



# ERC PROJECT MEDEA-CHART

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Faculty of Sciences – University of Lisbon

### Two postdoctoral fellowship positions in the History of Cartography

Two long-term postdoctoral fellowship positions are being offered in the framework of the European Research Council project **MEDEA-CHART: Medieval and Early Modern Nautical Charts: Birth, Evolution and Use** (ERC-STG 714033), led by Dr Joaquim Alves Gaspar. Applications should be sent by email to <mailto:medea-chart@ciuhct.org> between 13 and 28 April, 2017.

The complete text of the call is available in:

<http://www.era Careers.pt/opportunities/index.aspx?task=global&jobId=90301>.

The positions are expected to start on 1 June, 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter. The successful candidates will be part of the MEDEA-CHART team, composed of two senior researchers (Joaquim Alves Gaspar and Henrique Leitão), two postdoctoral fellows, two PhD students and a project manager. The two postdoctoral fellows will be hosted by FCIências.ID and the research work will be made in the premises of the Faculty of Sciences – University of Lisbon, Portugal.

#### Project synopsis

Of all the technical and scientific developments that made possible the early modern maritime expansion, the nautical chart is perhaps the least studied and understood. This is a very surprising fact as it was through those charts that the newly discovered world was first shown to the European nations. Although the History of Cartography is a well-established academic discipline and old charts have been examined for many years, their detailed technical study is still in its infancy. The main purpose of the ERC funded project MEDEA-CHART (ERC STG 714033) is to solve a series of crucial questions that have eluded the historians of cartography for a very long time, pertaining to the birth, technical evolution and use of nautical charts during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. This goal is to be accomplished using innovative techniques – cartometric analysis, numerical modelling and the examination of the manuscript charts with multispectral analysis – which will complement the traditional methods of historical research. With the introduction of such techniques it is intended, not only to solve long-standing problems, but also to change the discipline in a profound way, by opening new and exciting opportunities for research. The project aims to provide good answers to the following historiographical questions:

- **When, where, how** and with **what purpose** were the first portolan charts of the Mediterranean produced?
- **How** and **when** were the first latitude charts constructed, following the introduction of astronomical navigation, and how did they evolve technically?

- **How** did cosmographers, cartographers and pilots deal with the geometric inconsistencies of the early modern nautical charts, caused by the implicit assumption of a flat Earth and by the effect of a space and time-varying magnetic declination?
- **How** were old nautical charts used by the pilots at sea?

The fact that no satisfactory solutions for these questions have been found so far is explained not only by the scarcity of textual sources, but mostly by the difficulties posed by the complexity of the problems, requiring considerable expertise in unrelated specialized fields, such as medieval and early-modern history, mathematical cartography and marine navigation. It is our intention to contribute to the revitalization of the discipline through the training of a new generation of historians of Cartography, prepared to apply consistently interdisciplinary techniques to the study of old maps and charts.

### **Fellowship positions**

The fellowships amount to a minimum monthly stipend of €2,100, which may be increased to a maximum of €2,500, and include a personal accident insurance. The positions are initially opened for a period six months, starting on 1 June, 2017 or as soon as possible thereafter, and may be renewed until the end date of the project (March 2022).

The research will focus on the origin, evolution and use of the medieval and early modern nautical charts. Applicants are requested to submit a proposal of a personal research plan, within the general framework of MEDA-CHART's scientific goals. The fellowship holders are expected to:

- Participate in the activities of the MEDEA-CHART project, in close collaboration with the other team members.
- Publish the results of the research in international peer-reviewed journals.
- Present the results of the research in national and international conferences.
- Participate in the organization of scientific meetings and other public events.
- Assist the Principal Investigator in the supervision of the PhD students assigned to the project.

All candidates are expected to be fluent in spoken and written English. Knowledge of Romanic languages, including Portuguese and Latin, is a factor of preference. All candidates are expected to be proficient in the use of personal computers. Knowledge and experience in computer programming may be an advantage.

### **How to apply**

Applications should be sent via email, to [medea-chart@ciuhct.org](mailto:medea-chart@ciuhct.org), with the following documentation attached:

- A curriculum vitae.
- A Letter of Motivation, including a suggestion for a personal research plan.
- Certificates of all academic degrees.
- Letters of recommendation (up to two).