



LOGBOOKS: A NEW SOURCE OF PALEO-CLIMATIC DATA FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

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Recent studies using naval logbooks have concentrated on the climate of the Atlantic Ocean. There are, however, many other logbooks in European archives, a number of which have recently come to light. These discoveries offer a possibility of examining climatic change over the Mediterranean Sea from the late seventeenth century onwards. Such studies will complement the recent achievements using land-based records from instrumental and descriptive sources. Although most logbook data from before the mid-nineteenth century are non-instrumental, and are based on observations of wind force, wind direction and the general state of the weather (rain, cloud, fog, thunder etc.) they have the advantage of being recorded daily, using a consistent recording system. Work by the CLIWOC team has already shown the value of logbook evidence. The parameters of wind force and wind direction allow for pressure field reconstructions, while extreme events such as storms are recorded, often in great detail. Several sources of Mediterranean logbooks have been identified. Firstly, many hundreds have been found in London archives from English Royal Navy ships active in the region. English naval interest in the Mediterranean began in the 1690s, after which there was a near-constant presence in the region. The extensive cruising activities of the Royal Navy provide a wide coverage of the Western Mediterranean, but their voyages extended also into the eastern Mediterranean. In Spain there are a number of collections of diarios de navegación and cuadernos de bitácora from the Spanish Royal Navy that are held in the Archivo del Museo Naval and in Archivo General de

la Armada. A collection has recently been discovered that were prepared by vessels of the Catalan shipping companies. In France, logbooks are kept in Centre d'accueil et de Recherche des Archives Nationales (CARAN). Other resources may remain to be uncovered in Italian, Greek or Turkish archives. The combination of these sources can, after proper homogenisation, contribute to a significantly better understanding of Mediterranean climate during the last 300 years.