

Criminalizing Economies. Law, Distribution, and the Transformation of the Maritime World (1200-1600) – International Conference 22nd – 25th February 2018

Organized by Thomas Heebøll-Holm, Philipp Höhn and Gregor Rohmann

Traditionally legal and economic historians of the maritime world tend to differentiate between licit trade and illicit piracy, smuggling, fraud and corruption. However, maritime societies before the emergence of the sovereign state were shaped by legal and normative pluralism. Taking someone's goods at sea was not simply an endemic distortion of rising early capitalism, but a legal practice, which was highly embedded in norms and economic practices. Depending on their ability to enforce their interests in the discourses on the boundaries of licit and illicit economic practices, particular actors appeared either as pirate, smuggler, merchant, or as entrepreneur or admiral. Hence concepts like "piracy" or "smuggling" seem to be useless as analytical tools to study the history of maritime economies and of deviance in this arena. They are to be understood rather as discursive weapons to fight competitive actors and to enforce one's own economic and political position.

While the relation between the emergence of a discriminating concept of maritime deviance and the rise of the sovereign territorial state has been discussed already, the links to the procedures of appropriation, accumulation, and distribution of resources were hardly examined. But an economic perspective can broaden our perception of medieval maritime violence in at least two dimensions:

1. All actors in the maritime arena were primarily economic actors. They had to appropriate, commodify and distribute goods in interaction with land-based markets. As no collective executive institutions existed, the individual threat or even use of force served as a means to stabilise norms of behaviour. How did this economy of taking work and how was it connected to reciprocal exchange? How were maritime actors able to change goods with unknown property rights and to get access to markets?

2. The late Middle Ages were a period of economic and political transformation in which a hierarchical network of central markets evolved, while particular economic actors were increasingly marginalized. Thus governments and hegemonic economic actors increased their efforts to create a new legal distinction between licit and illicit economic activities in order to regulate markets and to extend their own power in the maritime realm.

We aim to explore and compare these emerging distinctions and their interdependence with economic activity in various late medieval maritime theatres of operations in a common edited volume.

Confirmed Speakers:

Kilian Baur (Eichstätt), *Schal men den clageren beyden syden recht behelpen* – King, Councils, Burghers, and the Juridical Consequences of War.

Mike Carr (Edinburgh), *Policing the Sea: Enforcing the Papal Embargo on Trade with "Infidels"*

Georg Christ (Manchester), *Pirates and the Venetian Coast Guard/Navy in the 14th Century*

Albrecht Cordes (Frankfurt), *Comment (legal history)*

Tobias Daniels (Rom), *Popes and Pirates: Paul Beneke and the Portinari-Triptych*

Christoph Dartmann (Hamburg), Naval Warfare in Communal Genoa

Frederik Vognsen Hansen (Aarhus), Conceptualizing 'Piracy' in late medieval Denmark

Thomas Heebøll-Holm (Odense), Prizes, Privateers, and Market in 14th-Century England and France

Philipp Höhn (Frankfurt), Merchant Spaces, Pirate Pirate? Distribution, Legal Pluralism, and the Construction of Maritime Deviance in the Baltic (14th to 16th Century)

Nikolas Jaspert (Heidelberg), Comment (maritime history)

Marie Kelleher (Long Beach), The Family Business: The Smugglers, Captains, and Councilors of Barcelona's Marquet Family

Alexander Krey (Frankfurt), Henning Putbus and Wrecking. A Study in the Interaction and Transformation of Resource Regimes

Bart Lambert (York) Navigating Insecurity: The Costs and Benefits of the Privateering Economy in Fifteenth-Century Bruges

Michael Meichsner (Greifswald), Islands and maritime conflicts - the example of Gotland around 1500

Flavio Miranda (Lisbon / Porto), Amândio Barros (Porto), 'Make Good Peace or Total War.' Trade, piracy and the construction of Portugal's maritime state in the later Middle Ages (1350-1550)

Beata Mozejko (Danzig), From the Baltic to the North Sea. The Great Caravel "Peter von Danzig" under the Command Berndt Pawesta, Councilor of Gdańsk

Gregor Rohmann (Göttingen), The Emperor, the Pope, and the "Pirates". How Hamburg gained Control over the Elbe River, 1359-1387

Emily Sohmer Tai (New York) Pirates on the Coast: Littoral Expansion and Maritime Predation in Liguria and Dalmatia, 1300-1500

Roberto José Gonzalez Zalacain (Madrid) Business on the last frontier: licit and illicit economic issues in the conquest and colonization of the Canary Islands (14th-16th centuries)