

PHD RESEARCH

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Diligence, Providence and Progress. History as a Secondary School Subject in the Southern Netherlands, 1750-1850 - [Original Title : *Vijt, voorzienigheid en vooruitgang. Geschiedenis in het secundair onderwijs in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1750-1850*]

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Between 1750 and 1850, various educational reforms were carried out on a national level in the Southern Netherlands. Due to the stormy political climate, the educational system continually changed. Proceeding from centralistic motives, each new regime wanted to leave its mark on education. The Austrian government in 1777, the French revolutionaries in 1795, the Napoleonic authorities in 1802, the Dutch administration in 1817 and (to a lesser extent) the new Belgian rulers in 1831, all engaged in education and prescribed new official school programmes – with the exception of the Belgian unionists in 1831. In my doctoral thesis, I examine how history became a separate school subject in the Southern Netherlands, what narratives the subject produced and how it was taught differently depending on the varying political and local contexts. To this end, I do not only analyse subject-related sources, such as directives for history teachers, published history textbooks or surviving notebooks, I contextualise the creation of history as a school subject within the broader ongoing debates on education and the curriculum. Hence, intellectual treatises on education, political plans for reform, and all kind of documents on discipline and organisation in colleges are included in my analyses as well. The thesis paints a vivid picture of how old practices survived, how historical

representations subtly changed, and how teachers' personal engagement often involved new didactical methods and approaches. The publication of the book is expected before the end of this year.