

# Annual Report Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies

2022-2023

## General

The Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (in Dutch: *Werkgroep 18e Eeuw*) is an active association with a number of regular activities per year, a Dutch-language yearbook sent to all members, and it participates in an English-language, peer-reviewed open-access scholarly journal *Early Modern Low Countries* (EMLC). As of now, the Society counts approximately 200 individual members, plus approximately 43 institutional members. The Society focuses on stimulating research on the (long) 18th century, as well as supporting (junior) researchers who are working on this period. To that end, it hosts several activities per year, from lectures to conferences. Additionally, it publishes a yearbook and participates in the successful journal *Early Modern Low Countries* (EMLC), founded in 2017, together with the Society for Seventeenth Century Studies. The Society explicitly aims to address both an academic and a non-academic audience, which is reflected both in its activities and its publications. As of this year, there have been some internal reforms: Lieke Van Deinsen has left the board. The board currently consists of 9 members: Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis (president), Alberto Feenstra (treasurer), Vanessa Van Puyvelde (secretary), Lien Verpoest, Devin Vartija, Josephina de Fouw, Brecht Deseure (representative EMLC), Sarah Adams (representative *Jaarboek 18e Eeuw*) and Eleá de la Porte.

The Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies organizes a conference and one or more public activities each year. It also tries in various ways to support (young) researchers and to promote the visibility of the long 18th century in academia and beyond. The Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies publishes a yearbook (in Dutch: *Jaarboek*) in Dutch, which is aimed at a wide audience and is sent to all members. Since 2017, the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies has also participated in the new online journal *Early Modern Low Countries*, which it publishes jointly with the Dutch-Belgian Society for Seventeenth-Century Studies. Members are kept informed of the latest news, conferences, exhibitions, calls for papers, and publications in the field of the eighteenth century through a digital newsletter, the website <http://www.18e-eeuw.nl/>, our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WerkgroepAchttiendeEeuw/>) and our Twitter-page (<https://twitter.com/18eEeuw>).

## Outreach efforts

The board members of the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies noticed that the needs of (early-career) researchers have changed. In order to attract more early-career researchers and reach out to (non-academic) enthusiasts, the Society has started organizing more individual events and activities. To be more precise, an online lecture series is organized every year as well as a member event every six months. Such events are not only open to enthusiasts, but also represent important networking opportunities for young researchers. The collaboration with AUP will also allow the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies to engage in more professional activities on publishing matters, such as organizing workshops for young researchers (e.g., on publishing the first article, on journal diversity, on open access...). It is also the Society's intention to present the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the *Yearbook* and EMLC more as one entity to the outside world: in this way we can reason outwardly as a stage for the history of the long 18th century, emphasizing interdisciplinarity as the uniting factor between all of these initiatives.

The Society has made efforts to improve its social media presence, in order to expand our reach and address new audiences. We have appointed one of our board members, Devin Vartija, as the Society's social media manager, meaning that things are running more smoothly now. In the future, we intend to work together with Amsterdam University Press (AUP), so that our events gain traction and visibility.

## Events

The tradition of the online lecture series, which was initiated by launched on the occasion of the Corona pandemic will continue this year as well. In addition, the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is constantly involved in the debate on the eighteenth century, for example through social media, but also through our website, newsletter or through personal involvement in initiatives and events.

## Webinars

Because of the series' great success, and the general accessibility of the format, a new webinar series will be organized in the Spring of 2023, this time on the theme "Translations/Multilingualism". The webinars attract many participants, both members and non-members, and are the perfect way for researchers and enthusiasts to step into the eighteenth century for an hour at the end of their workday.

Each webinar is introduced and moderated by the board members responsible for inviting speakers. The current series has as its overarching theme "Early Modern Babylon? Multilingualism in the Low Countries in the Eighteenth Century". The panel was put together by Vanessa Van Puyvelde, Brecht Deseure and Eleá de la Porte. This series includes three lectures that will take place over a period of three months: on April 26 (by Inger Leemans), on May 15 (by Lieven D'hulst) and on June 14 (by Vanessa Van Puyvelde). The first lecture will delve deeper into Inger Leemans' research on translation practices in the eighteenth-century Low Countries. In the second lecture, Lieven D'hulst will take us to the period of the French Revolution and take a transnational look at translation in the Southern Netherlands, with a focus on the Belgian author and translator Norbert Cornelissen. In the concluding lecture, Vanessa Van Puyvelde will analyze the identity-shaping role of literary journals from the eighteenth-century Southern Netherlands through a brief comparative study between a Dutch-speaking and French-speaking journal.

## Physical events

**Excursions:** 'The Forgotten Princesses of Thorn' (Spring 2022), 'Clara the Rhinoceros' (Autumn 2022) and 'Alkmaar in Suriname' (Spring 2023)

The last physical meeting of the Society took place in spring 2022. With great pleasure we invited our members to an excursion to the exhibition 'The Forgotten Princesses of Thorn' at the Limburgs Museum (Venlo) on Wednesday, March 30. In cooperation with the Limburgs Museum, a special program was put together for the members of the Eighteenth Century Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

November 2022 saw the publication of the new Yearbook of the Eighteenth Century, on the topic of 'Knowledge for the Public Good'. At the same time, the exhibition 'Clara the Rhinoceros' opened at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. With the help of Josephina de Fouw, a new member event was organized, focusing on the eighteenth-century thirst for knowledge and general wonder about the world. This excursion took place on November 4 and consisted of two parts: a book presentation where the new Yearbook was presented on the one hand and a visit to the Rijksmuseum on the other. The exhibition was about the life of Clara, the rhinoceros brought to Amsterdam from India by Dutchman Douwe Mout van der Meer Clara in 1741. It is difficult to imagine now, but until Clara's arrival, a print from 1515 was almost the only thing people knew of a rhinoceros. Clara toured large and small European cities for no less than seventeen years as a superstar, drawing crowds everywhere. Scientists studied her, artists marveled at her looks. Gijs van der Ham, curator of the exhibition, welcomed members of the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies that day for an exclusive joint visit to the exhibition.

A new excursion was also organized in the spring of 2023, this time to the Stedelijk Museum Albaar. There, under the guidance of Dr. Christi Klinkert, one of the museum's curators, we were able to view the exhibition Alkmaar in Suriname: 1745-present, which highlighted Alkmaar's slavery past. Afterwards, it was possible to visit the exhibition 'Rich and Independent: Maria van Nesse (1588-1860)' on one's own.

### **Summer Congress ISECS 2023**

This summer (July 2023) will see the 16th Congress of the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the world's largest gathering of specialists on all aspects of the eighteenth century. The conference is organized by the Italian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, with as its theme 'Antiquity and the Shaping of the Future in the Age of Enlightenment'. Several (former) members will lecture at the congress, including Eleá de la Porte, Vanessa Van Puyvelde, Devin Vartija, Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis, Lien Verpoest, Sarah Adams, Lieke van Deinsen and Wouter De Vries. This congress represents a great opportunity for the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies to increase the international outreach of its research(ers), both in vivo and on social media (Twitter).

### **Annual Congress Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Eighteenth Century 2023**

Last year's annual congress was organized in cooperation with the Seventeenth Century Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, with the theme "Emotions in Conflict. This year's annual congress will take place on 15 December 2023, most likely December. It will focus on 'The Revolutionary Era in North and South, 1785-1795'. The congress committee consists of Brecht Deseure, Frank Judo, Pierre Delsaerd, Lien Verpoest and Klaas Van Gelder. The congress will take place in Brussels. The call-for-papers are being prepared and will be sent out in the spring.

### **Publications**

As of 2017, the journal *The Eighteenth Century* has become an annual. Once a year, in the fall, the members of the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies receive this yearbook, whose main language is Dutch. The editors of the yearbook are Angelie Sens, Jeanette Kamp, Marleen de Vries, Christophe Madelein, Elwin Hofman and Sarah Adams (editorial secretary). Since last year, the yearbook is no longer published by Verloren publishers, but by Amsterdam University Press (AUP).

The 2022 yearbook, with the theme 'Knowledge for the Public Good', was compiled with the help of guest editor Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis and was dedicated to Christophe Madelein (1978-2022). He compiled a thematic dossier on knowledge and science in the eighteenth century in the broadest sense.

In 2023, guest editor Ruben Verwaal (Durham University) will provide a dossier focusing on (the perception of) eighteenth-century people with disabilities from a historical, literary, artistic or philosophical perspective. This Jaarboek aims to give attention to 18<sup>th</sup>-century people with disabilities. After all, the perception of disabilities and people with disabilities changed considerably. On the one hand, philosophers took deafness and blindness as the starting point for intellectual reflections on knowledge and language, while physicians specialized in congenital defects, and authors wrote about the spiritual and moral dignity of characters with disabilities. On the other hand, the increasing popularity of (auto)biographies gives insight into the experiences and views of people themselves. Some suffered public lives, told their stories and sought justice for themselves and others marginalized by poverty or social status. The Jaarboek will probably be finished by Fall 2023. A CfP for the 2024 Jaarboek has been released: 'Alcohol & Drugs in the Eighteenth Century'.

In addition, since 2017, the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies has participated in the digital open-access journal *Early Modern Low Countries (EMLC)*, which it co-manages with the Seventeenth Century Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. This journal is intended as an international platform for research on the Low Countries in the early modern period (1500-1800).

The language of communication is basically English. The editors include specialists in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and they include Dr. Joris Oddens (chair), Dr. David van der Linden (managing editor) and Prof. Dr. Maarten Prak (associate editor). In December 2022, volume 6.2 of EMLC was published online, with contributions on the Dutch mission of 1795 and the "forgotten" history of Western encounters with China, the Reformation in the Low Countries and the translation of the Qur'an in the Republic.

#### Funds and grants

##### **Thesis Award**

As of 2018, the Thesis Prize will no longer be awarded annually, but only once every two years, in the odd-numbered years. Thus, no thesis award was issued in 2022. A call-for-papers will be sent out for young researchers in the summer of 2023. Attached to the prize is a monetary amount, which has been increased to €500 (this was €250) as of 2018. In addition, the winner will have the opportunity to turn his thesis into an article for the Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies's yearbook or the journal EMLC. The intention is to give more visibility to the thesis award by linking an event focused on young people to the award ceremony. The three best submissions will be able to present their research briefly, so that researchers of the long 18th century can stay abreast of the themes that stir young researchers. In this way, therefore, we hope to increase contact between members and early-stage researchers.

#### International context

The Eighteenth Century Dutch-Belgian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies is part of the International Society for Eighteenth Century Studies. ISECS funds and organizes symposia and conferences and forms a bridge with our various sister societies in other countries. Recently this organization has changed its administrative embedding, where it was previously part of the Voltaire Foundation based in Britain, its embedding is now in France.

This year, the 16th Congress for ISECS will take place in Rome (July 3-7, 2023). Several (former) members will lecture at the congress, including Eleá de la Porte, Vanessa Van Puyvelde, Devin Vartija, Fokko Jan Dijksterhuis, Lien Verpoest, Sarah Adams, Lieke van Deinsen and Wouter De Vries.