



ONLINE
20 & 21 May

N.W. POSTHUMUS INSTITUTE
CONFERENCE 2021
EPIDEMICS AND
SOCIAL INEQUALITY

20 AND 21 MAY 2021

Keynote speaker:
Professor Sverre-Erik Mamelund,
Oslo Metropolitan University

This year's Posthumus Conference is organized by the N.W. Posthumus Institute in co-operation with the University of Antwerp. The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars interested in Economic and Social History from the Netherlands, Flanders and other countries.

The N.W. Posthumus Institute is the Research School for Economic and Social History in the Netherlands and Flanders. It includes research on non-Western history, world history and social-cultural history. The Posthumus Institute promotes innovative and cutting-edge interdisciplinary research and provides high-level training for PhD's and Research Master students. Go to our website for more information: www.ru.nl/posthumus or scan the QR-code.



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N.W. Posthumus Conference 2021 Programme

Time	Pre-conference activity - Thursday 20 May		
9.00 – 10.00	Zoom open for joining - <i>Main Session</i>		
10:00 – 11:00	Research Network meeting (parallel)		
	<u>Breakout Room I</u> <i>Economy and Society of the Pre-industrial Low Countries in Comparative Perspective</i>	<u>Breakout Room VI</u> <i>Life-courses, Family and Labour</i>	
	<u>Breakout Room II</u> <i>Globalization, Inequality and Sustainable Development in Long-Term Perspective</i>	<u>Breakout Room V</u> <i>Inclusion, Exclusion and Mobility</i>	
	<u>Breakout Room III</u> <i>Societies in Context: Interactions between humans and rural-urban environments</i>	<u>Breakout Room VI</u> <i>Routes and roots in Colonial and Global History</i>	
Thursday 20 May			
11.00-11.15	Opening – <i>Main Session</i>		
11.15-12.15	Keynote lecture – <i>Main session</i> <i>Social Disparities & Pandemics</i> Professor Sverre-Erik Mamelund (Oslo Metropolitan University)		
12.15-13.15	Lunch break - <i>Main Session</i>		
13.15-14.45	PhD sessions (parallel)		
	<u>Session A.1</u> <u>Breakout Room I</u> <i>Alessandra De Mulder (UA)</i> & <i>Faheem Rokadiya (UU)</i>	<u>Session B.1</u> <u>Breakout room II</u> <i>Ewout Hasken (UU)</i> & <i>Mayra Murkens (UM)</i>	<u>Session C.1</u> <u>Breakout Room III</u> <i>Philip Post (UL)</i> & <i>Alexander Geelen (IISH)</i>
14.45-15.00	Coffee and tea break - <i>Main Session</i>		
15.00- 16.45	Research sessions (parallel)		
	<u>Breakout Room I</u> Session I: <i>Life courses, Family and Labour</i> - <i>Women, households, and labour markets. The effects of women's work on fertility, behaviour and living standards.</i>	<u>Breakout Room II</u> Session II: <i>Life courses, Family and Labour & Societies in Context</i> - <i>Epidemics and inequality in the Low Countries</i>	<u>Breakout Room III</u> Session III: <i>Globalisation, inequality and sustainable development in long-term perspective</i> - <i>Running global empires</i>

Friday 21 May

9.00-10.00	Zoom open for joining - <i>Main Session</i>		
10.00-11.30	PhD session 2 (parallel)		
	<u>Session A.2</u> <u>Breakout room I</u> <i>Arlinde Vrooman (RUG)</i> & <i>Lore Helsen (UGent)</i>	<u>Session B.2</u> <u>Breakout room II</u> <i>Dennis De Vriese (VUB)</i> & <i>Rogier van Kooten (UA)</i>	<u>Session C.2</u> <u>Breakout room III</u> <i>Liesbeth Langouche (UA)</i> & <i>Alexander van der Meer (UL)</i>
11.30-11.45	Coffee and tea break - <i>Main Session</i>		
11.45-13.15	PhD session 3 (parallel)		
	<u>Session A.3</u> <u>Breakout room I</u> <i>Ingrid Schepers (UA)</i> & <i>Aditi Dixit (UU)</i>	<u>Session B.3</u> <u>Breakout Room II</u> <i>Neilabh Sinha (UL)</i> & <i>Alexander Collin (UvA)</i>	
13.15-14.15	Lunch break - <i>Main Session</i>		
14.15-16.00	Research sessions (parallel)		
	<u>Breakout Room I</u> Session I: <i>Inclusion, Exclusion and Mobility</i> - <i>Making and Using the City in the Low Countries</i>	<u>Breakout Room II</u> Session II: <i>Routes and Roots in Colonial and Global History</i> - <i>Global trade in the eighteenth century</i>	
	<u>Breakout Room III</u> Session III: <i>Societies in Context: Interactions between humans and rural-urban environments</i> - <i>Dealing with nature: drought control, pest management and food storage in the pre-industrial Low Countries</i>	<u>Breakout Room IV</u> Session VI: <i>Economy and Society of the Pre-industrial Low Countries in Comparative Perspective</i> - <i>How has comparative research shaped the social and economic history of the Netherlands?</i>	

Detailed programme overview & abstracts – Thursday 20 May

PhD sessions A.1.- C.1						
Time	Sessions	PhD Presenter	Title	NWP Fellow	Peer-commentator	Chair
13:15 - 14:45	A.1	Alessandra De Mulder (UA)	<i>Looking for a place at the table. Selling tables in London in eighteenth-century London auction advertisements</i>	Jeroen Deploige (UGent)	Maité Van Vyve (UGent)	Charris De Smet (UA)
		Faheem Rokadiya (UU)	<i>The Gloucestershire Handloom Weavers: family division of labour, gender, and wages (1838-40)</i>	Jane Humphries (OX)	Rosa Kösters (IISH)	
	B.1	Ewout Hasken (UU)	<i>The evolving political narrative on family firms in the Netherlands since 1945</i>	Mila Davids (TU/e)	Jeroen van Veldhoven (UU/Huygens-ING)	Tanik Joshipura (WUR)
		Mayra Murkens (UM)	<i>Changing diseases, changing mortality? Transitioning early childhood mortality and (in)equalities in Maastricht, 1864-1955</i>	Isabelle Devos (UGent)	Bram Hilkens (EUR)	
	C.1	Philip Post (UL)	<i>Land, labour and imperial competition in the Moluccas, 1840-1870</i>	Pepijn Brandon (IISH)	Richard Velthuisen (EUR)	Amza Adam (UL)
		Alexander Geelen (IISH)	<i>Regulating Mobility on the Eighteenth Century Gold Coast</i>	Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (IISH)	Robert Keenan (WUR)	

Abstracts

Session A.1

1. Alessandra De Mulder (UA)

Looking for a place at the table. Selling tables in eighteenth-century London auction advertisements

Gregorian homes were filled with a whole world of goods where types of furniture increased and became more and more specialised to suit a particular function or area in the house perfectly. A dining room table, writing desk and card table are just a few examples of places where the middling sorts could opt to sit as the eighteenth century went on. In other words, people had more as well as specifically designed items in their houses. This paper will map out the diversification and correlated specialised description of tables, desks and other furniture to sit at in over 5000 pages with London auction advertisements between 1742 and 1829. Auctioneers had very limited space to communicate both the material quality (e.g., mahogany and gold), distinctiveness and relevance (e.g., to the latest fashion, beautifully carved) of objects to sell the fine wares they put on display. Word real estate was pricey, so they had to address the consumer efficiently without losing the allure of the goods they offered for sale. By looking at both the occurrence of the different types of tables and how they were described in auction advertisements throughout the researched period, this paper will provide an overview of the intricate balance between intrinsic and design-based designations of furniture. Digital text analysis in the form of word embeddings will be supplemented by a close reading of the descriptions of various tables in the auction advertisements themselves, dictionaries, furniture manuals and other eighteenth-century printed material.

2. Faheem Rokadiya (UU)

The Gloucestershire Handloom Weavers: family division of labour, gender, and wages (1838-40)

This paper revisits N.J. Smelser's (1959) ideas on the family division of labour in the mature period of the industrial revolution and provides a snapshot of life for handloom weavers in Gloucestershire, 1838. Using a dataset of 195 shoploom weavers in Gloucestershire constructed from British parliamentary papers, parish data and surveys, it becomes clear that as late as 1838 traditional family structures in the handloom wearing industry had changed in a gendered way, although distinct to the theory laid down by Smelser. While Smelser discusses the cotton industry, this paper takes into account the wool industry, at a much later time period to Smelser. The "traditional" mode of parent training and supervision of children at home had changed, but instead the father, wife and child were employed by the same factory master, albeit in distinct and different occupations. Weavers, both men and women were in turn affected by their loss of autonomy and outwork as is reflected in surveys on satisfaction levels. Children took on preparatory processing roles and were no less significant, in some cases contributing one third of total wages.

Session B.1

1. Ewout Hasken (UU)

The evolving political narrative on family firms in the Netherlands since 1945

Family firms are popular amongst politicians and policy makers. Both the Dutch government and EU stimulate the creation and continuation of family enterprise. However, the current popularity of family firms contrasts sharply with their historical assessment. Family businesses have been viewed negatively in historical and economic literature in the past. Though the 'real-world' consequences of this academic debate have been addressed sparingly, it has been claimed that in the Netherlands family firms were disparaged in the 1950s and 1960s as they hindered economic growth and societal change. This sharp contrast between historical discouragement and current encouragement of family enterprise in the Netherlands is the focus of this paper. This paper examines how the evolution in the political narrative on family business between 1945 and 2015 in the Netherlands can be explained. The Netherlands has been marked by a transformation from a coordinated market economy with a critical attitude towards family firms, to a liberal market economy that praises entrepreneurship and family enterprise. Combined with conceptual ambiguity on what a family firm is, this changing context explains how the appraisal of family enterprise underwent such significant changes. Building on the current trend of Digital Humanities, an extensive digital collection of Dutch parliamentary records will be exploited, in order to present a quantitative overview of the historical frequency of the use of family business in political debates. Subsequently, this collection is used for a qualitative analysis of the use of the ideograph family business to present the different and developing narratives over time. Combined, these analyses explain the evolving political narrative surrounding family firms in the Dutch parliament and political debate between 1945 and 2015.

2. Mayra Murkens (UM)

Changing diseases, changing mortality? Transitioning early childhood mortality and (in)equalities in Maastricht, 1864-1955

During the nineteenth century, at the onset of the health transition, the vulnerability of young children to the typical childhood diseases caused high mortality rates among this age category. The contribution of this age group to the increase in life expectancy in the course of the health transition is thus substantial. Yet improvements in health and survival were not won equally. Studies on historical early childhood mortality and inequalities in socioeconomic status and gender have not yet found a conclusive answer to what causes possible inequalities. Through the analysis of individual level cause of death data in the industrial city of Maastricht, the aim is to gain an improved understanding of the health transition among young children and the consequential emergence and disappearance of inequalities. The major findings indicate that different disease patterns emerged for the elitist children regarding water- and foodborne infectious diseases, while for airborne infectious diseases gender inequalities were more important. These gender inequalities were mainly found along the lines of epidemic and endemic mortality, implying a biological disadvantage for boys and a more continuous socio-cultural disadvantage for girls. The latter only disappeared when the major gains in the health transition had been achieved.

Session C.1

1. Philip Post (UL)

Land, labour and imperial competition in the Moluccas, 1840-1870

In the 1850s, several plans were drawn up in The Netherlands to explore the possibility of establishing settler colonies in the Moluccas (in East Indonesia). These islands, once famous and rich because of the trade in spices had yielded fewer and fewer profits, and Dutch administrators and scientists believed that European settlers would bring new technologies and a proper work ethic. These plans not only aimed at increasing the productivity of the Moluccas but would also make it easier to argue for the legitimacy of Dutch claims to these lands. This was important as in the 1840s and 1850s Dutch officials feared that the British government was developing plans to establish themselves in the Dutch East Indies. Colonial officials in the Moluccas quickly realized, however, that creating new Dutch settlements in the Moluccas was only possible in case the colonial government could freely give out available common land. Colonial officials in Ambon, Ternate, and Banda therefore started analysing the contracts which had been signed by the Dutch East India Company (VOC), the trading company which had ruled over the Moluccas from the early seventeenth century onwards. A close analysis of these contracts showed that the majority of these common lands was, in fact, owned by the local villages themselves. By looking at these discussions, this paper aims to show how the Dutch colonial government struggled with territorial, legal, and racial borders, and argues that their contested and evasive nature was a constitutive element of colonial governance.

2. Alexander Geelen (IISH)

Regulating Mobility on the Gold Coast

This paper explores how the Dutch West India Company used local traditions and practices to regulate mobility on the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century. The paper focuses on two local practices that fall under the umbrella of pawnship: Impia and panyarring. These practices were used by the WIC to acquire labourers by both mobilizing and immobilizing people. Pawns were used by the Company as workers in and around their forts, but importantly also as collateral in the slave trade. Using the court cases from the WIC Court of Justice Archive at Elmina archive the paper discusses day to day workings of pawnship in local mobility regulation and includes the rarely heard voices of local inhabitants, enslaved and pawned people. Through these sources the paper reveals the extensive intrusion of the Company into local societies through their regulation and use of local practices. The West India Company did not act just as merchants in their forts on the coasts, but had an impact through their legislation and administration of justice that reached beyond their claimed jurisdiction.

Detailed programme overview & abstracts – Thursday 20 May

Time	Research Network sessions		
15:00 - 16:45	Session I: Life courses, Family and Labour <i>Women, households, and labour markets. The effects of women's work on fertility, behavior and living standards.</i>		
	Presenter	Paper title	Chair
	Hilde Greefs (UA) Anne Winter (VUB)	<i>Migration, settlement and working conditions of foreign female sex workers in late nineteenth-century Antwerp</i>	Paul Puschmann (RU)
	Corinne Boter (UU)	<i>Sub-regional specialization and the gender wage gap in the Lancashire textile industry, 1886-1906.</i>	
	Graziela Dekeyser (KU Leuven) Paul Puschmann (RU)	<i>Woman and men in a changing world. Tracing and eliminating the roots of gender disadvantages.</i>	
	Session II: Life courses, Family and Labour & Societies in Context <i>Epidemics and inequality in the Low Countries</i>		
	Presenters	Paper title	Chair
	Tim Soens (UA)	<i>EPIBEL: Epidemics and Inequality in the history of Belgium/the Southern Low Countries: an introduction</i>	Angélique Janssens (RU/UM)
	Tim Riswick (RU) Sanne Muurling (RU) Katalin Buzasi (LUMC)	<i>The last Dutch smallpox epidemic: Infectious disease, public health and social inequalities in Amsterdam, 1870-1872</i>	
	Bram van Besouw (UU) Daniel R. Curtis (EUR) Roos van Oosten (UL)	<i>Stinking Rich? Epidemics and Housing Wealth Redistribution in 17th-Century Leiden</i>	
	Isabelle Devos (UGent) Sven Vrielinck (UGent) Torsten Wiedemann (UGent)	<i>The 1866 cholera epidemic in Brussel: a reconstruction</i>	
	Session III: Globalisation, inequality and sustainable development in long-term perspective <i>Running global empires</i>		
	Presenters	Paper Title	Chair
	Michiel de Haas (WUR)	<i>Africa and the 'new history of capitalism' debate: the case of colonial cotton production, 1820-1960</i>	Pim Zwart (WUR)
	Willem Jongman (RUG)	<i>A fresh look at the Roman economy</i>	
Felicitas Becker (UGent)	<i>The dynamics of victim-blaming in rural development, the case of Tanzania</i>		

Abstracts

Session I: Life courses, Family and Labour

Women, households, and labour markets. The effects of women's work on fertility, behavior and living standards.

1. Hilde Greefs (UA) and Anne Winter (VUB)

Migration, settlement and working conditions of foreign female sex workers in late nineteenth-century Antwerp

This paper uses personal information from police files on immigration and prostitution as well as population records to reconstruct migration and residential trajectories of registered foreign sex workers in Antwerp, Belgium, in the year 1880. It elucidates how their highly transitory patterns of mobility and clustered patterns of residence formed part of professional international migration circuits connecting brothels in various European cities, catering to the upmarket segments of Antwerp's lively prostitution sector. By comparing their distinctive patterns of migration, residence, and work with other female migrants on the one hand and more 'irregular' forms of prostitution on the other hand, the chapter highlights the ways in which the presence of this particular migrant group—dominated by French women—shaped the bohemian reputation of the port's notorious entertainment district in the late nineteenth century.

2. Corinne Boter (UU)

Sub-regional specialization, majority gender shares, and the gender wage gap in the Lancashire cotton textile industry, 1886-1906

This paper examines the gender wage gap in the Lancashire cotton textile manufacturing industry with one empirical and one theoretical goal. Empirically, we will research the effects of varying local labour markets on women's labour market position. Sub-regional specialization within Lancashire intensified during our research period, with some districts specializing in weaving and others in spinning. Theoretically, based on our findings on the cotton industry, we will consider how driving forces of historical gender wage gaps that feature most prominently in the historiography – occupational segregation, market forces of demand and supply, and gender ideology – interacted. These factors have too often been presented as alternative explanations while they should be investigated in relation to each other. We draw three principal conclusions. First, there was a positive correlation between the share of adult male labourers in the textile labour force and the female-male wage ratio at the district level. Thus, the more masculine a local textile labour force was, the smaller the gender wage gap. Second, the gender wage gap among weavers was smaller in districts that specialized in weaving than in spinning districts. However, we found no such relation for spinners, which we explain by the complete gender segregation of male mule spinners and female ring spinners. Third, we argue that the Lancashire cotton textile industry is an illustration of how the interaction of various forces determine women's labour market position and how this interaction can change over time.

3. Graziela Dekeyser (KU Leuven) & Paul Puschmann (RU)

Woman and men in a changing world. Tracing and eliminating the roots of gender disadvantages.

This paper will follow later this week. Keep an eye on our website.

Session II: Life courses, Family and Labour & Societies in Context

Epidemics and inequality in the Low Countries

1. Tim Soens (UA)

EPIBEL: Epidemics and Inequality in the history of Belgium/the Southern Low Countries: an introduction

This short presentation introduces the EPIBEL-project. EPIBEL - Epidemics and Inequalities in Belgium from the Plague to COVID-19 – aims to map and explain inequalities in the impact of epidemic outbreaks. COVID-19 demonstrated that some people are more likely to suffer in their health and their material wellbeing than others. However, as the pandemic is still unfolding, our understanding of these inequalities is still limited. What is more, we ignore how this social bias in impact will eventually affect societal resilience – the way societies are able to absorb the shock and adapt to prevent similar shocks in the future. However, COVID-19 is not the first epidemic outbreak which hit the world. Hence, EPIBEL systematically compares COVID-19 with five previous epidemic outbreaks: the 1918/19 ‘Spanish’ Flu, the 1866 cholera epidemic, dysentery in 1692/93 and plague in 1438/39 and 1556/59. All of these were perceived by contemporaries as major outbreaks. As a result, they are well documented and resulted in the formulation of epidemic policies with lasting impact. EPIBEL combines the study of differential epidemic mortality, with a broader perspective on economic and health inequalities before, during and after epidemic outbreaks (including the impact on employment and social care). This way EPIBEL hopes to provide Belgium with a better pandemic memory, raising both the preparedness for future pandemics and the awareness that taking into account inequalities is crucial to mitigate impacts and prevent catastrophic outcomes.

2. Tim Riswick (RU), Sanne Muurling (RU) & Katalin Buzasi (LUMC)

The last Dutch smallpox epidemic: Infectious disease, public health and social inequalities in Amsterdam, 1870-1872

For centuries, smallpox was considered one of the most feared, deadly and widespread of all infectious diseases. Before the era of widespread vaccination, it would often erupt as a substantial epidemic at least once per generation, killing around 25 to 40 per cent of its victims. However, not all are equal when it comes to health and mortality. It was more difficult to escape infection in densely populated cities than in rural communities, but there were also marked differences between and importantly within cities due to varying public health measures by authorities and inhabitants’ living and work circumstances. Based on individual-level data on the causes of death, this paper examines the last nationwide upsurge of smallpox in the Netherlands through the lens of the city of Amsterdam. By scrutinizing, which part of the population was affected most by this epidemic – in

terms of age and sex, and geographic distribution across the city – this paper will shed further light on the relationship between epidemics and social inequality.

3. Bram van Besouw (UU), Daniel R. Curtis (EUR) & Roos van Oosten (UL)

Stinking Rich? Epidemics and Housing Wealth Redistribution in 17th-Century Leiden

Epidemic disease outbreaks could kill a substantial proportion of the inhabitants of early modern cities. Such loss of life produced the potential for shifts in the distribution of wealth within those cities. In this paper, we assess changes in the distribution of house ownership in seventeenth century Leiden—using a new series of fiscal registers (verpondingen)—and integrate these data with a spatial reconstruction of annual mortality per street. These data allow us to test whether mortality spikes—such as those occurring in 1624 and 1655, and especially the epidemic outbreak of 1635 that killed approximately one third of the population but with neighborhood mortality rates ranging between 5 to 50 per cent—did indeed affect housing wealth inequality. Furthermore, it allows us to dissect at what margins of the housing wealth distribution such changes occurred—keeping house prices constant due to the nature of the fiscal sources—and among what segments of housing and neighborhoods. In addition, we can closely relate these compositional effects to the distribution of mortality. These findings shed new light on the size of and mechanisms underlying early modern wealth distribution and inequality.

4. Isabelle Devos (UGent), Sven Vrielinck (UGent) & Torsten Wiedemann (UGent)

The 1866 cholera epidemic in Brussel: a reconstruction.

In 1866, a severe cholera epidemic raged across Belgium, like in many other European countries. The capital city of Brussels was hit hardest, with 3,469 deaths from the disease. Cholera is an infectious bacterial disease primarily spread via polluted water. Using a wide variety of sources (death certificates, population registers, cadastral surveys, police records, medical reports and bulletins of the municipal council), we reconstruct in this paper the course of the cholera epidemic across the city and determine who the main victims were. Although Brussels was the first Belgian city to have a piped water system since 1858, we argue that investments in drainage and public water supply did not necessarily reduce, and actually aggravated the risk of cholera during the epidemic.

Session III: Globalisation, inequality and sustainable development in long-term perspective

Running global empires

1. Michiel de Haas (WUR)

Africa and the 'new history of capitalism': colonialism, coercion and cotton, 1820-1960

In his landmark *Empire of Cotton* (2014), Sven Beckert has argued that since the 18th century European cotton capitalists successfully subjugated rural producers across the globe to their material interests, through state-backed and coercive interference (slavery and colonialism).

Africa, in this rendition of affairs, was treated as the latest cotton frontier, but its exploitation successfully thwarted by resistant African producers, despite concerted attempts by European colonialists and cotton capitalists. I study the dynamics of cotton production and trade flows across sub-Saharan Africa and challenge this narrative. Comparative analysis suggests that cotton production was a more interesting and valuable proposition to African producers than is often presumed, and that low output was as much a result of ecological constraints and poorly organized production and marketing conditions as it was of resistance. Moreover, European government departments, colonial officials, cotton traders, manufacturers and workers hardly formed a united front, and 'European cotton capitalists' were not the prime beneficiaries of cotton production in the African colonies. The implication of these findings is that we should be cautious to link present day patterns of African poverty and income disparities to a history of cotton imperialism.

2. Willem Jongman (RUG)

A fresh look at the economy of the Roman Empire

Few modern economic historians are at all interested in the Roman economy: for them history begins around AD 1000, if not later. And yet the Roman Empire was the largest political unit in European history, lasted for many centuries, was more urbanized than almost any later pre-industrial European society, more monetized, and, I shall argue had a relatively high standard of living, at least for a number of centuries. The explanation for the lack of interest is complex, and includes the educational background of the local scholarly tigers (many ancient historians are classicists), their intellectual horizon, and the nature of the traditional literary source material. 'Real' economic historians feel utterly out of place. This was not helped by the status of the most important economic and social historian of antiquity, Moses Finley, who argued that antiquity had a 'different' and 'embedded' economy that lacked any economic growth and could not be understood by the tools of modern economic analysis. In my paper I will argue that all this has changed, and that evolving trends in current research are intimately connected to the concerns in more recent periods of economic history. Modern economic analysis is no longer frowned upon, there is more awareness of what modern economic historians are doing, and thanks to the massive growth of archaeological documentation, there are now far more hard data, often in huge quantity. This has also resulted in a quite dramatic revision of the previously pessimistic and static picture of Roman economic performance. Using mostly large archaeological datasets, I shall argue that for the last few centuries BC and the first centuries AD the Roman Empire witnessed real economic growth, with both population and standard of living going up, and not just for the Italian core but for conquered provinces as well. I shall also argue that this came to a dramatic end by the deterioration of the climate and the series of pandemics that began in the late second century AD. Unlike after the Black Death, however, this did not improve labour incomes, but led to increased oppression. So my lesson is that Roman economic history deserves to be taken more seriously as a remarkable case of what could be achieved by a pre-industrial economy, and of the limitations to such an economy. The other lesson is that of the potential of archaeological data, and not only for the ancient world, but also for other periods.

3. Felicitas Becker (UGent)

The dynamics of victim-blaming in rural development, the case of Tanzania

That development intervention at large, and rural development in particular, rarely achieves what it sets out to do is now commonplace. Explanations of this state of affairs have generally focused on institutions: in particular, on institutional dysfunction and corruption in aid-receiving countries, and on the structure and effects of the 'development machine' itself, which has been described as geared towards expanding and maintaining the power of political elites. The 'targets' of rural development programmes, for their part, are routinely characterized as lacking in knowledge, initiative or ability to learn and 'modernise'. Based on a study of eighty years of developmental failure in rural Tanzania, this paper asks why similar, already-failed development strategies were repeated in different discursive guises under different political regimes. Further, it asks why their failure was repeatedly explained with reference to perceived shortcomings of the target populations, despite clear evidence of innovation, adaptation and hard effort by these cultivators. It argues that these processes cannot be understood unless the political focus is widened to include environmental conditions as well as conditions in global markets. Notwithstanding the apparent might of the 'development machine' as a global complex, experts and officials running individual projects were acting from positions of weakness, not strength, in the face of overwhelming environmental and marketing constraints. Finding fault with cultivators was a way of obfuscating these structural obstacles to prosperity. Perversely, it helped maintain development providers' interest in disadvantaged rural regions, as people could be presented as more amenable to change than climate, soil composition or price fluctuations.

Detailed programme overview & abstracts – Friday 21 May

PhD Sessions A.2 – C2						
Time	Sessions	PhD Presenter	Title	NWP Fellow	Peer-commentator	Chair
10:00 - 11:30	A.2	Arlinde Vrooman (RUG)	<i>The Introduction of Colonial Health Care Provision in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire: ca. 1900-1955</i>	Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (UU)	Tanik Joshipura (WUR)	Bram Hilkens (EUR)
		Lore Helsen (UGent)	<i>Female agricultural day labourers in eighteenth-century Flanders</i>	Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (UU)	Eline Rademakers (UL)	
	B.2	Dennis De Vriese (VUB)	<i>"A butcher at everyone's fingertips". Urban regulation and meat sector settlement patterns in Brussels, 1816-1866</i>	Yves Segers (KU Leuven)	Jeroen Oosterbaan (UL)	Maïté Van Vyve (UGent)
		Rogier van Kooten (UA)	<i>Leveling Through Space?</i>	Wouter Ryckbosch (VUB)	Elisa Bonduel (UGent)	
	C.2	Liesbeth Langouche (UA)	<i>On the comfort of window glass: each activity its light?</i>	Krista De Jonge (KU Leuven)	Weixuan Li (UvA)	Jeroen van Veldhoven (UU/Huygens ING)
		Alexander van der Meer (UL)	<i>Wars & whispers of ecclesial independence: the fourth Anglo-Dutch war (1780-1784) and the Batavian consistory</i>	Ulbe Bosma (IISH)	Charris De Smet (UA)	

Abstracts

Session A.2

1. Arlinde Vrooman (RUG)

The Introduction of Colonial Health Care Provision in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire: ca. 1900-1955

Despite a clear effect of changes during the colonial period on health suggested by qualitative sources, the literature on the (long-term) effects of colonial rule largely overlooks this relationship. My PhD project aims to enhance our understanding of the effect of colonial rule on health and health care in a specific place and setting: Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire from circa 1900 to 1955. This paper studies the introduction of health care provision under colonial rule in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire during this period. Using qualitative and quantitative primary sources, a new data set is built to capture colonial government investments in health care provision, and (results of) the colonial health care provision itself. I first study patterns and trends in expenditures on health care incurred by the colonial administrations. Next, I study patterns and trends concerning health care facilities, medical staff and patients.

2. Lore Helsen (UGent)

Female agricultural day labourers in eighteenth-century Flanders

This paper discusses the employment opportunities and remuneration of women as agricultural day labourers in Flanders in the eighteenth century. While much has been written about the social and economic changes that characterized the Flemish countryside in this period of agrarian transition, the role of female day labourers remains unclear. The changing market for wage labour is often described exclusively on the basis of male workers and their wages, with female servants being a notable exception. This gap in the research cannot be attributed to the absence of female day labourers in the Flemish fields, as they figure regularly in accounts kept by their employers. The international historiography has already shown the vast potential of farm accounts to study this topic, especially in comparison to the limitations of other sources such as censuses or contemporary descriptions. A number of unexplored eighteenth-century farm accounts shows that the experience of female day labourers could vary strongly with that of their male counterparts in Flanders. However, differences also existed in the employment opportunities among women: female participation rates, the gendered division of labour and women's remuneration were all subject to strong regional and even local variations.

Session B.2

1. Dennis De Vriese (VUB)

"A butcher at everyone's fingertips". Urban (de)regulation and butcher settlement patterns in Brussels, 1816-1866

On 9 June 1847, the Brussels meat market was transformed. Abandoning centuries of sales restricted to municipal meat halls in the city centre, the municipal council decided to allow meat sales from butchers' homes. The intended goal of this deregulation was very clear: luring new butchers to settle in the city in a dispersed manner, thereby spreading meat retail across the city. This paper seeks to assess the degree to which this attempt was successful in spatially reshaping butchers' locational patterns. Using addresses derived from professional tax records in a Geographical Information System (GIS) analysis, it explores Brussels butcher settlement patterns in the first half of the nineteenth century. While twenty years after the spatial deregulation a dispersed butcher settlement landscape had emerged, spatial deregulation is shown to have been much less a cause than a catalyst. From the early nineteenth-century onwards the traditional cluster of butchers in the city centre had been disappearing in favour of a more dispersed settlement pattern, an evolution which can only partly be explained by demand- and supply-side factors. The 1847 spatial deregulation, rather than creating new settlement patterns out of thin air, concluded a process of changing supply and demand infrastructure, population shifts and rental values which had been going on for five decades, decades in which modern settlement patterns had been slowly taking shape.

2. Rogier van Kooten (UA)

Levelling Through Space?

Using a historical case study, the Fall of Antwerp (1584-1585), this research explores the social and spatial mechanisms that can redistribute the differences between rich and poor during a catastrophic shock. Today we are in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis. According to many experts, the pandemic led to increasing differences between rich and poor. Yet disaster history teaches that the relationship between inequality and catastrophes, whether triggered by human action or by nature, is not a universal law. Some researchers find a levelling effect, others emphasize increasing inequality. This research therefore aimed to further uncover the redistributive mechanisms triggered by a disaster or violent shock, adding a spatial angle to the discussion. Differences between rich and poor, between professional groups or between ethnic and religious groups have for centuries been expressed in specific spatial patterns, sometimes resulting in highly segregated settlement areas. Moreover, social and spatial processes are inextricably linked according to New Urban History. Urban space plays an active role in shaping and changing social differences and power relations. Did the Fall of Antwerp act as a great social and spatial equalizer? This can be investigated by measuring the impact of this shock along demographic and material dimensions. The demographic dimension (mass emigration) will come to the forefront in this paper. Two questions will be addressed. First, how do we measure spatial inequality in 1584 Antwerp? This question is closely related to the field of residential segregation, but not necessarily the same. Second, how did the emigration wave of 1585-1586 change Antwerp's socio-spatial stratification or in other words, did inequality level through space?

Session C.2

1. Liesbeth Langouche (UA)

On the comfort of window glass: each activity its light?

My PhD thesis, about the historical use of window glass studies, describes how – between the 15th and the late 19th century – the available types of window glass have been experienced and installed differently. In this story, I discern three major themes: comfort, fashion and prestige. To a greater or lesser degree, these aspects influenced the generalisation of window glass, as well as the choice for a certain type of glass in a certain built context. For my paper, I chose to focus on one part of the comfort-aspect: the desire to have good lighting conditions where this mattered the most. Previous studies have suggested that, as from the 14th-15th centuries onwards, in castles and abbeys, study rooms were amongst the first locations to receive window glass, after the representative rooms and the chapels. It is possible that this was partly motivated by the better light-transmitting capacity of glass (as opposed to other sealing materials such as oiled cloth). But, what if different types of glass were available? To what extent were the different qualities of glass reflected in their installation? For instance, several sources mention how the more expensive French glass was preferred over the Burgundy and Rhenish glass. This implies that the French glass was of a better quality, which makes it logical to put this glass in rooms where the best light was needed. Whether this was true, will be studied, based on the case-studies of the Coudenberg palace (late 15th-early 16th centuries), the Antwerp city hall (late 16th century) and the Plantin-Moretus family (late 16th-late 18th centuries).

2. Alexander van der Meer (UL)

Wars & whispers of ecclesial independence: the fourth Anglo-Dutch war (1780-1784) and the Batavian consistory

This paper is dedicated to study the impact of intra- and inter-imperial events on the self-perception of Dutch Reformed ministers in Batavia, by looking at ecclesial minutes and correspondence during and after the fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1784). This war broke out on account of Dutch support for the thirteen colonies during the American war of independence, which brought the Dutch East India Company into conflict with Britain as well. This war was an unmitigated military and financial disaster for the latter, foreshadowing its bankruptcy and dissolution soon thereafter. This war prompted the Batavian consistory, which acted as higher church council for territories under the Dutch East India Company, to reflect on its mission in Asia, Calvinist notions of fighting a 'just war' and divine punishment for sins.

Moreover, during the American war of independence, the Pennsylvanian Dutch Reformed Church distanced itself from the Dutch metropolitan motherchurch. Consistories and synods in Holland acted as religious and administrative higher church councils for overseas Dutch Reformed Churches, sending out ministers, giving theological advice, and holding correspondence over religious and administrative matters. Events in Pennsylvania occasioned the Batavian Dutch Reformed consistory to reflect on declaring ecclesial independence as well, weighing arguments for and against maintaining ties with the motherchurch in Holland. Essentially, inter- and intra-imperial events prompted the Dutch Reformed Church in Batavia to reflect on its *raison d'être* and reasons for maintaining ties with the metropolis.

PhD Sessions A.3 – B.3						
Time	Sessions	PhD Presenter	Title	NWP Fellow	Peer-commentator	Chair
11:45 - 13:15	A.3	Ingrid Schepers (UA)	<i>Making the working class mobile: the impact of transport infrastructure and railway commute on the spatial organization of Belgium with 1870-1910 as watershed period</i>	Erik van der Vleuten (TU/e)	Joris Kok (IISH)	Rosa Kösters (UL)
		Aditi Dixit (UU)	<i>Supply of labour during early industrialization. Agricultural systems, textile factory work and gender in Japan and India, ca. 1880-1940 (Co-authored with Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk)</i>	Jan Lucassen (IISH)	Heleen Blommers (VU)	
	B.3	Neilabh Sinha (UL)	<i>Persuasive Images: Rhetoric in Mughal and Habsburg Visual Culture</i>	Caroline van Eck (CU)	Sietske van der Veen (UU/Huygens ING)	Elisa Bonduel (UGent)
		Alexander Collin (UvA)	<i>In Search of Knowledge: How Early Modern Magistrates Pursued Information, Education, and the Limits of Knowledge</i>	Maarten Prak (UU)	Amza Adam (UL)	

Abstracts

Session A.3

1. Ingrid Schepers (UA)

Making the working class mobile: the impact of transport infrastructure and railway commute on the spatial organization of Belgium with 1870-1910 as watershed period

Mobility and migration historians have human movement as their core interest and consider practices of mobility as an essential element in the production of space and hence in understanding the transformation of society. They acknowledge the necessity of transport infrastructure to facilitate, even enhance, mobility between places, yet they approach transport infrastructure as a neutral object. In general, they neglect the policy measures incorporated in the design of the transport network as well as the regulations concerning its use, both geared at creating desired flows of mobility. The conception of transport infrastructure as a socio-technological product that reorganizes space in order to establish certain outcomes gained prominence under European decision makers from the eighteenth century onwards, in accordance with the strengthening of the nation state and the rise of the engineer as technocrat. In order to increase knowledge about this interaction between transport policies, mobility flows and the spatial reorganization of society, this research uses the development of the Belgian railway network as promising case study. In the 1830s it was conceived as tool to create economic growth; from the 1870s onwards it likewise was employed as spatial tool to fix the rural dwellers in their birth villages while giving them access to a nationwide labour market. This presentation explores if the policies embedded in the railway design was answered by the households living in the countryside.

2. Aditi Dixit (UU)

Supply of labour during early industrialization. Agricultural systems, textile factory work and gender in Japan and Western India/Bombay, ca. 1880-1940

This paper explores causes of the marked differences in the gender division of labour in the early emerging textile factories in Japan and India in the first half of the twentieth century. In Japan, the overwhelming majority of the workers in spinning mills were young, unmarried women, while in India men – married as well as unmarried – formed the bulk of the factory textile workforce. We argue that an important factor explaining part of these differences in gender patterns in textile factory work are variations in agrarian systems and labour regimes therein. The structural differences in the productivity, intensity, and the social organization of labour in agricultural economies in both countries led to notable variances in the gender composition of the supply of (rural) labour for the factories. Differential deployment of rural farm and non-farm labour, in combination with distinct labour recruitment practices in the countryside, caused rural households to adopt radically different income-generating strategies.

Session B.3

1. Neilabh Sinha (UL)

The Persuasive Image: Rhetoric in Mughal and Habsburg Visual Culture

This paper explores the influence of rhetoric on the visual culture of the early modern Habsburg and Mughal courts. While the emperors Jahangir and Rudolf have been considered great patrons of art in general, the focus of their ateliers on Nature has made them stand out as unusual contemporary parallels. While my dissertation studies the output of these ateliers to understand the place of Nature in the early modern Eurasian worldview, the persistent question has been: how does one make the two traditions comparable to tease out similarities and differences? For an answer, I take seriously the connections made by early modern artists, literati, and intellectuals between art, poetry, and rhetoric. Early modern courtly individuals were generally trained in literary canons, as defined by the respective cultures. They operated within the tradition defined by these canons. The rules governing creative activity, especially in the literary sphere, were provided by established traditions of rhetoric. However, the visual arts were closely connected to the literary. Iconography, in both Indo Persian and European art, tends to draw on motifs from the classical literary canon as well as established figures of speech. Moreover, the sixteenth century saw an increased production of texts that concerned themselves with rhetoric in the very cultural regions under study in this dissertation. The involvement of men of letters and visual artists in the same intellectual networks as well as the increasing tendency to use allegory and metaphor in visual culture points to a convergence between rhetoric and visual culture.

2. Alexander Collin (UvA)

In Search of Knowledge: How Early Modern Magistrates Pursued Information, Education, and the Limits of Knowledge

This paper, modelled on first two chapters of my PhD thesis, considers how political office holders approached questions of information acquisition and knowledge formation, in the historical context of city governments in the Early Modern Holy Roman Empire. Taking a case study of the city of Bremen in the early sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries, the paper will, firstly, analyse patterns of information acquisition. This analysis focuses on changes in formal education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as considering the subject matter and rhetorical conventions of information transmission in private and official correspondence. Secondly, the paper will use this evidence to consider the relationship between information and knowledge, through an analysis of how information was evaluated and linked to existing knowledge to make sense of the world. The aim of the study is to demonstrate the relevance of attitudes toward knowledge for political decision making by reconstructing the ways in which political thought was integrated into beliefs about other areas of social, cultural, and economic life. It draws on original archival research on the personal papers of municipal office holders to examine the extent to which views on knowledge were articulated by such officials. Taking a what factors influenced the change over time in such views

Detailed programme overview & abstracts – Friday 21 May

Time	Research Network sessions		
14:15 - 16:00	Session I: Inclusion, Exclusion and Mobility <i>Making and Using the City in the Low Countries</i>		
	Presenter(s)	Paper title	Chair
	Bart Lambert (VUB)	<i>The Make-Up of the City: A Transdisciplinary Study of Urban Society in the Late Medieval Low Countries</i>	Manon van der Heijden (UL)
	Marjolein Schepers (VUB-UGent)	<i>Of back alleys and dark streets: a spatial history of inns and lodging houses in Leiden around 1800</i>	
	Marion Pluskota (UL)	<i>ProSpect – The Spectacle of Prostitution: the impact of prostitution on Amsterdam urban landscape around 1900</i>	
	Session II: Routes and Roots in Colonial and Global History <i>Global trade in the eighteenth century</i>		
	Presenter(s)	Paper title	Chair
	Chris Nierstraz (EUR)	<i>Rivalry for trade in tea and textiles. A Global History of East India companies (1700-1800)</i>	Ulbe Bosma (IISH/VU)
	Rafael Thiebault (IISH)	<i>Dynamism of the slave status: the case of the Southwest Indian Ocean compared</i>	
	Elisabeth Heijmans (UA)	<i>The Future in the eyes of early modern French merchants active in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic trade during the 18th century</i>	
	Session III: Societies in Context: Interactions between humans and rural-urban environments <i>Dealing with nature: drought control, pest management and food storage in the pre-industrial Low Countries</i>		
	Presenter(s)	Paper Title	Chair
	Thijs Lambrecht (UGent)	<i>The Crow and the Sparrow: Rural Economic Structures and Wildlife Persecution in the Low Countries, c. 1400 - c. 1850</i>	Kate Frederick (UU)
	Petra van Dam (VU)	<i>Coping with drought - An environmental history of drinking water: Project presentation</i>	
	Wouter Ronsijn (UGent)	<i>Quality, not interest: Explaining seasonal patterns in grain prices in eighteenth-century Flanders</i>	
	Session IV: Economy and Society of the Pre-industrial Low Countries in Comparative Perspective <i>Panel discussion: How has comparative research shaped the social and economic history of the Netherlands?</i>		
	Presenter(s)		Chair
Maïka De Keyzer (KULeuven), Marjolein 't Hart (Huygens, VU), Maarten Prak (UU) & Wouter Ryckbosch (VUB).		Pepijn Brandon (IISH)	

Abstracts

Session I: **Inclusion, Exclusion and Mobility** *Making and Using the City in the Low Countries*

1. Bart Lambert (VUB)

The Make-Up of the City: A Transdisciplinary Study of Urban Society in the Late Medieval Low Countries

In the late medieval Low Countries, urban societies were engines of economic growth, centres of political strife and hubs of cultural innovation. Due to the fragmentary nature of written records, however, we still know very little about the populations of these cities. The Make-Up of the City project aims to overcome this obstacle by bringing together perspectives from multiple disciplines. It focuses on a parish cemetery that was excavated in the Belgian city of Ieper, one of the biggest cities of Europe and a leading cloth-producing centre during the late medieval period. The 1,200 human skeletons of the 13th and 14th centuries that were found at the site will be analysed by a team of historians, archaeologists, human osteology experts and isotope specialists. Through this transdisciplinary approach, the project hopes to answer fundamental questions about the composition, the origins and the lifestyle of the population of late medieval Ieper, which disciplines in isolation cannot.

2. Marjolein Schepers (VUB-UGent)

Of back alleys and dark streets: A spatial history of inns and lodging houses in Leiden around 1800

This paper explores the material and spatial aspects of cities as places that people pass through, as stop-overs in longer trips, as accommodation for passanten, as the travellers and migrants residing briefly were called in the past. It connects the locations of inns and lodging houses to the places of arrival on transport, to the interactivity of the streets, and to the city lights, thereby analysing the connections between the migrant infrastructure and their visibility in the city. It is an explorative research, part of the research project 'Just Passing Through? Urban infrastructures of transient migration in the Low Countries, 1780-1870' which departs from the cities Leiden, Liège and Mechelen as nodal points in transport networks for passanten. Building on research of the projects Pubscape and Dangerous Cities, this paper explores the locations of inns and lodging houses in the city of Leiden between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century. Migration historians have recently started to devote attention to the places and spaces of arrival in cities. This research analyses the physical infrastructures of accommodation, the street grid, locations of transport layovers and city lighting to shed a light on people passing through cities. It is based on sources from the cadastre of Leiden (1832), the patent registers (1820-1894) which both provide information on the locations of inns and lodging houses, historical maps, and a spatial syntax calculation digitised by Historisch Leiden in Kaart; as well as the inn registers (1766-1801) and a list of city lights (1824-1827) of the city archives of Leiden. GIS geovisualisation methods allow for analysing the links, connections and patterns between these different infrastructures. This paper presents work in progress, which raises new questions for the predominantly social-cultural perspectives used in migration history. As such, it goes beyond the arrival and departure binary and provides new insights into the relations between mobility and urban society.

3. Marion Pluskota (UL)

ProSpect – The Spectacle of Prostitution: the impact of prostitution on Amsterdam urban landscape around 1900

The project 'ProSpect -The Spectacle of Prostitution' posits that prostitution is visible in, and has an impact on, the urban landscape. It argues that prostitution, as in the exchange of money, goods, or services for sexual relations, is visible not only through the display of women and men's body but also in the way modern cities developed: prostitution influenced the city's economy, health services, social composition, cultural changes, policing, spatial use of the urban environment, and had even a role to play in the lightscape and soundscape of certain areas. Amsterdam was the first city in the Netherlands which made brothels illegal in 1897, leading the way to a national ban in 1911. The municipality's aims were to reduce trafficking, to clean up its streets, and to give the modern city a veil of morality, by dismantling visible, tangible prostitution. However, it will be shown that despite this ban, prostitution remained visible and continued to shape the urban landscape and cultural life of the city.

Session II: Routes and Roots in Colonial and Global History *Global trade in the eighteenth century*

1. Chris Nierstraz (EUR)

Rivalry for trade in tea and textiles. A Global History of East India companies (1700-1800)

Despite their reputation for monopoly, East India companies had to fiercely compete for Indian textiles and Chinese tea. This rivalry had global ramifications and is best known for its impact on key historical events such as the opening of Western trade with China, the Boston Tea Party, the establishment of British Empire in Bengal and the Industrial Revolution. However, this study will move beyond an understanding of this rivalry from a European perspective by analysing the roots and routes of tea and textiles across the globe. Where did the origins of these commodities lay in Asia? And across what routes did these products flow from their production sites to their markets? If we understand their roots and routes, we can understand how these flows of goods helped shape outcomes beyond Europe, since this rivalry transformed political and economic outcomes in the wider Indian Ocean and Atlantic. We have to see this trade in the light of an open-ended story of global history, where not monopoly, but private trade, country trade in Asia, smuggling and most of all of Asian agency and resistance determined historical outcomes.

2. Rafael Thiebault (IISH)

Dynamism of the slave status: the case of the Southwest Indian Ocean compared

Slavery and the slave trade in the Indian Ocean region was different from its Atlantic counterpart. The century-old existence of slavery and very dynamic and active trade patterns in this region, existing long before the arrival of the Europeans, makes the Southwest Indian Ocean region an

interesting case study. Indeed, the slave trade was multidirectional, every port could be at the same time a reservoir or a destination of slaves, which contributes to the complexity of the unfree status. Europeans arriving in the Southwest Indian Ocean, witnessing pre-modern African societies identified as slavery something that consisted in reality of multiple forms of bondage. These practices were far from a static phenomenon, but rather dynamic a malleable according to the existing needs. It was the rise of global capitalism, which changed the malleability of the local forms of bonded labour, especially through the important role of the European slave trade. In this paper, through a bottom-up approach thanks to an extensive archival research, I will analyse the dynamics and the changes that occurred in unfree labour in these pre-modern societies that became involved in the global rising capital economy during the Modern Age.

3. Elisabeth Heijmans (UA)

The Future in the eyes of early modern French merchants active in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic trade during the 18th century

“I predict many risks for our vessels who were given the order to travel, may God prevent bad encounters. At last, canons are arriving to you, I hope they are good, we will use them this winter to arm all ships able to set sail” these are the words of the prominent merchant of Bordeaux, Abraham Gradis in 1755, a year before the declaration of the Seven Years War. Gradis had acquired provisioning contracts to French territories in North America (Quebec) with the French Crown. The firm provided food, wines and textiles for the French colonies and for a commission. However, the growing insecurity in the Atlantic, due in particular to British attacks, made these contracts less profitable than expected. Historians studying past futures argue that during the Enlightenment, and in particular the second a half of the eighteenth century, a new perception of the future developed: the notion that the future was constructible and that humans could construct a very different future than the present they lived in. To come to these conclusions, scholars have used the writings and inventions of Enlightened philosophers. However, other sources, such as merchants’ correspondence might reflect perceptions of the future closer to the daily life of men and women in the eighteenth century. How did French merchants perceive the future and to what extent did they think they could act on it?

Merchants’ activities were based on a constant assessment of risks and attempts at curbing uncertainty. Consequently, their letters are filled with statements about the future shedding light on future situations and expectations of different temporalities and varying degrees of agency. Long distance trade such as that of Gradis added a geographical factor to the temporal distance. In this presentation I will introduce my research project which explores how political, economic and social circumstances affected French merchants’ future expectations in the eighteenth-century long-distance trade.

Session III: Societies in Context: Interactions between humans and rural-urban environments

Dealing with nature: drought control, pest management and food storage in the pre-industrial Low Countries

1. Thijs Lambrecht (UGent)

The Crow and the Sparrow: Rural Economic Structures and Wildlife Persecution in the Low Countries, c. 1400 - c. 1850

Urban and rural communities in the Low Countries have a long and successful tradition of eliminating and persecuting wildlife. From the late middle ages well into the nineteenth century millions of animals (mammals and birds) were killed because they were considered a nuisance and a posed a threat to the profitability and productivity of economic activities such as arable and pastoral agriculture, forestry and fish farming. In this paper, I look at the underlying economic mechanisms and structures that explain the rationale, timing and methods of wildlife persecution and destruction. The examples of the crow and the sparrow illustrate the complex interactions between economic development in the Low Countries and wildlife during the pre-industrial period. Crows were culled in massive numbers in regions characterized by large holdings and wage labour because their foraging behaviour was detrimental for labour productivity. In particular during periods when labour was scarce and expensive, crows faced intensive persecution. Sparrows, on the contrary, posed a particular problem for small-scale peasant holdings because they targeted the grain harvest. During periods of population growth and increasing pressures on food reserves, sparrow populations became the subject of intensive prosecution and destruction campaigns. The example of the crow and the sparrow illustrates that the organisation and orientation of rural production can largely explain the timing, nature and intensity of wildlife destruction. This paper also argues that high levels of land and labour productivity in the pre-industrial Low Countries were achieved through the elimination of competition from wildlife.

2. Petra van Dam (VU)

Coping with drought - An environmental history of drinking water: Project presentation

Drought as a result of human-induced climate change is an urgent challenge worldwide. This paper is the presentation of a new research project investigating societal resilience to drought in coping with shortages of drinking water. In the Netherlands, before the introduction of piped water in the nineteenth century, the access to drinking water was highly flexible and adaptable. People procured water from multiple sources: groundwater, rainwater, and surface water. The research question is: in what ways did the practices and norms and values regarding the provisioning and use of drinking water develop in the Netherlands during the period 1550-1850, and how did they contribute to societal resilience to drought under differing environmental and social conditions? We make comparisons between dry and humid periods and investigate case-studies in two different regions: in the higher elevations of the Eastern Netherlands, with access to good ground water and surface water, and in the low-lying Western Netherlands, which depended on rain water, because ground water and surface water were brackish and polluted by industrial and human waste. The main aim of

this project is to deepen the knowledge about societal resilience to climate change. This cross-field project will combine the environmental history subfields of weather-and-climate history and drinking water history. The method will allow identification of factors, which contributed to societal resilience to drought over the long-term and make possible the exploration of drought as an agency in historical explanations. In addition, our historical imaginaries may inspire the general public and professionals to seek creative adaptations to climate change.

3. Wouter Ronsijn (UGent)

Quality, not interest: Explaining seasonal patterns in grain prices in eighteenth-century Flanders

What motivated pre-industrial farmers and peasants to store grain: protection against future harvest failure at any cost, or only for a financial compensation? Our current thinking on storage behaviour is still guided by McCloskey and Nash' 1984 paper. They argued that seasonal patterns in grain prices reflect increasing storage costs over the course of the agricultural year, in particular the interest on the capital tied up in the grain. According to this 'sawtooth model', prices are low after the harvest, and gradually increase in the course of the year, until the new harvest comes in and prices drop. This model faces two problems. First, the timing of seasonal patterns observed in continental Europe in the early and late modern period does not fit the model very well. Secondly, the model provides no financial incentive for producers to store grain longer than one year, as prices drop back to their initial level when the new harvest comes in. An assumption implicit in the debate is that grain, after harvest, at best maintains its quality, and often deteriorates. This paper investigates seasonal patterns in grain prices in eighteenth-century Flanders, using a unique dataset with simultaneous observations of grain prices of the previous year's and the current year's harvest. This reveals that, when properly stored, instead of deteriorating, grain quality actually improves over the course of the agricultural year. Exceptional harvests notwithstanding, the price of old grain was consistently higher than that of new grain. This has important implications for our understanding of storage behaviour of pre-industrial grain producers.

Session IV: Economy and Society of the Pre-industrial Low Countries in Comparative Perspective

Panel discussion: How has comparative research shaped the social and economic history of the Netherlands?

Maïka De Keyzer (KU Leuven), Marjolein 't Hart (Huygens, VU), Maarten Prak (UU), Wouter Ryckbosch (VUB) & Pepijn Brandon (IISH)

The network "Economy and society in the Pre-Industrial Low Countries in a Comparative Perspective" will expand its comparative perspective by including the relations of the Netherlands with the wider world in order to examine what impact these relations had on the economy and society of the Low Countries. For our network session, we invited four fellows for a panel discussion about the added value of international comparative research.

How has international comparative research shaped our picture of the social and economic history of the Netherlands? What are the new trends, and what are the limitations in the way comparative research is conducted? Are there remarkable differences in traditions and approaches between the Netherlands and Flanders? What can we learn from each other, and what can we learn from the international debates since the "Global Turn"? The panel members will first give their own reflections on comparative research for about 10 minutes, then the moderator will engage the audience in a discussion.

Additional information Zoom:

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Posthumus conference will take place in the online environment of Zoom. Below are some instructions for the upcoming event:

- The access link for the sessions can be obtained by [registering](#) for the conference.
- This year, we will use **breakout rooms** for the all of the different sessions with the exception of the keynote lecture.
 - Make sure you have the **latest updated version** of Zoom. This can be downloaded here: https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting
 - Once you have chosen a session to join (you can find them in the conference programme above), click on the **Breakout Room button** on the **bottom** of your screen.
 - A list of breakout rooms will appear. **Hover your mouse** over the room of your choice and **click on the join-button**. (see example below)
 - When you want to return to the main session, please click on **leave Breakout Room**.

Every day, between **9.00 – 10.00 am**, Zoom will be open for trying out the different options and making sure everything works properly. If there are any questions, please contact the Posthumus office manager **Milou van den Berg** at nwp@let.ru.nl.

Example breakout room:

