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The lifecycle of casks: the production, use, and repurposing of casks in the Netherlands (1300-1800)

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About the author

Jeroen Oosterbaan was born in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, on February 18, 1980. After completing primary and secondary school in Nijmegen, he attended the HEAO in Utrecht. Following the completion of his propaedeutic year, he began a Bachelor's program in Archaeology and Prehistory, specializing in Mediterranean Archaeology, at the *Universiteit van Amsterdam* in 2001. As part of this program, he completed a minor at the *Università degli Studi di Bologna* in Bologna, Italy, during the 2003-2004 academic year. After graduating in 2004, he continued with a Master's degree in Prehistory at the *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*, which he completed in 2007.

During his Master's degree, Jeroen Oosterbaan began working in 2006 as an archaeologist for the municipal archaeological service of Nijmegen (the Netherlands). In this role, he gained extensive experience in conducting large-scale archaeological excavations, focusing primarily on the Roman period, a specialization he maintained until the end of 2010.

In 2011, he joined Archaeological Research & Consultancy B.V. (ARC B.V.) as a project leader. There, he led several large-scale projects, including a major excavation at the site known as *Groote Markt* in Vlissingen (The Netherlands). This excavation yielded a large number of casks, which he personally analyzed as project leader. His analysis revealed a significant knowledge gap regarding these transport containers, sparking the idea for further research into this subject. In addition, his work at ARC B.V. provided him with extensive experience in excavating and interpreting sites from the Late Medieval and the Early Modern periods. This exposure led to a growing interest in these time periods, in which he has since built up substantial expertise.

After the bankruptcy of ARC B.V. in 2013, Jeroen Oosterbaan started working as a freelance archaeologist, carrying out assignments for various companies and municipalities. In this capacity, he gained additional experience and developed further expertise, particularly in the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods. Since 2014, he has combined this fieldwork with a part-time position as a lecturer and researcher in the Archaeology program at *Saxion Hogeschool*, where he remains employed to this day.

As a lecturer and researcher at an university of applied sciences, there is the possibility to apply for a grant called the *Promotiebeurs voor leraren* (PhD Grant for Teachers) at the *Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek* (NWO, Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research). This grant enables candidates to conduct PhD research at a university and aims primarily to reduce the gap between universities and the rest of the Dutch education system. In this role, PhD candidates act as a bridge between these two educational sectors.

After applying for and receiving this grant, Jeroen's appointment began on September 1, 2019. As a result, his position at Saxion University of Applied Sciences changed to a combined role within the Archaeology program and the Sustainable Areas and Soil Transitions (SAST) research group. Since 2021, Jeroen Oosterbaan has also been involved in the research project Constructing the Limes (C-Limes) as a researcher. This project, which focuses on the functioning of borders in general and specifically on the Roman imperial border in Northwest Europe, is scheduled to conclude in 2026.

Currently, Jeroen Oosterbaan holds multiple roles: he works as a lecturer-researcher at Saxion University of Applied Sciences, serves as a researcher for the C-Limes project, operates as an independent archaeologist, and pursues a PhD at Leiden University, with this thesis representing the completion of his doctoral research.

List of publications

Accepted peer-reviewed publications

Oosterbaan, J., Doeve, P., & van Daalen, S. (2022). Provenance and Production: Casks in the Dutch Archaeological Context. *International Journal of Wood Culture*, 3(1-3), 412-441. <https://doi.org/10.1163/27723194-bja10007>

Oosterbaan, J. (2023). Identifying Content through Casks. *Skyliiss: Journal of Maritime and Limnetic Archaeology and Cultural History* (23), 103-116.

Oosterbaan, J. (2024). *Tonnen en vaten*. De Zeecontainer van de Late Middeleeuwen. *Madoc*, 39(3-4), 169-182.
<https://doi.org/10.5117/MADOC2023.3-4.006.OOST>

Oosterbaan, J. (2025). Lifespan of Casks. *International Journal of Wood Culture* (published online ahead of print 2025).
<https://doi.org/10.1163/27723194-bja10037>

Tran, L., Oosterbaan, J., Vos, A.D. et al. The Coffee was Paid for Dearly: Shipwreck BZN4 and the Frigate't Hart. *J Mari Arch* (2025).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11457-025-09458-2>.

Main other publications

Oosterbaan, J. & Griffioen, A.A.J. (2015) Van vissersdorp tot havenstad. 750 jaar stadsvorming aan de Groote Markt in Vlissingen. (Archeodienst rapport 650, 576 pag.).

Oosterbaan, J., & Griffioen, A.A.J. (2018) In het hart van de stad. Laat-middeleeuwse bebouwing, vermogende lieden en oorlogsgeweld op het Hofplein in Grave, (DNA-rapport 1, 514 pag.).

Database WOODAN Cask Marks (2024). University of Leiden. Available online at: www.woodancaskmarks.org.

Appendix

The datasets and related articles have all been deposited in the DANS Data Station Archaeology under the title The Lifecycle of Casks and are accessible via the following DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17026/AR/IUWWEC>.