

# Back to the Future

Thinking about Futures in Late Medieval and  
Early Modern Europe and Beyond



"Allegory of Prudence" - Past, Present and Future  
Titian, c. 1550-1565

**14-15 November 2024**

City Campus, Antwerp or online (hybrid)

[Registration](#) required before October 15

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/back-to-the-future/>



University of Antwerp  
| CUH | Centre for Urban History



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## Thursday November 14

09:30-10:00	Introduction to the conference and the theme	Jeroen Puttevils (Antwerp University)
10:00-10:50	Future: A useful category of historical analysis	Marek Tamm (Tallinn University)
10:50-11:10	Coffee break	
11:10-12:00	"There will come a time": Imagining futurity in the Devotio Moderna	Matthew Champion (Melbourne University)
12:00-13:15	Lunch break	
13:15-14:05	Future ties: Familial experiences and expectations in the early modern Low Countries (c. 1600)	Sanne Hermans (Antwerp University)
14:05-14:55	What's in the air. Predicting the political future in the early modern Low Countries	Judith Pollmann (Leiden University)
14:55-15:20	Coffee break	
15:20-16:10	Gendered future thinking and self-representation in French merchants' correspondences during the eighteenth century	Elisabeth Heijmans (Antwerp University)
16:20-17:00	Futures from the ruins: History and prediction in Early Mexico	Matthew D. O'Hara (UC Santa Cruz)
17:00-17:30	Wrap-up	



"Alexander the Great pushes astrologer Nectanabo into a pit"

BL Royal 20 B XX, c. 1420





“Op een weegschaal worden ‘Eeuwig’ en ‘Tijdelijk’ gewogen”  
Jan Luyken, 1710 - Rijksmuseum

## Friday November 15

09:30–10:20	What did the future look like in early colonial India?	Shahzad Bashir (Aga Khan University)
10:20–11:10	Candlemas or February 2nd? The use of temporal frameworks in early modern English merchant letters	Sara Budts (Antwerp University)
11:10–11:25	Coffee break	
11:25–12:15	Shifting views of time: From cyclical to linear and the future of prophecies	Penelope Corfield (Royal Holloway, University of London)
12:15–13:15	Lunch break	
13:15–14:05	Letters, contracts and testaments: The future horizon of a family firm (1520-1550)	Max-Quentin Bischoff (Antwerp University)
14:05–14:55	Practical futurology in the Later Middle Ages: Thoughts and observations	Benjamin Scheller (University of Duisburg-Essen)
14:55–15:20	Coffee break	
15:20–16:10	After the end: Medieval ideas on the limits of future	Klaus Oschema (Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris)
16:10–17:00	The Ermine's game. Mercantile futures and warfare in late medieval Venice	Nicolò Zennaro (Antwerp University)
17:00–17:30	Wrap-up	