

CEGESOMA NEWSLETTER

NO 35 - FEBRUARY 2018

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THE DIGITAL CHALLENGE

Results of a day of reflection with the universities on the digital access to the collections of the State Archives. A rewarding meeting rich in exchanges on the respective needs of all parties. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/index_en.php?article=3671

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Publication of two new studies on occupation experiences and memories, and on the role of states in the construction of history and memory. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/autres_publi_en.php

BROADCASTS RADIO BRUXELLES AND ZENDER BRUSSEL TO DISCOVER AT CEGESOMA

An invitation to discover German propaganda in the radio transmissions of the occupier in Brussels during the Second World War. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/actu_en.php?article=3667

JOURNAL OF BELGIAN HISTORY

Publication of the double issue (2-3) of 2017. Among others in this volume, 6 articles on various subjects and a debate section on 'big data and the history manifesto'. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/rbhc_en.php?article=3653

ARCHIVES

The *Fondation roi Baudouin* entrusts new archives to CegeSoma on the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. [\[MORE INFO\]](#)

http://www.cegesoma.be/cms/actu_en.php?article=3664&pagnbr=16&pagofs=0

The State Archives meet the Universities on the Theme of Digitisation!

Since 2015, the State Archives have begun a process of reflection on the digital access to their collections, among other things via the Brain project MADDLAIN carried out in collaboration with the Royal Library. Among the audiences that were studied, the university researchers are one of the priorities of our institution. It therefore seemed useful to reunite the heads of department of the State Archives with representatives of the different history departments of the Belgian universities to exchange ideas on their respective needs.

Feedback on a study day with many debates organized on 5 February.



Some forty participants from different Francophone and Flemish universities, as well as from the State Archives, have met on 5 February to reflect together on the digital challenges of our institution.

The objective was to examine the specific needs of researchers, who are a key group of users among our public, before defining the broad lines of action of the institution for the next years in the digital field.

After a brief presentation of the results of the MADDLAIN project and the digital tools available at the State Archives, the day continued around different participatory workshops.

These workshops were organized around three themes:

1) The digitized collections of the State Archives : Do the present digital collections meet the expectations of the university researchers? What are the priorities of the researchers in the next years in terms of digitization of archive collections of the State Archives? Do the digitization formats meet the needs of the researchers in the context of the "digital humanities" projects?

2) The digital access to the collections : Does the online catalogue of the State Archives meet the expectations and needs of the university researchers? How can the present catalogue be improved? Is collaboration in the context of crowdsourcing projects a potential option?

3) The virtual research environments in the State Archives : Do researchers expect the Archives to make other digital tools available, particularly tools for the processing and analyzing of data, collaborative tools, etc.? What are the possible ways of collaboration between the Archives and the universities for the implementation of "digital humanities" projects?



The organization of this kind of study day proved once more extremely useful, because such meetings allow to establish and maintain an indispensable dialogue between the State Archives and its users. It not only offered all participants the opportunity to express their needs and expectations but it also presented specific collaboration avenues for the next years.

In the previous years, the State Archives have focused on the parish registers and civil status documents that are in particular demand with the genealogists. These documents are also used by historians, but other collections equally deserve to be digitized.

Among these were mentioned the inventories, files and indexes created by the producers of archives that complete the inventories made by the archivists, the thematic guides made by the State Archives, the iconographical documents, the cadastral sources that are mainly of interest to an international public such as the African archives.

Besides the collections that are a priority for digitization, the digitization methods have also been discussed. For instance, it appeared that a number of researchers were in the habit of photographing the documents in the reading room with the aim of studying them at home. But the bad quality of the reproductions and the problems concerning the metadata linked to these digital files advocate a real collaboration with the State Archives.

This could be by making digital equipment available in the reading room that could be used by the researchers after a brief training course, either in the context of a PhD or a history seminar, using funds kept at the State Archives.

During the workshop on the question of the access to the collections, many suggestions were made on the search tools, such as Search and Pallas. These concerned mostly the way in which the search results are presented, the search options that were proposed and the kind of tools offered to the readers. These suggestions are all the more useful as the State Archives will start the modernization of its search engines this year.

In general, the researchers prefer a number of different search methods: search by keyword such as Google, contextualization of the funds in a hierarchical tree, possibility to narrow a research by specific fields (date, repository, etc.)

A particular effort should be made in terms of ergonomics on the display of the results by offering among others the possibility to file them according to different criteria for each researcher. Finally, the communication on problems of multilingualism or synonymy in the keywords, as well as on the use of the search engines via mediation tools easily accessible via the different catalogues seems to be a priority of the researchers.



The last workshop was dedicated to the virtual research environments. As was shown by the results of MADDLAIN, researchers do not really use the existing collaborative research platforms, because they prefer to work in an environment that they are used to and which is directly adapted to their individual needs.

Thus, they use different tools according to their specific needs: a data storage (Office suite, Google Drive), document sharing (Dropbox, Google drive) and communication (blogs), reference management (Zotero, Tropy, XNconvert) or also specific analyses linked to the type of research (ArcGIS, Q-GIS, Nodegoat, Gephi, etc.).

The participants consider the State Archives' primary mission to make a maximum of funds available for research, to ensure their structuring and description with stable and coherent metadata so that they can be used in their own virtual research environments.

Most of them have mentioned the importance of improving the current search engines with more tools: user profile, listing of the results to a variety of criteria, possibility to order online, etc. Finally, to ensure the development of a policy with regard to the digital humanities, the universities stress the importance of the

quality and modeling of the data.

The goal should be the creation of interoperable databases to create links to other platforms outside the institution (Wikipedia, Wikidata, Wikisource, other Linked Open

Data, platforms of other partner institutions, ...).

If you want more information on the contents of the debates, a complete report is available [here](#).

Florence Gillet

23.2.2018

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Books

The CEGESOMA is a Belgian centre of expertise with regard to 20th century conflicts. It regularly publishes, alone or in coedition, monographs and research tools. To order a publication, send an email to cegesoma@cegesoma.be or telephone to 0032/2 556 92 11.

To consult the list of our publications, [click here](#).

To view our most recent publications, surf the pages below.

"Wallonia liberated", "Brussels, liberated city": photos wanted !



In view of the 75 anniversary of the Liberation and the end of the Second World War, two works will be published in the series "Villes en guerre" of *Renaissance du Livre*.

As for previous editions, these works rely heavily on photographs.

Which representation of the events is given through this medium? What do we learn from it? How to use it? Is it possible to write the history of cities at war by relying heavily on photographs? [Read more...](#)

1918-2018. Four Years of War. Hundred Years of Impact

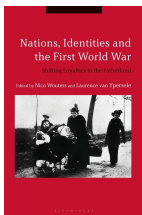


November 1918. Finally, the guns fell silent. Yet, it was not possible to close the chapter. The world as we knew it had disappeared for good.

A new fragile world was beginning, still to be invented. It was the beginning of "the short 20th century" as Eric Hobsbawm so eloquently put it, a phrase now appropriated by many historians.

To illustrate this complex period, the Vif/L'Express has published a special issue, aimed at a wide audience, which has been coordinated by Chantal Kesteloot and Laurence van Ypersele. [Read more...](#)

Results of the conference War and Fatherland are published



On 14-15 October 2015, CegeSoma with all Belgian universities organizes the international conference 'War and Fatherland'. Almost three years later, the results are published in the edited volume 'Nations, Identities and the First World War'.

The book is edited by Nico Wouters (CegeSoma) and Laurence van Ypersele (*Université Catholique de Louvain*), has fifteen chapters and was published by Bloomsbury. [Read more...](#)

A resistance fighter in the garden cities of Watermael-Boitsfort, 1940-1945



The famous documentary maker André Darteville bestows us with a poignant posthumous publication. He put into practice all his talent as a historian and journalist in order to deliver the detailed and heartfelt story of the Resistance in the bucolic Brussels municipality of Watermael-Boitsfort at the edge of city and countryside.

[Read more...](#)

New publication of associated researcher Frank Seberechts



After several recent book publications authored by some of our associated researchers - 'Grenzeloos verzet' from Paul de Jongh, 'De gebroken arm der wet' from Marc Verschooris and 'La valise oubliée' van Gerlinda Swillen - Frank Seberechts now also publishes his new book : 'Drang naar het Oosten'.

[Read more...](#)

Warfare and Welfare: on the Connection between Wars and the Development of the Welfare State.



Wars are moments of acceleration in the development of social policy.

After the Second World War in Belgium, the welfare state is directly associated with the Social Pact of April 1944.

In a new book, the connection between wars and the development of the welfare state ('the warfare-welfare nexus') for a number of countries in and outside Europe is the central theme. [Read more...](#)

Du café liégeois au Soldat inconnu. La Belgique et la Grande Guerre.

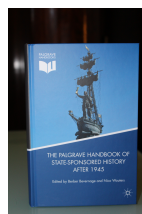


Looking at a past that has forever marked our history

The authors of this book have wanted to describe a certain number of events of the First World War, but also the traces that the conflict left on Belgian society. The aim was not to be exhaustive, or several volumes would not have sufficed.

[Read more...](#)

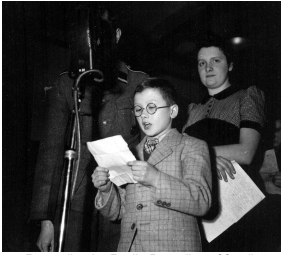
The State, History and Memory: New Publication



Nico Wouters (head CegeSoma) is, together with Berber Bevernage, co-editor of the new publication 'The Handbook of State-Sponsored History after 1945'. With 45 chapters and no less than 50 authors, this is the first book to systematically consider the role of states in the construction of history and memory. [Read more...](#)

The broadcasting programmes of Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel digitally accessible in the reading room!

Wartime radio was a particularly efficient means of communication. News of the front, official or clandestine speeches, encrypted messages and propaganda broadcasts were communicated to the Belgian citizens on a daily basis. Many families hold memories of evenings gathered around the radio. The radio was a real tool of information and persuasion, used by the allies as well as the occupier. CegeSoma proposes to discover or rediscover the German radio production in Brussels during the Second World War!



Recording by Radio Bruxelles of family messages for the volunteers on the Eastern Front, 1940-1945, Collection CegeSoma, Photo 24655.

During the Second World War, the Belgian authorities mainly produced their broadcasts in London and Leopoldville. In the early hours of the invasion of Belgium by the German army, the programmes of the *Institut National de Radiodiffusion (INR)* focused on the most recent events to provide the population with real-time information on the latest developments.

The second line of propaganda during the Second World War was developed by the Germans in the occupied territories. Already on 28 May 1940, the premises of the *INR* were requisitioned. As the technical facilities had been destroyed by the Belgian authorities before their departure to London, the occupier had to use mobile transmitters during the whole war. On 31 July, a decree from the *Militärverwaltung* officially led to the creation of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel*. These new establishments disposed of some 500 Belgian civilians, mostly former employees of the *INR*. The propaganda depended in the first place on the military administration, but was also overseen by Goebbels in Berlin.

Unfortunately, a large part of the Second World War radio archives have disappeared, but not all. The programmes broadcasted by the occupier from the premises of the *INR* have been partially saved and were requisitioned by the military prosecutor's office at the liberation. They were entrusted to the State Archives, and later to CegeSoma at its creation at the end of the 1960s as a Second World War study centre.

The collection of 78 rpm records of the broadcasts of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel* kept at CegeSoma consists of a thousand records in French and nearly two thousand in Dutch. There are also some 500 records in German. This record collection was first kept at the place de Louvain, then in the Résidence Palace and the square de l'Aviation, but are now kept in an air-conditioned room in the depot of CegeSoma in the rue Belgrade in Forest. Apart from the audio archives of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel*, CegeSoma also holds the transcriptions of the broadcasts and some administrative files under call numbers AA33, AA1321 and AA1522, briefly described in the corresponding inventories.

Digit03, the digitization programme funded by the Federal Science Policy Office, made the collection of the audio broadcasts digitally available in the reading room of CegeSoma.

A complete inventory of the broadcasts can be consulted [here](#). The digitization of the paper archives has also started, but this project, which is partially carried out by our own teams, will only be finalized in two or three years. However, the transcriptions of the broadcasts between July 1940 and March 1942 are already available in the reading room, as are all the broadcasts *L'Echo du Jour*.

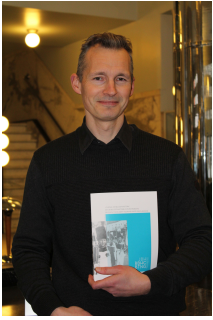
These are of course transcripts that have been kept after the war. They do not correspond with all the broadcasts of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel*, nor do they always correspond with the audio versions that we keep.

Florence Gillet
22.2.2018

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JOURNAL OF BELGIAN HISTORY –The Double Sized Issue of the JBH of 2017 has been published

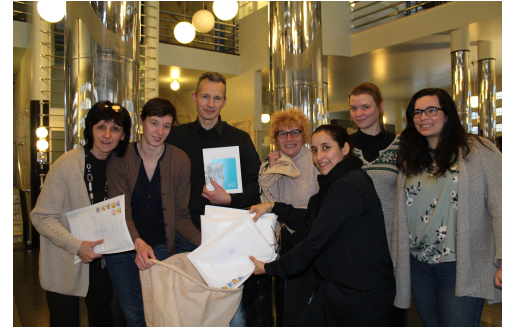
With considerable delay, the double-sized issue (2-3) of 2017 has been published.



The journal contains six diverse articles, on : the policies of hunting by the Belgian Worker's Party (1894-1936), the judicial trials of denunciators after WW I, the rise of the Social Economy in Flanders, movie programming in the Flemish LGB movement(1970-1990), folkloristic military marches in Wallonia and the German-speaking radio transmissions in Belgium (1965-1974).

Besides the PhD section and the reviews, the issue also has a debate section on the 'The History Manifesto' and 'Big Data' with contributions from Christophe Verbruggen, Ramses Delafontaine, Fien Danniau, Sally Chambers (UGent) Pieter Lagrou, Delphine Lauwers & Ornella Rovetta (ULB).

For more information : www.journalbelgianhistory.be
8/2/2018



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The commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The commemorations are ever-present in our society today. The centenary of the Great War, the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, and of course the recent terrorist attacks were all themes for commemoration ceremonies. Commemorations are social perceptions that should be studied not only for their historical relevance, but for the way societies have behaved with respect to them. In other words, how and to which end does the present claim the past?



However, the study of the commemorations is not always an easy one. Which documents should be consulted? Where are the interesting archive collections?

A lucky coincidence: in view of the 50th anniversary of the Second World War, the government had decided to seek the assistance of the Fondation roi Baudouin, an organization which can boast considerable experience in this field following the commemorations of King Baudouin's 'double anniversary': his sixty years of age and his forty-year reign.

The context of these events was rather particular : the commemorations were the first of their kind since Belgium had officially become a federal state, and were among others a political mobilization against the extreme-right and negationism. In fact, a particularly 'sensitive' context. CegeSoma had not only closely followed the events but had also published a book on the subject.

Thanks to the archives that have been entrusted to us by the Fondation roi Baudouin, new research can be launched. The documentation offers a perspective from within and looks for answers to questions such as: Which were the means that were used? How did the cooperation with the federal government and the different states work out? Which values were emphasized?

A lot of research questions to which the answers might be found in the archive boxes. A hint for the enthusiasts!

Chantal Kesteloot
21.2.2018

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