Bridging Boundaries

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Environmental History of the Low Countries

Sint-Baafshuis Ghent, 3-4 December 2026

Wednesday evening (2 December)

For early arrivals: evening activity (tbc: temporary exhibition on the Impressionist (luminist) artist Jenny Montigny (1875–1937) at the MSK – Ghent Museum of Fine Arts.)
See https://www.mskgent.be/en/exhibitions/jenny-montigny

Thursday (3 December)

09.00 - Walk in with coffee + registration
09.30 - Welcome

09.45 - **Possum Pincé**, Presentation of the ERC project *FROST: The impact of climate changes in Western Europe during the Young Dryas*

10.30 - Morning parallel sessions

Theme 1: **WEATHER AND CLIMATE**

Lise Meir, Kristof Haneca, Samuel Bodé, Pascal Boeckx, and Jan Van den Bulcke, *A Climate Archive in the Attic: Reconstructing Medieval Hydroclimate in Flanders Using Oxygen Isotopes in Oak Tree Rings*

Valentine Delrue, *Tuning into the Atmosphere: Placing Meteorology within Early Modern Climate Theory*

Louis Verschuren, Kristof Haneca, Cécile Oger, Matthieu N. Boone, Pieter De Frenne, Pascale Fraiture, Vincent Labbas, Vladimir Matskovsky, Valerie Trouet, Joris Van Acker, Anneleen Verstraeten, and Jan Van den Bulcke, *Unlocking Historical and Climatological Information From Medieval Wooden Manuscript Covers Using X-ray micro-CT*

Theme 2 : **WOODLANDS**

Aze Peeters en Koen Deforce, *Long-Term Changes in Forest Composition and Management Revealed by (Post-)Medieval Charcoal Kiln Remains in the Sonian Forest (Belgium)*

Marta Domínguez-Delmás, *Forest History and Timber Supply in the Continental Euro-Atlantic region (1300-1600): Explaining Change and Redressing Biased Perspectives*

Pieter Rodts, *The Past is Flowering all Around Us. Wild Bluebells as Archaeological Proxies for Past Grazing in the Sonian Forest*

12.00 - Lunch break

13.30 - Early afternoon parallel sessions

Theme 3: **LANDSCAPE HISTORY**

Annelies Storme and Koen Deforce, *Looking Down the Well: A Study of Landscape and Vegetation Evolution in Flanders Based on Pollen Analyses from Archaeological Features*

Harm Jan Pierik, Jeroen Zomer, Job van Tuin, and Ronald Harting, *Reconstructing Vanished Landscapes: Pristine Medieval Peatlands in the Coastal Plain of the Netherlands*

Luiza Teixeira-Costa, *Two Centuries of Landscape History in the Netherlands: A Plant Humanities Perspective*

Theme 4: **VERMIN**

Anna-Luna Post, *Rabid Dogs and Honeyed Beetles: Animals as Plague and Cure in the Early Modern Dutch Republic*

Charlotte Meijer, *"Kill them, or they will kill you": The Changing Relationship Between Humans and their Parasites in the Netherlands, 1700-1900*

Paulien Daelman and Elene Vernaeve, *Controlling Wildlife: Cattle Farming and Environmental Management in Belgium and Congo (19th-20th century)*

Theme 5: **FOOD**

Kristian Mennen, *From Field Crop to Bread and Beer in Belgium*

Maarten Zwiers, *Fenland Frontiers: Cultivation Efforts in the Nineteenth-Century Northern Netherlands*

Shira Huizinga Lemstra, *Water and Land Management along the Roman Lower Rhine*

15.00 - Break

15.30 - Late afternoon parallel sessions

Theme 6: **WATER AND WETLANDS**

Bob Pierik, *Water, Space and Environmental Inequality in Early Modern Amsterdam*

Ailish Lalor, *Building the Empire of Mud and Clay: Labor Relations and Environmental Change in Oostelijk Flevoland, the Netherlands and Wageningen, Suriname (1949-1960)*

Caroline Kreysel, *Nutrients on the Move: Peatlands on the Rise (1950s-1990): A More-Than-Human-History of Raised Bog in the Peel Region, the Netherlands*

Theme 7: **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

Claire Weeda and Nina Witteman, *Knowing Pests: Ecological Literacy and Pest Control in the Low Countries, 1500-1700*

Ditte Rens, *A Life in the Woods. The Sonian Forest in the Fifteenth Century*

Daan Jansen, *Of Rats and Men: Rats and Their Catchers in the Early Modern Urban Netherlands*

17.00 - 18.00 : Reception

Friday (4 December)

09.00 - Walk in with coffee
09.30 - Plenary Session 1: **LANDSCAPE HISTORY** (in cooperation with the Roman Society Research Center)

Kristof Haneca, Sjoerd van Daalen, Marta Domínguez-Delmás, and Yardeni Vorst, *How the Roman Empire Reshaped the Woodlands of Gallia Belgica and Germania Inferior: A Millennium of Dendrochronological Data*

Roy van Beek, Cindy Quik, Harm Jan Pierik, Elizabeth L. Chamberlain, and Eva Kaptijn, *Artificial Dwelling Mounds in Dutch Wetlands: Regional Archives of Human-Landscape Interactions (500 BCE-present)*

10.30 - Break

11.00 - Plenary session 2: **ANIMALS** (in cooperation with the Roman Society Research Center)

Anton Ervynck, Bea De Cupere, Quentin Goffette, and Wim Wouters, *The(Bio)Diversity of Archaeological Animal Remains: Evaluating a Source of Information for Environmental History*

Margreet Brandsma, Sander Govaerts, and Samuel Turvey, *The Cultural and Ecological Environment of Real and Imagined Pelicans in Medieval Europe*

12.00 - Lunch break

13.00 - Plenary session 3: **INTERDISCIPLINARY AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES**

Pieter-Jan Reynaert and Seb Verlinden, *Ditchscapes: Interdisciplinary Reconstruction of Historical Landscape Interventions in the Southern Campine, 1750-1850*

Joeri Aerts, Sophie Barbaix, Christophe De Coster, Janne Nys, Arnoud Jensen, Iason Jongepier, Tim Soens and Reinoud Vermoesen, *Ecologies of Fear or Amphibious Landscapes? Mapping Water-Related Hazards in Town and Countryside Before 1900*

Sander Govaerts, *Biodiversity and Ecological Entanglements in the World of the German Hanse, 1400-1600*

14.30 - Break

15.00 - **ROUNDTABLE ON BRIDGING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HUMANITIES AND BETA SCIENCES RESEARCH**

with Rob Lenders (Radboud University), Maïka De Keyzer (KU Leuven), Tim Soens (University of Antwerp), Thijs Lambrecht (Ghent University), and Inge van der Jagt (Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency)

16.00 - **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Organisation

Bridging Boundaries is organised by **Ghent University** (Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies and Research Group Human-Environment Dynamics), **University of Antwerp** (Environmental and Rural History of Urbanised Societies-research cluster), and **KU Leuven** (Research Group Middle Ages).

The organising committee consists of Sander Govaerts, Stefan Meysman, Christophe Verbruggen, Thijs Lambrecht, Tim Soens, and Maïka De Keyzer. Friday morning is co-organised with the Roman Society Research Center, a joint research center of Ghent University and Free University Brussels, represented in the Bridging Boundaries organising committee by Koenraad Verboven, Frits Heinrich and Paul Erdkamp.

Questions can be directed to Stefan.Meysman@UGent.be and Sander.Govaerts@UGent.be