

# Amsterdam School of Historical Studies

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## Annual Report 2023

### 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 230 academics, including PhD students, from the Faculty of Humanities, who participate in 11 research groups and 3 research centres.<sup>1</sup>

As a research 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, theatre and cultural studies, the history of health, and human-environmental relations have been strategic growth areas.

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 the Studies of Early Modernity (ACSEM), and the Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Sciences. The Vossius Center 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.

This 2023 annual report offers a brief overview of developments within the School and lists a selection of the achievements of its members and research groups.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1.

## 2. ASH in 2023: an overview

For ASH and its researchers 2023 proved to be year of 'returning to normal' after several years where research, travel, conferences, seminars, etc were severely impacted by Covid and various lockdowns. 2023 was also the year when the first preparations were started for the upcoming research 'Visitatie.' A review panel will make a site visit in November 2024 and in preparation for this a written 'Self-Evaluation' has to be prepared. The Self-Evaluation attempts to showcase the wide diversity and high quality of research that can be found within the school. It also showcases the developments that have been made in the past years to sharpen ASH' profile, viability of the research centres and groups, and societal impact strategies. Naturally, the pandemic did affect these developments, but ASH is nonetheless proud of the steps forward we have been able to make as a community.

At ASH, we are enormously proud of those PhD students who defended their theses in 2023, given that they had to experience years of uncertainty and instability. We were also impressed by the resilience of our community of PhDs and postdocs in general: we had several 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 Anna-Rose Shack continued her efforts to sustain a support system and a sense of community among all PhD candidates. Clearly, we could not have done so without all the supervisors, who went the extra mile in assisting their PhDs and postdocs in their research and activities.

ASH wishes to thank all the colleagues, who kept our research centres, research groups, and seminars going and starting new initiatives. 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**

Following the suggestions made by the Visitatie in 2019, ASH evaluated all research groups throughout 2022. This evaluation was done to sharpen our profile further and to stimulate colleagues to start new initiatives. Several groups that had been inactive during the pandemic came alive again this year. In contrast, others decided that this would be a natural moment to end the group to focus on new interests and collaborations. These groups were dissolved 1-1-2023. New groups were developed in 2023, to be started in 2024. An overview of the groups can be found in Appendix 1.

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. ASH is proud to welcome all our new staff members and looks forward to their addition to the research school.

During 2023 discussions were had on better integrating the postdoc community into ASH. Similar to the better quality assurance developed in the past years, ASH wanted better insight into postdocs' experience. Different from the PhD candidates, ASH does not act as the supervisor to the postdocs.

This responsibility has been placed with the departments the postdocs are hired into. However, ASH is part of the hiring process and is responsible for integrating the postdocs in the ASH community. In December all postdocs were invited for lunch to get to know the ASH management and each other. Also, ASH decided to implement a position for a Postdoc representative. This position is similar to that of the PhD representative and represents the ASH postdoc community to the ASH management and Advisory Board. The representative regularly joins meetings with the director, vice-director, coordinator, and office manager of ASH to raise issues considering the postdoc community. The representative also organises social events for postdocs and can organise events together with the PhD representative.

### **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.

Danielle van den Heuvel has been director of ASH since August 2022. Moritz Föllmer has been the vice-director since November 2022. 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 and office manager. 2023 was a turbulent year behind the scenes of ASH as Simon Speksnijder was ASH's coordinator until May 2023, after which Nina Simić was coordinator until September 2023. During the hiring period for the new coordinator, Paul Koopman acted as interim coordinator, with Dian Hulsebosch starting half-November as the new coordinator. Margreet Vermeulen was ASH's office manager until July 2023, after which Dian Hulsebosch took over the position. Both positions were filled by one person until March 2024 when a new office manager was found in Ruby van Hooijdonk. This meant that after a period of many changes, ASH was running at full capacity again.

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 2023, with the departure of Remieg Aerts from the Advisory Board in January due to his upcoming retirement, efforts were undertaken to add members to 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. Therefore a researcher was sought who could represent another department within ASH and Berenice Verhelst agreed to do so.

At the end of 2023, the Advisory Board consisted of the following academics from the different disciplines within ASH, as well as the PhD representative:

- 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. Berenice Verhelst – Ancient Greek (ACASA)
- Dr. Arnold Witte – Early Modern and Modern Art History (K&C)
- Professor Bart Wallet – Jewish Studies (GER)
- Anna-Rose Shack – PhD representative (since October 2022)

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. The representative also organises social events for PhD researchers.

ASH currently is home to 11 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 a 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](http://ash.uva.nl)). ASH members are kept up to date about developments and activities within the School through a monthly newsletter, which aims to inform and connect different research groups and research areas. In 2023 due to the changes behind the scenes, the newsletter appeared infrequently.

#### **4. ASH PhD community and policies**

PhD students represent the core of our School. In 2023, 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).

ASH PhD candidate Rukayyah Reichling was named one of the KNAW Face of Science for the year 2023. Faces of Science is a platform where young academics share their research experience and daily life through blogs, videos and social media stories. Rukayyah is one of twelve recently selected talented PhD researchers to join the community.

## **New policies**

### **ASH doctoral defenses**

The following fourteen PhD projects were completed in 2023:

**Anne-Lot Hoek** - *De strijd om Bali. Geweld, verzet en koloniale staatsvorming 1846 – 1950* (10 February 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Peter Romijn and David Kloos)

**George Muishout** - *Muslims and palliative care in a Western context. An exploratory qualitative investigation* (2 May 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Gerard Wiegers and prof. dr. Hanneke van Laarhoven)

**Annemiek Houwen** - *Ja, Dit kan zo niet langer! Beeldvorming, kritisch analyseren en genderverhoudingen in de bovenbouw van het voortgezet geschiedenisonderwijs* (8 May 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Carla van Boxtel, prof. dr. Mineke Bosch and dr. Paul Holthuis)

**Sophie van Ginneken** – *De toeristische blik op Amsterdam. De stad als ‘sight’ en ‘site’, 1840-2000.* (6 July 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Lex Bosman and dr. Petra Brouwer)

**Weixuan Li** – *Painters’ playbooks: Deep mapping socio-spatial strategies in the art market of seventeenth-century Amsterdam* (12 September 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Charles van den Heuvel, prof. dr. Julia Noordegraaf, dr. Claartje Rasterhoff and dr. Marten Jan Bok)

**Freek Meulman** – *De reservist in de hoofdrol. Tussen politiek en militaire idealen, de reserveofficier in Nederland 1918-1940* (13 September 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Wim Klinkert and prof. dr. Ben Schoenmaker)

**Christian Manger** – *Councils, Conflicts, Correspondence: Urban Diplomacy in Reval (Tallinn) and Lübeck (c.1470-1570)* (20 October 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz and prof. dr. Guy Geltner.

**Mathijs Boom** – *A Diluvial Land. Earth Histories in the Early Modern Low Countries, 1550-1830* (29 November 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Wyger Velema and prof. dr. Eric Jorink)

**Hans Wallage** – *Humanitaire hulpverlening in de Republiek tijdens buitenlandse vervolgingen van joden, 1600-1750* (13 December 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Geert Janssen and prof. dr. Irene Zwiep)

**Giuliano Colicino** – *Gli incisori e il mercato delle stampe nel Viceregno di Napoli (1656-1734)* (15 December 2023, supervised by prof. dr. Frans Grijzenhout, dr. Arnold Witte and dr. Loredana Lorzio)

## **New ASH PhD Candidates**

ASH welcomed six employed PhD candidates in 2023:

**Jens Aurich** - *Innovating around Resistance: Collective Labour Action and Technological Change (1750-1950)*. Supervised by dr. Maartje van Gelder and dr. Matthias van Rossum.

**Tjalling Janssen** - *Envoys of the Macrococosm: Elemental Beings & the Relationship Between Humans & the Natural World in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Thought*. Supervised by prof. dr. Wouter Hanegraaff and dr. Peter Forshaw.

**Brennan Kettelle** - *Her Dark Breath: Queer Currents within Nineteenth-Century Discourses on Lilith*. Supervised by dr. Marco Pasi and dr. Manon Hedenborg White.

**Imme Laseur** – *Livy as a Stylistic Anchor*. Supervised by prof. dr. Caroline Kroon and dr. Lidewij van Gils

**Emma Post** - *A league of their own: women diplomats in the League of Nations' fight against sex trafficking (1921-1945)*. Supervised by prof. dr. Elizabeth Buettner and dr. Katy Hull

**Koen Vacano** - *The Epics of the 21st Century*. Supervised by dr. Mark Heerink and prof. dr. Maarten Depourcq

ASH welcomed seven self-funded and external PhD candidates in 2023:

**James Chadwick** - *Living with Giacometti: The Artist Studio complex as a community of practice*. Supervised by prof. dr. Emilie Sitzia, dr. Rachel Esner and dr. Matthijs Engelberts

**Sieben Feys** - *Seigneuries, lordship and nobility in the duchy of Brabant (c. 1300–1550)*. Supervised by prof. dr. Frederik Buylaert and dr. Mario Damen.

**David van Gent** – *Nederland en de totstandkoming van het Suezkanaal, 1846-1876*. Supervised by prof. dr. Remieg Aerts and dr. Houssine Alloul.

**Eric Hoppe** - *Innovating around Resistance: Collective Labour Action and Technological Change (1750-1950)*. Supervised by dr. Danielle van den Heuvel and dr. Djoeke van Netten.

**Marie Mundliger** - *A life of Art. How Wilhelm Martin shaped Dutch Art history between 1900 and 1945*. Supervised by dr. Hanneke Grootenboer and dr. Elmer Kolfin.

**Marjanne Oosting** - *The family Mashber as a mystical and subversive text*. Supervised by prof. dr. Bart Wallet and prof. dr. Irene Zwiép.

**João Paixão** - *The Look of Passion: embodying the facial expressions of the London stage, 1730-1780*. Supervised by prof. dr. Kati Röttger, dr. Kristine Johanson and dr. Jed Wentz.

## 5. Research and impact

In 2023, ASH members wrote or contributed to well over 250 publications. Among these were 50 peer-reviewed articles and over 60 book chapters, 31 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 in 2022 the publication numbers are recovering due to the lessening of the effects of the Covid pandemic.

### 5.1 New permanent staff

ASH welcomed the following new permanent staff members in 2023:

Floribert Baudet, Professor by special appointment of Military History

Lisa Kuitert, Professor of Book Studies

Lisa Haushofer, Assistant Professor of Food History

Katy Hull, Assistant Professor of Modern Gender History

Olupeyi Oludare, Assistant Professor of Black History

Rosalind Powell, Assistant Professor in English Literature

Selena Savic, Assistant Professor for Protohistory of AI and Machines in the Arts

Lisa Skwirbli, Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies

Thomas Smits, Assistant Professor of Digital History and AI

Dženita Karić, Assistant Professor Religion Studies

Anna Weinreich, Assistant Professor Museums and Social Justice

## 6. Grants and awards

ASH is very proud of its ongoing record of grant applications across all levels, and especially of all those members, who in 2023 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 2023 the following projects and members received external funding:

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<sup>2</sup> Self reported, per 21-5-2024.

Researcher	Title Project	Institution	Grant	Amount
Houssein Alloul	<i>(No) Ambassadors of Modernity: Habitus, Interculturality, and the Ottoman Diplomatic Venture in Europe, 1832-1914</i>	NWO	Open Competitie XS	€ 50.000,00
Bram Mellink			IP-thema Seed Grant	€ 50.000,00
Geert Janssen	<i>Dordtse familieverzamelingen op drift. Voorwerpen als dragers van familie-identiteit in museale collecties, ca. 1550-1850</i>	NWO	Museumsbeurzen	€ 5.000,00
Rachel Esner	<i>Nagelaten. Vrouwelijke schenkers en legatoren aan Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (1849-heden)</i>	NWO	Museumsbeurzen	€ 5000,00
Mario Damen	<i>De encensering van de adel in de stedelijke ruimte. De Nassaudynastie in de Nederlanden (1400-1570)</i>	NWO	Open Competitie M	€ 400.000,00
Liz Buettner	<i>A league of their own: women diplomats in the League of Nations' fight against sex trafficking (1921-1945)</i>	NWO	Promoties in de FGw	€ 90.000,00
Samuël Kruizinga	<i>Occupied. Towards a Comparative and Entangled History of Occupation in the Age of Total War</i>		KNIR Colloquium	€ 10.000,00
Thomas Smits	<i>Multimodal AI, Image Analysis, and the Illustrated Periodical Press</i>	FWO	Field Development Grant	€ 25.391,69
Robert van der Zalm	<i>Museaal verleden: een toolset om tentoonstellingen te (re)construeren</i>	NWO	KIEM	€ 50.000,00

## 6.2 ASH Awards

In 2023 ASH awarded one prize: for the best valorisation project undertaken. ASH awards a Dissertation Award every other year, this will be awarded next year. The winners are selected by the ASH Advisory Board at the end of the academic year.

The ASH Valorisation Award 2022-2023 was awarded to [David de Boer](#). David is a postdoctoral researcher in the NWO-funded research project The Invention of the Refugee in Early Modern Europe. In response to the ongoing asylum crisis, David has made a sustained effort to raise public awareness that immigration is not a “new problem”, but an integral part of Dutch history. To reach different audiences, he has reflected on the history of refugees in various media. Together with Mathijs Deen, he created a radio documentary for VPRO – OVT Het spoor terug about refugees during the Dutch Revolt. With Geert Janssen he edited *De vluchtelingenrepubliek*, bringing together the expertise of fourteen historians of migration (including ASH-members Lotte van Hasselt, Hans Wallage, and Rosa de Jong). The book was well received in Dutch media. It resulted in i.a. an essay in



Trouw *Tijdgeest*, an interview in talkshow Op1, a thematic tour in the Rijksmuseum, and invited lectures at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Security.

Three projects that were nominated for the award were named by the Advisory Board as Honourable Mentions:

[Peter van Dam and Marin Kuijt on the gas extraction and parliamentary inquiries](#)

[Vincent Kuitenbrouwer with the project MediaOorlog \(Media War\)](#)

[Laura van Hasselt with the project Geld, geloof en goede vrienden](#)

## **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.

ASH researchers and groups organized many events again in 2023. These activities involved conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, symposiums, and masterclasses for PhD candidates. ASH's Research Centres each received a lump sum of €2.500; in both cases, the funding was used for a thematic seminar/lecture series and conference (Lecture Series Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and Urban History Seminar Series). The Vossius Center has its own separate budget.

## **Appendix 1: Overview of research groups and centres in 2023**

### 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
- Classical (con)texts
- Early Modern Mobilities: migration, communication, and knowledge in the Early Modern world
- Emotion and Subjectivity, 1300 – 1900 (dissolved 1-1-2024)
- Historical Theatre Research: Text, Performance, and Production of Knowledge
- History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents
- PULSE Network: Medicine and Society
- Modern History
- Power and Society in the Later Middle Ages
- Religious Dynamics and Cultural Diversity (dissolved 1-1-2024)
- The Modernism Research Group (started 15-4-2023)

### Research groups that dissolved 1-1-2023:

- Changing Identities: Art and architecture as bearer of meaning
- Cultural Memory, Rhetoric and Literary Discourse
- Natura Artis Magistra
- Networks of the Dutch Republic
- Public Health in Premodern Cities
- The Public and its Discontent