

3 PhD research positions (4 years) in African and Global History (ERC-Project CATTLEFRONTIERS)

The History Department at Ghent University is recruiting **3 doctoral fellows** for the **ERC Starting Grant Project 'CATTLEFRONTIERS – (Post)Colonial Cattle Frontiers: Capitalism, Science and Empire in Southern and Central Africa, 1890s-1970s' (2023-2028)**, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Samuël Coghe.

1. Description of the project

CATTLEFRONTIERS explores how colonialism, global capitalism and science transformed cattle production in Southern and Central Africa during the colonial and early postcolonial period. From the 1890s to 1970s, (post)colonial governments, scientists, entrepreneurs and settlers promoted a broad range of interventions to overcome the allegedly uneconomic attitudes of African pastoralists and turn cattle into profitable commodities. Adopted, adapted, contested or eluded by African cattle herders and owners, these interventions transformed pre-existing cattle economies, pastoralist societies, rural ecologies and animal populations in many and often unexpected ways.

CATTLEFRONTIERS breaks new ground by offering the first history of these transformation processes from hoof to table, for multiple empires and over a long time frame, and by integrating them into global history through the concept of 'commodity frontiers' (see Joseph 2019; Beckett/Bosma/Schneider/Vanhoute 2021). It pursues these objectives through a series of interlocking case studies on French, Portuguese and Belgian (post)colonies in Southern and Central Africa (most notably French Congo, Madagascar, Angola, Mozambique, Belgian Congo, Ruanda and Burundi). These case studies relate to 4 lines of inquiry, of which the following 3 will be managed by the 3 doctoral fellows:

1. **'The Biological Frontier: Veterinary Knowledge, Technologies and Animal Bodies'**. Starting from a case study on the history of African Animal Trypanosomiasis (AAT) in the Belgian Congo/DRC, Ruanda and Burundi (1890s-1970s), this line of inquiry will analyse how (European and African) veterinary knowledge and technologies were produced, circulated, adapted, implemented, neglected and/or contested in order to protect and/or improve the health and physical constitution of cattle in (post)colonial Central Africa.
2. **'The Mental Frontier: Pastoralist Subjectivities, Colonial Control and Market Integration'**. Starting from a case study on Angola and Mozambique (1890s-1970s), this line of inquiry will analyse pastoralist change/strategies and colonial policies towards pastoralists in Southern Africa.
3. **'The Socio-Ecological Frontier: Land, Environment and Labour'**. Starting from a case study on new forms of cattle production (including ranching) in Katanga (1910s-1970s), this line of inquiry will analyse the commoditization of land, labour and the environment.

A case study relating to the fourth line of inquiry ('The Commercial Frontier': Production, Trade and Consumption of Cattle Commodities') will be conducted by a postdoctoral fellow. The PI's case study will combine the four lines of inquiry.

The case studies will draw on multi-sited archival work and, to some extent, oral history, combining approaches from colonial, African, global, social, economic and environmental history, as well as from the history of science and medicine.

2. Your Tasks

- You will **focus on one of the three lines of inquiry for doctoral fellows** and **conduct the corresponding case study**. It is recommended that you work on the particular case study mentioned for 'your' line of inquiry, but you are encouraged to bring your own ideas to the topic and to help shape research on both the line of inquiry and case study.
- You will complete a PhD thesis under the supervision of the Principal Investigator (PI).
- You will contribute to the outputs of CATTLEFRONTIERS, most notably by (co-)authoring publications; co-organizing workshops, conferences and lecture series; presenting your results at international workshops and conferences; and contributing to the project's website and social media accounts.
- You will assist the team with administrative and organizational support.
- You will actively contribute to the activities of the research group Economies, Comparisons, Connections (ECC) and of the History Department at UGent in general.
- You will, where appropriate, share research data and collaborate with other team members.

3. What we are looking for

- You hold an MA degree in History, African Studies, History of Science, Anthropology or a closely related field (to be completed by the start date of the position).
- You are highly motivated to work on your case study as an early career researcher and to be an active member of an international research team.
- Ideally, you are already acquainted with colonial history and/or the history of sub-Saharan Africa (not necessarily with the areas covered by your respective case study) and have relevant research experience.
- You are capable of producing high-quality written work in English and/or French.
- You have excellent reading skills in English and French. For case study 2 (on Angola and Mozambique), very good knowledge of Portuguese is required.
- You have very good communication skills.
- You are willing to do part of your research in the respective African countries of your case study.
- For case studies 1 and 3, knowledge of Dutch is an advantage. For case study 1, knowledge of German is also an advantage. For all case studies, knowledge of relevant African languages is considered an advantage, but no prerequisite.

4. What we can offer you

- We offer you a full-time position for four years as doctoral fellow, subject to positive evaluation after one year. Ideally, your contract starts on 1 April 2024, but this can be negotiated.
- You will receive an internationally competitive doctoral scholarship that, depending on bilateral agreements between Belgium and your country, includes full or partial social security benefits (health insurance, pension rights and unemployment benefits). The scholarship amount is 100% of the net salary of a pre-doc Assistant Academic Staff (AAP) with the same level of education and seniority and equal family circumstances. The exact amount is determined by the Department of Personnel and Organization (DPO) at UGent. A grant that meets the conditions and criteria of the regulations for postdoctoral fellowships is considered free of

personal income tax. [Click here for more information about the AAP salary scales](#). Please note that the gross salaries in this table need to be balanced with the [current index](#).

- You will be allocated office space and a laptop, and receive funding for archival research and fieldwork, and for attending workshops and conferences.
- You will join one of the largest history departments in the Benelux with a strong focus on African history, extant in three professorships and as many ERC projects.
- You will be a member of a cutting edge research group with international scholars funded by the prestigious European Research Council.
- You will also be part of the interdisciplinary research group Economies, Comparisons, Connections hosted by the History Department.
- You will be automatically enrolled in the [UGent Doctoral School](#), which organises specialist courses and transferable skills seminars, and offers general support for doctoral researchers at UGent.
- You will have the possibility to enrol in the [Posthumus Institute PhD Training Programme](#), designed for PhD students working on Social and Economic History at universities in the Netherlands and Flanders.
- You can become a member of the [Sarton Centre for History of Science](#).
- Ghent University offers a wide range of benefits, such as training opportunities, at least 36 days of holiday leave per year, a vacation allowance and end-of-year bonus, compensation for public transport or a biking allowance, access to student restaurants and cafeterias, favourably-priced sport courses, eco vouchers, etc. [Click here for an overview of staff benefits](#).
- Ghent University assists with finding adequate childcare in Ghent, and runs several daycare facilities for children aged 3 months to 3 years. [Click here for more information on childcare and schooling](#).
- For international scholars, Ghent University also offers guidance for moving to Belgium (including for family members) and for getting your work permit (if applicable). [Click here for more information](#).

5. Selection Process

Submit your application until **18 December 2023, 23h59 CET** to Samuel.Coghe@UGent.be. Please put 'CATTLEFRONTIERS' + 'PhD' + the number of the line of inquiry you are applying for in the email subject line (e.g. 'CATTLEFRONTIERS PhD 2'). We cannot accept applications sent late, sent incomplete, or sent to another email address.

Your application must include the following documents in a single PDF (not larger than 6 MB):

- A **letter of motivation** in which you state your interest in the position and how you fit the criteria. If you want to apply for more than one of the case studies, please motivate this convincingly in your letter.
- A **CV** that also includes the name, position, institution and email address of 2 referees, who may be contacted for recommendation.
- A copy of your **MA degree**, if already held.
 - In case you hold a foreign degree in a language other than Dutch, French, German, English or Portuguese, please add a translation in one of these.

- If your MA degree is not yet in hand, please submit your BA degree and evidence of the imminent completion of your MA until the start of your contract (such as an attestation by your supervisor).
- A copy of your **MA thesis**. If the thesis is not yet complete, please submit a part of it (at least an abstract, the introduction and a full chapter) or another substantial piece of academic writing (such as BA thesis, MA research paper, publication, etc.).

For questions about this vacancy, please contact Prof. Samuël Coghe: Samuel.Coghe@UGent.be.

Selection Timeline

- Application deadline: **18 December 2023, 23h59 CET**.
- All candidates will be notified until **mid-January 2023** whether they will be invited for an interview
- Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed at the **end of January – beginning of February 2024**. This will happen in Ghent or via videocall depending on their residency.
- Final candidates will be informed of the outcome by **mid-February 2024**.
- Job start is ideally **1 April 2024** (but this can be negotiated).