T.N.A., FO 70/1, General correspondence before 1906: Sicily and Naples – Sir William Hamilton and Consuls, 1780-1781, fos. 42-3, William Hamilton to the Earl of Hillsborough, 7 March 1780.
[71] The best biography available is Mario Battaglini, *Francesco Caracciolo: La misteriosa tragica avventura del grande ammiraglio di Napoli* (Naples, 1998).
[72] T.N.A., FO 70/1, fos. 42-3, 51, 55, 67, 85-6, Sir William Hamilton to the Earl of Hillsborough, 7 March 1780; Comte Pignatelli to Hillsborough, 11 March 1780; Hillsborough to Pignatelli, 16 March 1780; Hamilton to Hillsborough, 11 Apr. 1780; Hillsborough to Hamilton, 16 May 1780. For an extended discussion of these events see Caputo, 'Foreign seamen', pp. 184-91.

Catherine II and beyond.[73] Many Russian lieutenants were still to be found in British ships during the French Wars, especially in the years when the two fleets cooperated in joint operations. This is how Lieutenant Goloskenoff, whom we met at the start of the article, had been recruited. These officers were readily accepted, and moved from ship to ship after periods of sickness or to follow specific commanders, as British lieutenants would (but with more choice). In March 1794, Count Woronzow, the Russian envoy, transmitted to the Admiralty a list of Russian gentlemen (three captain-lieutenants and twelve lieutenants) to be assigned to British ships: the Admiralty distributed them accordingly in vessels directed to North America, the Mediterranean, and the Leeward Islands, which they reached within a few months.[74] Woronzow kept some track of the young men's fate, periodically asking the Admiralty for updates, and negotiated matters like ship and fleet transfers, or the discharge of Lieutenant Greig when he was suddenly recalled to Russia by family affairs.[75] In 1797, the trainees were swapped with a new batch, once the Tsar was 'certain, that those Officers must have already acquired a sufficient practical knowledge'.[76] The transactions continued much in the same fashion after that date.[77]

[73] A. G. Cross, *'By the Banks of the Thames': Russians in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Newtonville MA, 1980), pp. 146-73; Mikaberidze, *Russian Officer Corps*, pp. 137, 207, 259; Davies, 'Russia', pp. 202, 205-8.

[74] T.N.A., ADM 1/3849, Admiralty Correspondence and Papers, Letters from Foreign Consuls, 1793-1795, nos. 653-8, 619, 538, S. C. Woronzow to the Admiralty, 1 March 1794, and enclosures; 18 Apr. 1794; 6 Sept. 1794. [N.B. numbering in this box is not consecutive by date].

[75] T.N.A., ADM 1/3849, nos. 409-10, 442-3, S. C. Woronzow to the Admiralty, 9 June 1795 and enclosure; 23 March 1795; ADM 1/3850, Admiralty Correspondence and Papers, Letters from Foreign Consuls, 1796-1798, nos. 149, 222, Woronzow to Admiralty, 13 Feb. 1796; 29 Oct. 1796. Aleksey Samuilovich Greig was born in Kronstadt from a Scottish exile family but was an officer in the Russian fleet: see Morfill and Morriss, 'Greig, Alexis Samuilovich'; Mikaberidze, *Russian Officer Corps*, 137.

[76] T.N.A., ADM 1/3850, nos. 92, 52, S. C. Woronzow to Evan Nepean, 16 July 1797 [quote]; James Smirnove to Evan Nepean, 10 Apr. 1798.

[77] T.N.A., ADM 1/3850, nos. 47, 94, S. C. Woronzow to Evan Nepean, 16 May 1797; James Smirnove to Nepean, 12 Feb. 1798; ADM 1/3851, Admiralty Correspondence and Papers, Letters from Foreign Consuls, 1799-1800, nos. 283, 291, 369, Woronzow to Nepean, 7 Feb. 1799; Smirnove to Nepean, 10 Feb. and 29 June 1799.

Individual transnational friendships coexisted with diplomatic considerations in driving these young men's service. Partly, this was a deliberate plan: the Tsar was sure that,

> having experienced so much kindness and attention from all His Majesty's Officers of the Fleet, when, upon their return home, they come to be appointed to the command of ships; being thus bound by gratitude to England, they will no doubt be ready to serve Her with so much the greater alacrity and readiness by cooperating with Her fleets against Her enemies, whenever an opportunity shou'd offer.[78]

The events proved him right, as the Russian fleet was packed with Anglophile admirals and commanders.[79] However, the connections among officers forged by shared transnational service were often personal, and went beyond any government's plans. Lieutenant Kaslivtzoff specifically requested to serve under Captain Sir Richard Strachan: he had 'had the honor to serve under that most excellent Officer on Board of the *Diamond*' and was 'extremely desirous to continue with him'.[80] Lieutenant Anitchkoff, who was originally going to be deployed on a different station, 'expressed a very great desire' to serve instead in the *Woolwich* frigate, because its commander, Michael Halyday, was a former shipmate of his, when they were both in the Russian Navy.[81] Halyday, or Halliday, was in fact born in St Petersburg, the son of a Scottish physician; by 1798 only 32 years old, he had served in the British Navy during the American and French Wars, but he had moved to the Russian,

[78] T.N.A., ADM 1/3850, n. 92, S. C. Woronzow to Evan Nepean, 16 July 1797.
[79] See e.g.: Cross, *'By the Banks'*, pp. 154, 158-73; Rodger, *Command*, p. 550.
[80] T.N.A., ADM 1/3851, n. 303, James Smirnove to Evan Nepean, 4 March 1799.
[81] T.N.A., ADM 1/3850, n. 125, James Smirnove to Evan Nepean, 16 Aug. 1798.

organically, in the interval between the two conflicts.[82] Anitchkoff reappears in the sources three years later, this time asking to join HMS *Zealous* under Captain 'Linozee' [Samuel] Hood, another officer under whom he had previously served, and whom he had just 'by chance met at Portsmouth'.[83] Social networks grew over the years, above and across national services. Even after the relationship between Britain and the Tsar soured, in 1800, which temporarily led to the expulsion of all his young trainees from the British fleet, some of them continued to wear the Royal Navy uniform back in Russia, defying orders.[84] The straggler Goloskenoff was presumably an extreme example of this: his case is particularly interesting because his permanence in the Navy openly flouted not only Admiralty oversight, but also diplomacy and regulations.

Notwithstanding the brief official hiatus at the end of Paul's reign, the British deployment of young Russians was pretty much uninterrupted from early in the Revolutionary Wars until well into the Napoleonic Wars, surfacing here and there in the sources: for example, we have a letter which Nelson wrote in 1804 to the gentlemen who had just joined HMS *Royal Sovereign*, reiterating their special status. 'Far removed from your Country and relations, and placed to serve in the Fleet under my command, I desire that you will, on every occasion, both in public and private concerns, consult with me, and let me know your wants and wishes, and always consider me as your sincere friend'.[85] Apart from diplomatic credit, what exactly they contributed must have varied from ship to ship and from man to man, but we find hints to the fact that their main value rested precisely in their role as

[82] J. Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography* (4 vols., London, 1823-35), ii.1, pp. 228-9.
[83] T.N.A., ADM 1/3852, Admiralty Correspondence and Papers, Letters from Foreign Consuls, 1801-1803, James Smirnove to Evan Nepean, 13 Aug. 1801.
[84] Cross, *'By the Banks'*, pp. 166-7, 172. For the recalls see: T.N.A., ADM 1/3852, James Smirnove to Evan Nepean, 22 and 25 March 1801. On permissions to rejoin their ships: Smirnove to Nepean, 27 June 1801.
[85] *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson,* ed. N. H. Nicolas (7 vols., London, 1844-6), v. 448, 16 March 1804. I found this letter thanks to a footnote in Cross, *'By the Banks'*, p. 173.

intermediaries. In 1795, Admiral Duncan took aboard HMS *Venerable* Mr Baskakoff, 'a Russian Naval Officer, who has served for some time with the British Fleet in the West Indies & lately returned from thence in the Assurance'. Baskakoff had asked to join the flagship until the arrival of the Russian fleet. 'As he speaks English well & has a knowledge of both British & Russian Naval Service,' Duncan mentioned in his application to the Admiralty, 'I think he may be a useful Man'.[86]

The Russians were, even physically, additional to the ships' complements, rather than replacing anyone aboard. We can see this most clearly in the case of Lieutenant Karostavitz, who was appointed to HMS *Blanche* in March 1803: he wished 'to know what cabin he is to occupy', and whether 'an additional Cabin' could be 'built for him' (the Admiralty, it goes without saying, did not allow modifications to the ship).[87] Because these officers were borne as supernumeraries on ships' books, 'as Russian Volunteers', some confusion existed even on their wages, and the Navy Board had to check with the Admiralty whether 'Persons of this description' were at all paid, and if so 'at what rate'. The reply was that they were 'To be Borne & Victualled as ABs' [able seamen], so at a drastically lower allowance than British commissioned officers.[88] This continued to cause perplexities. The question arose again, with regards to one of them, in June the following year, and the Admiralty's secretarial notes on the matter are worth reporting in full, as they offer a good representation of how ad hoc decision-making on these men had to be:

[86] Dundee City Archives, CO/MUS/221, Farrar-Duncan Papers, Letter Book, Adam Duncan to Evan Nepean, 30 July 1795.
[87] N.M.M., ADM/B/208, Board of Admiralty, In-Letters, March-Apr. 1803, Navy Office to Evan Nepean, 2 March 1803.
[88] N.M.M., ADM/B/218, Board of Admiralty, In-Letters, March-May 1805, Navy Office to William Marsden, 24 Apr. 1805. Some arrangements had also been negotiated ad hoc in the 1790s. See: T.N.A., ADM 1/3849, fo. 609, S. C. Woronzow to the Admiralty, 6 May 1794.

27 June

See what was settled in 1803 [DELETED: '(with Mr. Greig)'] respecting the Payment of Russian Volunteers.

See what was done in 1802 or 3.

[Different hand:] Nothing further appears respecting the payment of Russian Volunteers than the Order before referred to, of 29th April 1805.

[First hand again:] About 30 young Russians were sent to different stations at the period to which I allude, & some directions about them must have been given.[89]

Finally, again in the first hand, the sequence concludes with a resigned 'Order for allowing him A.B.'s Pay for the time he has served. Acquaint Capt. Laugharne.' From then onwards, the volunteers' pay seems to have consolidated at AB level, but the Navy Board still periodically checked with the Admiralty.[90] It is no wonder that the Navy misplaced men like Goloskenoff: it simply lacked the structure to account for them, because they were not originally meant to be there. As such, once again, they represented no competition whatsoever for their British colleagues.

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[89] N.M.M., ADM/B/222, Board of Admiralty, In-Letters, Apr.-June 1806, Navy Office to William Marsden, 25 June 1806.
[90] N.M.M., ADM/B/227, Board of Admiralty, In-Letters, June-Aug. 1807, Navy Office to William Wellesley Pole, 1 Aug. 1807.

Medics are, in the present day, seen as non-combatants, legally immune from being harmed and essentially *super partes* in a conflict.[91] This may in part explain why, at the turn of the nineteenth century, we seem to encounter more alien foreigners among their ranks than in the commissioned track of the naval quarterdeck. However, the case of young gentlemen that we have just seen – very much combatant personnel – suggests that this is not the sole possible explanation. Moreover, our post-Red Cross view of the medical profession is in some ways anachronistic when applied to the late eighteenth century. While the 1803 *Instructions to Agents* for prisoners of war classed surgeons as 'non-combatants', to be released, there appear to have been instances of naval surgeons retained on parole, like any other officer, exchanged, and even imprisoned like common seamen.[92] Rules exempting medical personnel from war captivity were formally codified in 1863, by US jurist Francis Lieber, and, hospitals aside, it was only with the Geneva Convention that the idea of medical immunity in battle was set into law.[93] Finally, it should be noted that being a naval surgeon required a warrant. Like a commission, a warrant was deemed an appointment of trust, theoretically sensitive enough to be legally reserved to native subjects. Why then do we find more examples of foreigners among surgeons than among commissioned officers? The answer is probably that the ones were much needed, the others were unwelcome competitors.

Uncovering the origins of naval surgeons is not easy, because there are no systematic records reporting them directly. M. John Cardwell has managed to gather some birthplace information tracking down, in the 1851, 1861 and 1871 censuses, 100 surgeons and assistant surgeons who were still alive at that point, and resident in Great Britain. He only found one

[91] F. Allhoff and K. Potts, 'Medical immunity, international law and just war theory', *BMJ Military Health*, clxv (2019), 256-65; I. Primoratz, 'Civilian immunity', in *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, ed. H. LaFollette (Chichester, 2013), pp. 804-12. I am grateful to Professor Fritz Allhoff for sharing his piece with me.
[92] R. Morieux, *The Society of Prisoners: Anglo-French Wars and Incarceration in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 39, 241, 243-4, 269, 301.
[93] Allhoff and Potts, 'Medical immunity', pp. 258-60.

(non-alien) foreigner, from Barbados. However, it can be easily seen that this is a very small sample (Cardwell himself estimates that about 2,000 surgeons served during the French Wars), and likely to be extremely skewed in favour of Britons. The sampling method compensates for the undercounting of Irishmen, but not for that of foreigners.[94] Yet in naval records from the time of the wars there are regular mentions especially of foreign assistant surgeons. Gabriele Bielle, from the name likely an Italian, was assistant surgeon in HMS *Conqueror* at Trafalgar, and also served in HMS *Ajax* and HMS *Gannet*. Surgeon's mates at the same battle included a Mattio Capponi from Corfu, and a John Sinclair, born in pre-Revolutionary New York.[95] My own database contains two surgeon's mates from Strasburg, in a ship deployed at the Cape of Good Hope in March 1802.[96]

That of the shipboard 'surgeon' was a miscellaneous social category, sometimes straddling the blurry divide between gentlemen and others, although most of them – similarly to commissioned officers – came from the 'respectable' middling sort.[97] On the one hand, we have men like the Dutch William Class Tjessima, who was an assistant surgeon in HMS *Greyhound* during the Napoleonic Wars: he left all his possessions to 'Honseverper[?] Salutwy[?] a native woman of Amboyna', and he signed his will with a cross mark, signifying that he was illiterate.[98] On the other, we encounter the erudite physician Augustus Bozzi Granville, born in Milan of a local notable and a woman of distant Cornish descent. After extensive travels in the Mediterranean, he served in the Royal Navy between 1807 and

[94] M. J. Cardwell, 'Royal Navy surgeons, 1793-1815: a collective biography', in *Health and Medicine at Sea, 1700-1900*, ed. D. B. Haycock and S. Archer (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 38-62, at pp. 38-41.
[95] 'Trafalgar Ancestors': 'Gabriele Bielle' https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/details_print.asp?id=4905; 'Mattio Capponi' https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/details_print.asp?id=7744; 'John Sinclair' https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/trafalgarancestors/details_print.asp?id=11253.
[96] Daniel Walters and John 'Delgeur': T.N.A., ADM 36/15330, fo. 21.
[97] L. Brockliss, J. Cardwell and M. Moss, *Nelson's Surgeon: William Beatty, Naval Medicine, and the Battle of Trafalgar* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 18-23; Cardwell, 'Royal Navy surgeons', pp. 41-4; Wilson, *Social History*, p. 193.
[98] T.N.A., PROB 11/1509/247, Will of William Class Tjessima, Late Assistant Surgeon of His Majesty's Ship *Greyhound*, 13 March 1810.

1813, as assistant surgeon and then surgeon. Polyglot and cosmopolitan, a proponent of Italian independence and politically active until the Congress of Vienna, after the war he settled in London, became a Fellow of the Royal Society, and had a dazzling career treating the elites and conducting scientific studies – including pioneering uses of prussic acid, mineral waters, and the stethoscope, and the first medical and racialized examination of an Egyptian mummy.[99] Before (speedily) learning English, Dr Granville used Latin to communicate with both the surgeon in his first ship and the two physicians on the Haslar Hospital board who examined and qualified him as a naval assistant surgeon. The third board member, a surgeon rather than a 'Dr', required interpreting, 'possibly not feeling himself competent to employ the more learned language'.[100] If shipboard medics' social backgrounds covered an ample spectrum, this was also true of the foreigners among them.

Not all foreign assistant surgeons sat formal examinations like Bozzi Granville. Often, they operated unofficially, without direct knowledge of the Admiralty, and this was perfectly tolerated. In 1807, Benjamin Silvera, assistant surgeon in HMS *Tartar*, requested a passage home to Jamaica after being disabled by a wound in the right hand. He had not been 'regularly appointed' by the Transport Board, but the latter did not seem to consider that an issue: they obtained confirmation of the story from the surgeon who had been Silvera's superior, and the Admiralty granted the man a passage home in the first available ship. He

[99] S. Furlani, 'Bozzi Granville, Augusto', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (1971) http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/augusto-bozzi-granville_(Dizionario-Biografico)/; O. Moscucci, 'Granville, Augustus Bozzi (1783–1872)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn (2004) https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11299; W. Munk, 'Augustus Bozzi Granville', *Royal College of Physicians* https://history.rcplondon.ac.uk/inspiring-physicians/augustus-bozzi-granville; A. B. Granville, 'An essay on Egyptian mummies', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, cxv (1825), 269-316; H. D. Donoghue et al., 'Tuberculosis in Dr Granville's mummy: a molecular re-examination of the earliest known Egyptian mummy to be scientifically examined and given a medical diagnosis', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, cclxxvii (2010), 51-6.

[100] Cardwell, 'Royal Navy Surgeons', p. 45; A. B. Granville, *Autobiography of A. B. Granville, M.D., F.R.S., Being Eighty-Eight Years of the Life of a Physician*, ed. P. B. Granville, 2nd edn (2 vols., London, 1874), i. 259-61.

also received a pension of fourteen pounds per annum from the Greenwich Chest.[101] In June the same year, Francisco Natale, who was aboard HMS *Superb*, wrote to the Transport Board to request an appointment as assistant surgeon: he was allowed to sit the examination in London after the surgeon of the *Superb* confirmed that he had, 'on all occasions, conduc[te]d himself much to his satisfaction, and that he speaks English sufficiently well to be understood'. Natale (probably Italian from the name) had clearly been serving informally for a while.[102]

The careers of some of these men offer fascinating transnational microhistories. Between 1810 and 1815, the surgeon Joseph (or Giuseppe) Stilon went from Forton Prison to serving in the Spithead guardship HMS *Royal William*, and then in a range of other naval ships in the Mediterranean, from sloop to third-rate size, as assistant surgeon and acting surgeon. He even managed to keep a position after the end of the war, and went on directly to become an assistant surgeon at the Malta Hospital and Dockyard, where he was employed until the autumn of 1819.[103] His will reveals that he was born in Stefanaconi, in the diocese of Mileto, present-day Calabria (then part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies). When he compiled his testament, in 1847, he was still resident in Malta, on British half-pay but practising as a physician and apothecary. He owned land in Compton Bishop, Somersetshire, and two of his daughters were married, respectively, to a Royal Navy commander and a Royal Navy surgeon. However, he still had contacts with his nephew Saverio, son of his brother Vincenzo, who clearly (only?) spoke Italian, as Joseph bequeathed to him his Italian

[101] T.N.A., ADM 1/3751, Admiralty Correspondence and Papers, Letters from the Transport Board, Feb.-June 1807, fos. 67-8, Transport Office to William Marsden, 25 Feb. 1807; 25 Feb. 1807. See also ADM 98/24, Office of the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded Seamen – Out-Letters to the Admiralty, 1806-8, fos. 25-6.
[102] T.N.A., ADM 1/3751, fo. 399, Transport Office to William Marsden, 8 June 1807; ADM 98/24, fo. 65, 8 June 1807.
[103] T.N.A., ADM 196/8/344, Admiralty: Officers' Service Records (Series III), Medical Officers, Dates of Entry: 1790-1848 – Stilon, Joseph, 16 July 1810.

language ‘books and pamphlets’, whereas the English and French went to his grandsons. The will itself was drawn up in two versions, English and Italian.[104] This was not the simple story of a British subject who happened to have been born abroad.

All the examples above, especially in the absence of hard quantitative data, do not amount to showing that the Royal Navy teemed with foreign surgeons. However, they suggest that foreign surgeons seemed to be, at least anecdotally, more common than foreign commissioned officers. The reason is simple. Increasingly, throughout the wars, the Sick and Hurt Board, the body originally responsible for health in the fleet, struggled with a shortage of plausible candidates for the role of shipboard medics. Each Royal Navy vessel was expected to carry at least one surgeon and one surgeon’s mate (later known as assistant surgeon), accompanied by further assistants in larger ships.[105] The reality was very different. In the spring of 1798, Captain Charles Paterson, having obtained a surgeon for his ship, applied for a surgeon’s mate: the Board replied that they could not give him one, ‘not having any such Persons waiting for employment’.[106] By 1807, the Sick and Hurt Board was reporting to the Admiralty that because of ‘the very great scarcity of Assistant Surgeons several Ships in active Service’ were ‘now totally without, and none’ had ‘their full complement’: this forced some triage in terms of which ships even got one, depending on where they were stationed and what other medical resources they had access to.[107] An assistant surgeon in an armed tender was denied leave of absence even to attend lectures in London, because although the Board was eager to encourage ‘young Men’ like him to refine

[104] T.N.A., PROB 11/2082/258, Will of Joseph otherwise Guiseppe [*sic*] Stilon, Surgeon in Her Britannic Majesty's Navy, 31 Oct. 1848.
[105] Brockliss et al., *Nelson’s Surgeon*, p. 7.
[106] Huntington Library, San Marino, Charles William Paterson papers, 1777-1858, msHM 76751, Office for Sick and Wounded Seamen to C. H. Paterson, 19 March 1798; msHM 76752, Office for Sick and Wounded Seamen to C. H. Paterson, 2 Apr. 1798.
[107] T.N.A., ADM 98/24, fos. 11-12, 14-15, 115, Transport Office to William Marsden, 22 Jan. 1807, 27 Jan. 1807, 29 Aug. 1807.

their training, they were unable to replace him at that time.[108] Professionally, naval service was not especially attractive to qualified surgeons (let alone physicians), especially in England: until 1805, pay was low and medical personnel were not even allowed a uniform. This is the origin of the (largely false) legend painting all Navy doctors as alcoholic rejects and failures.[109] Yet naval vessels could hardly cope without a surgeon. Once again, we see here that this was a simple matter of demand and supply. Cosmopolitan gentlemanly exchange may have come into the picture in rare cases, like that of Bozzi Granville. However, when the Navy double-checked that a prospective assistant surgeon could at all make himself understood in English, clearly no lofty intellectual connection was in place. For each Bozzi Granville dissertating in Latin there was a Class Tjessima, who could not write.

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We now turn to one final, miscellaneous category of foreign officer who worked for the British Navy. Usually he could supply very specific skills that Britons lacked. Much like that of young gentlemen, his position was deemed intrinsically exceptional and temporary. When it became something more, it provoked storms of protests on the part of British colleagues.

Some of these men were interlopers and spies, exiled royalists but also more dubious figures whose motives truly tested the limits of gentlemanly honour. For example, in 1807, the Spanish prisoner of war Don Josef Maria Ca[s]tanos, ex-first lieutenant of the *Los Dolores* (the translation of his petition said a frigate, but in fact, it was established, a privateer), had heard of the preparations for a second expedition to the Rio de la Plata: he offered himself as pilot, as he knew the river well, and specifically both 'the spot most

[108] T.N.A., ADM 98/24, fo. 118, 15 Sept. 1807. On the demand for surgeons see also Wilson, *Social History*, pp. 79-80.
[109] Brockliss et al., *Nelson's Surgeon*, pp. 15-25; Cardwell, 'Royal Navy surgeons'.

proper' for disembarking and 'the place where the Treasures of Monte Video are deposited'. He promised to 'act with the greatest fidelity to His Britannic Majesty', and he was 'certain of the success of the British arms if I am employed'.[110]

Even without mobilising explicit betrayal, there were other types of knowledge which the British Navy required, and foreigners supplied. Taking into account the statute of 1700 which we saw above, regarding any 'Office or place of Trust', in 1808 a case was posed to the Admiralty lawyers: 'whether a Foreigner may be legally placed at the Royal Naval College' in Portsmouth 'as a Mathematical Instructor in the Theory of Naval Architecture with an Annual Salary'. Initially, the lawyers argued that the answer was no. However, this opinion was changed when the Board of Admiralty confirmed that it did not intend to confer a warrant on the teacher.[111] We find other foreigners serving as schoolmasters to British young gentlemen. For example, the French Army officer M. Honore [*sic*] Baudin, alias Monsieur H. B. St. Amand, had been captured in 1798 during the French attempt to invade Wales. In November 1799, nonetheless, given that he had 'been particularly recommended to us as a young Man of good Family and Character, and as being, in all respects, very different from the generality of the Troops with whom he was made Prisoner', the Transport Board allowed the captain of HMS *London* to take him aboard as French teacher.[112] Transnational gentlemanliness opened the way, but the man was ultimately accepted into the service only because his specific skill was required.

Teachers are, of course, civilians, far removed from the taint of mercenarism faced by sea officers proper. However, the vicissitudes of the Frenchman Jean Louis Barrallier, a non-

[110] T.N.A., ADM 1/3751, fos. 100-1, Transport Office to William Marsden, 10 March 1807, and attachment.
[111] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, Admiralty: Miscellanea – Law Officers' Opinions, 1809-1810, n. 34.
[112] T.N.A., ADM 1/3742, Admiralty Correspondence and Papers, Letters from the Transport Board, Nov. 1801 – Dec. 1802, fos. 64-5, Transport Office to William Marsden, 28 and 30 Dec. 1801.

combatant but a candidate for a position of the utmost military responsibility in the Royal Navy, offer a perfect summary of the themes that we have explored in this paper. In the autumn of 1793, when a joint Anglo-Spanish-Neapolitan-Piedmontese amphibious force occupied the harbour of Toulon, he was *Ingénieur en chef de la Marine* in the port's arsenal. Like many of his fellow royalist officers, he switched to the British side, and when the attack failed he was forced to flee to Britain with his wife and four children. His gallant behaviour during the operations at Toulon, where he was wounded, gained him powerful patrons among the British officers who were on the spot: Lord Mulgrave, Admirals Goodall and Elphinstone, and General O'Hara all testified 'to his indefatigable zeal in promoting the public service'; and in the summer of 1795 Colonel Thomas Graham, Baron Lynedoch, was writing to Henry Dundas, the War Secretary, to obtain a pension for him, until some employment could be sourced 'in the line of his Profession, by w[hi]ch he may no doubt be render'd highly useful to this Country'.[113] We find Barrallier again in October 1809, a successful second Assistant to the Surveyors of His Majesty's Navy, and about to be appointed Builder (Master Shipwright) in charge of a new naval dockyard at Milford, with his son Louis Charles as Assistant Builder. These roles fetched a remarkable £600 and £300 salary respectively – even the junior position being more than most sea captains' pay.[114] Upon receiving the two warrants from the Admiralty, however, the Navy Board raised some concerns. When Barrallier had been employed as Assistant to the Surveyor, 'it was with a view to take advantage for the Public of

[113] National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, GD51/2/50/1-2, Papers of the Dundas Family of Melville, Viscounts Melville (Melville Castle Papers) – Letters and Papers on Admiralty and Naval Affairs, 1782-1867, Letter from [Col.] Thomas Graham, Stratton Street, to [Henry Dundas], 7 Aug. 1795. Barrallier's biographical details also come from this letter. One of his sons, Francis Barrallier, would move to the British colony in Australia in 1800 and begin a successful career as artillery officer and especially as surveyor, engineer and cartographer on behalf of the British government: V. Parsons, 'Barrallier, Francis Louis (1773-1853)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (1966) http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barrallier-francis-louis-1745.

[114] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, n. 19. Only first- and second-rate post captains made more: the annual wage of a third-rate captain in 1809 was about £283. See: Rodger, *Command*, p. 626.

his Talents as an Engineer'. 'As an experiment of his Talents', two old members of the Board recalled, he was given the task of finishing some ships,

> principally because there was [*sic*] some difficulties in his doing the duties of the Assis.t Surveyor in relation to the dock Yards among the inferior officers of which much Jealousy was excited by Mr Barrallier's appointment to the Office… However his being disposed of to superintend the build[in]g of Ships at a private Yard we have reason to believe quieted the minds of the minor officers and assistants in the Dock Yards from their conceiving that he would not be in the way of their promotion to higher situations to which they naturally looked forward.[115]

As for his son, given that for the past nine years or so he had served as Barrallier's clerk, he could not 'regularly have served such an apprenticeship as would entitle him to act as a Shipwright's Officer in His Majesty's Service or we believe in any other Service in England'. This being the case, the Board was 'apprehensive' that the two men's appointment

> would occasion very great dissatisfaction among the Assistants and Inferior Officers of our several Dock Yards who have devoted their whole lives to the duties of their profession & have from the hope of promotion undergone the drudgery

[115] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, n. 19.

> incident to that Profession and many of whom have qualified themselves for the situations to which they naturally aspire.[116]

Jean Louis Barrallier had been successfully building ships at Milford, on behalf of the Navy, since 1797.[117] He was, therefore, the obvious choice to lead a local dockyard establishment when the decision was taken to create one. The appointment of his son does smack of nepotism, but the Board did not (and therefore probably could not) bring any argument to discredit the father's *credentials* – only a political concern for British workers' jealousy. Xenophobia was present, but implicit: a relatively subtle, repeated hint to the fact that such jealousy was a 'natural' sentiment, echoing the same language that we saw in the case of Sidney Smith's biographer, condemning the 'unnaturality' of foreign service.[118] *Only then* was the legislation about foreigners brought up. According to a royal Order in Council of 4 July 1805, the Commissioners add, almost as an afterthought, 'no fforeigner [*sic*] on any pretence whatever is to be entered in any department of the Dock Yards'. 'And we would submit also', they continue, 'whether even naturalization would put these Gent[lemen] who are natives of France and who we presume are Catholics into a situation to hold Offices of such Great Trust under His Majesty's Government were every other objection to it is entirely out of the Question [*sic*]'.[119] The Admiralty's legal counsel admitted that indeed these appointments were places of trust within the statute of William III. They were therefore duly 'revoked'. However, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty did not want to lose Barrallier's 'talents', so they consulted the lawyer again: could they 'legally continue to employ' the man at all, 'without conferring on him any regular appointment' other than

[116] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, n. 19.
[117] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, n. 20.
[118] See footnote n. 19.
[119] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, n. 19.

Assistant to the Surveyors? The response was that they could, as long as he was not, the counsel reiterated, in what could be construed as a place of trust.[120]

The Admiralty per se did not have any qualms in issuing the warrant and putting Barrallier in charge of a dockyard – one of the positions in the Navy in which a disloyal officer could do the most damage, through sabotage and especially espionage.[121] Their Lordships were also, until reminded, ignorant of or unconcerned with the law excluding aliens. Legal barriers were ultimately what doomed the Frenchman's warrant, but they were not the Navy Board's primary concern, either. The main worry was discontent among the established players on the job market. Barrallier's foreignness was a mere excuse, for the Navy Board but also, we may argue, for the British workers themselves.

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In conclusion, employing foreign officers was not necessarily, by the end of the long eighteenth century, morally problematic, dishonourable, or dangerous. It was simply, in many cases, impractical, and an upstream effort in a flooded job market, crowded with established candidates enjoying a solid foothold in core networks of patronage. In this context, the contrasting discourses of national service and emerging anti-mercenarism on the one hand, and gentlemanly and professional cosmopolitanism on the other, were strategically deployed by various actors, in turn, to regulate access and exclusion. The value-laden associations attached to the composite social class of 'officers' in this crucial transition period make it a

[120] T.N.A., ADM 7/308, n. 20.
[121] On French and Spanish espionage in British dockyards see e.g.: L. D. Ferreiro, 'Spies versus prize: technology transfer between navies in the age of Trafalgar', *The Mariner's Mirror*, xciii (2007), 16-27.

perfect analytical tool for exposing the ways in which national labels, even when strongly weighted, poorly conceal underlying social and economic dynamics.

Several types of foreign-born men could be found on naval quarterdecks and in naval wardrooms, under various terms. For each of those groups, career prospects were ultimately dictated by the state of the employment market, on the collective if not always on the individual level. Official rules and even the law were deployed selectively, by the Admiralty, unbeknownst to the Admiralty, and with the tacit connivance of the Admiralty. Ambrose, the Trafalgar veteran, was commissioned *de facto* illegally; Goloskenoff, the lost Russian, nested in a busy British frigate and disappeared at sea; Silvera, Natale, and probably other assistant surgeons like them practised without formal examination, appointment, or warrant, and enjoyed the same treatment and rights as their properly established colleagues. Overall, however, we can spot some trends. Commissioned officers of foreign origin were rare, most of them born abroad but legally subjects. Foreign young gentlemen were accepted in appreciable numbers, but in the main because they had little chance of further promotion, they mostly intended to return to their home countries, and their stay was helpful in fostering diplomatic relations. Physicians, surgeons, and other non-combatants like teachers operated on the spectrum between cosmopolitan intellectual and highly skilled professional. It was, however, not the former title that guaranteed them a stable job, but the latter: immigrants who specialize in areas where there is a shortage of competence and local competition usually see all barriers to their settlement removed. This is demonstrated by the case of the many foreign assistant surgeons who lay decidedly in the category of skilled professional, rather than cosmopolitan gentleman, and were avidly recruited by the Navy. Finally, we have a man like Barrallier: professionally qualified, suitably connected, but barred from promotion not so much by his foreignness, as *through* his foreignness. We may say that national identification was, in many ways, a red herring.