

[Call for Papers: Transcending boundaries? Solidarity in the pre-industrial period](#)

Discussion published by Mark Stein on Wednesday, January 25, 2017

From: **Masure Hadewijch** <hadewijch.masure@uantwerpen.be>

Workshop Bruges - 26-27 October 2017

Transcending boundaries? Solidarity in the pre-industrial period

Call for papers - Workshop

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. This territorial analytic framework furthermore enhances the idea that the Christian, Jewish and Muslim charity and assistance system were of

a different 'world', leading to a lack of reflection about its differences and similarities.

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 and by paying attention to organisations and institutions of different religions; thus exploring the area of tension between territory, network and transnationalism. Family, religious, commercial and other ties indeed all challenged or transcended territorial boundaries. We welcome papers dealing with forms of charity, relief and assistance in Christian, Jewish and Muslim pre-industrial societies that have a translocal, transregional and/or transnational component, be it focussing on international tradesmen, religious communities, colonial forms of relief, ... If there is interest, a publication might follow. A keynote lecture will be given by prof. Gervase Rosser.

This workshop will be organised in Bruges from 26 to 27 October 2017. Please send your abstracts of ca. 300 words to Hadewijch.Masure@uantwerp.be before 15 April.

Prof. dr. Bert De Munck - dr. Eline Van Onacker - Hadewijch Masure (University of Antwerp - Centre for Urban History)

Prof. dr. Paul Trio - Hannelore Franck (KU Leuven Campus Kulak Kortrijk)