



First International Post-Graduate Conference of the GCLA Real and Imagined Boundaries in Late Antiquity (4th-9th century)

Ghent University • UFO (Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 35) • Ghent (Belgium)

photo by Carlo Emilio Biuzzi



We invite applications from **postgraduate researchers** (PhDs and advanced Masters).

To be considered for a **20-minute paper**, please send an email to gclaphdconf@ugent.be with a paper **title**, an **abstract** of ca. 300 words, a short **bibliography** (max 10 titles), and a brief academic **biography** by **30 November 2024**.

Applicants will be notified by **20 December 2024**.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

In recent scholarship on Late Antiquity, attention has been increasingly paid to the concept of boundaries. Understood as **frontiers, margins** or **limits**, boundaries serve as defining lines between literary genres, group identities, geographical regions, religions, and more. Throughout history they have created **conflicts, intolerance, and distinctions**. Boundaries, however, can also be crossed: providing opportunities for **coherence, tolerance, and exchange**, boundaries are noteworthy above all for their **multifaceted nature**, their various dimensions and, paradoxically, their inherent **permeability**.

Studying **Late Antiquity (4th-9th c.)** from this perspective allows us to situate the period in its **Eurasian and African context** by considering differences and similarities within empires and beyond, focusing on what unites and divides. It also affords us the opportunity to consider **disciplinary boundaries**. Given the difficulty of studying such an intricate mixture of **languages, cultures, sources, and contexts**, inter-disciplinary cooperation has become crucial.

This conference aims to overcome “the tendency of most disciplines to consolidate their boundaries even as they attempt to broaden their scope and membership” (F. Trivellato, *On the Margins*, 2021, 249) by gathering **junior scholars** from different disciplinary fields; it also aims to discuss boundaries in all their manifestations, from a diverse range of angles. Through **presentations, keynote lectures, and open conversations**, we hope to stimulate **new insights** for postgraduate researchers of the Later Roman Empire, Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

Postgraduate researchers from the **following fields** are especially invited to participate:

Arabic Studies, Archaeology, Art History, Biblical Studies, History, Jewish Studies, Linguistics, Literary Studies, Oriental Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Theology.

We welcome researchers working with **languages** such as Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Georgian, Gothic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, Slavonic, Sogdian, Syriac.

Possible topics may include but are not limited to:

- Building boundaries with(in) **literary texts**
- **Confessional** and **dogmatic** boundaries between texts and reality
- **Translation** as an activity to cross linguistic boundaries
- **Marginality** as a category to define an **inside-outside** perspective
- **Physical, political, and military boundaries**, between geography and literary representation
- Conflicts within and outside **empire(s)**
- Traces of boundary markers in **material** and **artistic culture**
- Perceived late-antique boundaries in **academic publications**
- **Trade routes** and **religious missions** as connective and dividing factors

Keynote speakers: **Aaron M. Butts** (Hamburg University) • **Khodadad Rezakhani** (Leiden University) • **Marco Formisano** (Ghent University)
introduction by **Lieve van Hoof** (Ghent University)