Potentiality of marine climatological data for the western Mediterranean from
Catalan ships’ log-books (18th and 19th centuries)

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In order to obtain more information about past climates, new palaeoclimatic
techniques and sources are needed to evaluate the present climatic change. Marine
meteorological data from documentary sources, i.e. ships’ log-books, is a recognized
proxy tool for climatic reconstructions. The Mediterranean basin, due to its historical
background, has an enormous amount of information not yet exploited. In addition,
the geographical characteristics of the region (a closed sea surrounded by mountains
and dotted with islands) and its latitudinal situation makes this area exceptional since
is affected by many climatic interactions.

This investigation analyses the potentiality of the information provided by this source
during the golden period of Catalan trade with America (eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries), focusing on the type of meteorological data available for the western
Mediterranean basin. The structure and evolution of the log-books and the
methodology used for the transcription of weather data will also receive attention.