

Amsterdam School for Culture and History

Annual Report 2014

Introduction

Established in September 2014, the Amsterdam School for Culture and History (ASCH) represents and fosters the study of cultural history within the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Amsterdam. It brings together more than 300 academics, who participate in circa 40 research groups. ASCH research is on the interface of history and culture: it studies the historical dimension of culture and the cultural dimension of history. Researchers are oriented towards culture in its various historic manifestations and dynamics. Their work is characterised by diachronic, longitudinal as well as comparative and synchronic approaches to culture and history.

This annual report covers a period of four months, which characterises a phase of transition following the reorganisation of the Faculty of Humanities. ASCH took the first steps towards establishing a new identity within the Faculty, and towards developing an effective policy and implementation.

ASCH Research Organisation

Members of ASCH work together in Research Groups to initiate, foster and develop common research interests within and outside the faculty. In 2014 a total of 39 research groups were active in ASCH. Among their main responsibilities are establishing a research agenda, preparing research grant proposals and encouraging the exchange of ideas between PhD candidates and senior staff members.

ASCH has also selected five thematic Research Areas within the wide-ranging, interdisciplinary domain of the ASCH research:

1. Urban History
2. Golden Age Studies
3. Medieval and Renaissance Studies
4. Contemporary History and Culture
5. Literary Culture

These are areas of research into culture and history in which ASCH particularly excels at national and international level. Their aim is to enable interfaces between research groups within ASCH, but also with academic and societal partners outside of ASCH. They are priority areas within ASCH, but they do not cover all of its research. Research groups that fit within the thematic areas have the same status as those that do not.

The progress of the ASCH Research Groups and Areas will be evaluated in the course of 2015.

ASCH management and support

The Academic Director of ASCH is prof. dr. Geert Janssen. He is responsible for the quality of research, its overall coherence and output, and the implementation of Faculty policy. More specifically, the ASCH director monitors the activities and sets targets of the different research groups and research areas within ASCH, and reviews the PhD supervision across the School.

The ASCH director is a member of the Research Council of the Faculty. The Council consists of the directors of the six Research Schools and the AIHR director, who together develop the research policy and ensure its implementation. In 2014 the ASCH director was assisted by an Executive Board for day-to-day business. Its members were prof. dr. Irene Zwiép and dr. Arno Witte. He was also supported in all principal, practical and budgetary matters by the Research School coordinator (Brigit van der Pas) and the office manager (Jantine Beuven). The coordinator is responsible for ASCH's operating budget, registration and practical quality control of (external/self-funded) PhD candidates, ASCH communication, and ASCH's valorisation strategy.

An interdisciplinary Advisory Board advises the director on ASCH strategic and operational matters (e.g., assessment procedures, selection of research groups and research areas). In 2014 it consisted of the following senior academics from different disciplines within ASCH and an ASCH PhD researcher: prof. dr. Lex Bosman, prof. dr. Liz Buettner, prof. dr. Mia Lerm-Hayes, prof. dr. Ellen Rutten, prof. dr. Vladimir Stissi, prof. dr. Gerard Wiegers and Sanne Frequin (PhD representative).

ASCH strategy and policy

Within a large and diverse Research School such as ASCH it is vital that researchers with different qualities complement, inspire and reinforce each other. ASCH aims to support and encourage all active and ambitious researchers and to provide them with the tools to enable them to make a contribution to the School as a whole. In 2014 the following steps were taken to achieve this:

- *ASCH quality control*

The organisation of the PhD pilot interviews and annual progress meetings was streamlined in the following ways: 1. a number of fixed dates were set for the meetings, clustered in the spring and autumn; 2. the Academic Director held all interviews himself; 3. skype meetings were facilitated when committee members were abroad.

- *ASCH (financial) administration*

A guide was drawn up for applying for financial support from ASCH, which defines clear and transparent criteria for funding. ASCH also introduced an application form for applying for ASCH funding so as to facilitate the application process.

- *ASCH newsletter*

ASCH introduced a monthly digital newsletter, which aims to keep its members informed and updated on all relevant matters, and to connect different research groups and research areas.

- *ASCH valorisation*

One of ASCH's main priorities in the coming years is to further develop and stimulate the valorisation of research results. Many ASCH researchers already have close connections with societal partners. ASCH seeks to make these partnerships more visible, to foster and broaden their agenda and, where possible, to formalise them. As a first step in developing this strategy, some examples of successful partnerships between ASCH researchers and external parties were

added to the ASCH website. Furthermore, preparations were made for an ASCH valorisation event, hosted together with the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) on 15 January 2015. The aim of the event was to inform and inspire ASCH scholars about valorisation.

- *ASCH early career seminars*

ASCH seeks to increase its support to early career scholars (post docs, temporary lecturers) who play a vital role in the Faculty. The preparations were made to host three lunch seminars in early 2015 for early career scholars (e.g. advanced PhD candidates, postdocs, junior lecturers) about publication strategies, research funding opportunities and the international job market. A number of senior ASCH members participated in these sessions and shared their experience and advice.

ASCH PhD community

In 2014 ASCH had over 60 PhD researchers (including staff members of Conservation and Restauration) who were employed by the faculty. In accordance with the Faculty's 'Rules and regulations PhD researchers', their progress is monitored throughout the course of their employment. The first formal evaluation of their progress takes place after 9 months by means of a pilot study. If the pilot is assessed positively, the employment contract is extended. Subsequently, PhD researchers have annual appraisals with the Research School Director and the supervisor(s). In 2014 the ASCH director held all scheduled interviews himself.

ASCH also has a significant number of externally or self-funded PhD researchers. In 2014 ASCH devised a policy for admitting new candidates: candidates are asked to hand in a research proposal, a work plan and a letter of recommendation from the proposed ASCH supervisor, which are assessed by the ASCH director in terms of quality, feasibility and fit within the ASCH profile.

ASCH funds

ASCH individual researchers, research groups and thematic research areas may apply for ASCH financial support. To this end, ASCH drew up guidelines to allocate the funding in a clear and transparent way. Conditions for funding are that researchers also seek external (i.e. non-ASCH) co-funding and that requests make clear which concrete results can be expected. These predicted results can take the form of publications, but also new collaborations (external partners, co-financers of future research) or research grant proposals.

The amount of ASCH funding for general activities depends on the character and envisaged impact of the proposed activity. In 2014 ASCH granted 25 requests for funding of general, mainly one-off, ASCH-related activities (see Appendix 1 for an overview). These activities involved conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, symposiums and masterclasses for PhD candidates.

Each thematic Research Areas could apply for a maximum of €2.500 in 2014-2015. In 2014 ASCH granted three requests for funding related to the Thematic research Areas. In all three cases the funding was used for a thematic seminar/lecture series (Golden Age Study Seminar Series, Lecture Series Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Urban History Seminar Series).

Appendix 1: Overview of applications awarded ASCH funding in 2014

<i>Activities supported by ASCH in 2014</i>	<i>Date of activity</i>
<u>Seminar series</u> : Research Area 'Golden Age Studies' (7 seminars)	2014-2015
<u>Seminar series</u> : Research Area 'Urban History' (7 seminars)	2014-2015
<u>Lecture series</u> : Research Area 'Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies' (8 lectures)	2014-2015
<u>Seminar series</u> : 'Annual history research seminar' (8 seminars)	2014-2015
<u>Lecture series</u> : 'The Dynamics of a Textual Past' by Research group 'Cultural Memory, Rhetoric, and Literary Discourse'	2014-2015
<u>Guest Lecture</u> : by dr. Tuija Hovi (Abo University) for Research group 'Religious Dynamics and Cultural Diversity'	April 2014
<u>Book presentation</u> : "Want hi verkende dien name wale'. Opstellen voor Willem Kuiper'	May 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'Luigi Nono's Musical Paths Between Politics and Art' in light of the Holland Festival 2014	June 2014
<u>Symposium</u> : 'Waar zijn wij mee bezig? Laat-middeleeuwse kunst en architectuur in de Nederlanden'	June 2014
<u>Farewell colloquium</u> : for prof. Henk van Nierop	June 2014
<u>Workshop</u> : Research group 'Emotion and Subjectivity, 1300-1900'	Sep 2014
<u>Symposium</u> : 'Out of the Box. Ethnologies for the 21st Century'	Sep 2014
<u>PhD meeting</u> : Caribbean Literature	Sep 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'On the Road for Peace'	Oct 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'International Federation for Public History'	Oct 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'Stukken Stijlen Stelsels, 50 jaar Theater in Nederland (1964-2014)'	Oct 2014
<u>Workshop</u> : 'Geographies of Alchemy and Chemistry: 5th SHAC Postgraduate Workshop'	Oct 2014
<u>Book presentation</u> : 'Medieval art in the Northern Netherlands'	Oct 2014
<u>Valorisation meeting</u> : 'Shakespeare Adaptations, 1714-2014'	Oct 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'Textual Strategies in Greek and Latin War Narrative'	Oct 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'Slavistendagen'	Nov 2014
<u>Broodje kaas Lecture</u> : Research group 'Boundaries and Identities'	Nov 2014
<u>Workshop</u> : 'Technologies of Spectacle – Knowledge Transfer in Early Modern Theater Cultures'	Nov 2014
<u>Conference</u> : 'Popular political protest in Renaissance and Early Modern Venice'	Feb 2015
<u>Workshop</u> : 'Text, Performance, and Production of Knowledge' by the Research group 'Historical Theatre Research'	March 2015
<u>PhD Masterclass</u> : 'Impact of Empire'	May 2015
<u>Conference</u> : 'The First Amsterdam Comics Conference: Comics Interaction'	July 2015
<u>Conference</u> : 'The 3-G Network Celebrates the Guyanas 2015-2016. The Pan-Guyanese Highway: Cayenne-Georgetown-Paramaribo'	Oct 2015