

Great Inventions of the 19th Century | Transportation | Seafaring

Further, faster and cheaper. Steamships changed the traditional seafaring routes and colonies across the high seas were made possible.

During the 19th century seafaring was crucial for communication. When the steam engine was applied to sea transport, steamships gradually replaced sailing ships and the ports became key hubs for commerce and travel between the European and Arab and Ottoman shores. Seafaring in general demanded scientific and technical skills and knowledge including navigating with the help of maps and compasses; steamship handling required specialised technical knowledge in the fields of communication and mechanical engineering. Political, economic and social factors marked the modernisation of seafaring. A modern port, a steamship or a modern fleet represented the competition between different powers for control of sea routes. Under colonialism seafaring was tailored to the needs of the motherland.



Working Number: FR 016

Name: View of Istanbul: the Valide Sultan Mosque and the port

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 19th century

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The port of Eminönü developed in the 19th century as a modern landmark in the centre of Istanbul, where both ancient and modern buildings – mosques, palaces and Sirkeci station for the Orient Express – were located.



Working Number: RO 010

Name: The port of Galați

Holding Museum: National Museum of Romanian History

Date: First half of the 19th century

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Galați (Moldavia) was a port on the Danube waterway strategically and economically organised at the international level. The only port not controlled by the Sublime Porte or Russia, Galați traded with Poland, Hungary and the Ottoman market. A free port between 1837 and 1883, it was the seat of the Commission of the Danube at the end of the Crimean War.



Working Number: AT 008

Name: Drawing of the railway bridge between the mainland and Venice

Holding Museum: Austrian State Archives

Date: c. 1830

Materials: -

Curator Justification: The modernisation of seafaring in the Mediterranean was on the political and economic agenda of the Austrian Empire. After the Congress of Vienna (1815) Venice was incorporated in the Kingdom of Lombardo-Venezia. Austria considered Venice to be the gateway to

the Middle East and introduced a railway to connect the port of Venice to the core of the empire.



Working Number: RO 003

Name: Firman issued by Sultan Abdülmecid for the construction of the Constan#a–Cernavod# railway

Holding Museum:

Date: Romanian Railways Museum

Materials: 1857

Curator -

Justification: The modernisation of seafaring went side by side with the construction of railways to improve the efficiency of trade between ports and significant locations. The first railway on Romanian territory and in the European part of the Ottoman Empire, the Constan#a–Cernavod# railway was built after the Crimean War in a strategic position from the Black Sea towards the Danubian waterways.



Working Number: TN 066

Name: La Goulette

Holding Museum: Institut Supérieur d'Histoire Contemporaine de la Tunisie

Date: 1861

Materials: Paper

Curator The port of La Goulette was restored by Muhammad al-Sadiq Bey

Justification: as part of his programme of reforms to reinforce the economy, administration and military power of the Regency of Tunis. The aim was to make the port of Tunis a modern port for ships of big tonnage, connected to railways and other infrastructure.



Working Number: AT 011

Name: The Austrian ship on which Emperor Franz Joseph participated at the opening ceremony of the Suez Canal in 1869

Holding Museum:

Date: Austrian Military Museum / Institute of Military History

Materials: 1869

Curator -

Justification: Seafaring and economy were deeply interconnected. Having lost Venice in 1866, Trieste (today an Italian city) became the main port through which Austria conducted commercial relations with Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. The Suez Canal was a further commercial outlet for the Austrian market.



Working Number: LB 012

Name: Port of Beirut

Holding Museum: -

Date: 1887

Materials: -

Curator
Justification: Beirut port was renovated from 1887. The Ottoman authority gave the concession of the port to an Ottoman company, the Compagnie du Port, des Quais et des Entrepôts de Beyrouth. The concession was fortified when the company gained from the Customs authority the sole rights to store and carry all the transit goods passing through Customs.



Working Number: LB 008

Name: Beirut Port Train Station

Holding Museum: Ministry of Transportation

Date: 1903

Materials: -

Curator
Justification: The railway connected the port to the main Beirut station. It was conceived as a continuation of the sea route via Beirut port. It testifies to how the new communication routes opened new ways inland, and to the link between local infrastructure and economic changes in the Ottoman provinces.



Working Number: MO 034

Name: Photograph of El-Hank Lighthouse, Port of Casablanca

Holding Museum: National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco

Date: 1 August 1920

Materials: -

Curator
Justification: In 1904 Sultan Mulay 'Abd al-Aziz signed a contract with the Compagnie Marocaine, a French company connected to the Schneider industrial group, to develop the port. This happened in a context of delicate balance between the competing European powers to secure influence in Morocco through projects, economic activities or financial assistance.



Working Number: TR2 044

Name: Messageries Maritimes's Istanbul-themed posters

Holding Museum: Ömer M. Koç Collection

Date: 1909

Materials: -

Curator
Justification: Messageries Maritimes was a French merchant shipping company whose story throughout the 19th century was influenced by social, military and political events. Its ships were used during the Crimean War for travel and for trade in the Middle East and on the Atlantic Ocean. It is usually associated with the period of France's colonial and military interventionism in the Middle East and Asia.



Working Number: FR 134

Name: Société les Affréteurs Réunis [...] Weekly, individual direct services from Rouen and Bordeaux-Bayonne to Algeria and Tunisia, and vice versa.

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 1913

Materials:

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Curator

Justification: This map, published by a French maritime company, shows the railways connected to the ports of Tunis and Algiers. At the beginning of the 20th century, railways and ports were efficiently organised in order to allow the maritime companies to bring back to France the minerals extracted in Tunisia and Algeria.



Working Number: DZ 169

Name: Algiers port

Holding Museum: Musée National des Beaux-Arts

Date: c. 1920

Materials: Oil on canvas

Curator

Justification: This painting shows the port of Algiers as a French colony. No longer the capital of corsairs, Algiers was reshaped by an infrastructure to match the economic strategies of the colonisers. The industrial port, like many other similar structures, adjusted its traditional landscape to meet the needs of the motherland.



Working Number: ET1 031

Name: Port of Alexandria

Holding Museum: Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Date: 25 June 1928

Materials:

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Curator

Justification: The ancient port of Alexandria is an example of the continuous development, in the 19th and early 20th century, of traditional ports to meet the needs of industrialisation. The ports, traditionally located in strategic locations, kept and improved through innovation their role as important hubs on communication routes.



Working Number: QT 015

Name: Dhow collection

Holding Museum: National Museum of Qatar

Date: 19th century

Materials: Timber

Curator

Justification: In spite of the introduction of steamships and innovations in seafaring, traditional ships and seafaring did not disappear, both representing a main source of income. The dhow is a traditional wooden ship of

Qatar and the Gulf, which was used for pearling, fishing and for trade with India and East Africa.
