

American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Activities Report, 2021–2022

Prepared by Benita Blessing
Executive Director

Annual Meeting

The 2022 Annual Meeting took place in Baltimore, MD, from March 31-April 22. It was our first in-person session since 2019, and included an impressive 180 sessions. Thanks to a generous grant from Johns Hopkins University Press, we were able to host the poet Honorée Fanonne Jeffers, who read from her award-winning book *The Age of Phillis* to a packed hall.

Publications

Volume 55 of ASECS's quarterly journal *Eighteenth-Century Studies* – edited by the new team of Ramesh Mallipeddi and managing editor Oliver Bedard, both of University of British Columbia, Vancouver – contained 25 articles and 39 reviews. This volume covered an impressive array of diverse topics and methodologies, with particular focus on new technologies and methodological considerations, particularly in regards to research into race and sexuality.

Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, Vol. 50, appeared in the summer of 2022 and was the first volume edited by the new editing team David Brewer (Ohio State University), editor, and Crystal Lake (Wright State University). As Brewer and Lake observe in their introduction, the journal serves as ASECS's "very own journal of the plague year," and we celebrate the authors in this volume who helped remind us of the vibrant scholarship in our field emerging even amidst a pandemic.

Prizes

Thanks to the new Gale-ASECS Non-residential fellowship awards, ASECS will have awarded over \$40,000 in library fellowships, travel awards, conference support, and prizes at the end of this fiscal year.

The Gale-ASECS Non-residential Fellowships

These fellowships support research or teaching projects that rely on Gale's [Eighteenth-Century Collections Online Parts I and II \(ECCO\)](#) and use digital humanities methodologies. Awarded fellows are given access to the [Gale Digital Scholar Lab](#) for the duration of their fellowship, a text and data mining and visualization tool built specifically to analyze primary sources. The inaugural winners and their projects were:

- **Heather Heckman-McKenna**, University of Missouri, to expand upon current understandings of bodily sensibility, with the long-term goal of publishing the ensuing database for public use;
- **Adam Kozaczka**, Texas A&M International University, for a study of eighteenth-century legal writing and court reporting;

- **Jared Richman**, Colorado College, to advance work in locating renderings of vocal disability in eighteenth-century print culture;
- **Daniel Watkins**, Baylor University, in order to build metadata files and data visualizations that will sketch out the reception history of the *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses* in eighteenth-century Britain; and
- **Sara Weston**, Yale University, to pursue the curation of an archive to support her project "'The Shape of Numbers, 1701-1800."

The Louis A. Gottschalk Prize

The Louis Gottschalk prize annually recognizes the best scholarly book on an eighteenth-century subject. In 2022, the Gottschalk prize was awarded to **José Francisco Robles**, *Polemics, Literature, and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century Mexico: A New World for the Republic of Letters* (Liverpool University Press). Robles introduces readers to the vibrant intellectual and literary culture of eighteenth-century Mexico as configured by communities of readers radiating from the capital city to the provinces. This vividly presented and meaningfully analyzed literary landscape expands the eighteenth-century Republic of Letters beyond Europe, providing a sweeping introduction to a wide range of texts, authors, and issues from eighteenth-century Mexico and bringing the Hispanic eighteenth century more broadly into dialogue with all of us.

Honorable Mention went to **James Mulholland**, *Before the Raj: Writing Early Anglophone India* (Johns Hopkins University Press)

The 2022 Srinivas Aravamudan Prize

The Srinivas Aravamudan Prize goes to the author of an article published in the previous year that pushes the boundaries, geographical and conceptual, of eighteenth-century studies, especially by using a transnational, comparative, or cosmopolitan approach. This year's winner was **Kerry Sinanan**, "Lost Mothers in the Caribbean Plantation and Black Maternal and Infant Mortality," *Caribbean Literature in Transition. Volume 1. 1800-1920*. Eds. Evelyn O'Callaghan and Tim Watson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020: 390-406. In this work, Sinanan scrutinizes images of the Caribbean plantation by white slave owners to teach readers about the complexities of our current social constructs about race. By making a persuasive case for the urgency of close reading and for speaking with nuance about print and visual cultures, Sinanan demonstrates how they have a role to play in revealing the continuing artistic legacies of slavery.

Honorable Mention went to Carrie Shanafelt, "'A World of Debt': Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, The Wealth of Nations, and the End of Finance," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 55.1 (Fall 2021).

The 2022 James L. Clifford Prize

The James L. Clifford Prize recognizes an article that presents an outstanding study of some aspect of eighteenth-century culture, interesting to any eighteenth-century specialist, regardless of discipline. It carries an award of \$500.

2022 James L. Clifford Prize Winner: Alan S. Ross, University of Vienna, for "The Animal Body as Medium: Taxidermy and European Expansion, 1775-1865," *Past & Present* 249 (November 2020).

In a rich and wide-ranging essay, Professor **Alan S. Ross** applies insights from iconology, history of science, and art history to a highly original study of taxidermized animals. Demonstrating the deep entanglement of taxidermy with European allegorical traditions and colonial ventures, Ross explores the evolution of taxidermy and the ways it mirrored global interactions and interconnections. Drawing on a prodigious quantity of research and using the key example of primates presented first at the London natural history cabinet of Ashton Lever and later at the Natural History Museum of Vienna, Ross provides a delightfully interdisciplinary analysis that draws in and surprises readers.

Honorable Mention went to **Elizabeth Ellis**, “The Natchez War Revisited: Violence, Multinational Settlements, and Indigenous Diplomacy in the Lower Mississippi Valley,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 77:3 (July 2020).

The 2022 Innovative Course Design Competition

To encourage excellence in undergraduate teaching of the eighteenth century, the Society invites proposals for the ASECS Innovative Course Design Competition, from members in any of its constituent disciplines. Proposals should be for a new course or for a new unit within an existing course; the course should never have been taught or have been taught very recently for the first time. Winning entries may be viewed on the [Teaching the Eighteenth-Century](#) website:

- **Katherine Bergevin**, Ph.D. Candidate in English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, for “Colonialism and Resistance in the Enlightenment;”
- **Lisa Maruca**, Associate Professor of English at Wayne State University, for “Mediating the Global Eighteenth-Century,” and
- **Luis Ramos**, Clinical Associate Professor in Liberal Studies at New York University, for “The Politics of Enlightenment in Southern Europe and its Atlantic Colonies”

2022 Graduate and Early Career Caucus Mentorship Award

The ASECS Graduate and Early Career Caucus Excellence in Mentorship Award recognizes commitment to students’ short- and long-term goals, effectiveness in helping students to navigate graduate school coursework and requirements, ability to guide and inspire students in the exchange of ideas, research and writing; and success in seeking and securing opportunities for mentees such as conference presentations, publications, fellowships, and/or grant awards. **George Haggerty**, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of California, Riverside, was this year’s recipient.

The award committee and nominators focused on Haggerty’s above and beyond mentoring, especially those interested in queer studies and disability studies.

2022 Graduate Student Conference Paper Prize

The ASECS Executive Board awards a prize for the best paper presented by a graduate student at the ASECS Annual Meeting. This year’s winner was **Helena Yoo Roth**, Ph.D. Candidate in history at the CUNY Graduate Center, for “The Many Deaths of George II and Colonial Time Consciousness.” Yoo Roth examines the role of what she terms “colonial time-consciousness” played in the events that brought about the independence of the thirteen North American colonies from the British Empire. This well-written and precisely documented paper explores

transatlantic communication in the eighteenth century and establishes a place for our field in the growing field of Time Studies.

Honorable Mention was granted to **Emily Beeber**, University of Delaware, for “‘Rubens Peale with a Geranium’: Botanical Science and Slavery in the Early Republic.”

ASECS Women’s Caucus Emilie du Châtelet Prize

The Émilie Du Châtelet Award is an annual prize made by the ASECS Women's Caucus to support research in progress by an independent or adjunct scholar on a feminist or Women's Studies subject. **Kimary Fick**, Oregon State University, was awarded the prize for “‘Gedanken über die Musick’: Duchess Anna Amalia (1739-1807) as Enlightened Musikkennerin.” Fick’s project examines concepts of taste and culture in relation to ideologies of the Enlightenment and the female connoisseur. This project sits firmly at the intersection of music studies, cultural and literary history, and the Enlightenment more generally.

The Gwin J. and Ruth Kolb Research Travel Fellowship supports younger eighteenth-century scholars to travel to distant collections in North America and abroad.

2022 Winner: Julia Pohlman, post-graduate researcher in history at the University of Aberdeen, for “Facing the Other Within - Tolerating Differences in Eighteenth Century British Jewish Urban Spaces.”

The Richard H. Popkin Research Travel Fellowship supports scholars to travel to collections in North America and abroad.

2022 Winner: Mark Lentz, Associate Professor of History at Utah Valley University, for “Between Words: Interpreters of Colonial Yucatan, 1519-1844.”

The **ASECS Huntington Library Short-term Fellowship** is for postdoctoral scholars or PhD candidates who reside outside the Los Angeles metro area and wish to use The Huntington’s collections to study the period 1660–1815.

2022 Winner: Helena Yoo Roth, Ph.D. Candidate in history at the CUNY Graduate Center, for “American Timelines: Imperial Communications, Colonial Time-Consciousness, and the Coming of the American Revolution.”

2022 Traveling Jam Pot

The Traveling Jam Pot is replenished annually by the generous contributions of ASECS members and supports participation in the Annual Meeting by ABDs and PhDs within a year of receipt of the doctoral degree. This year’s awardees were **Laura Golobish, June Oh, Isabella Rosner, and Ankita Srivastava**.

2022 Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Fund

The **Non-Tenure Track Faculty (NTTF) Fund** provides travel assistance to non-tenure track faculty presenting their research at the Annual Meeting. This year’s awardees were **Elizabeth Browne, Pichaya “Mint” Damrongpiwat, Vincent Pham, Joanna Raisbeck, and Rebecca Squires**.

2021-2022 American Council of Learned Societies – Intention Foundry

The Intention Foundry brings together scholars and executive directors of ACLS member societies in programs that strengthen humanistic studies for the 21st century. This year's fellows for the workshops on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism in the Academy, **Bethany Qualls** (UC Davis) and **Pichaya "Mint" Damrongpiwat** (UC Irvine) were joined by outgoing Executive Director Mark Boonshoft and incoming Executive Director Benita Blessing.

Major Actions by the ASECS Executive Board

- Hired ASECS's second full-time Executive Director and moved the ASECS office;
- Successfully completed fundraising in 6 months for perpetual access of Gale's *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (ECCO) 1 & 2 for members in North America and nearby areas, 3 years ahead of schedule;
- Appointed Kathleen Lubey, Professor of English at St. John's University, as the new book review editor for *Eighteenth Century Studies* Kathleen Lubey, Professor of English at St. John's University;
- Launched a series of virtual events to discuss and celebrate prize-winning books and articles;
- Created a new committee for Media and Communication.