

Foreign Jack Tars

The British Royal Navy of the French Wars (1793–1815) is an enduring national symbol, but we often overlook the tens of thousands of foreign seamen who contributed to its operations. *Foreign Jack Tars* presents the first in-depth study of their employment in the Navy during this crucial period. Based on sources from across Britain, Europe, and the USA, and blending quantitative, social, cultural, economic, and legal history, it challenges the very notions of ‘Britishness’ and ‘foreignness’. The need for manpower during wartime meant that naval recruitment regularly bypassed cultural prejudice, and even legal status. Temporarily outstripped by practical considerations, these categories thus revealed their artificiality. The Navy was not simply an employer in the British maritime market, but a nodal point of global mobility. Exposing the inescapable transnational dimensions of a quintessentially national institution, the book highlights the instability of national boundaries, and the compromises and contradictions underlying the power of modern states.

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Foreign Jack Tars

*The British Navy and Transnational Seafarers
during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*

Sara Caputo

University of Cambridge



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Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
 New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009199797

DOI: 10.1017/9781009199841

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First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Caputo, Sara, author.

Title: Foreign jack tars : the British Navy and transnational seafarers during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars / Sara Caputo, University of Cambridge.

Other titles: British Navy and transnational seafarers during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2023. | Series: Modern British histories | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022033911 (print) | LCCN 2022033912 (ebook) | ISBN 9781009199797 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009199810 (paperback) | ISBN 9781009199841 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Great Britain. Royal Navy—History—18th century. | Foreign enlistment—Great Britain—History—18th century. | Mercenary troops—Great Britain—History—18th century.

Classification: LCC DA87 .C37 2023 (print) | LCC DA87 (ebook) | DDC 359.00941—dc23/eng/20220719

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022033911>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022033912>

ISBN 978-1-009-19979-7 Hardback

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For Mum and Dad

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Acknowledgements

Every historian could fill volumes with their archival adventures, and recounting them here would be self-indulgent. In my mind, however, it is not the picturesque or the uncanny (much of both was encountered) that stands out the most: along the way, I have met so many kind and helpful people that the thought is overwhelming. It has been an absolute privilege.

Many individuals and institutions are due gratitude. To begin with, I owe huge thanks to Renaud Morieux, my PhD supervisor. Infallibly pointing out inconsistencies and weaknesses in my work, he helped me hammer my thinking into better shape, and provided exceptional and ongoing support. The book has changed since then, and, as per the usual formula, all remaining blunders are mine. I could not have hoped for a better doctoral supervisor.

Liam Gauci in Malta, Biagio Passaro, Angelo Odore, and Massimo Maresca in Naples and Sorrento, and Nicholas Rodger in Oxford were incredibly generous and hospitable, making me feel at home during my visits and providing much useful information. I remain in their debt. Gareth Atkins was a wonderful advisor, and Melissa Calaresu and Stephen Conway were exceptional examiners. Every single one of their thoughtful suggestions has helped me shape my thesis into this book. The ever-kind Callum Easton shared sources, ideas, and words of encouragement. Joan Abela, Emmanuel Buttigieg, Maroma Camilleri, Simona Cerutti, Noel D'Anastas, Berit Eide Johnsen, Irene Galandra Cooper, Mary Laven, Silvia Marzagalli, James Raven, and Jakob Seerup, via email or in person, provided valuable indications and sources that have shaped the direction of this project. Mark Williams, Paul Webster, Tracey Loughran, Federica Ferlanti, Lloyd Bowen, Anna Groundwater, and Gordon Pentland were fantastic teachers, mentors, and believers before, during, and after this journey. Nicole Janz and the Social Sciences Research Methods Programme at Cambridge trained me from scratch in the use of inferential statistical methods and R. The brilliant Claire Simons, too, cannot be thanked enough for all her kindness and

xii Acknowledgements

expertise, for reading my quantitative chapter, and for texting over stunningly fast and spot-on solutions if my code defeated me. The editors, series editors, and anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press offered excellent and generous feedback and advice. Students, as ever, and in particular the school pupils whom I had the privilege to meet through the Brilliant Club, kept the enthusiasm and inspiration alive.

Many, many more people are owed thanks for their assistance, suggestions, support, encouragement, for interesting conversations, or for triggering new ideas and insights, or sharing individual sources and literature. I am certain that this will not be a comprehensive list, but here are many of their names – in alphabetical order, as I could not begin to think of a fair way of ‘ranking’ them: Sarah Atkins, Catherine Beck, Sandy Biery, Erica Charters, Nicholas Chiasson, Gaetano Damiano, Jeremiah Dancy, James Davey, J. D. Davies, Renata De Lorenzo, Nicholas Dixon, Saul Dubow, Jake Dyble, Elisa Ercolin, Amy Erickson, Christina Faraday, Simon Gallaher, Fernanda Gallo, Ben Gilding, Yonatan Glazer-Eytan, Ben Griffin, Nick Guyatt, Cath, Craig, and Carrie Holloway, Josh Ivinson, Walter Jansson, Lawrence Klein, Roger Knight, Emily Manson, Dániel Margócsy, Madison Marshall, Louise Moschetta, Elaine Murphy, Barbara Naddeo, Bruno Pappalardo, Sarah Pearsall, Vincent Peresso, Anna Maria Rao, Alexander Ray, Olesya Razuvayevskaya, Glauco Schettini, Ruth Schilling, Sujit Sivasundaram, Christina Skott, Fred Smith, Mary Stewart, Alistair Swiffen, Deborah Thom, Louis Volkmer, Sarah Watkinson, Callie Wilkinson, and Evan Wilson.

This project was originally funded by a Robinson College Lewis – Arts and Humanities Research Council studentship and by a twelve-month Scouloudi Fellowship at the Institute of Historical Research, London. My research trips to archives in Britain, Italy, Malta, and the Netherlands, as well as attendance at conferences and workshops, were generously funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council RTSG grant, by the Cambridge History Faculty Fieldwork Fund, Members’ History Fund, Specialist Archive Travel Fund, and Conference Attendance Fund, by four Academic Expenses grants from Robinson College, by the IHR Power and Postan Fund, and by two conference attendance bursaries from the Economic History Society. Fellowships at Magdalene College, Cambridge, the Deutsches Schiffahrtsmuseum in Bremerhaven, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, CA, gave me much-needed mind space, time, and new resources to turn my thesis into this book.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the help of staff at the Cambridge Faculty of History, Robinson College and Magdalene College, and at the various archives and libraries I visited: from nearest to furthest, the Cambridge University Library and affiliated libraries,

Acknowledgements

xiii

Robinson College Library, Magdalene College Library, the Jerwood Library of Trinity Hall, the British Library, Senate House Library, and Parliamentary Archives in London, the Caird Library of the Greenwich National Maritime Museum, the National Archives in Kew, the University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections, the Portsmouth Museum of the Royal Navy Library, the Devon Archives and Local Studies Service, the Koninklijk Huisarchief and the Nationaal Archief in The Hague, the Deutsches Schifffahrtsmuseum library, the Archivio di Stato in Naples and Pizzofalcone, the National Library of Malta and Notarial Archive in Valletta, the Archives of the Metropolitan Cathedral and National Archives of Malta in Mdina, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

Finally, I need to thank Elisa, who has put up with me for a very long time; Mum and Dad, for being there for me at any hour and anyway; and Cameron, for his stalwart support and patient love.

Older versions of some parts of this book (especially the Introduction and Chapter 7) have appeared in print in a short historiographical piece:

Sara Caputo, “Vers une histoire transnationale de la marine britannique au XVIII^e siècle” in *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 2019/3 (no. 397), pp. 13–32, © Armand Colin. Armand Colin est une marque de Dunod Éditeur, Malakoff.

A previous incarnation of Chapter 2, also containing some fragments from the Introduction, was published in the *Historical Journal*:

Sara Caputo, ‘Alien Seamen in the British Navy, British Law, and the British State, c.1793–c.1815’, *The Historical Journal* 62:3 (2019), 685–707.

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