FROM THE BARGAIN/BARGAINING “AGREEMENT” TO THE SHIPPING AGREEMENT (I)

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of the legal components of the boarding agreement shows that this contract, in fact, is an individual employment contract concluded for a fixed period, with a particular suite of elements determined by very specific of the sailor profession.

The individual boarding agreement is an undefined legal concept, which incidentally regulates the meaning of "individual employment contract concluded for a fixed period" by employees who are part of the crew.

Keywords: Embarking, embarking, Collective Work, boarding personnel

1. HISTORY

It is inconceivable to specify the time period when navigation began, as the science and art of driving a vessel from one point to another in the world. Failure comes from the fact that man has felt the need to pass a course or a stretch of water early in his existential adventure. It is a known fact that monkeys use, in order to survive, the floating logs in the event of flooding or simply to pass on the other side of a river.

An important step was made when there emerged the idea of keeping the trunk for later use. The archaic tree trunk hollowed inside used in order to float on rivers and seas, described in the Polynesian cosmogonist tales [1] is at the origin of a new occupation in the civilizing race of humanity [2].

The "initiation" into the mysteries of the journey on rivers, lakes and seas was done in several places, separately, due to the isolation of human communities [3]. Thus the movement on rivers, faster than the terrestrial one, created an alternative to human existence, firstly by satisfying the need for food, when people stood still their hunger by cultivating plants, raising animals, or fishing on the shore. The movement on water firstly created a richer source of fishing and also led the man to new shores where he was able to change what they overflowed with what they lacked.

Some tribes moved quickly from monoxides and rafts to boats with superposed rows of paddles able to fish offshore or to sail around islands, and even continents [4]. Over time, the insurmountable obstacles due to the increasing demands of civilization, have turned in factors of progress both in what concerns the means of water transport and the coastal shipping development [5], at first, and then maritime shipping and development.

Subsequently, the modernization of these nautical means shifted from their peaceful use which generated wealth through maritime trade [6], to the conquest or invasion of other territories through the organization of military fleets [7] able to suppress and plunder, to organize maritime blockades in order to control large stretches of water [8].

In these circumstances, besides the quality of grower, farmer, hunter, etc, a new occupation appears – the one of rafter [9], boater [10], oarsman, steersman, seaman or adventurer at first [11], then the sailor, pirate, Viking, corsair [12], sea dog, seafarer or legendary names such as the Argonaut [13].

For a long period of time, the floating means used as the main way of propulsion – the paddle, driven by human force [14], recruited from among the prisoners or slaves [15] whose minimal rights were limited to food and summery equipment. Navigation has evolved, however, and the entire manpower used precisely for vessel propulsion was partially replaced by wind power, respectively by the art of taming the wind and driving the boat as needed - regardless of its direction.

1.1. Bargaining for the ship personnel

After the discovery of the steam engine and the diesel engine, bold seamen have become the masters of the sea. The means of traveling on water required a corresponding qualified service staff followed by a contract of employment between the sailors- employees and the vessel commander, directly, when he was also the owner of the vessel or, in other situations, together with the owner of the respective vessel, who drew the crew list.

An exceptional situation is the bargaining for a crew list on a pirate ship. After taking notice of its contents, the pirates swore with their hands on a Bible that they would comply. The content of the "bargaining agreement" provided for constitutional (the equal right to vote), administrative, criminal (death penalty), civil, religious dispositions and labor standards etc, which provided both for the rights and obligations and prohibitions for all crew members in relation to the positions they held [16].

The harsh life at sea imposed even to pirate crews special measures of labor safety. "The presence of young boys and women is strictly prohibited. The one who will be found guilty of having seduced a person of the opposite sex and of having convinced her to navigate disguised, will be sentenced to death." [17].
Sailors bargaining for the merchant marine knew hard times at first. The owner's interest was to send ships to sail full speed and often face unfavorable weather, in extremely unfavorable working conditions for the crew, and which were unspecified in the bargaining agreement. Underpaid, always living half-wet with their hands rammed by rough ropes, forced to climb all the time on masts, on strong winds and waves (that overburdened the ship in pitch and reeling over 30-40 degrees), on rain or snowstorm, not a few were those who disappeared in the waves [18]. For the ship owners, the cargo was the important one and not the sailors.

The burden of service included different obligatory exercises (of salvation, vitality etc.), but the excesses of some commanders, brought the crew to physical and mental exhaustion, by timed workouts, similar to the imposed military exercises [19]. Fear of the unknown and of the inevitable unknown was a particular obstacle in the selection of the personnel from among those who dreamed of an immediate enrichment.

Every storm at sea could let behind new wrecks, further loss of life and other names of missing vessels – this was the anticipatory picture of each sailor, before deciding to go at sea.

1.2. Crew Enrollment

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a galley crew consisted of approx. 150-400 people, depending on the voyage, the ship's mission or the ship capacity. The share was represented by the oarsmen and the sailors were around 40-50; they handled the sails and the helm [20]. Their number was completed by the armed personnel - up to approx. 50 people; they constituted what today is called the "marines." The leadership of such a ship usually consisted of a commander who could even be the ship owner, 2-3 under-officers and the commander of the soldiers on board or a commit, two under-commits, the pilot (if applicable) and a scribe. The staff plan of the ship also included the so-called experts: chefs (one or two), thumpers, carpenters, the doctor who also had the attribution of barber and a priest who, when needed, was also a notary.

Before leaving for the voyage, the captain received from the Senate a list of instructions (commissio). In these instructions there were contained all the rules governing the navigation, the rights and the obligations of the captain, of the owner and of crew members, drafted on the basis of Senate decisions related to the muda of the respective year, either on the basis of current shipping practices, or based on legal practice on the preparation of line galleys.

The choice of captain was subject to fulfilling the minimum age of 30 years and to belonging to a noble caste. He was elected by the Senate, and during the voyage he represented the power of the republic to which he was belonging. The captain had a large number of legal and administrative rights [21], similar to a Venetian consul, or even to a governor.

The Venetian experience presents us a specific way of the employment of seafarers. The enrollment of the crew was made among volunteers, on a day fixed by the Senate, an operation which was held in Piazza San Marco, where there were settled banks for enrollment, where the owners [22] were proceeding to hiring the employers: steersmen, rowers; a cook, a suffrage and a cabin attendant. The captain was also choosing his people, with the exception of the Admiral [23], who was elected by the Council. The carpenters were nominated by the Arsenal.

The conditions of employment were included in the book that was on board, in the care of the ship scribe.

The exigency in the crew recruitment was different in relation to the capacity of the ship, the different situation of the armed ships - which required more severe conditions than those of a commercial vessel.

According to the Venetian documents, need for rowers increased in the early fourteenth century, exacerbated by the Black Plague, which led to their decrease in number. Thus, they started to use as rowers convicted persons, former smugglers, pagan slaves who were promised freedom in exchange for conversion – their fidelity and faith was proven by their work on the galley.

Faced with the challenge of finding volunteers for such an exhausting work, they also passed to illegal methods of recruitment. Agents were sent to cabarets and bars with the task of organizing gambling games. The mission was that those who lost and could not pay their debts to be brought to the galleys in order to be used as oarsmen.

The Eastern policy used the ballot as a means of recruitment and those who escaped were required to contribute, however, with certain expenses for equipping the ships.

During stopovers, which were, most times, very long, the owners were trying to minimize the navigation crew in order to reduce costs; they would hire a new crew when the ship was on the point of leaving the port.

1.3. The Development of Romanian river and maritime transport

In the international trade of goods and services, a higher comparative advantage is the ship transport - with the lowest cost reported to the ton / ton or freight / gauge [24]. A country may be more effective than any other country, in terms of its shipping activity even for the simple reason that it geographically benefits of a sea or ocean gateway.

The development of the Romanian river and maritime transportation imposed the creation of national shipping companies. Thus, in 1888, there was adopted the Law on the Establishment of a river and maritime navigation service, the legal framework providing the basis for the establishment by the State, in 1890, of the company of "Romanian River Navigation (NFR)", and, in 1895, of the company of "Romanian Maritime Service (RMS)", the latter operating initially within the CFR, and, subsequently, becoming independent [25].

In 1903 there was established the Company of the Russian Navigation on the Danube, which held the monopoly of freight and passenger traffic on the Danube and the Prut River. After 1900, the port activity within the Cetatea Alba, Reni, Chilia, Vâlcov centers has known significant increases. Permanent courses tied, by
Ismail, the Galati city to Odessa, while Austrian shipping companies were serving the route Odessa-Vienna [26].

In 1938, there was issued the Decree-Law establishing the National Navy Fund and in 1939 there was adopted a new navy program according to which the Royal Navy was going to be equipped with 180 ships - made partly because of the outbreak of World War II.

In 1939, the sea and river fleet under the Romanian flag consisted of: 26 maritime vessels, including 15 cargo ships, 6 passengers ships and five mixed ships; 807 river vessels, of which 23 of passengers and the rest of the tugs, boats, barges, docks, elevators etc.; 152 service vessels and coastal and river police vessels. The capacity of the maritime vessels was of 58,214 tons of naval registry, the capacity of river vessels was of 519,938 metric tons of river and the capacity of service and police vessels was of 21,340 metric tons [27].

The great loss suffered by the Romanian economy during World War I [28], followed by those produced during World War II (1940-1944), considerably decreased the capacity of maritime and river transport; in most cases, these losses had been caused by air raids. This situation is worsened by the end of World War II, due to the provisions of art. 11 of the Armistice Convention, signed in Moscow on 12 September 1944 [29], when Romania was obliged to pay in products [30], payment spread over six years; 355 maritime and river vessels had to be delivered [31]. To these, there must be added a total of 110 warships seized without any negotiation, and which have been moved to the Caucasus ports, where their Romanian names and flags have been changed with Soviet ones [32].

The future economic relations between Romania and the Soviet Union have continued with the establishment of 16 Soviet-Romanian joint ventures, such as S SOVROMTRANSPORT (19 July 1945) [33] and SOVROMNAVAL (15 August 1952) Soviet-Romanian Shipping Company - returned to Romanian State property after 18 September 1954. The river and maritime navigation of Romanian ships as well as shipbuilding returned again under the full jurisdiction of the Romanian state; this represents a landmark to the alignment to the international legal framework and the beginning of new development projects, in accordance to the need of the Romanian economy.

2. THE SAILOR PROFESSION

The shipping companies with great reputation and financial stability have invested in the construction of commercial and passenger ships, the largest ever. Basically, in terms of passenger ships, there were built real floating cities, with cinemas, dance halls, swimming pools, tennis courts, basketball, fitness centers etc., with the transport capacity of around 1500 - 2000 passengers and a huge number of service personnel, whose number exceeds 400 employees, of which about 30-50 are sailors (about 10 to 15 – able-bodied personnel and the difference – unable-bodied personnel) [34].

These impressive passenger ships that were crossing the Atlantic in 5-6 days, received a heavy blow after the '50s [35], with the advent of passenger jet aircraft, which shortened the time, on the same distance, to 5-6 hours.

In these situations, the sailors together with the service personnel employed on passenger ships, highlighted in the classification of occupations, often reach several pages. They are proposed different ways of employment with the fulfillment of specific training stands obtained under the minimum courses required by the International Maritime Organization and provided for in the contents of international conventions.

Nowadays passenger ships are used only for travel, cruise and leisure [36].

The profession of sailor has become an occupation like any other, only nowadays [37] when there has been obtained, legally, the recognition of certain functions in a functional hierarchy of management and execution, specific to the working conditions on vessels, with jobs recognized after the acquisition of knowledge obtained through training, based on rules imposed by the provisions of international conventions to which most maritime and non-maritime states have acquiesced.

The Ministry of Labor, under the Government Decision no. 575/bis/1992, on the establishment of uniform lists of general interest, provided in the general conception of informatization in Romania has enlisted seafarers' employment agreement [41] defines the term "crew".

Any maritime or river ship, public or private property, which is engaged in the transportation of goods or passengers for commercial ends and which is registered within a country, has hired a specialized staff in order to insure for involvement of the ship in the transport and navigation activities, according to the destination assigned by its construction.

Any vessel flying the Romanian flag is served by a crew operating the vessel safely, meeting the environmental protection conditions and fulfilling other activities on board [39].

The personnel consist of sailing crew and auxiliary staff, and its composition is determined according to ship type and destination [40].

In what concerns the crew, the positions on board (when speaking about ships flying the Romanian flag) can only be occupied by the sailing crew, possessing licenses or certificates for their corresponding competence.

The auxiliary personnel perform activities on board for which no licenses or certificates of competence are issued.

All crew members must demonstrate that they meet minimum age and health conditions laid down in national regulations and international agreements and conventions to which Romania is party.

3.1. The concept of "crew"

ILO Convention no. 22 of 24.06.1926 on the seafarers' employment agreement [41] defines the term
"seafarer" in art. 2 letter a), as being any person employed or used in any capacity on board of a ship and enlisted in the contract of employment on the ship. The term excludes the commanders, pilots, cadets, students on board of school-ships and apprentices with special contracts of apprenticeship; the term excludes crews of the military Navy and other persons in the permanent service of the state.

According to Art. 52 of Government Ordinance no. 42 / 1997 (r) on maritime and inland waterways transport, the Romanian sailing crew consists of all persons, regardless of nationality, who possess a license or a certificate of competence obtained or recognized in accordance with legal provisions which entitle them to perform functions on board of ships.

The record of the Romanian sailing crew is held by the Romanian Naval Authority in the registries of the sailing crew.

The form and content of the Register of Romanian seafarers are approved by the order of the Minister of Transport, Construction and Tourism.

Each crew member must have, necessarily, an identity document.

Crew members on vessels operating at sea may also use the seaman's book as identity document.

In Romania, the seaman's book is issued on behalf of the Government, by the Ministry of Labor, Family and Equal Opportunities, through the Romanian Naval Authority.

Crew members on vessels operating on inland waterways must have a service card which proves the service skills, medical skills, the navigation times and the sectors covered.

The form and content of the seaman's book and the service card are approved by the Ministry of Transport, Constructions and Tourism.

The service card is issued by the Romanian Naval Authority.

During marching tests of newly built ships or out of repair, the specialized staff of dockyards may also be on board. During this period, the specialized personnel of dockyards have the same rights as seafarers, their salary being paid under the law.

The port captain sets the minimum safety crew which must be embarked on newly constructed vessels or out of repair, during marching tests.

On board of the ships flying the Romanian flag, in addition to the crew, other persons may also be embarked, within the limit of the salvage means existing on board, with the consent and responsibility of the owner / operator of the ship and with the approval of the boarding port captain [art. 57, G. O. 42/1997 (s)].


4.1. The Boarding Agreement

In Romania, the boarding conditions are those stipulated in the collective employment agreement, the individual employment agreement concluded under the labor code, and service duties are contained in the regulations and instructions on the service on board of maritime and river ships.

The boarding agreement is defined as that convention which governs the employment relations of crew members, of the ships flying the Romanian flag, with their employers [42].

4.2. The Enlistment Agreement

We will offer additional explanations to those revealed in the "History" Section, Subsection 1.2., in order to eliminate the confusion between several terms of marine life with the same terms accepted by the laws in force today, but which sometimes have a different meaning.

In the English-Romanian maritime lexicon, the employment / enrollment agreement (or the role of crew) is defined as a written document concluded between the commander or the owner and any member of the crew, setting out the conditions of employment: the office, service duties, the rights to salary, food and onboard service, the duration of employment, the termination clauses (to a date stipulated in the contract, at the completion of a specific voyage or at any time by mutual consent in cases of serious damage or loss of the vessel or in case of the loss of the work capacity of the sailor etc.). The agreement in concluded in the presence of an authority (Captain or other organized service). Under the contract, the employed seamen are enlisted within the roll of the ship crew. When employment is made without an express written contract, the enlistment into the roll of the crew (Muster roll) [43] was the legal presumption of the existence of the contract. Thus, the roll of the crew is sometimes confused as notion with the enlistment agreement.

Article 532 et seq. C. com, regarding "the enlistment agreement" and its legal regime have been implicitly repealed and, at present, it is inapplicable [44].

4.3. The Crew Roll

The crew roll is a document almost similar to the nominal list of the crew of a ship, which is one of the main documents without which a ship can not leave the port and can not navigate legally [45].

This document is an official document issued by the competent maritime authority (in Romania, by the port captain), where there is inscribed the entire crew of the ship. It includes: the surname, the forename, the age, the address and the professional qualifications of each member of the crew, the function they fulfill on board, the main obligations of the cart service, rights to salary, food and maintenance etc.

In this document there are mentioned the positions of every man of the crew and passengers under different names in different situations: the roll at crash, roll at leak, roll at maneuver, roll at boat [46]; roll at fire; roll at conflict; roll at cleaning. In such a roll, there are inserted all the duties they have to fulfill in various situations (daily service, in an emergency; failure, etc.).

The crew roll is at the basis of the establishment of the general roll of the ship with which it must not to be confused. Also, in comparison to the crew list [47], it has
different goals and contents. In the absence of an employment / boarding contract, the crew roll replaces it, producing all the legal effects of the contract.

4.4. The General Ship Roll (the Muster)

The general ship roll is an internal organizational document, including the nominal allocation of crew members to the intervention position in cases of fire, damage, ship abandonment, which requires urgent action for the safety of the ship or for saving people. The general ship roll must be made at the ship’s entry into service and it is kept up to date, operating whenever changes occur in personnel cases. For each post there are fixed the duties and the procedure regarding: the closing of watertight doors and bottom valves, pipes leak checking axle damper and fire protection installation, putting down fires, preparing the boats and the other life saving equipment on board in order to abandon the ship, announcing the passengers in case of evacuation of the ship, driving them to boarding stations, boarding supervision etc. The general ship roll nominally allocated the entire crew in rescue craft, in accordance with the "International Convention for the Safety of Human Life at Sea" relating to: the maximum capacity, the appointment of a boat chief, assuring a sufficient number of certificated sailors etc. For the cases of fire and ship abandonment, the general roll provides for the special signals that are transmitted on the ship by means of whistle, buzzer or ringtones.

The partial rolls derive from the general roll: of fire, damage, boats, abandonment etc. on which there are conducted training exercises with the crew.

5. REFERENCES

[5] In the past, navigation was extremely difficult and the navigators encountered threats at every step he made; they did not have adequate navigation instruments and they were accompanied by prestigious foretellers whose advice they were strictly respecting. For a very long time, navigation had depended on weather and on winds and their prognosis was difficult to approximate.
[6] From voyages and maritime expeditions to long voyages which are at the basis of the creation of maritime and trade routes. Nowadays it is spoken about the “Sea Highway”.
[7] Since the time of Vespasian (69-79 d. Hr.), the Roman military fleet „Classis Flavia Moesica” patrolled under the command of a praefectus; at Noviodunum (Isaccea) there was its headquarters. These maritime units had naves annicace - „river vessels”, and masculi Scythici. Idem p. 65.
[12] The kings of England and France gave the Corsars „commissions”, i.e. plunder authorizations in the name of the Crown.
[14] The first “navigators” were traveling by water, using the current speed and their hands; later, they used masts, poles, oars and paddles.
[18] The sailors’ slogan: “A hand for you and the other for the ship” (XIXth century).
[21] In case of subordination or revolt, the captain had to arrest the responsible persons and to deliver them to the Venetian authorities, in the neighboring harbor; if the ship was off-shore, in full march, the captain himself could judge the case and he could not change his sentence thereafter.
[22] Then patron was the person who represented the interest of the owners and he was organizing the voyage.
[23] The Admiral was the first hand of the captain.
[24] Ships with technical characteristics were very advantageous.
[26] In1924 The Commercial Marine on Danube under Romanian flag had 637 vessels with a movement force of 34345 C.P. and a capacity of 449,1 thousand tons. Idem, p. 227.
[27] See the data on the maritime traffic of goods in Romanian harbors in 1938; MUREȘAN, M.; MUREȘAN, D. op. cit. p. 293.
[29] The Armistice Convention between the Romanian government and the governments of URSS, UK and
USA, published in the Official Gazette, Part I, nr. 219
din 22 September 1944.
[30] The amount of compensation is of 300 millions
dollars, the parity of 35 de dollars/ 1 ounce of gold, and
the prices of Romanian goods that would be delivered
were the world ones 1938, with an increase of 15% for
the rolling material and of 10% for the others, although,
in fact, on the world market, these prices had increased
with 33% in comparison with those from 1938; the 300
millions dollars meant over 55% of the Romanian
national revenue, evaluated in 1945 to 519 millions
dollars.
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la înfiinţarea Societăţii „SOVROMTRANSPORT”, în:
Document, Anul VI, nr. 1 (23)/2004, p. 16.
[34] See the data on Titanic presented in the article of G.
Negrut, Dezastrul transatlanticului Titanic.
[35] See the situations of the passenger transatlantic
vessels Queen Mary, Queen Elisabeth, France, Raffaelo
United States, which left the “water scene”.
CRĂCINOIU, C.; Neagu, A. op. cit. p. 96.
[36] For instance, the vessel „Norwegian Dawn”, with a
length of 294 m; it can embark over 2500 passengers
plus de necessary of 1100 crew members.
www.evz.ro/art.679943.
[37] The ancient Greeks used to say that people were of
two types the living ones, the dead ones and those off-
shore.