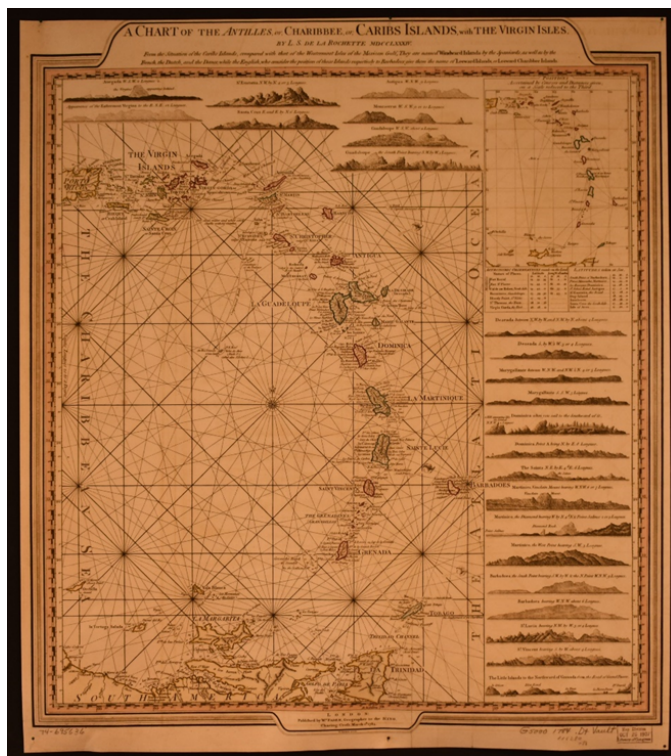


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Date stay abroad: 30-08-2021 till 17-12-2021
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Study programme: Research MA Colonial and Global History
Faculty: Humanities

In the past four months, I had the opportunity to do an internship at the research project *In the Same Sea: The Lesser Antilles as a Common World of Slavery and Freedom* at the Saxo Institute of the University of Copenhagen. I have had a wonderful time in Copenhagen where I was part of an international research team working on an ambitious project that investigates the common colonial history of the Lesser Antilles. During this time, I worked on several research assignments and tasks, participated in meetings and workshops, and was a full member of the research project. Besides increasing my knowledge and understanding of the field of early modern Caribbean colonial history, in particular, the history of the Lesser Antilles, I developed myself as a beginning academic historian.



Map of the Lesser Antilles hanging in the project's office.

In The Same Sea aims to investigate the combined history of the Lesser Antilles from the 1650s to the 1850s. By examining the history of the English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Danish, and Swedish colonies within a single framework, the inter-island connections and dynamics are brought to the foreground. The project was and is still in its beginning phase and it was interesting for me to experience this and to see how intelligent research choices are made when multiple directions for exploration are still open. I participated in the weekly meetings, reading group discussions, writing sessions in which we discussed and peer-reviewed each other's written work and ideas, and workshops with visiting scholars. In doing this I was able to learn from and contribute to this important early phase in which the ambitious research goals as formulated in the research proposal are being translated to concrete research plans and actions.

An important theme in the project's research on enslaved mobility is maritime marronage – the fugitive practices enslaved men, women, and children by escaping slavery over sea. One of the project's aims is to map the intensity of marronage and maritime marronage in the Lesser Antilles. To do so, the project works on establishing a database that records individual runaways whose acts of escape were made public in newspaper advertisements. These runaway advertisements were put into local Lesser Antillean newspapers by slave owners who hoped to recapture their slaves or by colonial officials who hoped to find the owners of the fugitive enslaved people they had captured. During my internship, I have been involved in this work by searching, reading, and analyzing runaway advertisements from Dutch Antillean islands. Moreover, I also contributed to the ongoing discussions about how to best structure the database and the workflow of data entry.

Besides working on the project's database, I also contributed to *In The Same Sea* by working on small research papers in which I investigated an in-depth case study. The rich and well preserved manuscript sources of the Dutch Antillean islands enable historians to qualitatively investigate practices of escape and the consequential responses from slave owners and colonial authorities trying to maintain slavery and recapture their 'property'. I studied journals, minutes, and letters of officials mentioning the successful or unsuccessful attempts of escape, correspondence between colonial officials from different Lesser Antillean islands discussing the efforts of recapturing escaped slaves, and legislative ordinances that aimed to prevent enslaved people from running away. In my paper, which was been published on the project's website, I elaborated on the attempts of enslaved people to flee the Dutch island St. Eustatius in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, the practices and planning of escape, and the inter-imperial



extradition of runaways in the context of the abolitionist developments in the British Empire. In my discussion on these themes, I aimed to ask relevant questions that could point towards new research directions. I had the opportunity to present my work to all members of *In The Same Sea*, discuss it with them, and rewrite it based on their comments. This phase of presenting, communication, discussion, and rewriting was very valuable and useful for me. It forced me to ask more and better questions, be more precise in my writing, and think about what I wanted to add to the historiographical debate.

Through my individual research project, my contributions to the project's collaborative work, and my participation in the project's activities in general I developed academic skills such as identifying and analysing sources, placing my findings within a historiographical field, and communicating those findings. The fact that this took place within an international context was of great value. I came into contact with other historiographical contexts – Danish, British, North American, and French – and sources in different languages from different archival institutions. At the same time, I could be of added value to the project by bringing my own expertise in the Dutch language, Dutch archives, and Dutch historiography. *In The Same Sea* is an international project with researchers coming from different backgrounds, speaking and reading different languages, and being in different phases in their academic careers. Having the opportunity to be a part of this, to work together, and to think collaboratively was of great value.

An important objective of the internship was familiarisation with academia as a future professional field. During my time at *In The Same Sea*, I took part in the daily practice of doing research within a research project. I learned how the individual research efforts and outputs of all project members are brought together and how this contributes to the project's objectives. I hope to stay connected to the project and all project members. In the next year, I will work from the Netherlands as a student assistant for the project. Altogether, I have benefited a lot from the opportunity to do research within the context of *In*

The Same Sea, to participate in the project's work, and to receive advice, guidance, comments, and suggestions from all project members. This experience confirmed my ambition to pursue a professional career in academia after my studies.