Proposal for the 3rd MMHN Conference

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It is well known that the introduction of heavy artillery at sea played a major role in the transformation of warfare at sea roughly between 1500 and 1650. Whereas galleys were the first ships to take advantage of the use of heavy artillery, in the long run sailing ships became the preferred ships for maritime warfare. Perhaps the most spectacular consequence of the slow and difficult but eventually successful adoption of broadside artillery on sailing ships was the return of the sailing vessel for warfare in the galley-dominated Mediterranean. Historians as Fernand Braudel and Frederic Lane have recognized the role of the Dutch and the English in the (re-)introduction of the sailing ship for Mediterranean warfare from the start of the early modern era. From 1618 until 1667, when the Venetian arsenal built its first ship-of-the-line, Venice regularly hired converted merchantmen for warfare from the Dutch and the English. The aim of this paper is to put the Dutch contribution to Venetian warfare at sea in the Mediterranean in the seventeenth century in a broader timeframe as well as in a comparative perspective by using new evidence as well as Dutch literature relatively unknown outside the Netherlands. The goal of this exercise is threefold: 1. to emphasize the continuing role of converted merchantmen for warfare beyond the Middle Ages into the Early Modern Era, even after the introduction of the gun port. 2. To contribute to bridge the gap between medieval and early modern naval history and 3. To contribute to bridge the gap between Mediterranean maritime history on the one hand and the history of the Atlantic and North Sea on the other.

(The paper could be presented either in English or French.)
Autobiographical Note

Louis Sicking is lecturer in history at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands. He studied history at Leiden and Aix-en-Provence and held fellowships of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies. He was a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York City. He is the author of Neptune and the Netherlands. State, Economy, and War at Sea in the Renaissance (Leiden, Brill, 2004) and Colonial Borderlands. France and the Netherlands in the Atlantic World in the Nineteenth Century (Leiden, Brill, 2008) and of many articles, mainly on maritime and overseas history.

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