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## Introduction. From Janus to Studium, and beyond: a comparative anatomy of the history of science journals in the Low Countries

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# Introduction. From *Janus* to *Studium*, and beyond: a comparative anatomy of the history of science journals in the Low Countries

ILJA NIEUWLAND\* AND GEERT SOMSEN\*\*

The issue in front of you represents the swansong of *Studium*, a journal that was founded in 2008 as the successor to both *Gewina* and *Scientiarum Historia*, two long-standing journals dedicated to the history of science, published in the Netherlands and Belgium, respectively.

Now that *Studium* itself is coming to an end and once again a number of successor journals are starting, it seems like a good moment to reflect on the history of history of science journals in the Low Countries.<sup>1</sup> This history is rich – it includes the (globally) oldest international journal in the field (*Janus*) and shows an evolution and diversity easily overseen from the current vantage point of a single journal. We have invited several authors to give thought to the rich history of the writing on the history of science in the Low Countries. Some of them have served as the editors of the journal whose history they describe; others are writing from a position of unencumbered critical distance. We have maintained an informal tone throughout this issue, both to allow for personal observations and to make clear that we have no claim on presenting a ‘final’ history of any of these publications.

These authors’ articles are interspersed with reprints of originals: ‘Janus Redivivus’ (1896) by B.J. Stokvis, the very first article in a history of science journal; ‘In Limine’, which launched the journal *Scientiarum Historia* in 1959; and an observation on ‘labels’ by Casper Hakfoort in *TGGNWT*, reflecting the mood of the field in 1982. What we also reprint is a unique piece on the history of history of science journals in the Netherlands, written by Bert Theunissen in 1998. Taken together, this leaves the past two decades, including the current termination of the line *Gewina-Studium*, uncovered; on this most recent history we provide some remarks in a final piece at the end of this issue.

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1 We use the term ‘history of science’ loosely and broadly, to avoid tedious elaborations of precise coverage.

Our setup is roughly chronological. We inevitably start out with the history of *Janus*, in a piece by Floor Haalboom which explores the broader significance of the two-faced Janus metaphor for the relationship between the history of science and the history of medicine. In addressing the somewhat chequered history of the Belgian journal *Scientiarium Historia*, Geert Vanpaemel shows how a journal explicitly set up to focus on local and regional history increasingly began to suffer because for a difficulty to attract new authors amidst a fundamentally changing academic publication landscape. That not all writing of the history of science in the Low Countries was done in dedicated journals becomes clear in Danny and Anne Beckers' foray into the history of science as portrayed in non-specialist journals. They also points out that these professional publications had their own motives for involving themselves with the history of their field. Leen Dorsman's contribution about the journal *Batavia Academia* shows the other extreme, for rather than those dilettantist efforts this was a specialized journal dedicated to university history, intended both to solidify a relatively new subdiscipline and to help in creating a (professional) community. Rienk Vermij's description (and reminiscences) of 'the green journal' (*het groene tijdschrift*) of the Dutch History of Science Society (under its official names *Tijdschrift voor de Geschiedenis der Geneeskunde, Natuurwetenschappen, Wiskunde, en Techniek* and *Gewina*) reiterates achievements and problems that we have witnessed in earlier contributions. Intended on the one hand to serve the interests of the Society's members, mostly amateurs, and on the other the promotion and professionalization of the history of science in the academic world, these journals never resolved the inherent conflict between these objectives. Both also grappled with the increasing problems of publishing in the Dutch language in an internationalizing academic milieu. In conclusion, we show how *Studium* carried these problems over, while also facing a number of new developments: a rapidly changing composition of the Dutch and Belgian history of science community and a reorganization of the field into institutions such as the Descartes Centre, covering the history of all academic disciplines.

In different forms, the metaphor of Janus always seems to rear its two-faced head. The elimination of *Studium* is, among other things, a recognition of the troubles that have plagued most history of science journals in the Low Countries from the middle of the twentieth century onwards. Its two successors, the *Journal for the history of Knowledge* and *Magazine voor Wetenschapsgeschiedenis*, represent the Belgian-Dutch History of Science Society, *Gewina*, toward its twofold audience: the former facing professional the community, the latter addressing the community of amateurs of our discipline and its stories.

The double gaze has not vanished. Janus is dead, long live his two faces!

#### *Acknowledgments*

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