

INVITED ADDRESS
BELGIAN CORNER

**A SHORT REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE
BELGIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

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This review of the history of the Belgian Psychological Society was written on the occasion of the 50th anniversary. It includes a report of the conditions under which the Society was created, a summary of the first four years of working, and a sketch of the major developments that have taken place since the foundation. The review also contains information about the presidents of the Society, the members, the honorary members, and the BPS journal *Psychologica Belgica*. Finally, there are sections on the national and international initiatives of the Society, and on the activities organized during the academic year 1996-1997.

Psychological Research in Belgium Before the Society

Somewhat ironically, it may be noted that three of Belgium's most famous "psychological researchers" worked in the nineteenth century, decades before psychology was established as a science and taught at universities. They were Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874), Joseph Plateau (1801-1883), and Joseph Delboeuf (1831-1896). Quetelet, director of the Royal Observatory and professor at the Belgian Military Academy, was a statistician who first applied the normal distribution to individual differences in the domains of anthropometrics, psychology, and sociology (see e.g., Muncie, McLaughlin, & Langan, 1996). Plateau, professor at the University of Ghent, was a physicist who discovered the law of mixing colors by means of rotating discs and who experimented with the stroboscopic effect. Among other things, he made a lasting contribution to the field of psychophysics (e.g., Laming & Laming, 1996). Delboeuf, professor at the University of Liège, also played an important role in psychophysics

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(starting as a student of Plateau), but in addition is currently known for the perceptual illusion which bears his name (e.g., Suzuki & Arashida, 1992) and for some of his work on human memory (e.g., Nicolas, 1995). It may be noted that, owing to a lack of psychological journals at the time, the Belgian Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts played a major role in the dissemination of these findings by publishing them in the proceedings and the monographs of the Academy.

The real point of departure for the continuous development of psychological research in Belgium was the foundation of laboratories of experimental psychology at the universities (see Nuttin, 1961, for a nice review of the first decades; see also Costermans & Vandendriessche, 1971). The first laboratories were created around 1890 at the Universities of Ghent (under the direction of J. Van Biervliet) and Louvain (under the direction of A. Thiéry). At the University of Brussels, around the turn of the century there was a vivid interest in educational psychology (called pedology).

In the first half of this century, one Belgian researcher outperformed all others: Albert Michotte van den Berck, Thiéry's successor in Louvain. His earliest research was on tactile sensation (he worked for several months in Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig). He later became involved in the introspective methodologies of Külpe and the Würzburg School, gradually shifted in the direction of Gestalt psychology, and shortly before the second world war started his experimental work on the perception of causality for which he is still well-known (e.g., Thinès, Costall, & Butterworth, 1991). It was Michotte who in 1946/47 took the initiative to found the Belgian Psychological Society.

The Foundation of the Society

The foundation of the Belgian Psychological Society is exceptionally well documented, because the first volumes of *Psychologica Belgica* largely consisted of the minutes of the Society (see also below). Even Michotte's seminal invitation letter of October 25, 1946, was published in full length (both in French and in Dutch). Because of the availability of these sources (see also the *Newsletter* of November 1996) we will not recapitulate the origins of the society in detail, but will instead concentrate on the minutes of the meeting of December 8, 1951 (*Psychologica Belgica*, 1, pp. 45-47). These present a French review of the activities during the first four years of the Society. The translation below is not literal, because in some places irrelevant details have been omitted, in others information has been added to better situate the minutes in context.

Minutes of the 8 Dec. 1951 BPS Meeting¹

History. On November 30, 1946, M. Michotte van den Berck, professor at the University of Louvain, convened a gathering of professors interested in teaching psychology. This took place in the buildings of the Fondation Universitaire / Universitaire Stichting in Brussels. The purpose of the meeting was the creation of a Belgian Psychological Society which would assemble the specialists from the four Universities (Louvain, Brussels, Ghent, and Liège) and which would be open to those having a positive approach to the discipline. Such a society should establish relationships between researchers, help researchers educate one another in their area of specialization, extend the domain of applications, and protect the title of psychologist, which is manifestly abused.

In the aftermath of this meeting, a commission was established to draft the statutes of the Society. It consisted of MM. Michotte (Louvain), Nyssen (Brussels), Fransen (Ghent), Nuttin (Louvain), and Paulus (Liège; secretary). Preliminary statutes were drafted by this commission and sent to the attendants of the first meeting.

On February 15, 1947, a new meeting took place, during which the final statutes were established. The Bureau of the new society, consisting of Albert Michotte (president, Louvain), Auguste Ley (vice-president, Brussels), Sylvain De Coster (secretary, Brussels), Joseph Nuttin (treasurer, Louvain), Frans Fransen (delegate, Ghent), and René Nihard (delegate, Liège) was also elected.

The statutes were published and from that date onwards the Society formally came into being. Its regular activities started at the end of 1947.

Death of founding members. During 1947, the BPS deplored the loss of two of its founding members, MM. Heernu and Nihard. A public homage was given to them by M. Michotte, president, during the meeting of October 18, 1947. M. Paulus replaced M. Nihard in the Bureau of the Society.

Recruitment of new members. On February 15, 1947, the Society consisted of 24 members. Strict standards were imposed on entrance to the Society. At the end of 1951, the number of regular members amounted to 40.

Visiting psychologists from abroad. The Society had the pleasure to receive the following psychologists: MM. Klineberg, Köhler, Revesz, and Ombredane. Since he has been taking charge of the teaching of psychology at the University of Brussels, M. Ombredane has been given full membership of the Society.

¹ Here follows a part of these Minutes. The paragraphs History through Projects are signed by S. De Coster, Secretary. The Report of the Treasurer is signed by J. Nuttin.

Meetings of the Society. Following the stipulation that monthly meetings be held, such meetings took place every second Saturday from October 18, 1947 on, with the exception of the months of July, August, and September. These meetings were initially held at l'Institut des Hautes Etudes de Belgique, but subsequently they were regularly convened at the Fondation Universitaire.

Activities of the Society. The main activity of the Society consisted of monthly intellectual contacts including a presentation (by one of the members or by a guest speaker), followed by discussion. Both national languages were used in the presentations.

Two visits were organized, one to the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology at the University of Louvain, the other to the Psychotechnical Centre of the Army at Everberg.

The talks always resulted in animated and instructive discussions. Thanks to these, one goal of the Society was achieved from the first year of its existence, namely to inform researchers, scattered over Belgium, of developments taking place throughout the country.

In this respect, it is important to note that besides the papers, communications of 15 minutes were allowed by the statutes of the Society. The duration of the discussions, however, has sometimes prevented these communications from taking place.

Other activities. 1. The Belgian Psychological Society has sent the bibliography of its members during the years 1940-1945 and 1945-1948 to the UNESCO, upon the latter's request. 2. The Society has tried to compile a Yearbook of its members, providing information about their work. This enterprise has not been successful.

Relations with foreign societies. The statutes of the Society have been sent to most of the corresponding societies abroad.

The Society was represented at the ceremony of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Société française de Psychologie.

The Society became member of the International Union of Psychological Science.

Projects. Of the various objectives listed in the manifesto of the Belgian Psychological Society to justify its existence, two merit particular consideration, and have been a source of continuous preoccupation to the members of the Bureau. 1. Defense of the title of psychologist. Upon the foundation of the Society, this defense was proclaimed to be necessary. Unforeseen circumstances, however, have prevented a public examination of the question. 2. Publications of members. From the very start, the Society has sought to promote and

facilitate publications of its members. Circumstances and a lack of means have prevented the Bureau of the Society from finding a solution to this problem. However, the Bureau is of the firm opinion that these two objectives can not be forgotten.

Summary of the report of the treasurer concerning the first four years of the Society.

1947

receipts (membership fees)	4.200
expenditures (printing etc.,)	<u>3.027,50</u>
balance on December 31, 1947	1.172,50

1948

receipts and in hands	5.327,50
expenditures	<u>970,50</u>
balance on December 31, 1948	4.357,00

1949

receipts and in hands	11.557,00
expenditures	<u>647,75</u>
balance on December 31, 1949	10.909,25

1950

receipts and in hands	20.709,25
expenditures	<u>2.000,00</u>
balance on December 31, 1950	18.709,25

1951

receipts and in hands	25.676,25
expenditures	<u>2.542,00</u>
balance on December 31, 1951	23.134,25

The amount of money we saved over the past four years allows us to consider publication of a Yearbook of the Society. (*End of the Minutes of the 1951 BPS meeting.*)

Further Developments of the Society

The first statutes of the Society were largely inspired by the format of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts. There was a limited number of highly selected working members (max = 50) and adhering members, gathering on a regular basis (minimally four times a year) during which one of the members presented a paper, which was afterwards discussed. A summary of the talk was made available to the Society and published in the proceedings (which turned out to be *Psychologica Belgica*, not published until 1954).

Most of these characteristics have gradually been relinquished. In 1960, the maximum number of working members was dropped, although the distinction between working and adhering members still exists today (the former being defined as those who have a university degree in psychology; the latter as those who do work related to psychology, without having a university degree; adhering members have the same rights as working members but cannot vote at the General Assembly).

The monthly reunions were gradually replaced by a general Annual Meeting. This happened for the first time in 1962, when the reunions of May and June were replaced by an Annual Meeting, held on Saturday May 12 in the Psychological Laboratory of the University of Brussels. After a series of papers in the morning and the afternoon, the meeting was concluded with a General Assembly of the Society during which a new Bureau was elected for the years 1962-1964 (exactly the same format still prevails today). In a transition period, starting from 1968, the monthly reunions were replaced by gatherings of the scientific committees. These committees had been created within the Society in 1963, and consisted initially of (i) a Committee for General and Experimental Psychology, (ii) a Committee for Genetic Psychology and Psychological Consultation, and (iii) a Committee for Social Psychology and Industrial Psychology. They were largely autonomous from the Society (although in the beginning they had a representative in the Bureau). In later years, the number of committees (also called working groups) proliferated until in 1991 they were over 20. In addition, the activities of most of these committees had slowly declined and they did not meet any more. This actually meant the end of the former monthly reunions.

Finally, in 1965, *Psychologica Belgica* was no longer considered as the Yearbook (minutes) of the Society, but as a regular journal (further confirmed in 1968, with the publication of more than one issue per year and the creation of an autonomous editorial committee). The activities of the Society were summarized each year at the end of the journal until 1973. Around that time, it was decided to start an Information Bulletin of the Society. This Bulletin appeared in January 1972, February 1973, and then stopped. In November 1975, it was "re-invented" (at least it started again at number 1) and continued until January 1980 (number 14), when the Belgian Federation of Psychology was founded (see below) and took over the Bulletin. In January 1985, the Bulletin was for the third time re-instantiated (again starting at number 1) and this time it lasted until the end of 1991, when it was replaced by the *Newsletter*, which still exists today.

Presidents

From the very beginning of the Society, the terms of the presidents and the

vice-presidents have been limited (varying between two and four years in different periods). One of the presidents (M. Osterrieth) resigned prematurely due to health problems. As a rule, presidents came from different universities (in the beginning there were four universities: Brussels, Ghent, Liège, and Louvain; after the division of Brussels and Louvain into French- and a Dutch-speaking universities, there were six). This gave the following sequence of presidents:

1. Albert Michotte van den Berck (Louvain, 1947-1951)
2. René Nyssen (Brussels, 1952-1955)
3. Jean Paulus (Liège, 1956-1959)
4. Léo Coetsier (Ghent, 1960-1961)
5. Arthur Fauville (Louvain, 1962-1963)
6. Jean-Marie Faverge (Brussels, 1964-1966)
7. Joseph Nuttin (Louvain, 1966-1968)
8. Marc Richelle (Liège, 1968-1970)
9. Gérard de Montpellier d'Annevoie (Louvain, 1970-1972)
10. Jean-Pierre De Waele (Brussel, 1972-1974)
11. William De Coster (Ghent, 1975-1978)
12. Paul Osterrieth (Bruxelles, 1978-1979)
13. Jean Costermans (Louvain, 1979-1981)
14. Piet Janssen (Leuven, 1981-1984)
15. Paul Bertelson (Bruxelles, 1984-1987)
16. Léni Verhofstadt-Denève (Ghent, 1987-1990)
17. Véronique De Keyser (Liège, 1990-1993)
18. Géry van Outryve d'Ydewalle (Leuven, 1993-1996)
19. Bernard Rimé (Louvain, 1996-1999)

Members

In the first years of its existence, the number of members grew steadily from the 24 founding members in 1947 to a maximum of 484 in 1973. Around that time, the Society was confronted with two moves that affected virtually all general and national societies: specialization and internationalization. As knowledge grew, research in the different areas of psychology became increasingly specialized and difficult to fully grasp by outsiders. In addition, due to the increased mobility of researchers, societies were founded with a narrower scope and a geographically larger audience. Because of the higher level of relevant expertise in these societies, researchers increasingly turned to them. As a result, the number of members of the Belgian Society during the subsequent decade dropped to slightly above 300, a number that has since remained pretty constant (in 1996, there were 325 members; see the Appendix), despite the fact that the number of students obtaining a degree in psychology

has sharply increased. Initially, the Society tried to cope with the growing specialization by the creation of "working groups" (see above), but this has not always been very successful.

Honorary Members

According to the statutes, the Society is allowed to award honorary membership to outstanding psychological researchers (up to a maximum of 10 at the same time). Thus far the Society has been rather frugal in conferring this privilege. Only on four occasions have persons been given honorary membership

1. On the occasion of the 15th International Congress in Brussels (1957)

F. Bartlett	H. Langfeld
O. Klineberg	J. Piaget
C. Kluckhohn	H. Piéron
W. Köhler	
2. On the occasion of an invited conference given before the Society in 1981 on "Unité et diversité de la psychologie d'aujourd'hui et de demain"

P. Fraisse
3. On the occasion of his honorary degree at the ULB (Brussels, 1984)

D. Broadbent
4. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Society (1997)

J.L. McClelland

Psychologica Belgica

As indicated above, one of the main purposes of the Society was to promote publications of its members, so that Belgian researchers could take notice of each other's work. To scientists confronted with a system of "publish or perish", this goal may seem opportunistic, but it probably was not. In the first place, up to very recently, formal incentives to publish were virtually absent in Belgium. Academic appointments and promotions were (and are) mainly based on educational needs, so that -at best- professors were part-time researchers (Bertelson, 1996). Also, due to the scarcity of research funds provided by the Belgian government(s), academic positions have always been limited in number, so that all the work had to be done by the same small group of people. Under these circumstances, publishing was a pretty idealistic business, as can be concluded from the fact that Belgian psychological researchers over the years have contributed to some 0.5% of all publications covered by PsychLit (this figure has been remarkably stable throughout the period between 1974 and 1996, and there are no reasons to believe that the situation was different before this period of time; on the other hand, it may be noted that 0.5% still makes a

total of 1273 journal articles between 1991 and 1997).

Furthermore, the Belgian situation has been complicated by the existence of two official languages (Dutch and French), which were not always fully mastered by the members, and which formed a combination that seemed to be virtually absent outside Belgium. For these reasons, it is an open secret that from time to time the editors of the journal (and the members of the Bureau) have had to be encouraging to receive enough adequate submissions. As such, in conformity with its goals, *Psychologica Belgica* has published a fair amount of Belgian research that otherwise probably would not have been publicly available.

The driving force behind the creation of *Psychologica Belgica* was Joseph Nuttin from the University of Leuven. As we saw above, already in 1951 he commented that the Society had enough money to afford its own publication. Until the creation of an editorial committee in 1968, he was the only person responsible for the journal (the first seven volumes, covering the period between 1947 and 1967, with the acknowledged support of K. Swinnen and M. Flamen). In 1968, a distinction was drawn between the Editorial Board and the Editorial Secretariat. Until 1983, the Editorial Board consisted of one person from each university (i.e., four members between 1968 and 1969, and six members between 1970 and 1982). In 1983, the Editorial Board was enlarged in order to include a greater variety of expertise in the different areas covered by the journal. The Editorial Secretariat was the managing body of the journal and until 1995 consisted of one French-speaking and one Dutch-speaking person. Since 1969 the Editorial Secretariat has received invaluable assistance from Betty Vanden Bavière. The respective Editorial Secretariats were:

- 1970-1977: Jean Costermans & Gaston Vandendriessche
- 1978-1982: Xavier Seron & Paul Eelen
- 1983-1984: Jean Rondal & Paul Eelen
- 1985-1986: Véronique De Keyser & Paul Eelen
- 1987-1988: Véronique De Keyser & Alfons Marcoen
- 1989-1993: Serge Brédart & Alfons Marcoen
- 1994-1995: Guy Lories & André Vandierendonck
- 1995-: André Vandierendonck

From 1954 till 1967, the languages used in *Psychologica Belgica* were French and Dutch. In 1968, English became accepted as third language and it was decided that each article should have an English abstract. With the change of editorship in 1994, the Bureau of the Society decided that all articles should be in English (although initial submissions in the national languages were still allowed). The two major reasons for this decision were: (i) the observation that most Belgian psychological researchers read articles more easily in English

than in the other national language, and (ii) the awareness that the heterogeneity of languages hindered international distribution of the journal. Because of this language policy, the presence of two persons with a different mother tongue in the Editorial Secretariat was no longer felt necessary, and when Guy Lories asked to be relieved from his editorial duties, he was not replaced. Since 1995, André Vandierendonck has been the sole editor of *Psychologica Belgica*. At the moment, the term of editor is limited to three years, and can be renewed only once.

Before 1968, *Psychologica Belgica* mainly consisted of the minutes and statutes of the Society, the curriculum vitae and publications of the members, and summaries of the papers given at the monthly and annual meetings. Gradually, full length articles of the talks were included. In 1968, *Psychologica Belgica* became a regular journal. From then until 1994, issues of *Psychologica Belgica* appeared on the average twice a year, although occasionally there have been three appearances or only one (depending on the number of submissions). In 1994, it was decided that *Psychologica Belgica* should be a quarterly journal to reduce the publication lag. In practice, however, due to the inclusion of double-volume special issues, appearances have been limited to three times a year. The journal is distributed among the members of the Society, and is available in some 60 university libraries over the world. The abstracts are listed in eight sources, including Psychological Abstracts and Current Contents. In addition to articles, the journal includes book reviews. As many of these are French books, *Psychologica Belgica* has unintentionally turned out to be a major English window to these publications.

The Foundation of the Belgian Federation of Psychologists

In the 1970s, the Society seriously started to tackle the problem of the legal protection of the title of psychologist. Previously, a few scattered initiatives had been taken (such as sending a letter to the responsible minister), but there was little persistence in these efforts. The problem was that everybody could call him/herself "psychologist" without proof of relevant studies and/or work experience. The aim of the Society was to restrict the title of "psychologist" to persons who had obtained a university degree in psychology. However, it soon became clear that in order to be get such a legal protection through parliament, it was necessary to come up with very detailed proposals about the status of a psychologist, the characteristics of the profession, the deontological code to be followed, sanctions for possible breaches, and so on. Thus, a large part of the activities of the Society in the 70s was devoted to these writings and to amendments asked by different institutional agents (see the Bulletins of the Society from 1975 till 1980).

By the end of the 70s, however, it became increasingly clear that the Belgian Psychological Society had a number of serious handicaps to achieve success in this matter. For a start, there were problems with the representativeness of the Society. As a grouping of predominantly academic researchers (see also the evolution in membership described above), choices had to be made that mainly concerned non-academic psychologists (e.g., clinical psychologists, school psychologists, vocational psychologists) who by that time had founded their own societies. Furthermore, the continuous efforts necessary for achieving the legal protection started to exceed the capacities of the Society, and eroded its scientific activities.

For these reasons, contacts were sought with the other societies and during an assembly on December 1, 1979, the statutes of the Belgian Federation of Psychologists were signed in the University Foundation by 50 representatives of the different societies. The existence of the Federation was made official in *Het Belgisch Staatsblad/Le Moniteur belge* of March 20, 1980. In order to ensure that the Federation would be representative of all psychologists and not just one society among many others, a principle of reciprocity was adopted. This principle implied that somebody who wanted to become member of one of the constituting societies automatically had to become member of the Federation, and that nobody could be member of the Federation without additionally being member of one of the Societies.

Although this is not the place to present further details about the history of the Federation, it should certainly be mentioned that the Federation succeeded in its first goal. The title of psychologist is legally protected in Belgium since January 1, 1997 (laws approved in 1995).

International Contacts

As Michotte was not only one of the founders of the Belgian Psychological Society, but also of the "International Union of Psychological Science" (I.U.Psy.S) and the "Association de psychologie scientifique de langue française", the relationships between the Belgian Society and these two international societies were very tight. For instance, three times a member of the Belgian Society has been president of the IUPsyS: Michotte (1957-1960), Nuttin (1972-1976), and d'Ydewalle (1996-2000). In addition, the Belgian Society has organized two International Congresses of the IUPsyS (1957 and 1992). Both occasions have been considered as milestones in the history of the Society (and of scientific psychology in Belgium; cf. the chapter by Richelle, Janssen, and Brédart (1992) about "Psychology in Belgium" in the *Annual Review of Psychology*). It may also be recalled that on the occasion of the 1957 Congress, the Society awarded its first honorary memberships, and that the

1997 honorary member, J.L. McClelland, was an invited speaker of the 1992 Congress. In 1971, the University of Liège organized the 17th International Congress of Applied Psychology (of the International Association for Applied Psychology). On this occasion, *Psychologica Belgica* published a special issue (1971, 11-2) with an extended survey of Psychology in Belgium, edited by Jean Costermans and Gaston Vandendriessche. Finally, several members of the Society have been active in the French Association of Scientific Psychology (e.g., de Montpellier was president in 1960).

The Society in the Academic Year 1996-1997

Although it is tempting to write at great length about all the initiatives taken by the Society during the 50 years of its existence, we will restrict ourselves to a description of the activities in 1996-1997 and, where possible, relate these to previous happenings. By doing so, we hope to give a more lively picture of what the Society stands for today.

The activities of the Bureau of the Society start with the beginning of the academic year (October) and end with the Annual Meeting (usually in the beginning of May; this year exceptionally at the end of April due to the large number of free Fridays in the beginning of May). The Bureau meets every last Monday of the month at the Laboratoire de Psychologie Expérimentale of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, from 5 pm until 7 pm. Generally, attendance is fairly good. The language spoken is English, as this is equally well mastered by the members of the two language communities.

1996 was the beginning of a new Bureau consisting of:

Bernard Rimé (UCL, president)

Géry d'Ydewalle (KULeuven, past president)

Geert De Soete (RUG, Dutch-speaking vice-president)

Monique Radeau (ULB, French-speaking vice-president)

Frank Van Overwalle (VUB, Dutch-speaking secretary general)

Vincent Yzerbyt (UCL, French-speaking secretary general)

Robert Schets (treasurer)

Marc Brysbaert (KULeuven, deputy-treasurer)

Guido Peeters (KULeuven, deputy secretary, *Newsletter*)

Jean-Pierre Thibaut (ULG, deputy secretary, *Newsletter*)

Axel Cleeremans (ULB, adviser, electronic messages, Annual Meeting)

Florence Discry (ULG, adviser)

André Vandierendonck (RUG, *Psychologica Belgica*)

Betty Vanden Bavière (KULeuven, *Psychologica Belgica*)

The previous Bureau (under the direction of Géry d'Ydewalle) had -more or less by accident, it must be admitted- discovered that the Society was founded

in 1946/1947. The new Bureau was urged to organize some celebration. A number of proposals were taken into consideration (e.g., the organization of a two-day meeting, a special celebration at the University Foundation where it had all started) but rejected because either it was feared that the members would not be interested (e.g., in a two-day meeting, which would cost considerably more), or because they were too expensive. Finally, it was arranged that the Society would try to organize a "normal" Annual Meeting in the buildings of the Royal Academy, followed by a dinner in a restaurant. Axel Cleeremans agreed to take care of the former, Marc Brysbaert was asked to make arrangements for the latter. It was also decided that because of the special occasion, the Society would apply for extra funding from the Dutch- and the French-speaking Funds for Scientific Research. Significantly for the growing separation between the two language communities, the application was successful on the French side but not on the Dutch side. The support from the French side, however, helped to invite a special guest speaker (J.L. McClelland).

The Bureau was again reminded of the Society's past, when it received a very kind letter from H.F. Bartlett together with an integral bibliography and CV of his father, Sir Frederic Bartlett. This was sent to the Society in appreciation of the honorary membership awarded to Sir Frederic Bartlett in 1957. As most of the younger members of the Bureau were not aware of the fact that honorary memberships had been awarded in the past, it was concluded that a short history of the Society would be appropriate on the occasion of the 50th anniversary. Marc Brysbaert volunteered to write this. Robert Schets, the member with the longest adherence to the Society (going back to 1960) and the largest archive, offered his support. At the same time, an idea took root that the anniversary would be a good occasion to award a new honorary membership (it may be remarked that no membership had been awarded on the occasion of the 1992 International Congress, in contrast to the 1957 Congress). It was further decided that the seminal invitation letter of Michotte marking the inception of the Society, and the letter of H.F. Bartlett would be published in the *Newsletter* to inform the members. The bibliography and CV of F. Bartlett were copied and sent to all university libraries of the country.

Still on the matter of publications, it may be remarked that in preceding years the Society has made considerable efforts (i) to have an electronic mailing list, and (ii) to have an interactive web site. Geert De Soete has taken care of the former, Axel Cleeremans of the latter. The electronic mailing list mainly serves to inform researchers about upcoming seminars at the different universities, the web page to provide members and non-members with the most recent information of the Society. Although these developments have made information distribution easier and less expensive, it is to be feared that traces of these initiatives may no longer be available for future historians. Besides the electronic messages, the Society has also renewed its flyers in which the Society is presented and new

members asked to join.

In 1995, a "Best Thesis Award" contest had been started (initiative of Frank Van Overwalle) to honour the best master's thesis of each year. The selection procedure consisted of two steps: first, each thesis was read by two independent referees from universities other than the candidates'; second, the outstanding theses were all read by a committee that made the final decision. The first award, worth 25,000 BEF and given at the Annual Meeting of 1996, was for Walter Schroyens (KULeuven). There were a total of 16 submissions, five of which were clearly outstanding. Given the large amount of time spent in adjudicating the competition, a discussion took place within the Bureau concerning the best strategy to follow in the future: either to require higher standards from submissions, or to make a first selection on the basis of the abstracts. This was particularly relevant because in 1996 the number of submissions had increased from 16 to 35. The winner of this contest was Francis Tuerlinckx (KULeuven).

A large part of the discussions of the Bureau were devoted to the question of the relations with the Belgian Federation. Since the Federation achieved the goal of protecting the title of psychologist (see above), the Society has felt less involved with the workings of the Federation. In addition, there have been some frictions because the Federation has considerably augmented its fee, which on account of the principle of reciprocity, has had implications for the members of the Society as well. There were long debates between members who thought that the Society should restrict its activities to the scientific side, and others who were convinced that the Society should play a role in the further developments of the Federation, in particular with respect to the schooling of psychologists. Gradually, the latter conviction has gained ground.

The Annual Meeting of the Society is usually organized in one of the universities, in order to keep attendance and organization costs low. So, the last meetings took place at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (1991), the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (1992), the Universiteit Gent (1993), the Université de Liège (1994), the Université Catholique de Louvain (1995), and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (1996). Because of the 50th Anniversary, the 1997 meeting was not organized in the ULB but in the Royal Academy, on April 25, under the auspices of the National Committee for Psychological Sciences. The management was in hands of a "ULB team" (see Cleeremans, Kolinsky, a Mousty, 1997, for further details). After some welcome and introductory remarks, the meeting started with a lecture of J.L. McClelland on "Why there are complementary learning systems in hippocampus and neocortex: Insights from the successes and failures of connectionist models of learning and memory". This was followed by the honorary membership award and the BPS best thesis competition award. During the rest of the day, 33 lectures and 72 posters were presented, for a total of 185 (paying) participants. In the

evening, there were a cocktail and a dinner. The latter was attended by 68 persons and took place in "Hôtel Métropole" (Brussels). On the menu were "Fonds d'artichaut frais à la salade de crabe" and "Parelhoen gevuld met gestoofde groentjes, Fine Champagnesaus en kasteelaardappelen".

The balance of the Society at the end of 1996 was positive. On the incoming side, there was 1,049,697 BEF. Expenditures equalled 868,843 BEF, making a difference of 180,854 BEF. The latter, however, was slightly inflated because it contained membership fees for 1997 (178,600 BEF), as well as expenses for 1997 (70,250 BEF). So, the real balance was 72,504 BEF.

Future of the Society

Belgium is a small country, divided in two distinct language communities, and devoid of politicians willing to invest heavily in the psychological sciences. Given these constraints, it is not to be expected that the Belgian Psychological Society will ever play a worldwide role. The maximum number of members it could possibly attract is probably below 2,000 (coming from 7 different universities including Mons). For some researchers, this has been enough reason to leave the Society aside and turn directly to more prestigious associations in the US, France, and the UK. For others, it has not prevented them from investing seriously in the organization. Indeed, the Society has had the pleasure of counting some of Belgium's finest researchers among its most active members.

Michotte's first reason for founding the Society still remains the main basis for its existence today: At some level, researchers in psychology must be represented and given the opportunity to meet one another and talk about their work. It cannot be that Belgian researchers have to go abroad to hear what their colleagues from nearby universities (or even their own university) are doing. The success of the Annual Meetings proves the need for such a regular gathering. In addition, a good deal of decisions are still made at the Belgian level or at the level of the language communities. These include grants for collaboration from the Federal Government (such as the Interuniversity Attraction Poles fostering collaborations between universities of the two communities), and grants from the Funds of Scientific Research. The Annual Meeting is the ideal convention for candidates to present their work and for committee members of the funding agencies to hear persons they are asked to judge about.

For these reasons, the Society is likely to continue its -rather quiet and modest- existence along the same lines, and the future will probably not be very different from the past. However, as the present review hopefully shows, this is not such a bad record after all.

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Appendix

Members of the BPS at the end of 1996 (plus year of first adhesion)

ADLER Anouk	1983	COLIN Cécile	1995
ALEGRIA Jesus	1969	COMBLAIN Annick	1995
ANTHONISSEN Claire	1990	COMPERNOL André	1977
ARQUIN Jean-Marie	1980	CONTENT Alain	1987
BARBIER Véronique	1995	CORVELEYN Jozef	1978
BARUFFOL Erich	1992	COSTERMANS Jean	1963
BEAUFORT Marie-Louise	1993	COULL Alastair	1996
BECKERS-JANSSEN Annie	1976	CULEE Christine	1992
BEGUIN Philippe	1992	DAB Sashia	1996
BERTELSON Paul	1956	DAENEN Julien	1983
BESTGEN Yves	1989	DAS Gert	1995
BLOMART Jeanine	1962	DE BAETS Isabelle	1995
BODSON Valérie	1995	DEBAL Rik	1990
BOEVE Nelle	1994	DEBEUF Antoon	1972
BOHRER Arnold	1980	DE BRABANDER Ann	1985
BONAMI Michel	1971	DE BRUYNE Annie	1964
BONNARENS Pierre	1968	DE CLEYERE-MOUTON M.	1980
BORN Michel	1986	DE COCK Gaston	1962
BORREMANS Mieke	1995	DECOENE Stefaan	1986
BOUTS Patrick	1992	DE CORTE Erik	1965
BOUWEN René	1967	DE COSTER William	1956
BRAET Caroline	1992	DECRUYENAERE Marleen	1992
BREDART Serge	1980	DEFLANDRE Hugues	1995
BRUYER Raymond	1980	DEFRENNE Jacques	1977
BRUYNOOGHE René	1991	DE FRUYT Filip	1987
BRYLSBAERT Marc	1987	DEGAND Jean	1970
BUELENS Anne	1994	DE GRYSE Els	1995
BURNET Nathalie	1996	DE KEYSER Véronique	1968
BUYSSE Ann	1994	DE LANNOY Jacques	1962
CALLENS Marie-Magdalena	1992	DELBEKE Luc	1963
CASAER Sarah	1991	DELIEGE-SMISMANS I.	1986
CAUDRON-GERARD M.-C.	1985	DELVILLE Annabelle	1996
CHANTRAINE Yves	1992	DEMESMAEKER Nadine	1994
CHARLIER Brigitte	1992	DEMEY Eve	1986
CLAES Koen	1995	DEMEY Marc	1973
CLAEYS Isabelle	1995	DE MOL Jacques	1979
CLAUS-SOUVENIR M-C	1995	DELVILLE J.	1996
CLEEREMANS Axel	1992	DENEVE-VERHOFFSTADT Leni	1965
CLINCKE Gilbert	1976	DE RAEDT Rudi	1994
CLUCKERS Pascale	1995	DERIVIERE Serge	1964
CLUYTENS Mireille	1992	DE SMET Francine	1995
COECKELBERGH Tanja	1995	DETRAUX Jean-Jacques	1975
COETSIER Pol	1962	DE TREMERIE Jan	1982

de VRIES-GILLOT Franc.	1978	HOLVOET Marnix	1981
DE WALQUE Laure	1996	HOUYOUX André	1962
DE WITTE Karel	1976	HUBER Winfrid	1983
DHONT Marleen	1968	HUETING Johan	1966
D'HOOGHE Rudi	1990	HUTSEBAUT Dirk	1972
DIERICK Veerle	1995	JADOT Jean-Marie	1991
DOM Ida	1996	JAECEN Els	1986
DONNAY Lucienne	1960	JANSSEN Piet	1964
DUBOIS Michael	1992	JANSSEN Riane	1990
DUJARDIN Gérard	1964	JANSSENS Paul	1973
DUPONT Martine	1994	JASPARD André	1977
DURET Isabelle	1992	KAISE Alain	1990
DUVAL-ANDRICH Sylvie	1983	KARNAS Guy	1972
d'YDEWALLE Géry	1971	KOLINSKY Régine	1985
ERAUW Kris	1993	KRISTOFFERSEN Ingrid	1968
ETIENNE Anne-Marie	1996	LAGROU Leo	1963
EVERS-KIEBOOMS Germaine	1976	LAMORAL Philippe	1976
EVINCK Sylvie	1996	LANGE Marielle	1995
FAYASSE Michèle	1995	LAPLASSE Daniel	1965
FEYEREISEN Pierre	1975	LAROCK-TEHEUX A-M	1978
FLAHAUT Dominique	1982	LAURENT François	1983
FLION Ilse	1996	LECOCQ Isabelle	1995
FONTAINE Ovide	1966	LEDENT Annick	1996
FRENAY Frédéric	1995	LEFEBVRE Alex	1979
FRENCH Robert	1996	LEFEVRE Brigitte	1987
GARANT Michèle	1992	LEJEUNE Helga	1970
GAUSSIN José	1968	LEJEUNE Jean	1992
GEMIS Véronique	1996	LEJEUNE Marc	1993
GENARD Nathalie	1996	LEMAIRE Philippe	1995
GEORGE Mercédès	1995	LEMAL Joceline	1964
GERMEYS Inez	1995	LENS Willy	1967
GODIN André	1956	LEONARD Benoit	1994
GOFFINET Laurence	1995	LEPERE Isabel	1988
GOOSSENS Luc	1981	LEYBAERT Jacqueline	1987
GOVAERTS Georges	1967	LEYENS Jacques-Phil.	1968
GROOTJANS Jozef	1987	LEYN Wendy	1994
GUARDARD Claudel	1994	LIETAER Germain	1964
GUSTIN Frédéric	1995	LOISEAU Lucien	1962
HAEGEMAN Katrien	1996	LONEUX Katja	1996
HAENTJES Geert	1977	LORENZ-CROUFER E.	1993
HAGE Catherine	1992	LOUVEAUX Pascale	1996
HAUTEFENNE Isabelle	1995	LOUVIAUX Christine	1996
HENDRICKX Hilde	1996	LOWENTHAL Francis	1995
HENRION Judith	1996	LUMINET Olivier	1993
HERMAN Ginette	1995	MAES Cindy	1995
HOLENDER Daniel	1975	MAGEROTTE Ghislain	1970

MANCO Altay	1995	REGGERS Jean	1995
MARCOEN Alfons	1964	RICHELLE Jacqueline	1971
MASSART-VAN LANCKER	1995	RIJCKAERT Trees	1990
MATHIAS Nicolas	1976	RIME Bernard	1980
MATHIEUX Murielle	1995	RINGOOT Koenraad	1981
MATTHEEUWS Anna	1964	ROBIN Edith	1982
MATTHEEUWS-HAMBROUCK	1965	ROEYERS Herbert	1994
MATTHYS Erik	1991	ROGIER Anouk	1996
MEERS André	1970	ROMBAUTS Jan	1960
MELIS Annemie	1995	RONSSSE Els	1995
MERCIER Michel	1982	ROSSEEL Yves	1996
MERTENS Veerle	1987	RUTS Wim	1991
MERVIELDE Ivan	1970	RYDBERG Ann	1995
MEURISSE Isabelle	1995	SALENGROS Geneviève	1993
MINNOEY Marleen	1994	SALENGROS Pierre	1964
MOISSE Isabelle	1995	SAROGLOU Vassilios	1996
MORAIS José	1975	SBILLE-DEVILLE H.	1995
MORMONT Christian	1975	SCHETS Robert	1960
MOUCHET Jean-Pierre	1992	SCHOOTE Kathia	1995
MOUSTY Philippe	1990	SCHROYENS Walther	1995
MUBIKANGIEY Luc	1979	SERNICLAES Olivier	1994
MUTOMBO Jempa	1990	SERNICLAES Willy	1991
NICOLAY A.-C.	1996	SERVAEGE Katie	1994
NIVEAU Louis	1989	SIMON Pierre	1992
NORRE Jan	1983	SLOORE Hedwig	1969
NUTTIN Jozeph	1959	SMITMANS Aline	1980
ONGHENA Patrick	1991	SOETENS Eric	1991
PAESBRUGGE Sonya	1995	SOUGNE Jacques	1995
PATEET Pierre	1979	STASSART Olivier	1995
PATESSON René	1971	STEIMES Nathalie	1995
PAUWELS Pamela	1995	STEIN Marc	1995
PAUWELS-SEGAERT M.	1995	STEVENS Jozef	1976
PEETERS Guido	1967	SYDOR Guy	1995
PEPERMANS Roland	1978	SYLIN Michel	1991
PERL-SZYPER S.	1968	TANT Mark	1995
PHAM HOANG Quoc Vu	1992	TERRYN Frans	1970
PIERART Bernadette	1976	THEWIS Brigitte	1995
PIQUERAY François	1994	THIBAUT Jean-Pierre	1990
PIRONT Jean	1987	THIRION Paul	1990
PLATTEAU Walter	1983	THOMSON Raphaël	1996
PONCELET Martine	1996	TILLIET Luc	1983
PRIELS Jean-Marc	1990	TRINE Georges	1980
PRINCEN Marie	1995	TROCH Cindy	1995
PROPS Annie	1987	TULLENEERS Robert	1976
QUERTEMONT Etienne	1995	VAN ALBOOM Patrick	1994
RADEAU Monique	1971	VANANDRUEL Martine	1980

VAN ASSCHE Annemie	1990	VAN MEERBEEK J.-P.	1980
VAN AVERMAET Eddy	1975	VAN OLMEN Frans	1973
VAN BALEN Richard	1960	VAN OVERWALLE Frank	1982
VANDAELE Agnes	1993	VAN PASSEL Guy	1980
VAN DAM Francis	1970	VAN RENSBERGEN Johan	1987
VAN DAMME Jan	1978	VAN RENTERGEM Mathieu	1990
VANDEKERCKHOVE Marie	1995	VAN RUYMBEKE Agnès	1996
VAN DE LEEMPUT Cécile	1985	VANSTEENWEGEN Debora	1996
VAN DEN ACKER Samuel	1992	VEREecken Katleen	1994
VANDEN BAVIERE Betty	1982	VERGUTS Tom	1995
VANDENBERGHE Luc	1989	VERHAEGEN Paul	1958
VAN DEN BROECK Patrick	1987	VERHAEGHEN Paul	1989
VANDENKERCKHOVE Martine	1990	VERMEERSCH Jean-Pierre	1985
VAN DEN NESTE Angélique	1995	VERMEULEN Johan	1969
VANDENPLAS-HOLPER C.	1976	VERSTRAETEN Edwin	1995
VAN DERGOTEN Koen	1990	VIOLON Anita	1973
VAN DER GUCHT Tamara	1994	VIOLON Jacques	1973
VANDER LINDEN Martial	1994	VLAEYEN Johannes	1980
VANDER MEEREN Wilfried	1992	WAGEMANS Johan	1986
VANDER STEENE Gilbert	1964	WARRANT Laurence	1995
VANDIERENDONCK André	1969	WAUTERS-DEMARET Claire	1992
VAN ESBROECK Raoul	1969	WESTREICH Smadar	1993
VAN EYLL Catherine	1995	WIJFFELS Hendrik	1966
VANGESTEL Sofie	1995	WILLEMAERS Henri	1964
VANHEDDEGHEM Marijke	1973	XHENSEVAL Bernard	1966
VANHEYMBEECK Rudi	1965	YZERBYT Vincent	1986
VAN KERKHOVEN Lutgarde	1995	ZECH Emmanuelle	1995
VAN LOO Leo	1990		

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