

## VIRTUAL MOBILITY (VM) GRANT REPORT TEMPLATE

This report is submitted by the VM grantee to VNS Manager, who will coordinate the approval on behalf of the Action MC.

**Action number: 18140**

**VM grant title: Preparing an online virtual exhibition and a digital catalogue**

**VM grant start and end date: 10/09/2021 to 30/09/2021**

**Grantee name: José María Pérez Fernández**

### Description of the outcomes and achieved outputs (including any specific Action objective and deliverables, or publications resulting from the Virtual Mobility).

(max. 500 words)

Grantee enters max 500 word summary here.

The grant has reached its main objective, in making significant progress towards the final design and organization of a virtual exhibition and catalogue to be held in parallel with an on-site exhibition and a symposium in Prato in January 2022. The (still provisional) title of the exhibition is *Paper in Motion: Information and the Economy of Knowledge in the Early Modern Mediterranean* and that of the symposium *Paper and the Dematerialization of the Global Mediterranean Economy*.

The online exhibition and its digital catalogue display 93 different documents in several languages (including Hebrew, Arabic, Latin, Dutch, Spanish, German, Italian and Armenian) from several important European archives in different countries (the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, Egypt, and Malta, among others) with paper-based records of financial and commercial activity between the late fourteenth and the early eighteenth centuries. The exhibition thus samples some of the most relevant paper-based formats and documentary genres used to codify financial value and information in different languages.

We have therefore gathered samples of formats and genres used for the codification and exchange of financial, mercantile and economic data and value produced by some of the different linguistic, cultural, and religious communities around the Mediterranean. These documents illustrate the relations among each other, and also their deals with the north of continental Europe. We look into the ways in which this sort of documents can codify information and values that go beyond mere economic and financial data, which pertain to other disciplines such as diaspora studies, the history of emotions, cultural studies and the history of communication, as they also illustrate the entanglement of financial discourse and vocabulary with the language and the epistemological principles that pertain to other realms like theology and philosophy. This amounts to a representative corpus of primary documents that can be used as empirical case studies for a transnational history and critical analysis of the nature, function and evolution of such documents. More than in the merely domestic circulation of these documents, we focus upon the formats, genres, and strategies employed for the circulation of such documents across linguistic, cultural, political, ethnic and religious communities, and what this entailed for their formal features, their semiotic nature and their performative functions.

The documents with the images and the accompanying essays and captions have been organised into thematic blocks, for each of which I have written a brief introduction. They are therefore ready to go to the designers and the publishers, for the implementation of the digital design of the virtual exhibition and the publication of the printed catalogue.

Although it will be available before, the exhibition will be officially inaugurated on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2022, and it will coincide with the organization of the symposium, which will take place on January 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2022. Except for the local documents from the archive and library in Prato, the rest of the documents will be displayed in the digital virtual exhibition (which will also include digital reproductions of the Prato documents).

### **Description of the benefits to the COST Action Strategy (what and how).**

*(max. 500 words)*

Grantee enters max 500 word summary here.

The exhibition will be organized as one of the activities of the “Paper in Motion” Work Group (<http://www.peopleinmotion-costaction.org/workgroups/paperinmotion/>), which I lead, and it thus contributes to .

The organization of the exhibition and its catalogue is a collaborative project, which I am coordinating. It involves the participation of an international team of collaborators and it includes professional archivists, senior scholars as well as doctoral students, postdoctoral students, and early career researchers. The exhibition brings together documents from strategic locations between the North of Europe and the Mediterranean, which were part of important financial and mercantile networks during the period that goes from the fourteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. These networks saw the circulation of people, objects, and ideas, but also of financial and mercantile value, codified in documents that constitute a prelude to the financial revolution of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Although the documents are related to the practices of trade and finance, the exhibition and symposium approach them from a ground-breaking and essentially interdisciplinary perspective that includes, but which also goes beyond, economic and financial history, into the realms of disciplines like cultural history, the history of emotions and slavery, diaspora studies, translation studies and media studies. It intends to address questions that involve, among other important aspects, the semiotic nature of these documents, their performative functions, the protocols used in their elaboration, and their role in their exchange across linguistic, cultural, and religious boundaries. As such, we will also contemplate them as traces of people, things and ideas in motion.

The project thus provides a ground-breaking and interdisciplinary approach to primary sources. It combines the methodologies of economic and cultural history, as well as disciplines like global history, translation studies, and Mediterranean studies, among others. It uses a series of samples of primary sources from several different archives, from different countries, and in different languages to provide a first approach to the paper traces left behind by the movement of people, objects, and ideas across the Mediterranean.

It does address, in conclusion, some of the most important objectives included in the MOU of the action, to wit:

- Redrawing geographical and disciplinary boundaries in innovative ways.
- Developing new perspectives for the study of circulation, dislocation, and dispossession across a region of historical significance and contemporary urgency.
- Multiplying and cross-referencing primary sources in more than 10 partner countries in order to respond adequately to the complexity of comparative historiography within the Mediterranean.
- Bringing together researchers from multiple academic traditions, areas, and disciplines including literary, art, cultural, political and material history.
- Providing an alternative history of the ‘Great Sea’ by looking at the ‘Mediterranean in the world’ and by introducing the study of emotion, firstly to its history of human dislocation, and secondly as a site of hitherto unwritten history
- Building a functional and highly-creative interdisciplinary network of collaborators from around the world that will continue a conversation after the life of the grant.

### **Description of the virtual collaboration (including constructive reflection on activities undertaken, identified successful practices and lessons learned).**

(max.500 words)

Grantee enters max 500 word summary here.

This work has been conducted in close collaboration with the two co-editors of the catalogue (Prof. Giovanni Tarantino, Florence University) and Matteo Calcagni (PhD candidate, European University Institute), and with the designers of the virtual exhibition and its catalogue.

We have coordinated an international team of scholars and archivists from:

- Amsterdam (Amsterdam City Archives, Tessa de Boer and Ramona Negrón, from the University of Leiden)
- The Fugger Archive in Germany (Franz Karg, its director)
- The Simón Ruiz Archive in Medina del Campo, Spain (its director, Antonio Sánchez del Barrio, alongside other members in his team of researchers and archivists)
- Adami Archive and Biblioteca Roncioniana (del Vernaccia archive), with Matteo Calcagni
- Archivio di Stato di Prato (Leonardo Meoni, its director and Chiara Marcheschi, archivist)
- Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence (Francesca Gallori, its director)
- National Archives of Malta and its National Library (Charles Farruggia, director of the archives, and Maroma Camilleri, librarian)
- Archivio Storico Banco di Napoli (Claudia Grossi & Gloria Guida)
- Archivi della Fondazione del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna – (Dr. Pietro del Corno & Prof. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, U. Bologna)
- National Archives of Egypt – Prof. Nelly Hanna (The American U. in Cairo)
- Portuguese documents – Roger Lee de Jesús (doctoral student, U. de Coimbra)

The coordination of so many different scholars and archivists from many different places has been made possible thanks to online collaboration, and part of the job was undertaken during the lockdowns caused by the pandemic. One of the main lessons learned is that this sort of grants, and the use of online digital infrastructure, have been fundamental for the successful completion of events like this.

It contributes to global networking through its incorporation of an international team of archivists, doctoral students, postdoctoral students, and senior scholars into a collaborative project that amounts to an archival cartography of Mediterranean global exchanges. The diversity of approaches, disciplines, and primary sources constitutes an important stepping stone for further research in several different directions, and for further collaboration among participant members.

The virtual exhibition and its online catalogue will display these documents, and the essays that accompany them, for an international audience of academic specialists, but it will also offer a glimpse of these phenomena for the general educated reader.