

S.1.4. – 18th-century sailors' lives, skills and experiences
CHAIR: S. June Kim
(Korea Maritime & Ocean University)

Les marins de la traite : essai de reconstitution de carrière des Malouins embarqués sur les négriers (1700-1730)

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Abstract

La traite négrière depuis Saint-Malo s'est accélérée au XVIII^e siècle, comme dans tous les ports de France. Les équipages qui empruntent cette route triangulaire ont été formés à d'autres types de navigation, la pêche en particulier. Peu ont même l'habitude de se rendre aux Antilles. Cette communication propose de retracer la carrière d'une partie de ces marins en cherchant à comprendre ce qui les amène, dans le cadre de leur expérience maritime, de leur vécu et de l'attitude de ceux qui les dirigent (commandement, armateurs), à se porter vers ce type de navigation en n'oubliant pas les situations des familles. En d'autres termes, le risque plus important lié à cette navigation, la durée de l'absence, sont-ils mis en balance avec l'intérêt d'ordre pécuniaire de ces voyages ? Des pressions s'exercent-elles sur ces gens de mer ou remarque-t-on un mimétisme (lié au phénomène de l'embarquer ensemble) qui aboutirait à un phénomène de groupe ? Un bilan sera tiré de ces navigations dans la mesure où la question de savoir si ces expériences ont pu infléchir les carrières, sera posée, tout comme celle de la létalité. Cette communication se fera en français avec des diapositives en anglais.

Keywords

GEMER, traite négrière, Saint-Malo, navigation, colonies

Biography

Philippe Hrodej. Maître de conférences à l'Université de Bretagne Sud (Lorient), auteur d'ouvrages sur la course et la piraterie, sur le commerce vers les Antilles à la fin du XVII^e siècle et porteur d'un projet portant sur les gens de mer (GEMER). J'appartiens au laboratoire TEMOS (TEmps, MONdes et Sociétés) ainsi qu'au GIS d'Histoire & Sciences de la mer.

Aurélié Hess. Ingénieure de recherche CNRS auprès du laboratoire TEMOS (TEmps MONdes et Société) et travaillant à ce titre sur plusieurs projet dont le projet GEMER portant entre autre sur la reconstitution de carrières maritimes liés aux matricules des classes.

The eating habits of seafarers in Brittany at the beginning of the 18th century. Meeting between judicial archives and underwater archaeology.

DENIS LE GUEN

Abstract

The suggested communication takes an anthropological look at the deck of the great sailing boats frequenting the ports of Brittany at the beginning of the 18th century. The seafarers who belong to their crews do various missions : fishing campaigns in Newfoundland, privateer operations at the English Channel or in the Gulf of Guinea, commerce in the Caribbean or the South Seas. Nevertheless, these men share a common experience, the sea, the confinement, the danger. Their eating habits and more generally the material environment in which they operate must shed light on the functioning of modern societies.

The written sources consist mainly of admiralty funds from the main Breton ports. These courts have produced a variety of archives, some of which provide valuable data on eating habits. For example, ship sales inventories show the remaining food at the end of a campaign or the cooking utensils used during the campaign. The judicial investigations themselves are particularly interesting because they sometimes show, almost accidentally, the social implications that center around this strong moment of sociability that the meal represents : an altercation occurs during this, witnesses then describe what they eat, when the conflict does not lie in the organization of the meal itself.

Underwater archaeology resonates with these fragments of life, echoed in the archives. On the Dauphine, for example, a privateer frigate lost off the coasts of Saint-Malo in 1704, cooking utensils and leftovers provide a concrete picture of what the archives quickly outline in inventories. Archives, in turn, when describing meal scenes, add depth to these inanimate objects. They bring these men who handle them back to life, the way they cook and what they eat. Two questions then guide my intervention. What is the method for relevantly meeting such different sources ? Do the data collected make it possible to understand the ship as a microcosm of 18th century society ?

Keywords

Modern History; Eating habits; judicial archives; underwater archaeology

Biography

Denis Le Guen. Professor of history and geography, I teach in a high school in Nantes (France). Since 2018, I do a thesis at the University of Angers. My subject is about the material culture of seafarers in Brittany (1680-1720). It is based on the meeting of judicial archives and submarine

archaeology. This research work is co-directed by Florent Quellier and Sylviane Llinares (University of Angers and Lorient, STT Doctoral School, TEMOS laboratory). Elisabeth Veyrat of DRASSM and Marie-Pierre Ruas of CNRS-MNHN are part of the thesis follow-up committee. I spoke at the 4th and 5th IEHCA International Conventions in Tours in 2018 and 2019. I must also participate in the publication on the wrecks of Saint-Malo, a publication led by archaeologists Michel L'Hour and Elisabeth Veyrat.

From tacit to explicit knowledge: Changing ways to learn seamanship in the 18th and 19th centuries

Seamanship

KAREL DAVIDS (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Abstract

‘Seamanship was, and is, for the most part a practical subject’, according to John Harland (Seamanship in the Age of Sail (1984)), but the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a momentous change in the ways seamanship could be learned. The art of seamanship was no longer only taught by seasoned sailors through hands-on instruction on board. The skills and techniques of handling and working a ship were more and more also explained in manuals on seamanship and mariner’s dictionaries, practiced in specially commissioned training ships and tested in formal examinations. This shift from ‘tacit’ to ‘explicit’ knowledge took place in navies and merchant marines of all major western seafaring nations. This paper deals with this under-researched change in nautical education, with a focus on countries around the North Sea. In what respects and how was ‘seamanship’ turned into explicit knowledge? Why did it happen? Who were the key actors in this process? Those are the central questions that will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords

seamanship, nautical education, 18th and 19th centuries

Biography

Karel Davids studied Economic and Social History at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands, where he received his Ph.D.) in 1986. From 1994, he held the Chair of Economic and Social History in the Faculty of Humanities and the School of Economics of Business Administration at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands, where he retired in 2018. His publications in English include *The Rise and Decline of Dutch Technological Leadership. Technology, Economy and Culture in the Dutch Republic, 1350-1800* (Leiden, Brill 2008), *Religion, Technology, and the Great and Little Divergences: China and Europe compared c.1700-1800* (Leiden, Brill 2013), *A Miracle Mirrored. The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge UP 1995) (co-edited with Jan Lucassen) and many articles on the history of technology, economic history and maritime history. His new book *Global Ocean of Knowledge 1660-1860. Globalization and Maritime Knowledge in the Atlantic World* will be published shortly.