

# Career Development Plan-Year 1

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Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PROJECT AND MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS EXPECTED (half page should be sufficient):**

As stated on the previous Career Development Plan, the main objective of this PhD project (“Trading Networks involved in the Timber Trade: Mechanisms and Routes (AD 1500-1800)”) is to investigate the networks that imported timber from the north of Europe to the Iberian Peninsula, and how they did so. As this was rather a wide subject for a three year PhD, I have recently limited the chronological and spatial scope of the investigation, focusing on a more specific topic: the North European merchants that traded with timber in Seville during 1580-1598. This new delineation allows me to meet the essential pillars of my individual project with the key questions of ForSEAdiscovery: could Iberian forest resources sustain the increasing demand of timber for the Hispanic naval industry? Where was timber imported from? Who were the merchants supplying this timber? How was the socioeconomic organization of these agents?

The main hypothesis of this PhD is that the resources of the Iberian Peninsula could not meet the increasing demand of its shipbuilding industry and timber had to be imported from the north of Europe, especially from the Baltic Sea and the west coast of Norway. Dutch commercial networks dominated trade in these regions by 1580-1600, when Amsterdam emerged as the greatest European *entrepôt* in the context of the Eighty Years’ War. Therefore, an interesting paradox occurred: the Hispanic Monarchy had to rely on their enemies in order to maintain and improve their fleet; I would like to reflect on this dependence during the last two decades of Philip II’s reign (1580-1598), which coincides with the first two decades of the Dutch Republic. Furthermore, the decline of Antwerp, the remaining relevance of German merchants and the rise of the Amsterdam market, which happened in this period, implies a turning point in the development of the transnational networks involved in European trade, making this a crucial period for the European economic history.

The process explained before was mirrored in the commercial milieu of Seville. The Andalusian city was the only port allowed to trade with the Spanish America and it consequently became the principal port for the Iberian maritime expansion. Historiography and a first approach to primary sources show that the supply of timber in Seville seemed to be controlled by northern merchants. It can be argued the existence of a Flemish oligopoly that controlled this trade in Seville: a small number of these northern merchants owned most of the houses and warehouses by the dockyard (Atarazanas), they supplied timber and ship components to the Armada, they collected the local taxes on timber sales, they redistributed

timber products to other Andalusian towns, they had contacts in Danzig, Bergen or Amsterdam...

In short, this research will deal with the transnational networks that imported timber to Seville from 1580 to 1598: Who were these agents? How were they related to each other? What were their strategies to build up this oligopoly? Did their economic activity have an influence in their social promotion in Seville? How were they connected to the northern providers? How were they connected to the royal and local officials? How can we explain the transnational nature of this local community and this Atlantic network? This is only a sample of the various motivating questions of the PhD dissertation that I will submit in December 2017.

### **LONG-TERM CAREER OBJECTIVES (over 5 years):**

#### 1. Goals:

The primary objectives are finishing on time the PhD at the University of Groningen and publishing the dissertation as a monograph.

During these years, I would like to become familiar with the Dutch scholarly practice and the Dutch historiography, as well as become proficient in English and Dutch. In the end of the PhD, on an intellectual side, I would like to participate in current historiographical discussions, and on a professional one, I would like to be sufficiently trained to continue my academic career as a researcher.

#### 2. What further research activity or other training is needed to attain these goals?

My participation in three different education and training programs will be a great help for attaining these goals: ForSEAdiscovery (ITN project), the Graduate School for the Humanities (University of Groningen), and Posthumus Institute (research school for Economic and Social History in the Netherlands and Flanders). This is the list of the activities in which I will participate in the next two years:

- GSH activity "Format of the doctoral thesis" (January 2015)
- GSH activity "Didactic skills" (January 2016)
- GSH activity "Dissertation-design" (March 2016)
- Posthumus Seminar 2 "Work in progress" (Spring 2016)
- Posthumus Conference (Spring 2016)
- B1 course in Dutch
- Posthumus Research Design Course (September 2016)
- Posthumus Individual Assessment (December 2016)
- GSH activity "Publishing in English" (November-December 2016)
- ForSEAdiscovery workshop "Advanced Team and Project Management" (2017)
- ForSEAdiscovery intensive course "Dendroarchaeology of Ships – Practice and Prospect"(2017)
- B2-C1 course in Dutch (2017)
- GSH activity "Self-profiling" (2017)
- GSH activity "A future in Academia" (2017)

- GSH activity “Dissertation Defense Day” (2017)

Furthermore, I also consider that my individual daily work is essential for attaining these goals. This work is mainly based on the study of an international and updated bibliography, and the analysis of primary sources.

### **SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (1-2 years):**

1. Research results
  - o Anticipated publications:

For the next two years, I am planning at least one publication in English.

- o Anticipated conference, workshop attendance, courses, and /or seminar presentations:

I believe that presentations in conferences, and participations in workshops and seminars are very important for improving my research. They are very fruitful ways of discussing my methodology and results with an academic community, in order to progress towards the final PhD dissertation. I would like to present my research in at least two international conferences per year.

2. Research Skills and techniques:

As I work mainly with primary sources, a key skill for my research is paleography. I will not need any special training for that, as I am used to work with Early Modern handwritings.

I am also working with databases programs to deal with the large amount of information that I am obtaining from the primary sources. I had some difficulties in the beginning but the more I develop the database, the easiest I find it. Once the database is properly organised, I will use Social Network Analysis and Geographic Information System tools to study and represent the information.

Additionally, I am aware that I must benefit from this PhD position to cultivate an original, independent, and critical thinking, personally and professionally.

3. Communication skills:

The best way of participating in international scholarly debates is to improve my oral and written skills, which, in short, will allow me to present my research results to a scholarly international audience. On the other hand, I also find very important to be able to disseminate the main questions and results of my work to a non-specialized audience.

4. Other professional training (course work, teaching activity):

I plan to acquire an initial teaching experience participating in University seminars or workshops.

5. Anticipated networking opportunities

My participation in the three training programs, which I mentioned above, will provide me continues opportunities for exchanging information and methods, and debating ideas. Additionally, I am establishing a network of professional and academic contacts through my participation in other conferences, meetings and seminars.

6. Other activities (community, etc) with professional relevance:

Learning Dutch is not only helping me to integrate myself into Groningen's daily life, but will also provide me with a better professional profile for a future in an international academy.

Date & Signature of fellow:

Date & Signature of supervisor: