



PORTUGUESE FOREST RESOURCES  
AND TIMBER SUPPLY  
IN THE AGE OF DISCOVERY (1500-1800)

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# INTRODUCTION

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- ❖ Objectives ESR 2
- ❖ Sources and Methodology
- ❖ Outputs
- ❖ Dissemination



# OBJECTIVES ESR2

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- ❖ Compile data on timber supply to Portuguese shipyards (16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)
- ❖ Identify sources of timber supply for main Atlantic Portuguese shipyards
- ❖ Process of timber selection, acquisition, mechanisms of trading networks and transport

# OBJECTIVES ESR2

❖ Compile data on timber supply to Portuguese shipyards (16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)

- After preliminary talks between Jan Willem and Catia, the chronology for this sub-project will be 1580-1668)
- Data will be collected from:
  - Notarial Archives
  - Sound Toll Databases (after 1634)
  - Diplomatic documents



# OBJECTIVES ESR2

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❖ Identify sources of timber supply for main Atlantic Portuguese shipyards

- Sources will be determined by:
  - Provenance of ships transporting shipbuilding timber (mainly the Baltic)
  - Places identified by the literature on the Baltic as timber suppliers

# OBJECTIVES ESR2

❖ Process of timber selection, acquisition, mechanisms of trading networks and transport

- Due to language limitations, there will be no information about timber selection in the home environment (no access to Swedish, Danish or High German sources for the Research Fellow)
- Acquisition will be determined by amount and volume of trade
- Mechanisms of trade will be determined by fluxes of exchanges
- Networks will be determined by contracting parties for timber import
- Transport will be evidenced by freight contracts, power of attorney and Sound Toll Database



## SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

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- ❖ Collect literature concerning timber trade related to Atlantic Iberian shipbuilding industry (1500-1800)
  
- ❖ Compile information from archives and existing databases about navigation and timber trade



## SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

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- ❖ Collect literature concerning timber trade related to Atlantic Iberian shipbuilding industry (1500-1800)
  - Literature is outdated and reflects, often enough, presumptions, assumptions or ‘educated guesses’ rather than source-based analysis, working hypotheses of theoretical modelling





## SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

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❖ Compile information from archives and existing databases about navigation and timber trade

- Merchants importing and exporting timber
- Skippers involved in the trade and their provenance
- Typologies of ‘parts’ of timber being imported for shipbuilding
- Freight prices
- Prices of volume (or number) of imported timber
- Specific clauses ruling these exchanges



# OUTPUTS

- ❖ Data base containing information about merchant networks, volume of timber trade and transport, and areas supplying timber for shipbuilding to Atlantic Iberia (16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)

# OUTPUTS – SO WHAT?

## ❖ Possible Research Questions/Working Hypotheses

- Why does Portugal need to import timber?
- Why from the Northern European seaboard?
- Who dominated the timber trade and why?
- What was the role timber played in individual entrepreneurial portfolios?
- What was imported and where to? Hypotheses to why (certain towns and not others)?
- What does the evolution of freight prices tell about transportation costs (and perhaps prices in consumption markets)?



# DISSEMINATION

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- ❖ Publications peer-reviewed journals
- ❖ International Conferences
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Participation in outreach activities

# CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ We will be asking a broad set of questions
- ❖ We will provide a wide-ranging set of answers
- ❖ We will not be able to answer many questions
- ❖ We will provide a series of educated guesses (based on inference of primary sources)
- ❖ The chronological path has been built in the assumption that:
  - Jan Willem's team will provide for the chronology 1668-1748 (or thereabouts), mostly for the Spanish case
  - Ana's team will provide for the chronology of first quarter/half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, mostly for the Spanish case