**COURSE DAY: PROGRAMME**

***Medieval Maps and Spaces.***

***A course day on cartography and spatial representations for medieval studies***

*December 4th 2014, Ghent*

*With Introduction and Conclusion by Erik Thoen*

**Xavier Baecke - The creation and use of spatial metadata to enrich large datasets: exploring the possibilities in *Diplomata Belgica***

The *Diplomata Belgica* is an inventory of all charters composed in the Southern Low Countries before 1250, comprising around 34.000 records. More than half of these records contain a full text edition of the charters. This database contains an impressive amount of data, including spatial metadata in the form of toponyms associated with the actors of the charter.

Such a dataset offers new opportunities for analysis, but also poses challenges to mine and apply the geographical information contained within the charters. In the presentation, I will focus on two aspects in particular. First, I will present the spatio-temporal GIS model which maps out the bishoprics and principalities of the Southern Low Countries, and how this model was applied to enrich the *Diplomata Belgica* with spatial metadata. Second, I will explore the possibilities provided by such an enrichment in terms of visualization and quantitative analysis.

**Catherine Clarke – City Witness: mapping place in the Middle Ages and today**

The session will explore how GIS mapping and digital visualisation techniques can be integrated with medieval textual ‘mappings’ of urban landscapes, extending our understanding of medieval perceptions of place and spatial practices. The session will include hands-on elements, such as plotting a textual itinerary onto a map, and examining the challenges in bringing together modern mapping conventions with medieval spatial imaginaries. Finally, the projects in Chester and Swansea all involve engagement with the wider community, heritage and tourism agencies, and local government. The session will invite questions about research and social impact, and how medieval places are ‘mapped’ today for local people, tourists and consumers of heritage. Participants are encouraged to bring along a heritage / visitor map of a town or city for analysis and discussion.

This session will draw on several major research projects funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and directed by Professor Clarke, which explore place and identity in the medieval city through digital mapping and textual analysis (‘Mapping Medieval Chester’ ([www.medievalchester.ac.uk](http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk)), ‘Discover Medieval Chester’ (<http://discover.medievalchester.ac.uk>) and ‘City Witness: Place and Perspective in Medieval Swansea’ ([www.medievalswansea.ac.uk](http://www.medievalswansea.ac.uk)).

**Karen De Coene – Medieval cartography. An anachronism?**

In *La terre. Connaissance, représentations, mesure au Moyen Âge* (2013) Patrick Gautier Dalché rejects the use of ‘geography’ and ‘cartography’ as appropriate names for spatial knowledge in medieval scholarly culture. His arguments are obvious. Neither geography, nor cartography has been considered as an autonomous discipline and correct geographic representation took by no means priority. Dalché suggests the use of ‘representations of space’ as an alternative name.

How true this statement may be, it makes us lose sight of the striking similarity between medieval representations of space and later cartography and geography. The symbolic language and the use of mind mapping typically for medieval intellectual thinking, have at least been a great source of inspiration for later developments in both disciplines. Intellectual concepts as ‘harmony’, ‘unity’ and ‘authority’, how contradictory it may sound, have influenced the early development of cartography.

Therefore we will explore medieval iconography from the viewpoint of a later cartographer. This undoubtedly methodological anachronism contributes to the discussion of how continuity interacts with innovation in the cartographic scientific tradition.

**Ellen Klompmaker – The Scheldt maps of 1469 and 1505. Regional and local cartography in medieval Flanders**

In the National Archives of Belgium and the Felix Archive two remarkably large, late medieval maps are preserved. The *Scheldekaart van Rupelmonde tot aan het Zwin en het eiland Walcheren* (National Archives) dates back to around 1469 and measures more than 17 feet. The *Scheldekaart van Rupelmonde tot aan de Noordzee* was drawn in 1505 and measures almost 18 feet. After these maps were made, the represented area changed considerably due to floods and human intervention.

The latest study on the maps was published in 1950. Digital images of the maps facilitate research on them. In this session the following topics will be discussed. What types of maps are the Scheldt maps and why were they made? Is there a relationship between these maps and other medieval regional and local maps produced in this area? Which historical information do the maps provide concerning land occupation, infrastructure, borders, shipping, tolls and late medieval mapmaking? An until now unnoticed difference between the left and right side of the map of 1505 sheds light on the question about the interrelationship between the Scheldt maps.

**Iason Jongepier – The potential of historical maps for landscape reconstructions: evaluation, processing and concrete examples**

Historical maps form an excellent source of information for the creation of landscape reconstructions, certainly from the late Middle Ages onwards. However, one should be aware of the limitations of this kind of source material, which are mostly caused by a large variation of quality. In the first part of this session, the possibilities for evaluating this map quality will be assessed, with a focus on geometrical accuracy. The second part of this session will deal with the practical processing of historical maps, and the creation of landscape reconstructions within a Geographic Information System (GIS). The third part of this session will be used to give concrete examples of landscape reconstructions, based on historical maps. The focus will be on the Waasland Scheldt polders, which underwent large scale landscape transformations in the late medieval and early modern period. These changes were reconstructed using historical maps. Furthermore, a short introduction to the GIStorical Antwerp project will be given. In doing so, this session hopes to illustrate the potential of historical maps, leading to inspiration for further research.

***Practical information***

This one-day course will take place at Ghent University in the Simon Stevinzaal, Jozef Plateaustraat 22.

Participants can enroll by sending an email to [sara.moens@ugent.be](mailto:sara.moens@ugent.be). There is a registration fee of 15EUR. This fee includes participation in the course and lunch and is to be paid on the day of the course. The registration fee is waived for members of the Flemish Medievalist Association (for more information on how to become a member, see http://www.vlaamsewerkgroepmedievistiek. org/?page\_id=25).

A more detailed schedule of the course sessions will be sent to all participants around the end of November.

The course is taught in English.