Amsterdam School of Historical Studies

Annual Report 2021

1. Introduction and mission statement

The Amsterdam School of Historical Studies, based at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Amsterdam, 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 the Faculty of Humanities, who participate in 16 research groups and 4 research centres.[1]

A relatively young school (established in 2014), ASH is proud to be a broad, interdisciplinary, 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 and disciplines, including history, history of art, literary studies, and religious studies. It encourages collaborations between scholars along thematic and conceptual 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, a global approach, the integration of digital methods, and the history of health, of gender relations and of human-environmental relations have been strategic areas of growth.

ASH maintains an open, bottom-up-approach, inviting its members to explore new research directions, instigate new projects through grant applications or collaborations with other UvA faculties, and start new research groups. The result is a dynamic research environment that stimulates new initiatives and research directions,

In addition to the smaller research groups, ASH is home to three larger research units: the Amsterdam Centre for Urban History (ACUH), the Amsterdam Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CMRS) (until November 2021), and the renamed Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Golden Age (ACSGA) since September known as the Amsterdam Centre for the Studies of Early Modernity (ACSEM). Moreover, the Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Sciences brings together researchers from all faculties; this centre functions independently but is administratively part of 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. ASH maintains strong ties with national and international museums, heritage institutions, libraries, and modern media, including national television and the local and national press.

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[1] See appendix 1.

This 2021 annual report offers a brief overview of developments within the School and lists a selection of the achievements of its members and research groups.

2. ASH in 2021: an overview

For ASH and its researchers, the Covid pandemic continued to have an impact in 2021: travel and research trips were largely impossible, and conferences and seminars were cancelled. Most of all, the impact of Covid and the various lockdowns on the lives of all our members has been our main concern. As director, vice-director, and support team – as well as the members of our Advisory Board – we have focused on the care for our PhDs and postdocs, discussing the options for possible extensions with the FGw, while also keeping the first-year pilot studies and annual meetings of the PhDs running on schedule. Luckily, PhD's and postdocs whose projects had suffered delays and were in the last year of their contract could apply for contract extensions, which were generally always granted by the Faculty Board.

At ASH, we are enormously proud of those PhD students who defended their theses in 2021, given that they had to experience a year or more of uncertainty and instability. We were also impressed by the resilience of our community of PhDs and postdocs in general: even though they indicated that they sorely missed a normal work-life balance, we had several very fruitful meetings in which they exchanged best practices, including informal – but disciplined – Shut Up and Write groups and a system of digital office buddies. Our PhD representative Rosa de Jong continued her efforts to sustain a support system and a sense of community among all PhD candidates. The position was taken over by Hans Wallage in December. Clearly, we could not have done so without all the supervisors, who went the extra mile in helping their PhDs and postdocs figure out how to cope with the changes in plans and activities.

For all members of ASH, 2021 meant having to reconfigure our teaching, admin duties and research plans, often while incorporating childcare and homeschooling. ASH wishes to thank all the colleagues, who kept our research centres, research groups, and seminars going (or even started new ones!). Finally, for those ASH members who had to take a step back from their research to focus instead on other tasks, from teaching to taking care of family. ASH wants to stress that foregrounding our own (mental) health during this crisis takes priority over research. If there ever was a year that forced us to readjust goals, this was it. We are glad that, as a school, we can conclude that our foundation – in terms of the research quality and viability, but also collegiality – is strong.

Strategic choices

The external 'Visitatie' or research assessment in 2019 (regarding ASH in 2014-2018) mirrored that strong foundation. 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 PhD students, early career researchers, or more senior colleagues. This success is very much a collective achievement and a testimony to the creativity and activity of Ash researchers. In 2020, ASH took the suggestions of the assessment committee on board in consultation with the Faculty of Humanities and the members of its Advisory Board. Among other things, we strive towards further sharpening our overall profile, by giving additional support to strong groups, such as ACUH and the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents-group, while also stimulating colleagues to start new initiatives. Moreover, we were able to strengthen our focus by hiring new colleagues, whose research focus chimes with ASH's strategic goals, such as a global approach, urban history, the integration of/reflection on digital methods in the Humanities, as well as environmental and health humanities.

The impact of the Covid pandemic will extend beyond 2020, affecting our research and research-related activities. This will be taken into account when assessing ASH members' research in the coming years and when discussing their research plans. We are particularly grateful to the Faculty that the possibility for extensions for our PhD students and postdocs was guaranteed also for 2021. At the same time, we look forward to re-establishing a research environment, through digital, hybrid, and hopefully – when possible – on-site activities, such as workshops, seminars, and conferences.

3. ASH management, support, and organisation

As set out in its founding white paper, ASH starts 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 enable them to make a contribution to the School as a whole.

Maartje van Gelder has been the director of ASH since February 2020; Sofie Remijsen continued in her position as vice director and thus guaranteed continuity for the PhD candidates. From September 2021 until January 2022 the vice-director position was fulfilled by Djoeke van Netten ad interim due to maternity leave. The director is responsible for the quality of ASH research, its overall coherence and output, and the implementation of Faculty policy. The director is also the liaison between ASH and the chairs of the departments of GER, ACASA, NLD, MVTC, and K&C (respectively the departments of History, European Studies and Religious Studies; Ancient Studies; Dutch Studies; Modern Languages and Cultures, and Art History and Cultural Studies) for all matters concerning research, including the hiring of new faculty members and providing input for promotion files. Furthermore, the director is a member of the Research Council of the Faculty, which discusses research policies and the general research strategy of the Faculty, and liaises with the Department Chairs. The vice-director is responsible for all matters related to the PhD students, including the annual evaluations, the pilot studies, and the selection of 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 practical and budgetary matters by the coordinator, Simon Speksnijder, and Margreet Vermeulen, ASH's office manager. During the year ASH also had administrative support by Romy Beck, hired as an extension of the support team in reaction to the Covid pandemic.

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 PhD positions, developing/implementing new research policies, and the awarding of annual prizes). The Advisory Board also establishes and evaluates the strategic research priorities, which serve as a departure point for the development of new research groups, collective initiatives, and the preparation of research profiles for new hires.

In 2021, efforts were undertaken to add members on the Advisory Board. For the last couple of years, the Board was dominated by historians and hence researchers working at the department of History, European Studies, and Religious Studies. Also, relatively few full professors sat on the Advisory Board. Hence, experienced researchers with the *ius promovendi* were asked to join the Advisory Board, and Serena Ferente and Arnold Witte agreed to do so.

At the end of 2021, the Advisory Board consisted of the following academics from the different disciplines within ASH, as well as the PhD representative:

- Professor Remieg Aerts – Dutch History (GER)
- Dr. Petra Brouwer – Architectural History (K&C)
- Professor Serena Ferente - Medieval History (GER)
- Dr. Kristine Johanson – English Literature (MVTC)
- Dr. Djoeke van Netten – Early Modern History (GER)
- Professor Manon Parry – Public History/Health Humanities (GER)
- Dr. Marco Pasi – Western Esotericism (GER)
- Dr. Arnold Witte – Early Modern and Modern Art History (K&C)
- Rosa de Jong – PhD representative (until December 2021)
- Hans Wallage – PhD representative (starting December 2021)

The ASH PhD representative represents the ASH PhD community on the PhD Council Board and the ASH Advisory Board. The representative regularly joins meetings with the director, vice-director, coordinator and office manager of ASH to raise issues considering the PhD community; during the pandemic, such meetings were organised more than usual (on average once a month). The representative also organises social events for PhD researchers, though in 2021 (as in 2020) these meetings were mostly virtual.

ASH currently is home to 16 research groups and three research centres (see the list in Appendix 1). Their main responsibility is to provide a dynamic and inspiring home for their members. They can take on different forms, from informal reading groups and seminars focused on the discussion of ASH members' work-in-progress to more formally organized platforms for seminars and lectures. ASH sees these groups as crucial, bottom-up building blocks, providing members with a place to develop their individual and collective research agendas, discuss grant proposals, present their own work, and organize workshops and symposia. Moreover, the research groups and centres foster regular exchange between postdocs, PhD students and advanced MA students with more senior staff members. For a detailed overview of the profile and activities of the groups and centres, 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. After appearing intermittently in 2020 due to the pandemic, in 2021 the newsletter appeared as usual.

4. ASH PhD community and policies

PhD students represent the core of our School. In 2021, ASH had around 60 PhD students who were employed or formerly employed by the Faculty, and 70-75 self-funded PhD candidates or 'buitenpromovendi' (these numbers fluctuate slightly throughout the year).

New policies
During the year a new policy for the admission procedure of self-funded and external PhD candidates was developed. The Advisory Board voted to change the procedure in September 2021. The new policy was implemented starting 1 March 2022.

The new policy outlines the following (summarised):

Because of the increased number of self-funded and external PhD candidates and the new AIHR policy where the research schools are asked to offer more intense supervision to improve quality assurance, ASH formulates a new, more uniform selection procedure. This policy is also developed to formalise the admission procedure.

- The Advisory Board will now consider the proposals from prospective self-funded and external PhD candidates.
- There are two submission rounds per year, one in April and one in September.
- A limited number of candidates will be approved per submission round. ASH aims for a maximum of 5 new self-funded or external PhD candidates per round (10 per year).
- Candidates may resubmit their proposal once in the next submission round, following the appeal procedure.
- All applications must be submitted at the beginning of the supervision process, following the UvA Promotion Regulations 2020 (Article 13.3)

The criteria for selection are the following:
- The proposal must have a well-defined research object or goal, with a guiding question or hypothesis, be structured according to logical sub-questions, have a methodology explained clearly and in sufficient detail and appropriate, be feasible, and bring about scientific innovation. The proposal should follow the AIHR template exactly.
- Self-funded and external PhD candidates seek the support of two supervisors on their own. One of the supervisors has to be a permanent staff member of ASH and one has to hold the *ius promovendi.* The proposal should fit with the expertise present at ASH and the chosen supervisors.
- The self-funded and external PhD track is open to all driven candidates who can demonstrate that they have acquired the necessary research skills during their MA (or equivalent) in a discipline related to their PhD research. Lower than average grades or insufficient prior education may be grounds for rejection, unless evidence can be presented that they have

already carried out scientific research of sufficient level in the interim. Unlike for funded places for PhD students, it is not necessary for candidates to have already demonstrated excellence. ASH likes to maintain/increase the current diversity in backgrounds of self-funded and external PhD candidates.

4.1 ASH doctoral defenses

The following eleven PhD projects were completed in 2021:

Marianne Groep-Foncke - *Water's worth. Urban society and subsidiarity in seventeenth-century Holland* (13 January 2021, supervised by prof. dr. Guy Geltner and dr. Djoeke van Netten)

Aad Schravesande - *Hilbrandt Boschma (1869-1954), Nederlands-hervormd* (13 January; supervised by prof. dr. James Kennedy)

Indra Kneepkens - *Masterful Mixtures. Practical aspects of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century oil paint formulation* (27 January; supervised by prof. dr. Arie Wallert and prof. dr. Claudia Chavannes-Mazel).

Dani Evers - *Halacha in 'the age of authenticity'. Een studie van koelot (verlichtende uitspraken) in de moderne Joods-religieuze rechtspraak* (24 February; supervised by prof. dr. Irene Zwiep and dr. Bart Wallet).

René Lugtigheid - *Van aardse stof tot hemels lof. De transitie van de achttiende-eeuwse Noord-Nederlandse damesjapon van modeartikel tot kerkelijk gewaad in de katholieke eredienst* (5 March; supervised by prof. dr. Frans Grijzenhout)

Nathan van Kleij - *Beyond the Façade: Town Halls, Publicity, and Urban Society in the Fifteenth-Century Low Countries* (12 March; supervised by prof. dr. Guy Geltner and dr. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz).

Sandra den Dulk - *Verlangen naar groene wandelingen. De wording van het stadspark 1600-1940* (23 June; supervised by prof. dr. Erik de Jong and prof. dr. Lex Bosman).

Pieter van den Broek - *Embedded Narratives in Silius Italicus' Punica. A Narrotological, Intertextual, and Intratextual Approach* (15 September; supervised by prof. dr. Irene de Jong and Mark Heerink)

Eddy de Beaumont - *De aanschaf van infanteriegeweren, 1750-1850. Een studie over defensieaanschafprocessen* (20 September; supervised by Wim Klinkert and prof. dr. Joost Jonker)

Marc Kropman - *Shifting Lenses |Multiperspectivity and narratives of the Dutch past in secondary history education* (12 October; supervised by prof. dr. Carla van Boxtel and dr. Jannet van Drie)

Sanne Frequin - *Propaganda in steen. Een reconstructief onderzoek naar de commemoratieve en politiek-dynastieke boodschap van de grafmonumenten van het Grafelijk Henegouwse Huis (1280-1356)* (8 December; supervised by prof dr. Frits Scholten, prof. dr. Claudine Chavannes-Mazel and dr. Wendelien van Welie-Vink)

ASH welcomed five employed PhD candidates in 2021:

Afke Berger – *De Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten en lokaal bestuur in Nederland in tijden van oorlog.* Supervised by Prof. Peter Romijn and Dr. Hinke Piersma. Employed by the NIOD (Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies).

Ezra Engelsberg - *On Stage, in the World: Identity and Community in Jewish-German Theatre, 1800-1871.* Supervised by Prof. Irene Zwiep and Prof. Ton Nijhuis

Lola Bos - *Staged Narrative as an Anchoring Device: Narratology, Intermediality and Cognition in Sophocles'.* Supervised by Prof. Irene De Jong and Prof. Felix Budelmann (RUG)

Marleen Puyenbroek - *Working from Home. Women as Professionals in the Household and the Art Market of the Dutch Republic, 1580-1720.* Supervised by Prof. Frans Grijzenhout and Dr. Judith Noorman

Vany Susanto - *Colonial Citizens? Petitioning for Legislation in Early Modern Batavia.* Supervised by Prof. Remco Raben and Dr. Danielle van den Heuvel

ASH welcomed seven self-funded PhD candidates in 2021:

Wim Gerlagh - *Invloed van (de Engelse literator, kunstnijveraar, socialist en typograaf) William Morris in Nederland 1870 tot (ca.) 1920.* Supervised by Prof. Remieg Aerts

Hugo Schalkwijk – *The Struggle to Reform Nursing Roles in the Netherlands, 1970 – 2020*. Supervised by Dr. Manon Parry and Prof. Lisette Schoonhoven (UMCU)

Giuliano Colicino – *The market for prints in Naples (1656-1734).* Supervised by Prof. Frans Grijzenhout and Dr. Arnold Witte

Giulio Dalla Grana - *The Religious and Political Influence of Towianism in Italy.* Supervised by Dr. Marco Pasi (UvA) and Prof. Marta Margotti and Prof. Natale Spineto (Universita di Torino, Italy)

Boris Hoetjes - *Ambiguïteit als verankerde innovatie in Vergilius.* Supervised by Prof. Irene de Jong and Dr. Suzanne Adema (UL)

Ian Lewis - *Interpreting Political Architecture: Parliament Buildings in Asia. Models, Transfers and Appropriations in the 20th Century.* Supervised by Prof. Remieg Aerts and Dr. Petra Brouwer

Hans Verbeek - *Biografie van Gerrit Schimmelpenninck (1794-1863).* Supervised by Prof. Remieg Aerts and Dr. Jeroen van Zanten

5. Research and impact

In 2021, ASH members wrote or contributed to well over 300 publications. Among these were 54 peer-reviewed articles and over 67 book chapters, 32 publications aimed at the general public, 25 books and edited volumes; additionally, they wrote or contributed to dozens of other publications, e.g. published conference papers, encyclopedia entries, editorials, websites and articles aimed at the general public. Many peer-reviewed publications were published with leading international presses or high-ranking journals. A full list of publications and public appearances 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. Overall, it seems that already by late 2020 and continuing in 2021, the effects of the Covid pandemic are shown to have had an impact on the number of publications, which is in line with the conclusions of various reports on the effects of the pandemic on academia.[2]

5.1 New permanent staff

ASH welcomed the following new permanent staff members in 2021:

Daniëlle Slootjes, Professor of Ancient History
Serena Ferente, Professor of Medieval History
Dylan Burns, Assistant Professor of the History of Western Esotericism in Late Antiquity
Liana Saif, Assistant Professor of the History of Islamic Esotericism in the Medieval Period

6. Grants, awards, and honours

ASH is very proud of its ongoing record of grant applications across all levels, and especially of all those members, who in 2021 submitted grant applications to NWO, European Research Council, or other bodies. We remain grateful to all ASH researchers who undertaken this commitment and appreciate that their efforts – as well as the effort of the colleagues, who read draft applications and participate in mock interviews, and sit on the various grant committees. Regardless of whether the applications obtain funding, they are crucial in helping colleagues move forward with new research project ideas that often involve important national and international collaborations. For ASH, especially the larger projects offer early career researchers an opportunity to conduct a PhD or postdoc project. As such, these applications and projects are instrumental in maintaining the viability and flourishing of our School.

6.1 Grants
In 2021 the following projects and members received external funding:

Researcher	Title Project	Funding Institution	Grant	Amount

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[2] See the report by the Jonge Akademie and the Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren (the Dutch Young Academy and the Dutch Network of Women Professors respectively), published in October 2021: *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic first lockdown period on the work and well-being of academics.*

Danielle van den Heuvel	*Vrouwen op de (historische) kaart*	KNAW	Pilotfonds Wetenschapscommunicatie door Wetenschappers: Gewaardeerd!	€ 10.000
Fraser Raeburn	*Comparative histories of foreign fighter mobilisations*		Leverhulme Trust	
Kristine Johanson and Carol Clarkson	*Uitingen van kwetsbaarheid in vroegmoderne vrouwenpoëzie*	NWO	Promoties in de FGw	€ 184.378,40
Sofie Remijsen	*Tijdsgebruik en -beleving in laat-antiek Egypte*	NWO	Vidi	€ 800.000

ASH is also proud to continue to host part of the NWO Zwaartekracht project *Anchoring Innovation*, including Work Package 1 "Rhetoric & Discourse Linguistics", coordinated by professor Caroline Kroon and also including Lidewij van Gils, Merlijn Breunesse, Luuk Huitink, Rodie Risselada, and Boris Hoetjes, and Work Package 2 "Literature & Art", of which professor Irene de Jong is the co-cordinator, and which includes Lola Bos, Caterina Fossi, and Boris Hoetjes.

6.2 ASH Awards

ASH always awarded two annual prizes, one for the best dissertation completed in the previous year and one for the best valorisation project undertaken. The winners are selected by the ASH Advisory Board at the end of the academic year. However due to the lesser amount of completed dissertations during the pandemic, ASH changed the Dissertation Award to be handed out every other year. The award will thus be awarded again in 2022 for the period 2020-2022.

The ASH Valorisation Prize 2020-2021 was awarded in October 2021 to Anique Hamelink. Anique is a PhD candidate at ASH, working on her doctoral thesis 'Dress, gender and cultural identity in the north-western provinces of the Roman Empire', a project funded as part of the Anchoring Innovation project of the national research school OIKOS. Anique is an expert on clothing, jewelry and hairstyles in the Roman Imperial period, and dedicated to researching and creating historically accurate Roman clothing and jewelry. She has contributed to numerous events about the ancient world aimed at the general public, and more recently has lent her expertise for a 3D facial reconstruction of a mummy at the National Museum of Antiquities. The TV-show *Het Verhaal van Nederland* is broadcasted by NTR on NPO 1, and Anique has advised the crew on clothing and appearance of Roman characters in episode three about Romans and the early Middle Ages. She has also contributed to another tv show that is broadcasted on NPO: for *In Levenden Lijve* episode one about Cleopatra, Anique is interviewed while she is preparing a Cleopatra hairstyle. Lastly, Anique is also the designer of Roman-type jewelry via her company Just Classic.

Other researchers received prizes or awards for their research and work:
- Sander Govaerts was awarded the Dissertation Award by Stichting Praeumium Erasmianum for his thesis *Mosasaurs: interactions between armies and Ecosystems in the Meuse Region 1250-1850.*

- Rosa de Jong was awarded the Alexander Grass Memorial Fellowhips for her project *From European Ports to Caribbean Homes: Second World War Refugees in Global Transit.*
- Maroesjka Verhagen received the Holland Scriptieprijs for het thesis *In functie van een voedselketen. De wisselwerking tussen agro-ecosysteem en landbouwmodernisatie, de Beemster 1612-1799.*
- Piet Gerbrandy was awarded the J. Greshoff-prijs for his essay collection *Grondwater*.

7. Research groups & funded activities

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.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic caused many scheduled events to be cancelled, postponed or transformed into digital events. As a result, ASH funded very few such events. Similar to 2020, only a handful events took place that were funded by ASH. Some events in 2021 took place in alternative digital and hybrid forms and ASH supported these events by aiding in funding the technical support. One of these events was the Picturing the Pandemic conference. Other events that took place were a colloquium, symposium and some seminars and lectures.

Appendix 1: Overview of research groups and centres in 2021

Research centres:

- Amsterdam Centre for Studies in Early Modernity (ACSEM)
- Amsterdam Centre for Urban History (ACUH)
- Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Science

Research groups:

- America in the World
- Changing Identities: art and architecture as bearer of meaning (stopped in 2021)
- Classical (con)texts
- Cultural Memory, Rhetoric and Literary Discourse
- Early Modern Mobilities: migration, communication and knowledge in the Early Modern world
- Emotion and Subjectivity, 1300 – 1900
- Historical Theatre Research: Text, Performance, and Production of Knowledge
- 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