The notion of collective interest, borrowing its wording from Roman law, common law or simply from local linguistic customs, occurs repeatedly in certain sources and in certain spaces in late medieval Western Europe. The frequent recurrence of this often imprecise phrase has led to a desire to scrutinize this notion in its geographical, chronological, political and cultural contexts. To be sure, whereas the notion is widely used, it is the expression of very different intentions sustained by a more or less firm and a more or less ancient historical and political consciousness.

Traditionally confined to the sphere of the State and of auctoritas, the phrase the “Common Good” is set to conquer the cities in the late Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Early Modern period. But how can we compare a kingdom like France where the cities defend their “Common Good” by making reference to the interest and benefit of the Kingdom with principalities like Flanders where, despite their fierce desire for autonomy, the cities use the notion with much greater reservation than their Italian counterparts?

The “Common Good” of one group is not that of the others. But the idea of the “Common Good” refers to a degree of political maturity that we want to evaluate by tracing the intellectual and theoretical roots that have led to the emergence of this notion in the urban world and by analysing the practical forms of its manifestations.
**Friday, September 15**

9h30 : Welcome and coffee

10h00 : Introduction by MARC BOONE

**Session I: The Common Good in the Urban World, between Theory and Representation**

chaired by JEAN-PIERRE SOSSON

10h30 : GIACOMO TODESCHINI, Partisiper au Bien Commun. La notion franciscaine d’appartenance à la civitas

11h00 : SABRINA CORBELLI, Striving for the ‘Common Good’ and the education of the citizen: evidence from Italy and the Low Countries (13th-14th c.)

11h30 : CLAIRE BILLEN, Dire le Bien Commun dans l’espace public. Textes gravés et textes éphémères sur les édifices de la ville dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux au bas Moyen Âge

12h00 : WIM BLOCKMANS & ROBERT STEIN, Whose community? The origin and development of the concept of Bo- num Commune in Flanders, Brabant, Holland and Utrecht (11th-14th c.)

12h30 : Discussion

13h00 : Lunch

**Session II: In the Name of the Common Good, a “jeu de mots”?**

chaired by ERIK AERTS

14h30 : JAN DUMOLYN & ELODIE LECUPPRE-DESJARDIN, Le Bien Commun en Flandre médiévale : la lutte discursive entre princes et sujets

15h00 : PATRICK BOUCHERON, Politisation et dépolitisation d’un lien commun. Remarques sur la notion de Bien Commun dans les villes d’Italie centro-septentrionales entre commune et seigneurie

15h30 : GISELA NAEGLE, Armes à double tranchant ? Bien Commun et chose publique dans les villes françaises au Moyen Âge

16h00 : Coffee Break

16h15 : ANNE-LAURE VAN BRUAENE, A Virgin for all causes? The Virgin of Ghent as communal symbol in late medieval and early modern Ghent

16h45 : Discussion

**Saturday, September 16**

**Session III: Governing the City in the Name of the Common Good**

chaired by HILDE DE RIDDER-SYMOENS

9h30 : EBERHARD ISENMANN, The notion of Common Good (‘Gemeinter Nutzen’), the concept of politics (‘Politice’) and practical policies in late medieval and early modern German cities

10h00 : PIERRE MONNET, Bien Commun et bon gouvernement : le traité politique de Johann von Soest sur la manière de bien diriger une ville (1493)

10h30 : Coffee break

10h45 : WALTER PREVENIER, Utilitas communis in the Low Countries (13th-15th c.): from social mobilisation to legitimation of power

11h15 : ARJAN VAN DIXHOORN, Discussing and negotiating the Common Good in early modern Antwerp (ca. 1580-1620)

11h45 : Discussion

12h15 : Lunch

**Session IV: The Urban Practice of the Common Good**

chaired by PETER STABEL

13h30 : ALBERT RIGAUDIER, De la fiscalité pour le Bien Commun au financement des biens communs dans les villes du Midi français (XIIIe-XVe s.)

14h00 : ANDREA ZORZI, “Bien Commun” et conflits politiques dans l’Italie communale

14h30 : GERVAISE ROSSER, For whose good? Vows and actions in the English medieval guilds

15h00 : Coffee Break

15h15 : MAARTEN PRAK, The Common Good and the city in early modern Holland

15h45 : Discussion

16h15 : Concluding remarks by ELODIE LECUPPRE-DESJARDIN & ANNE-LAURE VAN BRUAENE

The colloquium will take place in the University Centre Het Pand (Onderbergen 1)

**By public transport:**

From the central station (Sint-Pieters), take tram 1, 10, 11 or 12 (every 6 minutes) to the Korenmarkt. Cross the bridge and walk around the church (Sint-Michiels) to arrive at Het Pand

**By car:**

Follow the signs towards car park P7 Sint-Michiels. Inside, the exit marked Onderbergen will take you to the Wilderoosstraat, opposite Het Pand

Participants are advised to make hotel reservations in a timely fashion. For more information, please contact

Dienst Toerisme (Infokantoor Belfort)

Botermarkt 17A
B-9000 Gent
Tel. +32 (0)9 266 52 32
http://www.visitgent.be/

---

Contact and Information

Elodie.Lecuppre@univ-lille3.fr
Annelaure.Vanbruaene@UGent.be

http://www.ulb.ac.be/philo/urbs/