



University of
St Andrews

Medieval/Early Modern History: two doctoral positions (1 + 1 + 2 years) within the ERC Starting Grant Project “STATE – Lordship and the Rise of the State in Western Europe, 1300-1600”

Deadline: 15 November 2016

Ghent University (Belgium) – Department of History

University of St Andrews (UK) – Department of Medieval History

Job Description

Two doctoral positions (PhD studentships) are available starting 1 September 2017 on an ERC-funded research project that pursues a new interpretation of state formation in Western Europe between 1300 and 1600. Jointly-supervised at the Universities of Ghent (by prof. dr. Frederik Buylaert) and St Andrews (by dr. Justine Firnhaber-Baker), the two doctoral researchers will explore secular lordship in the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth century. One will focus on the French province of Normandy, and the other on Languedoc. The heuristic aim is to develop a snapshot survey of seigneuries and their owners of a part of each province, using sources preserved in the *Archives nationales/Bibliothèque nationale* in Paris, as well as in regional archives (travel expenses are borne by the ERC-project). The interpretative aim is to use these case studies to engage with current theories on state formation and elite formation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe.

The period between 1300-1600 is considered the key phase in the genesis of the modern state. While there is debate about whether this was a top-down process carried out by princes, or a bottom-up process carried out by popular representation, scholars tend to agree that state building was essentially a process of centralization. This assumption must be questioned, as recent studies have raised awkward questions that cannot be answered by the current paradigm.

The research hypothesis investigated by this project is that the emerging states of Western Europe could only acquire sufficient support among established elites if they also decentralized much of their legal authority through a process in which princes created or endorsed a growing number of privately owned seigneuries as “states-within-states” for the benefit of elites who in turn contributed to state building. This project will study the interplay between states and seignorial elites in five regions – two in France (i.e. the doctoral researchers’ projects), two in the Low Countries, and one in England – to test whether fiscal and military centralization was facilitated by a progressively confederal organization of government. Together, the case studies cover four key variables that shaped the relations between princes and power

elites in different combinations all over Europe: 1) state formation, 2) urbanization, 3) the socio-economic organization of rural society, and 4) ideological dissent. The comparisons between the case studies are aimed at the development of an analytical framework to chart and to explain path-dependency in Europe.

The two doctoral positions are set up as a Joint PhD between Ghent University (the host institution of the project's PI, prof.dr. Frederik Buylaert) and the University of St Andrews (the host institution of dr. Justine Firnhaber-Baker, the co-supervisor of the project), and if the submitted doctoral dissertation is accepted, the degree will be awarded by both institutions.

The doctoral researchers are expected to spend one academic year at St Andrews (the tuition fees are covered by the ERC-project) and the other three academic years at Ghent University. As of September 2017, the ERC-research team will consist of two postdoctoral fellows and two doctoral students. Close collaboration is expected with dr. Erika Graham-Goering (Ghent University), the postdoctoral researcher who focuses on lordship in fourteenth-century Languedoc and Normandy.

Ghent University was founded in 1817 and has approximately 40,000 students. It is consistently listed in the top 100 of the universities of Europe (see <http://www.ugent.be/en>).

St Andrews University was founded in ca. 1410-1413 and has approximately 8,500 students. It is frequently ranked as the third best university in the United Kingdom (e.g. Guardian and Times Higher Education rankings).

Qualifications

The two successful candidates preferably have:

- A masters degree (in hand or in progress) in Medieval or Early Modern History. (For those whose masters degree is in progress, the doctoral position may only be taken up if that degree is successfully completed before the start of the project).
- Demonstrated experience with archival work, preferably on French or French-language history.
- Demonstrated experience with qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Demonstrated capacity for creative and independent research.
- A fluent reading-knowledge of French, and (where appropriate) of Latin
- An active interest in comparative history.
- The ability and willingness to work as a member of an international research team, including contributions to a shared database as well as joint publications.
- The ability and willingness to develop an English-language publication track record of high academic standards.

Prospective candidates who are interested in both Languedoc and Normandy only need to submit one application. Prospective candidates who are exclusively interested in only one of the two case-studies must indicate this preference explicitly in the motivation letter.

Offer

We offer a doctoral position of 1 FTE (i.e. a full-time position), beginning 1 September 2017. Initially, there is a one-year contract. After a positive evaluation, this contract can be extended for three more years (a total of four years maximum). The fellowship provides a monthly salary of ca. 1900 euros on a full-time basis, in concordance with the requirements of the Flemish Government.

The scholarship is fiscally exempted and Ghent University offers a holiday allowance, free public transport between home and work place, access to university sports facilities and university restaurants, and end-of-year bonus. For more information, see www.ugent.be/en/work.

How to apply

Applications are to be sent as a pdf-file by email to prof.dr. Frederik Buylaert (email: frederik.buylaert@ugent.be) and dr. Justine Firnhaber-Baker (email: jmfb@st-andrews.ac.uk).

Applications must include the following elements:

- Motivation letter.
- Curriculum Vitae, including a survey of 1) language skills (active and passive); 2) experience with archival work; and 3) PC-skills.
- A pdf-copy of the master dissertation or undergraduate dissertation (for those with a masters in progress).
- A writing sample (e.g. a student paper), preferably in English unless the submitted dissertation or paper is already written in English.
- Certified copies of relevant diplomas.
- Contact details of two referees (name, institutional affiliation and email address) or two letters of reference.

In the second stage of the application procedure, the selected candidates will be provided with the full project description and be asked to submit a research proposal of max. 1,500 words that will be discussed during a Skype interview.

Application Deadline: 15 November 2016

Additional information

Are you interested? For more information, please contact prof.dr. Frederik Buylaert (email: frederik.buylaert@ugent.be) and dr. Justine Firnhaber-Baker (email: jmfb@st-andrews.ac.uk).