

Amsterdam School of Historical Studies

Annual Report 2019

Introduction and mission statement

The Amsterdam School of Historical Studies represents and fosters the study of the human past from Antiquity to the present, exploring historical topics in tandem with their contemporary implications. It brings together more than 200 academics, including PhD students, from Amsterdam's Faculty of Humanities, who participate in 20 research groups and 4 research centres.

A relatively young school (established in 2014), ASH is proud to be a broad and dynamic research environment. What unites our scholars and characterizes the school is the drive to better understand the past, both distant and more recent. ASH integrates a variety of (inter)disciplinary perspectives, including history, history of art, literature, and religious studies. It encourages collaborations between scholars along thematic lines (e.g. Religion, the City, Conflict), geographical focus (e.g. Mediterranean World, American Studies, Modern Germany) and in terms of period (e.g. Antiquity, the Middle Ages, Early Modern and Modern History). Since its foundation, ASH has developed particular strengths in European history (from ancient to modern), urban history and the history of migration. In recent years, the history of medicine and public health, of gender relations and of human-environmental relations has achieved growing importance.

As a broad, inclusive and dynamic School, ASH is home to three larger research units: the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, the Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Golden Age and the Amsterdam Centre for Urban History. Moreover, in 2016 the Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Sciences was launched, bringing together researchers from all faculties who share an interest in the history of humanities and sciences. The Vossius Center functions independently but is administratively attached to ASH.

ASH prides itself in being firmly rooted in contemporary society. Current political debate, societal challenges and cultural developments inform, or contribute to, our research agenda. Set in the vibrant city of Amsterdam, ASH maintains strong ties with museums, heritage institutions, libraries, and modern media, including national television and the local and national press.

This 2019 annual report offers a brief overview of developments within the School and lists a selection of the achievements of its members and research groups.

ASH in 2019

In the spring of 2019 ASH received the final report of the external 'Visitatie'. The review panel had made a site visit in December 2018 and received a written 'Self-Evaluation' by ASH. Our diverse activities between our founding in September 2014 and the end of 2017 were taken into consideration.

The final verdict of the committee is testament to the high calibre of ASH's work. Like other research schools within our Faculty, we were evaluated in three areas: a) Research quality; b) Relevance to society; and c) Viability. The possible scores achievable were 1) excellent; 2) very good; 3) good; and 4) unsatisfactory.

ASH was judged as:

- Research quality: excellent (1)
- Relevance to society: very good (2)
- Viability: excellent (1)

This placed ASH as one of the three top-rated schools within the Faculty. This impressive result stems from the many and varied internationally- and nationally-respected activities of a large proportion of our researchers, whether they be doctoral students, early career researchers, or more senior colleagues. This success is very much a collective achievement in which the entire school can take immense pride.

In the coming years, ASH will take the committee's suggestions on board in consultation with the Faculty of Humanities. Among other things, we will continue to strive towards further sharpening our overall profile, ensuring the viability of ASH's research centres and research groups, and contemplating the most effective 'valorisation'/societal relevance strategies in ways that both respond to external opportunities that present themselves as well as proactively help to initiate new societal engagements from within. Moreover, as before, we will strive to maintain our excellent track record in publications, research grants, and attracting talented doctoral candidates who will be assisted in completing their projects successfully in a timely fashion.

ASH management, support, and organisation

As set out in its founding white paper, ASH policy departs from the idea that researchers with different qualities complement, inspire, and reinforce each other. ASH 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 August 2019, the position of ASH's Academic Director transferred from Professor Liz Buettner to Professor Guy Geltner¹, and dr. Sofie Remijnsen was appointed as Vice-Director. The Director is responsible for the quality of research, its overall coherence and output, and the implementation of Faculty policy. More specifically, the ASH Director monitors the activities of the different research groups, considers funding applications, and advises about vacancies. The ASH Director is a member of the Research Council of the Faculty that discusses research policy and ensures its implementation.

¹ Dr. Maartje van Gelder became director on 1 February 2020; this report has been compiled under her directorship.

The Vice-Director is responsible for all matters related to the PhD candidates of ASH. Specifically, the Vice-Director reviews the progress of PhD (formerly) employed candidates via yearly meetings, chairs meetings to review the pilot studies of employed PhD candidates, and chairs selection committees responsible for appointing new PhD candidates. Both the Director and Vice-Director sit on the Advisory Board of ASH and are responsible for the admission of new external PhD candidates. They are supported in all principal, practical, and budgetary matters by the Research School coordinator Simon Speksnijder together with its office manager, Margreet Vermeulen.

An interdisciplinary Advisory Board advises the Director on ASH strategic and operational matters (e.g., assessment procedures, the shortlisting of PhD candidates for NWO-funded doctoral positions, the selection of research groups and research areas, and the awarding of annual prizes). In 2019 the Advisory Board consisted of the following senior academics from different disciplines within ASH and a PhD researcher:

- Professor Remieg Aerts (from October 2019 onwards)
- Professor Lex Bosman (until October 2019)
- Dr Helmer Helmers (until July 2019)
- Dr Kristine Johanson (from July 2019 onwards)
- Dr. Djoeke van Netten (from July 2019 onwards)
- Professor Manon Parry
- Dr Sofie Remijnsen (first as normal member, from August 2019 onwards q.q. as Vice-Director)
- Professor Gerard Wiegers (until April 2019)
- Wouter van Elburg (PhD representative)

The ASH PhD representative represents the ASH PhD community on the PhD Council Board and the ASH Advisory Board. The PhD representative organises a meeting for the ASH PhD community twice a year to discuss topics relevant to PhD candidates.

ASH currently is home to 20 research groups (see the list in Appendix 1). Among their main responsibilities are establishing a research agenda; preparing research grant proposals; stimulating new research through reading groups, research presentations by group members and invited outside speakers, and organizing workshops and symposia; and fostering regular exchanges between PhD candidates and more senior staff members. For a detailed overview of their profile and activities, please see ASH's website (ash.uva.nl). ASH members are kept up-to-date about developments and activities within the School through a twice-monthly newsletter, which aims to inform and connect different research groups and research areas.

Awards, grants, and honours

Although our Faculty continues to operate in a climate of financial difficulties, ASH is very proud of its ongoing impressive record of grant applications across all levels. Yet whether falling under the rubric of the NWO, European Research Council, or other bodies, grants obviously remain dauntingly competitive and demand a great investment of our time, regardless of whether applications ultimately bear fruit. We remain grateful to all ASH researchers who undertaken this commitment

and appreciate that their efforts mean that they move forward with new research project ideas that often involve important national and international collaborations, whether or not they are officially ‘successful’ in securing what often proves elusive financing.

In 2019 the following projects and members were able to secure external funding:

Name	Grant	Budget
Helmer Helmers	VIDI	€ 799.817 [project executed at KNAW/Huygens-ING]
Peter Romijn (on behalf of Rosa de Jong)	NWO PhD's in the Humanities	€ 175.067,36
Monica Colominas	VENI	€ 249.942 [project executed at University of Groningen]
Claartje Rasterhoff (co-applicant)	Smart Cultures	€ 158.000
Samuël Kruizinga	NWA-ORC Matchmaking	€ 5.500
Mario Damen	AHRC Networking Grant	€ 3518
Mario Damen	NIAS Fellowship	€ 11.400

In 2019 the following ASH members were able to secure internal funding:

- FGw RIS Fund grant: Peter van Dam and David Rijser
- FGw Aspasia Fund grant: Djoeko van Netten

ASH awards two annual prizes, one for the best dissertation completed in the previous year and one for the best valorisation project(s) undertaken by (an) ASH-member(s). The winners are selected by the ASH Advisory Board at the end of the academic year. In 2019 the following ASH members received these awards during the annual meeting:

- *Valorisation prize*

The 2018/2019 Valorisation prize was awarded to both Lia van Gemert and Tim Verlaan. Lia van Gemert was instrumental in organising activities and giving lectures for the ‘[Brederode Year](#)’, commemorating the 400th anniversary of the death of the Dutch poet and playwright G.A. Bredero.

Tim Verlaan’s many activities included giving the annual [Enneüs Heermalezing](#), his involvement in the collective [Failed Architecture](#), his advisory role for the Gemeente Amsterdam on post-war architecture and his frequent appearances in the media to weigh in on issues regarding contemporary urban history.

- *Dissertation prize*

The 2018/2019 dissertation prize was awarded to Janna Coomans for her thesis *In pursuit of a healthy city: sanitation and the common good in the Late Medieval Low Counties*. She was supervised by prof. dr. Guy Geltner. Janna’s work was singled out for the depth of its research into hard-to-find evidence, its methodological complexity, its intellectual creativity, and its originality within her field. Janna’s thesis was nominated in December 2019 for the Praemium Erasmianum Dissertation Prizes; she was announced as the winner of one the prizes in May 2020.

ASH PhD community

PhD candidates represent the core of our School. In 2019 ASH had c. 60 PhD employed or formerly employed PhD researchers (these numbers fluctuate slightly throughout the year) who were employed by the faculty and about c. 70-75 registered self-funded PhD candidates or 'buitenpromovendi'.

- ASH doctoral defenses

The following fifteen PhD projects were completed in 2019 (in chronological order):

Mano Delea - *Pan-Africanism: A Legacy of Slavery* (11 January 2019; supervisors prof. dr. S. Small and dr. K. Nimako).

Anne van Egmond - *Opgetekend: Materiële representatie aan het Haagse hof 1345-1425* 7 February 2019 (supervisors prof. dr. C.A. Chavannes-Mazel, prof. dr. D.E.H. de Boer and prof. dr. H.T. van der Velden).

Jacques Rutten - *De leesvader van Nederland. Frater Caesarius Mommsen en zijn betekenis voor het leesonderwijs* (19 February 2019; supervisor Prof. dr. J. Kennedy).

Sanne Klaver - *Women in Roman Syria: the cases of Dura-Europos, Palmyra, and Seleucia on the Euphrates* (21 March 2019; supervisors prof. dr. E. Hemelrijk and L. Dirven).

C.P. van den Boomgaard - *Voor de nazi's geen Jood. Hoe ruim 2500 Joden door ontduiking van rassenvoorschriften aan de deportaties zijn ontkomen* (3 April 2019; supervisors prof. dr. J.T.M. Houwink ten Cate and prof. dr. W.C. Ultee).

Rosanne Baars - *Rumours of revolt. Civil war and the emergence of a transnational news culture in France and the Netherlands, 1561-1598* (15 May 2019; prof. dr. H.F.K. van Nierop and prof. dr. G.H. Janssen).

Sander Govaerts - *Mosasaurus. Interactions between Armies and Ecosystems in the Meuse Region, 1250-1850* (21 May 2019; supervisors prof. dr. G. Geltner, prof dr. M. Aerts and dr. M. Damen).

Lina Weber - *Bound by debt. Political arguments concerning state finance in Great Britain and the Dutch Republic, 1694-1795* (12 June 2019; prof. dr. W.R.E. Velema and dr. I.J.A. Nijenhuis).

Eleá de la Porte - *Verlichte verhalen. De omgang met het verleden in de Nederlandse verlichting* (2 July 2019; supervisor prof. dr. W.R.E. Velema).

Tymen Peverelli - *De stad als vaderland. Het verleden van Brugge, Leeuwarden en Maastricht in de eeuw van de natiestaat, 1815-1914* (22 October 2019; supervisors prof dr. J.T. Leerssen and prof. dr. W.J.H. Furnée).

Trude Dijkstra - *The Chinese Imprint. Printing and Publishing Chinese Religion and Philosophy in the Dutch Republic 1595-1700* (23 October 2019; supervisors prof. dr. E.M.P. van Gemert and prof dr. M.A. Weststeijn).

Aniek van den Eersten - *Metaphor in Herodotus' Histories* (1 November 2019; supervisors prof. dr. I.J.F. de Jong and dr. M.P. de Bakker).

Norbert Middelkoop, Kunst- en cultuurwetenschappen - *Schutters, gildebroeders, regenten en regentessen. Het Amsterdamse corporatiestuk (1525-1850)* (1 November 2019; supervisors prof. dr. F. Grijzenhout and dr. E.S. Bergvelt)

Wim Ros - *FUNDAMENTUM ORGANISANDI. Het orgel in de 15e eeuw, architectuur en ontwerp* (4 December 2019; supervisors prof. dr. A.F.W. Bosman and prof. dr. J. Fidom).

Robert Sinterniklaas - *Information Age Airpower in Afghanistan. Development of the air campaign in Afghanistan and how it supported strategic and operational goals of civil and military policy makers between 2001 and 2016* (11 December 2019; supervisors prof. dr. H. Amersfoort and prof. dr. F.P.B. Osinga).

- New ASH PhD Candidates

ASH welcomed 7 new self-funded PhD candidates in 2019:

John Bezold – *Frans Hals' sons and studio: a Northern Netherlandish painting dynasty* (supervisors prof. dr. F. Grijzenhout and dr. E. Kolfin)

Jonathan Burman – *The conceptualisation and application of truth-telling theory in contemporary rabbinic discourse and practice* (supervisors prof. dr. I.E. Zwiep and dr. Y. Hagbi)

Rafik Dahman – *Non-Muslims in the eyes of Islam, non-Muslims in the eyes of Muslims: a comparative research between Islamic legal formality and daily reality* (supervisors prof. dr. G.A. Wiegers and dr. M. de Koning).

Carl Deussen - *Collecting the Intimate: Gender, Desire and Material Culture in 19th Century Ethnographic Collecting* (supervisors prof. dr. M.S. Parry and dr. C. de Cesari)

Anne-Lot Hoek - *De strijd tot het einde. De Nederlandse bezetting van Bali 1849 – 1949* (supervisors prof. dr. P. Romijn and prof. dr. R. Raben)

Erik Meijer - *Een maritieme paradox: het grootse denken bij de Koninklijke Marine verklaard, 1939 - 1955* (supervisors prof. dr. W. Klinkert and dr. A.M.C. van Dissel)

John Smit - *Tussen leger en maatschappij: militaire muziek in Nederland 1819-1923* (supervisors prof. dr. W. Klinkert and prof. dr. A.G.M. Koopman)

Research and valorisation

In 2019, ASH members wrote or contributed to over 200 articles and chapters (of which more than 140 were peer-reviewed), over 40 reviews and review articles, 40 popular publications, 15 monographs and 10 edited volumes; additionally, they wrote or contributed to dozens of other publications (e.g. published conference papers, encyclopedia entries, editorials, and websites). Many peer-reviewed publications were published with leading international presses or high-ranking journals. A full list of publications by ASH members can be found in the University of Amsterdam's [Digital Academic Repository \(DARE\)](#). This repository contains digital copies of many articles, books, book chapters, reports, dissertations and inaugural lectures.

In line with tendencies in international scholarship and the requirements for external funding, ASH seeks to develop and stimulate the valorisation of research results. Many ASH researchers already have close connections with societal partners. ASH encourages them to make these partnerships more visible, to foster and broaden their agenda and, where possible, to formalise them.

ASH researchers contributed to a number of museum exhibitions and cultural activities related to them in 2019. The efforts undertaken by Tim Verlaan on urban history and Lia van Gemert (with Jeroen Jansen and others outside ASH) in the context of the 'Brederode Year' have already been mentioned. Other activities include for example Arjan Nuijten's organisation of a [symposium](#) in Paradiso on the history of drug policy in the Netherlands; Mathijs Boom's work as a curator of an [exhibition in Teylers Museum Haarlem](#), Manon Parry's work on [DisPLACE](#), Kristine Johanson's work as a playwright tackling current issues, and much more.

ASH is also a regular contributor to the Amsterdam debate centre SPUI 25 (please see <http://www.spui25.nl/programma/archief/archief.html>) and the educational programme of the Illustre School (<http://is.uva.nl>).

Several ASH researchers enhanced our School's links with the state sector as well. Rimko van der Maar and Ruud van Dijk, for example, established the 'Werkgroep Historie en Internationale Politiek' that brings together historians, diplomats, and civil servants for discussions, debates, and conferences in a collaborative initiative with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and professor Ruud Janssens regularly advises the Dutch Ministry of Defense.

A number of ASH scholars, including Sanne Frequin, Niek Pas, George Blaustein and Geert Janssen, were regularly invited to share their expertise with newspaper, radio, and television audiences, being highly valued for their ability to comment on to place contemporary issues into historical perspective in an accessible fashion.

New researchers

The following new members were appointed in 2019:

Dr. David de Boer, as postdoctoral researcher in the NWO VICI-project *The invention of the refugee in Early Modern Europe*, led by prof. dr. Geert Janssen.

Dr. Lidewij van Gils, as postdoctoral researcher in the NWO Zwaartekracht-project *Anchoring Innovation*, co-led by prof. dr. Caroline Kroon.

Dr. Léa Hermenault, as postdoctoral researcher in the ERC-project *Premodern Healthscaping*, led by prof. dr. Guy Geltner.

Dr. Gamze Saygi, as postdoctoral researcher in the NWO VIDI-project *Freedom of the Streets*, led. By dr. Danielle van den Heuvel.

Dr. Gulnaz Sibgatullina, as postdoctoral researcher in the ERC-project The European Qur'an: Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1150-1850, co-led by prof. dr. Gerard Wiegers.

ASH funds

ASH seeks to support the activities of its members and groups through small grants. Each individual researcher, research group, and centre may apply for financial support. Applications are considered by the Director and are based on formal guidelines to allocate the funding in a clear and transparent manner. The results usually take the form of academic events, such as conferences, workshops, public lectures. ASH also earmarks a significant portion of its annual budget for events organized by PhD students that will benefit their research, help expand their scholarly networks, and enrich their CVs.

In 2019 ASH funded over 40 separate academic events (see Appendix 2 for an overview). These activities involved conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, symposiums, and masterclasses for PhD candidates. ASH's three Research Centres each received a lump sum of €2.500; 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). The Vossius Center has its own separate budget.

Appendix 1: Overview of research groups and centres in 2019

Research centres:

- Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CMRSA)
- Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Golden Age (ACSGA)
- Amsterdam Centre for Urban History (ACUH)
- Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Science

Research groups:

- America in the World
- Boundaries and Identity Formation in the Premodern World
- Changing Identities. Art and architecture as bearer of meaning
- Classical (con)texts
- Cultural Memory, Rhetoric and Literary Discourse
- Early Modern News and Information Culture (until September 2019)
- Early Modern Mobilities: migration, communication and knowledge in the Early Modern world (from September 2019 onwards)
- Emotion and Subjectivity, 1300 - 1900
- Historical Theatre Research: Text, Performance, and Production of Knowledge
- History and Philosophy of the Humanities
- History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents
- Medicine and Society
- Modern History
- Natura Artis Magistra
- Networks of the Dutch Republic
- Power and Society in the Later Middle Ages
- The Public and its Discontents
- Public Health in Premodern Cities
- Religious Dynamics and Cultural Diversity

Appendix 2: Overview of activities sponsored by ASH in 2019

<i>Activities supported by ASH in 2019</i>	<i>Date of activity</i>
Seminar/lecture series: ACSGA 'Golden Age Studies' (7 events)	
Seminar/lecture series: ACUH 'Urban History' (9 events)	
Seminar/lecture series by the Modern History Research Group (7 events)	
Seminar/lecture series: 'Classical (con)texts' (2 events)	
Lecture series: Religious Studies 'Current Issues' (3 events)	
Seminar series: 'Ancient History Research Seminar' (2 events)	
Workshop: Studying ethnic minorities: interdisciplinary perspectives'	27-11-2019
Symposium by the Historical Theatre research group: Calderón 'La vida es sueño'	31-10-2019
Expert meeting: Literary approaches to the Septuagint	2-10-2019
Symposium: Annual Amsterdam Symposium on the history of food	15/16-11-2019
Event: 'Everybody in the place'	14-11-2019
Conference: European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism	2/4-7-2019
Workshop: 'Law and religion in the Middle East Mediterranean through the Ages'	28-6-2019
Symposium: 'Character assassination!'	21-6-2019
Symposium: 'Sizing up the Cold War'	24-5-2019
Workshop: 'Deep history in the long Eighteenth century'	9-5-2019
Workshop: Pictorial space in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance	26-4-2019
Book launch: Germany and the French wars of religion, 1560-1572	22-1-2019