

## Activities Report of the **Austrian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies**, 2023-2024

By Thomas Assinger (OGE18 Secretary).

This report covers activities of the Austrian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (OGE18) from May 2023 through the submission deadline of July 12, 2024.

### I **Organizational and Strategic Matters**

The OGE18 was founded in 1982 and currently has 215 members. The present board ([https://oege18.org/?page\\_id=18](https://oege18.org/?page_id=18)) was elected on November 25, 2022, and will remain in office until the end of 2024. As the increasing number of members shows, strategic efforts to recruit especially scholars at the beginning of their academic careers are successful. An important medium-term goal of OGE18 is to initiate and coordinate larger international and transregional grant proposals. To this end, an important focus is on intensifying the exchange of information between members and with other national societies of 18<sup>th</sup>-century studies.

### II **Publications**

There has been an important organisational change regarding publications. The production of the OGE18 yearbook and book series will from now on be supported by an **editorial team**. This is intended to professionalize the administrative and editorial processes, to render cooperation with guest editors more transparent and to improve the peer review process.

Recently Published [Yearbooks](#) (double-blind peer-reviewed) of the OGE18:

- M. Romberg / M. Garloff / D. Gruber / M. Mayer (Eds.) (2023), Querschnitt. Aktuelle Forschungen zur Habsburgermonarchie im 18. Jahrhundert. Vienna – Cologne – Weimar, Böhlau Verlag (Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert und Österreich, vol. 38). [*Cutting Across. New Research on the Habsburg Monarchy in the Eighteenth Century*]
- L. Rammerstorfer / G. Waldner / N.C. Wolf (Eds.) (forthcoming 2024), Wien um 1800. Eine Großstadtkultur im historischen Umbruch. Vienna – Cologne – Weimar, Böhlau Verlag (Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert und Österreich, vol. 39). [*Vienna 1800. A Metropolitan Culture in Historical Transition*]

Recent Publications in the [OGE18 Book Series](#):

- P. Himl (forthcoming 2024), Beobachten, Beschreiben, Gestalten. Die Polizei im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Moderne Staat, 1770–1820. Vienna – Cologne – Weimar (Schriftenreihe der Österreichischen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts, vol. 23).

### III **Activities**

Unlike other Societies, the OGE18 does not feature a regular series of lectures. Instead, it tries to reach out to its members through different formats of academic exchange, while, of course, also participating in the co-organization of talks, conferences and excursions.

Several members of the OGE18 took part in the **ISECS World Congress** in Rome in July 2023. They successfully presented their latest research and established and maintained contacts with scholars from all over the world.

Perhaps the most important task in the past year was dedicated to promoting outstanding work of early career scholars. In memory of Emperor Francis Stephen of Lorraine's special role as patron to the sciences and the arts in 'Austria', the OGE18 awarded the **Franz-Stephan-Preis 2023** for excellent dissertations on the history and culture of the Habsburg Monarchy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, further it awarded the **Franz-Stephan-Förderungspreis 2023** for excellent MA-theses on a topic from the field

of eighteenth-century studies presented at an Austrian university. Given the many submissions worthy of consideration, it was a great challenge to organize a reliable decision-making process with two reviews per submission, one internal and one external.

The awards were formally presented during our general meeting, the **Tag des 18. Jahrhunderts** on 24 November 2024. Award winners were Gernot Mayer (Bonn), Eva Seemann (Zurich) and Florian Ambach (Innsbruck). The meeting also included the presentation of the new yearbook, new members were officially welcomed and Norbert Christian Wolf, Professor of German at the University of Vienna, gave the keynote speech “Euphoria and Resentment” on Johann Pezzl’s *Skizze von Wien*. Entertainment was provided by Marcin Kranz on the baroque guitar with pieces by Santiago de Murcia.

In addition to this highlight of the annual programme, the OGE18 also took part in the **retirement ceremonies** of historian Gunda Barth-Scalmani (Innsbruck, 2 June 2023) and art historian Friedrich Polleross (Vienna, 22 June 2023). The OGE18 was also able to cooperate in the organisation of two conferences: From 13-16 September 2023, the cultural history conference [Wien um 1800. Eine Großstadtkultur im historischen Umbruch](#) took place in Vienna; from 15-16 February 2024, the conference [Herrschaft, Verwaltung und Zentralisierung](#) on the administrative history of the Habsburg Monarchy was held in Innsbruck. Further, two presentations are to be mentioned from OGE18’s cooperation with the lecture series [Geschichte am Mittwoch](#) (History on Wednesday) at the University of Vienna: On March 6, 2024, Renate Zedinger (Vienna) talked about Maria Luisa de Borbón; on June 12, Jeff Burson presented his “Quest for Deeper Origins of Enlightenment: Perspectives on the Entanglement of Humanism, Confessional Dispute, and Early Modern Globalization”.

A major success in OGE18’s international cooperation was the granting of the COST-Action [Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe 1500-1800](#) headed by Mona Garloff by the European Union funding organisation European Cooperation in Science and Technology. The working groups for the next four years are currently put together and will begin their work in October.

In order to convey hands-on knowledge about digital humanities research, the OGE18 is continuing its series of **Digital Days**, an open exchange format for DH-oriented projects on the (long) eighteenth century ([https://oege18.org/?page\\_id=1890](https://oege18.org/?page_id=1890)). Future events in Klagenfurt and Salzburg are being planned.

In addition to the Franz-Stephan-Preis, a recurring activity to promote early career scholars is the OGE18’s **doctoral colloquium** where PhD students can share and discuss their projects with renowned experts in the field of 18<sup>th</sup>-century studies. The next colloquium will take place in September 2024 in Stams (Tyrol).

To **recruit new members**, the “Schenk eine Mitgliedschaft” (Donate a Membership) initiative was successfully continued. Members of the OGE18 can thus give away one-year memberships, from which particularly graduate students and early career scholars benefit.

Regarding the society’s **outreach efforts**, the OGE18 regularly posts content on its **social media** (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) in addition to its website. The website itself is to be redesigned and given a contemporary look in the near future. Furthermore, new books in 18<sup>th</sup> century studies are regularly presented in short videos and interviews via the **OGE18 Youtube channel** (“[OGE18 Bücherkiste](#)”).

Two more recent activities are perhaps worth mentioning: First, OGE18 is currently working on a long-term solution for organizing its documents and books in an own archive and library; second, the

society is developing a fundraising strategy for the future with professional advice in order to secure financial support. Respective portfolios are being established within the advisory board and the executive board.

For a detailed account of all OGE18 activities please visit our website ([www.oege18.org](http://www.oege18.org)).