

# Transcending boundaries?

Solidarity in the pre-industrial period

IT

Workshop  
27 October  
@Antwerp

1549  
1549

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*Abstract*

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Recent historiography on charity, poor relief and mutual assistance has strongly focused on its community-delineating potential. All assistance and relief is in one way or another reserved for a specific group considered ‘deserving’, be that co-religionists, fellow townsmen, members of a particular guild, confraternity or quarter, etc. When allocating aid or relief to one specific group, the in-group is formed while its boundaries are being sharpened to outsiders. The putting up of boundaries thus stands at the forefront of research on charity, assistance and relief.

This is enhanced by Eurocentric modernity narratives, in which notions of territory have played a major part. Historiography for example has strongly focused on a perceived shift, especially from the sixteenth century onwards, from private initiatives to the responsibility of public institutions and governments, initially at city level; later the regional or ‘national’ level took over. Writing from the vantage point of national welfare states, historians have perceived poor relief all too easily as linked to a certain territory and / or citizenship. Poor relief and aid embedded in networks stretching across territories often escaped the attention. This is all the more problematic since medieval and even early modern political actors conceived their political communities in a non-territorial way, as corporations, or clusters of corporations, based on membership rather than residence.

Recent studies have already criticised this modernity narrative and the use of ‘nations’ as frame of analysis. In a range of research fields ‘entangled history’ or *‘histoire croisée’* approaches have yielded new insights, while in the broader social sciences new conceptual approaches have chosen networks as their basic concept. However, a truly network-based and transnational perspective on charity, assistance and relief is still missing. In this workshop we want to broaden the view by focussing on networks of charity, assistance and relief, transcending local, regional and / or national boundaries; thus exploring the area of tension between territory, network and transnationalism. Family, religious, commercial and other ties indeed all challenged or transcended territorial boundaries.

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*Program*

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12u30: Welcome and registration

13u:00 Keynote lecture by **Gervase Rosser** (University of Oxford)

Living Together: Contemporary Challenges and the Experience of the Medieval Guilds

13u45: **Eline Van Onacker** (UA)

An (a)social economy? Peasant communities and the relationship between formal and informal relief during the grain crisis of 1556/57 in the Low Countries

**Marjolein Schepers** (VUB)

Crossing community boundaries? Territoriality, transnationalism and belonging in eighteenth-century France and Flanders

15u30: Coffee/thee

16u00: **Hannelore Franck** (KU Leuven)

Reform of outdoor relief in Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> century: religious transformation or political opportunism?

**Arie van Steensel** (RUG)

Solidarity: Modern Theories and Medieval Practices

17u45: Closing remarks by Bert De Munck (UA)

18u00: Drinks and Dinner

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*Information and registration*

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Date: October 27, 2017

Location: University of Antwerp, Stadscampus, building E, room E.207 (see map)

Entrance fee: This event is free of charge but registration is obligated since the number of places is limited.

Information

& registration: [Hannelore.Franck@kuleuven.be](mailto:Hannelore.Franck@kuleuven.be)

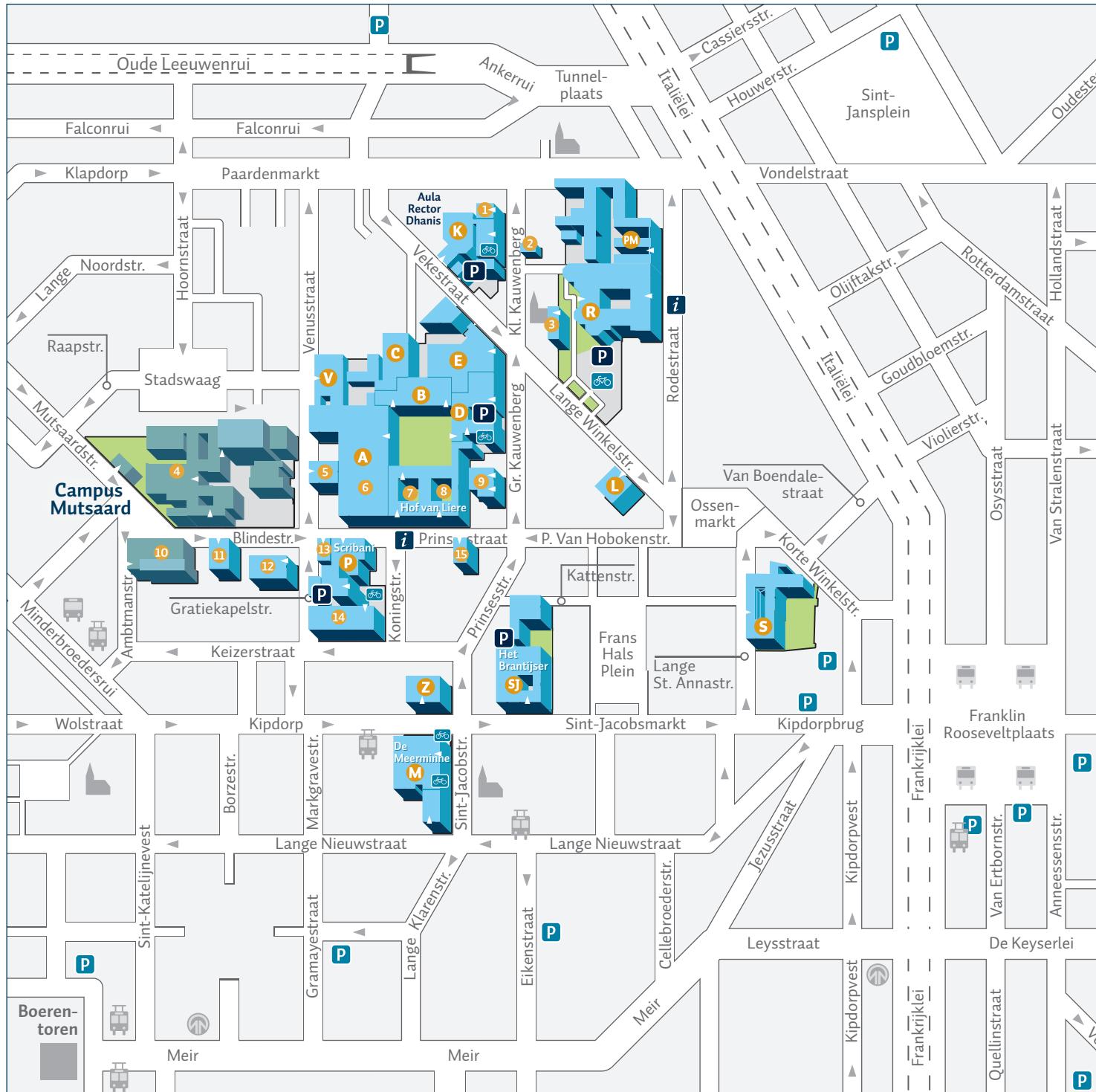
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- E Agora/Sporthal - Grote Kauwenberg 2
- K Aula Rector Dhanis - Kleine Kauwenberg 14
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- 12 Dienst Internationale Samenwerking - Gratiekapelstraat 10
- 13 Linguapolis - Prinsstraat 8
- 14 komida@CST / Labotheek - Koningstraat 8
- 15 Zomaar een dak - Prinsstraat 32

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