

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: Group visit to the 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: Frozen in time – Unravelling Younger Dryas Climate Variability, Environmental Dynamics and Their Impact on Human Recolonization in Western Europe*

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*

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

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**

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

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** (co-organized 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** (co-organized 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. The sessions on Friday morning are co-organised with the Roman Society Research Center, a joint research center of Ghent University and Free University Brussels, represented by Koenraad Verboven, Frits Heinrich and Paul Erdkamp.

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

