

ASHMS

Amsterdam School for Heritage and Memory Studies

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A New Name: The Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture

Dear ASHMS Members,

I am pleased to let you know that ASHMS Advisory Board has unanimously approved both the forthcoming expansion of our school when five research groups, ACASA and NICAS members in the fields of archaeology and conservation and restoration will join us next year. Already in our first meetings it became clear that the new groups and members will add much to our mission to become a transdisciplinary platform for all humanities research related to both the pastness of the present and the present of the past. As a result of this expansion the school will also change its name from February 2016 to become "The Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture".

I must admit that I never imagined how much time it would take to actually build a school, but by now we may conclude that we really have come into existence. This is also symbolically marked by the new location in the restored BG2 building which also offers much space to PhDs and visiting fellows. At this moment the school brings together almost one hundred researchers, of which more than fifty staff members and thirty-five PhDs. While this is more than we could have expected, many staff members combine their membership with that of one or two other schools. From an institutional perspective this might be seen as a weakness or at least a peculiarity, as our school lacks the 'natural' support of a department, or even a discipline. Yet, we might also regard it as a challenge and enjoy the adventure of

becoming the UvA's first truly interdisciplinary research community.

In fact ASHMS already has come to function as a platform for transdisciplinary research initiatives. In cooperation with other interdepartmental and interfaculty centers, such as ACHI and ACCESS EUROPE, the school has initiated two new book series; the *Heritage and Memory Studies* series at AUP and the *Palgrave Cultural Heritage and Conflict* series. The School has also supported a large number of international workshops and conferences, and, together with IXA and the faculty's research department, also a growing number of international research proposals. ASHMS further operates within a growing network of museums and heritage organizations. In cooperation with the College of Humanities and Graduate School, the School was also involved in plans for education, such as the BA honours program *Competing Memories*, and the new research master "Heritage, Memory and Material Culture"; the latter in addition to existing dual "Heritage and Memory Studies" masters and other programs in the fields of heritage, memory and material culture.

After having contributed to these institutional building activities, the ASHMS board has advised to make the school more visible in the nearby future, for which we hope that our website and this newsletter will function as an internal and external communication channel. For next year we also hope to employ more activities to strengthen the cohesion of themes and research groups, fostering the bonds with, and between, you as our members. In addition to this 'community building' we would also like to become more visible in the international research fields where some of our research groups might have excellent cards to excel. For we may be satisfied about what has been reached, but in this difficult period for humanities we have still a long way to go to convince others of our expertise on the uses and abuses of the past.

Prof. Rob van der Laarse (Academic Director) &
Dr. Ihab Saloul (Academic Coordinator)

Proposals for a new acronym

The new name of the research school, The Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture, also requires a new acronym. For that we would like to ask our members to think along and submit suggestions and ideas for the new acronym. Please send your acronym proposal before 25 January 2016 to ashms-fgw@uva.nl. The proposals will be reviewed by the Advisory Board and the winning idea will be publicly announced at ASHMS new year's reception/dinner on 29 January 2016 (19:00-21:00 / BG2 Cafeteria) to which all our members are warmly welcome to join.

Events and conferences

Book Launch "Jan Willem Kumpel

18th of December 2015, 15:00 - 18:00

Special collections library of the UvA

and the Huizinga Instituut

Attendance is free, please register in advance

On the 18th of December 2015, the special collections library of the UvA and the Huizinga Instituut will host the book launch of 'De herinneringen van Jan Willem Kumpel (1757–1826). Het rampspoedige leven van een Amsterdams jurist, publicist en Orangist', edited by ASHMS and ASH staff member Hanneke Ronnes. This book forms the 33rd and last volume in the Egodocumenten series that is being published by Uitgeverij Verloren. The launch will be preceded by a mini-symposium (in Dutch) in the Nina van Leerzaal, Special Collections UvA, with lectures by Hanneke Ronnes, Rudolf Dekker, Peter van Zonneveld and Marleen de Vries. At 17:00 there will be a reception at the Museumcafé, where a small exhibition on Jan Willem Kumpel is being held.

More information [here](#).

Conference: Transcultural memory and reception in Europe

18-21 April 2016

Sofia, Bulgaria.

This conference will focus on the ways in which memory narratives, produced by a variety of political and civil society actors as well as by artists and writers, circulate within European societies and across European borders. How are memory narratives interpreted, appropriated, and translated into actions and attitudes? How does reception feed into the production of new narratives or the transformation of existing ones? In keeping with the main aims of ISTME (In Search of Transcultural Memory in Europe), of particular concern will be the question

how such processes play out across national and cultural borders. Confirmed keynote speakers are Prof. Dr. h.c. Aleida Assman, University of Konstanz; Dr. Paula Hamilton, University of Technology, Sydney; Prof. dr. Wulf Kansteiner, Aarhus University; and dr. Miglena Nikolchina, Sofia University.

More information [here](#).

Conference: The East & Europe

23-25 June 2016,

University of Amsterdam

Through critical, multidisciplinary, diachronic and comparative approaches this conference intends to explore the dynamics between the two geographical and conceptual constructs: 'the East', whether identified with Byzantium, Islam, Eastern Christianity, Asia, or other characteristics, and 'Europe', as the perceived counterpart of the variously defined 'east' or as in itself the embodiment of western cultures' self-ideal? Confirmed key note speaker is Prof. dr. Edhem Eldem from the Bosphorus University in Istanbul on June 24th.

Conference: Creativity and the City 1600-2000: An E-Humanities Perspective

27-29 October 2016

University of Amsterdam

This international and interdisciplinary conference on the history of creativity and the city aims to bring together recent research in the fields of history, arts, and digital humanities. In the last decade, scholars in the humanities and social sciences have explored the complex interplay between places and their culture using a variety of methods and approaches. The conference examines the relationship between cultural artefacts (art, books, etc.) and the urban networks and spaces in which they were conceived, (re)produced, distributed, mediated, and consumed in early modern and modern Europe. How such issues can be studied by means of existing and novel (digital) methods, as well as comparative and long-term approaches, is the second major theme of the conference.

Please note that this is a bimonthly newsletter. For more up-to-date news, please check the [ASHMS-website](#).

Calls

ACCESS EUROPE: Call for events

Deadline: 17 December 2015

ACCESS EUROPE is an UvA-VU platform for stimulating, coordinating, and supporting collaborative research, education and public debate on contemporary Europe, the European Union, and its member states. It engages a wide range of academics from the participating faculties in the Centre's six core Research Themes: European Politics and Society; Political Economy of Integration and Welfare; European Law and Governance; European Constitutionalism; European Identity and Culture and Europe and the World. ACCESS EUROPE invites UvA and VU researchers to submit proposals for academic or public activities on topics with a clear European dimension.

Find more information [here](#).

Undergraduate Panel: Call for papers

Deadline: 15 January 2016, midnight Eastern Time

This undergraduate panel, to be held 17-20 March at Harvard University, is organized by the American Comparative Literature Association, and will be centered around the concept of borders.

Central to several fields of knowledge, the concept of borders has enjoyed continuous attention since antiquity. Borders circumscribe, juxtapose, and define; they can be transgressed, trespassed, negotiated, reestablished. From enclosures in jurisdiction and economy to warfare strategy; from the importing and exporting of goods, theoretical concepts, and artistic trends to translations of texts across languages and cultures; from narrative "omniscience" and the limits of consciousness to waves of migration; from frames in film or paintings to marginalia; from the questioning of disciplinary boundaries to the tension between center and periphery; from journeys across spatial and temporal boundaries to the blurring of the normal/abnormal and human/non-human distinctions: "borders" keep populating and nurturing the literary and artistic imagination. The organization welcomes proposals of 250 words or less for papers that explore the theme of borders in its multiple inflections. Please send your proposals to Henry Bowles (bowles.henry@gmail.com) and Elena Fratto (efratto@fas.harvard.edu)

ESSCS Summer School on Legibility: Call for papers

Deadline: 16 January 2016

This summer school, organized by Pepita Hesselberth (LUCAS/NICA) and Esther Peeren (ASCA/NICA) centers around the question of legibility. What does it mean for something to be (considered) legible and what are the stakes and limits of such legibility? The organizers welcome papers dealing with these questions from cultural, literary, cinematic, material, affective, technological, machinic, linguistic and other perspectives, including the metaperspective reflecting on the (il)legibility of our own academic writing, especially in interdisciplinary contexts. The Summer School will feature keynote lectures and masterclasses by senior scholars (to be confirmed), as well as paper sessions in which PhD candidates and other young scholars address the theme of legibility in relation to their own research. Abstracts (max. 300 words) with a short bio (max. 150 words) should be submitted to nica-fgw@uva.nl by 17 January 2016.

For PhD students and RMA students associated with NICA, there is also a possibility to earn 5 ECTS.

Find more information [here](#).

IHRA: Call for grant applications

Deadline: 31 January 2016, 23:59 CET

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally. The IHRA calls for grant applications in its Grant Strategy 2015-2018. Applications with the following special focuses are encouraged: genocide of the Roma, new research fields, projects that further support IHRA's Multi-Year Work Plan, Holocaust denial, new technologies and social media, and public campaigns and installations.

Find more information [here](#).

The East & Europe Conference: Call for papers

Deadline: 15 February 2016

This conference will take place 23-25 June 2016 at the University of Amsterdam. The organizers from the Amsterdam School for Regional, Transnational and European Studies invite researchers from various disciplines within the humanities to share their scholarly interest in the cultural interaction and exchange that has taken place since antiquity between 'the East' and 'Europe', and in the processes of societal transformation and identity construction involved.

The four broadly-defined sessions in which these and related questions will be discussed allow for a variety of methodological approaches to these topics.

1. Boundaries & Concepts
2. Translation & Transformation
3. Mobility & Identity
4. Memory & Imagination

Find more information [here](#).

The Making of the Humanities V: Call for papers

Deadline: 30 April 2016

One of the activities of the research group 'History and Philosophy of the Humanities' at the UvA is the organization of a series of conferences: the 'Making of the Humanities'. Previous conferences were in Amsterdam (2008, 2010) and Rome (2012, 2014). The fifth conference in the series will take place at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA, 5-7 October 2016. The organizers of the conference are interested in papers on the history of a wide variety of disciplines, including archaeology, art history, historiography, linguistics, literary studies, musicology, philology, and media studies, tracing these fields from their earliest developments to the modern day. They welcome panels and papers on any period or region and are especially interested in work that transcends the history of specific humanities disciplines by comparing scholarly practices across disciplines and civilizations.

Find more information [here](#).

Visiting Scholars & Postdocs

In this issue, we would like to introduce three of the school's visiting scholars and postdocs: Ms. Iveta Gogava, Dr. Zuzanna Dziuban, and Dr. Judy Schagen.

Iveta Gogava, visiting PhD from Tbilisi State University, Georgia

What is your academic background, and can you tell us something about your current research project?

I obtained my Bachelor in Political Sciences and a master's in "Transformation in the South Caucasus" from the Center for Social Sciences at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), Georgia. In 2013 I started my PhD in Cultural Studies program at TSU. Since October 2015, I am a guest researcher at ASHMS under the supervision of Prof. Rob van der Laarse and Prof. Ellen Rutten, where I work on my dissertation as part of the larger research project "Soviet Remembrance of 1930s: Political Repression." This project aims to study the narratives around the political repressions in

Georgia (1936-38) comparing the official (state provided) and oral (perceived) history. To study the difference that exists between the two and determine to what extent these repressions can be considered as a cultural trauma and identify the main characteristics of cultural trauma in Georgian society after the collapse of the USSR.

What inspired you to study this topic, and why did you choose to join ASHMS?

I was first inspired to do this research when I followed a course on "Perceptions about History: Memory Politics." As an assignment for this course, I examined the remembrance of the Soviet repression of Georgia in the 1930s in the memoirs of repressed people, in order to illustrate the main characteristics of Soviet repressions. This research inspired me greatly and I wanted to extend my project. In December, 2014, I received a Doctoral Fellowship by the L.E.P.L. Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. While searching for specialized expertise in the field of Memory Studies, I came across the work of Prof. van der Laarse and Prof. Ellen Rutten who accepted to supervise my project and host me at ASHMS.

Can you reflect on your trajectory so far in the research school and how do you envision your contribution to heritage and memory studies in the coming years?

Getting acquainted with ASHMS research fields has made me realize that my research can contribute to the field of Heritage and Memory studies in two ways: First, it introduces the analysis of traumatic experience of Soviet repressions in the case for Georgia, and can thus shed light on the way these experiences still affect the country in the present. Second, my study makes use of a variety of sources (textbooks, memoirs/diaries, press), which can provide unique and interesting insights in the formation of socio-cultural memory, the nature of provided and perceived histories and the characteristics of the transformation of these narratives.

Zuzanna Dziuban, a Visiting Postdoc from the University of Konstanz, Germany

What is your current position, and when did you join the Amsterdam School for Heritage and Memory Studies?

In September 2014 I was granted a DAAD/Marie-Curie P.R.I.M.E (Postdoctoral Researchers Mobility Experience) fellowship, which gave me employment at the University of Konstanz in Germany. The fellowship also enabled me to spend a year abroad as a visiting postdoc researcher. I joined ASHMS in October 2015 under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Rob van der Laarse.

What is your academic background, and can you tell us something about your current research project?

I have an academic background in philosophy and cultural studies. In 2009 I defended my dissertation in cultural studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. My dissertation, titled 'Atopia as an Interpretative Category in Radical Hermeneutics of Cultural Experience,' was devoted to the analysis of the long-lasting battles surrounding 'experience' and its reconceptualizations within the framework of the variegated hermeneutic tradition, with a special focus on post-Heideggerian hermeneutics. After my PhD, my research interests have shifted to the field of urban studies, critical special theory, and finally, to heritage and memory studies and genocide studies. My current research project, "Deathscapes – Landscapes – Public Art: Material, Political and Affective Afterlives of the Nazi Extermination Camps" focuses on the postwar fates of three National Socialist extermination camps in Poland (Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka), and tests the interpretive potential of new conceptual approaches to the research on post-Holocaust landscapes such as dead body studies, materiality, and affect theory. The need to give voice to these complex ontologies goes hand in hand with a desire to understand the troubling history of those sites, which were for many decades almost entirely erased from the memorial landscapes of Poland and Europe.

What inspired you to study this topic, and why did you choose to join ASHMS?

I was struck by the fact that the postwar fates of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, crucial for the implementation of the 'Final Solution,' still suffer noticeable neglect in scholarly research. At the same time, I was fascinated by the many advancements, shifts and alterations undergone by those sites in the recent years: as material sites, the largest Jewish cemeteries on Polish soil, as multidimensional subjects of legal proceedings, political interests, archaeological investigations, and cultural and artistic representations. As such they can serve as a perfect prism through which to analyze the transformations of post-war memory politics in Poland and, more generally, the dynamics of Holocaust memory in Europe. On a theoretical level, my project was born out of the realization that the discipline-bound and often narrowly focused perspectives on the former Nazi camps still form the prevalent scholarly approach to these sites. Unlike in other research contexts where the intersections between the remnants of violence, memory, politics and space are being investigated in their dynamics and complexity, the research on post-Holocaust landscapes remains relatively immune to the latest theoretical developments cutting across the established disciplinary boundaries, such as the material/ forensic/ affective or transnational 'turns.' The work conducted at ASHMS within the framework of the

interdisciplinary research project 'Terrorscapes,' is an important exception. It proposes an approach to the spaces marked by violence, including post-Holocaust landscapes, that explores the intersections between their material, narrative and political dimensions. Moreover, ASHMS also cooperates with the Dutch Sobibor Foundation actively and involved in commemoration of the 'Aktion Reinhardt' camps. The archeological investigations at Sobibor and Treblinka are also developed in collaboration with the School. For all these reasons ASHMS was the ideal choice for conducting my research project.

Can you reflect on your trajectory so far in the research school and how do you envision your contribution to heritage and memory studies in the coming years?

My stay at ASHMS already gave me the opportunity to deepen my theoretical perspective and to expand my international academic and professional networks which is crucial for the successful completion of my research. The School provides, in addition, a perfect intellectual environment to develop my ideas on my habilitation, which is the planned outcome of the research project. I hope it will not only fill the research gap regarding the afterlives of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, but also propose an innovative conceptual framework for studying the neglected dimensions of these sites which are scarred by difficult pasts. To provide an example: my project asks about the potential implications of the turn towards the materiality and agency of human remains in the developing field of dead body studies for the research on post-Holocaust landscapes, which are, after all, sites of mass burial. This question plays an important role in a book I am currently editing the 'forensic turn' reshaping theoretical approaches and cultural sensitivities towards spaces shaped by (genocidal) violence.

Judy Schagen, a Visiting Postdoc from Haifa University, Israel

What is your academic background, and can you tell us something about your current research project.

I received my MA in economic-social history from the UVA. In 2013, I obtained my PhD from the Faculty of Arts, history department, within CLUE+, the Research Institute for the Heritage and History of the Cultural Landscape and Urban Environment, at VU University Amsterdam. In my dissertation, *Objects in context, peoples in places. Home, museum and belonging in the cultural landscape of Israel*, I looked at museums and domestic spaces of eight groups in Israel—Chabad, Moroccan, Iraqi, Ethiopian, Russian, Religious-Zionist, Christian Arab, and Muslim Arab. I argued that, while the sheer number of museums in Western European countries often expresses the concept of a multicultural

society, in Israel, by contrast, the large quantity of museums is a reflection of a divided society where museums seem to be part of the struggle over land and national narrative. I proposed a new approach to collecting and categorizing particularly well-suited to societies in conflict.

Following my PhD I received a postdoctoral fellowship at Haifa University in Israel. Here I rewrote my thesis for book publication. The manuscript has been accepted for publication by Berghahn Books, New York / Oxford, and the publication date of *Having and belonging. Homes and museums in Israel* is set for March 2016. I also started a new research project focusing on the connection between migrants, museums and memorials in Israel. I joined the Amsterdam School of Heritage and Memory Studies in November as a visiting postdoctoral researcher, where I am continuing this research.

What inspired you to study this topic, and why did you choose to join ASHMS?

After I completed my MA, I started working as a researcher in museums. From the beginning I was aware of the responsibility museums have when collecting and categorizing objects and particularly when choosing which story to tell.

This inspired me to focus my academic work on the role of museums in the establishing of societies. I strongly believe that museums and memorials can help migrant groups to become acknowledged and respected within society.

I have been looking for a community in which to discuss my work and to engage in a debate about heritage and memory with academics from diverse areas and fields as well as artists. Therefore I was drawn to the interdisciplinary nature of ASHMS. Dr Ihab Saloul's interests in cultural memory, identity politics, migration, diaspora and contemporary cultural thought in the Middle East correspond with my own interests, which makes the school an even better fit for me. I feel very fortunate to be able to join the ASHMS.

Can you reflect on your trajectory so far in the research school and how do you envision your contribution to heritage and memory studies in the coming years?

I hope to contribute to heritage and memory studies by formulating a model of collecting and categorizing objects that is particularly suited for museums in societies in conflict, but which also applies generally. As I believe museum collections are influenced by the presence of memorials, the model will take into account the role memorials play in the cultural political landscape. I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the academic debate within the school and I hope to be able to connect the ASHMS further to institutions like CLUE+. At the VU I will participate in the conference '(Dis)connected world' on 18 March and am tentatively

scheduled to teach a World Heritage module in the spring.