

Call for papers

Conflict Management in the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic, 1200-1600: Actors, Institutions and Practices of Dispute Settlement

Law Faculty, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam / Institute for History, Universiteit Leiden
Amsterdam and Leiden, 24-25 May 2019



From the late Middle Ages onwards, maritime conflict has developed hand in hand with international trade. Over time, specific institutions were established to address disputes arising from violence or mishap at sea and in coastal areas.

Conflict resolution at sea has mostly been studied through the lens of the history of diplomacy and international law. Of late the emphasis has shifted to the process of conflict resolution itself. Alongside in-depth case studies, there is a more wide-ranging detailed interest in the different actors and institutions involved. Conflict management has a wider meaning than conflict resolution, as the concept includes alternative modes of dealing with conflicts that do not necessarily involve resolving them. Beyond classical issues such as naval warfare, piracy and privateering, medievalists and early modernists exploring the worlds of the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic have increasingly devoted attention to processes of conflict settlement and conflict avoidance. As a result, the vast diversity of formal judicial procedures and informal or private paths of settlements has come to light.

As research on conflict management continues to flourish, its maritime dimension still deserves more attention. The overall emphasis is still mainly on state formation and should be qualified, therefore, as land-oriented. The current conference aims at focusing on the maritime perspective, and proposes an actor and dispute-centered approach to avoid such a teleological perspective. How did maritime violent actors justify their acts (for example feuding or war) and how did they negotiate property rights? How did victims of maritime conflicts claim compensation or reparation? How and to what extent did they get support from authorities and polities? How did individual actors and public institutions negotiate disputes which transcended jurisdictional boundaries (for example those involving reprisal and piracy)? What strategies, arrangements and agreements were resorted to in order to achieve resolution of those conflicts, and to what effect?

So far, students of the maritime dimension, have studied either the Atlantic, the North Sea region or the Baltic, creating separate historiographies. But historically, these regions represent closely

entangled seascapes. After all, maritime conflicts did not end at geographical borders. Actors like the Hansards, English, or merchants from the Low Countries traded in the three maritime arenas and stood in complex relationships, characterized by conflict and cooperation. This conference will foster an exchange between scholars working on these three areas of research, allowing for a comparative and long-term perspective. This may reveal connections between the three seascapes and shed a useful light on the multiplicity and complexity of the various paths chosen for the management of disputes.

Paper proposals

We welcome paper proposals for a twenty-minute presentation on topics related to the above call. We encourage papers related to merchant conflicts and their management in the Atlantic, North Sea and/or the Baltic, including aspects related to legal strategies, diplomatic exchanges and more informal means of conflict management.

Please submit your paper proposal (500 words) and a short curriculum (250 words) by 15 January 2019 to Louis Sicking (l.h.j.sicking@hum.leidenuniv.nl). Please do not forget to include your name, institution, current position (PhD candidate, post-doc, lecturer...), and e-mail address in your short cv. Registration is free and covers coffee and tea. Speakers and participants should be able to cover their own travel expenses and accommodation. (Selected speakers will be invited to join us in submitting their work for publication.)

Locations

Friday 24 May 2019: Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Vijzelstraat 32, Amsterdam

Saturday 25 May 2019: Kamerling Onnes Building, Law Faculty Universiteit Leiden, Steenschuur, Leiden

Official language Paper proposals and presentations should be in English.

Dates and deadlines

15 January 2019 – Call for papers closes.

1 April 2019 – Registration opens.

30 April 2019 – Registration ends.

24 May 2019 – Conference begins.

Organisers

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This conference is organised by the Law Faculty of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the Institute of History of Leiden University, as part of the international research project “Maritime Conflict Management in Atlantic Europe, 1200-1600” (partners: NWO, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Universiteit Leiden, Universidad de Cantabria, Universidad de La Laguna, Université de la Rochelle and Universidade Nova Lisboa)



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