**FORMS OF REMUNERATION IN THE SPANISH MERCHANT MARINE: FROM SAILOR-TRADESMAN TO SEA WAGE EARNER (S. XVIII-XIX)**

Dr. Enric Garcia Domingo. Universitat de Barcelona.

**Abstract**

The merchant marine is one of the economic sectors where the salary as a form of remuneration appeared earlier. From the fourteenth century, labour payment wages (under various names) coexists with other forms of remuneration based on risk-sharing commercial adventure. Such forms of remuneration were regulated by a comprehensive legal system based on common law in the late Middle Ages and then, in Modern Ages based in state regulations.

But despite its early onset, wage system in the merchant marine widespread especially between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The process can be documented as a parallel to the development of capitalism in the shipping industry, and the radical separation between labour and means of production. Throughout the process, workers have been moved away from trade benefits to one only way of income: wages. They had, though, maintained a certain capacity to obtain other income connected to the maritime adventure (smuggling on the one hand, or a tolerate trade of a certain amount of private goods on the other). The process of salarization affected in the late nineteenth century all job categories on board ships, including officers and masters.

To sum up, in the Middle Ages the sailor contributed to the commercial venture, and also took a risk in it. But after the process of salarization, seafarers were reduced to sell their labour in exchange for a wage. When workers were unable to participate in the shipping business, they also were kept free from economic risk. Hence the title of this presentation: a journey from the sailor tradesman to wage earner. My presentation is part of an ongoing investigation. The conclusions are therefore preliminary.

The role of the seafarer as wage earner has not received probably enough attention. Sailors fit perfectly into the classic Marxist definition of worker: they were free individuals possessed of their workforce as their only merchandise and had nothing more to sell. But this statement requires a reinterpretation along the lines proposed by Marcel van der Linden to redefine concepts such as work or sell selling work capacity (Linden, 2008). My main contribution is to draw attention to the forms of pre-capitalist development to better understand the process of salarization. The study of different forms of remuneration is not easy, because for centuries lived together different systems in the same places, and there is some confusion in terminology to define each system.