

het Belgische koloniale verleden. Dit vlot geschreven en mooi geïllustreerde boek is dus zeker een mooie aanvulling op de bestaande, klassiekere historische overzichten van de Kongo Vrijstaat.

Bas De Roo, Onafhankelijk onderzoeker

Theo Hermans and Reinier Salverda (eds.), *From Revolt to Riches. Culture and History of the Low Countries, 1500-1700*. (London: UCL Press, 2017). 301 p. ISBN 9781910634875.

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This edited collection, consisting of 23 articles, gives a versatile and detailed overview of the Low Countries in the early modern period. The range of topics is interesting and the articles well argued, which makes this collection not only suitable for those interested in the individual topics, but also a valuable general introduction to the Low Countries in this period. The chapters are ordered roughly chronologically and take the reader through several areas of interest, ranging from the use of Latin, art history, Dutch architecture, close readings of important literary and historical texts, to Calvinism and politics. As a result, the collection at no point feels tired or dull, but portrays the Low Countries with vivid colours. This is partly assisted by the beautiful illustrations in colour. There is a good balance between chapters that provide the reader with a more general introduction to certain topics, such as Johan Verberckmoes' introduction to stereotyping and A. Agnes Sneller's chapter on political Dutch pamphlets, and those chapters detailing a more specific historical moment, for example Marcel Backhouse's investigation of Dutch and Flemish strangers in Sandwich. It is also refreshing to see that this edited volume takes the diplomatic relations between the Low Countries and other countries, with a particular emphasis on England, into account, such as in Hugh Dunthorne's chapter on the Dutch revolt in English political culture. There is, moreover, space for some of the more esoteric forces that were at play in the early modern period, of which P.E.L. Verkuyt's chapter on geomancy is a brilliant example. The reader thus travels from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the curious and curiouseer.

Despite these several positives, there remain some limitations to this collection. The chapters are the published proceedings of a conference held at UCL in 1989, nearly thirty years ago. Although many of the articles have not been superseded, or been replaced by radically alternative opinions, there are some problems attached to this republication. The body of secondary material (which is mostly footnotes) has barely been updated, with the latest referenced source I could find

from the year 1990. Although, as mentioned in the brief introduction, eager readers of this collection can go elsewhere for more up to date material, a suggestion for further (more recent) material at the end of each chapter would greatly have benefitted the book; updating the footnotes would have been a simple and effective way of doing this.

There is one exception: in chapter 15, Paul Sellin discusses the mysterious disappearance of Rutger Wessel van den Boetzelaer's *Meditations Chrestiennes* in his fascinating chapter. A copy of this text was, however, found in 2011, and at the end of the chapter a short descriptive epilogue is added with updated information. Similar efforts with other chapters could have been made with valuable results. For example, some of these chapters have since been transformed into monographs by their authors, and although these are mentioned in the author's biographies, they have not been added to the footnotes, or related to their chapters. Some further minor problems came to light as well. Several chapters begin with the opening well-known among academic articles, 'in the last twenty years' in all its variants. This means that these articles are now (presumably) talking about the last *fifty* years, during which scholarship has changed a great deal (sometimes dramatically).

Lastly, at several points in the collection, the chapters refer to similar texts, historical events and important authors; at times there is even some repetition between chapters; a good example of this would be the frequent references to the myth of the Batavian Republic. However, there is no cross-referencing to other chapters in the collection; they are all treated as separate entities, where some increased coherence could have assisted the reader in following up points of interest. This could perhaps also have been solved through an extended informative introduction to the collection by the editors, in which they drew parallels between the chapters, reiterated the overarching ambition of this collection, or commented on recent scholarship performed in the areas addressed in this book. The one-page introduction that we are given, unfortunately, is not enough.

After reading this collection, I was ultimately left wanting. This collection of sometimes wonderful essays had the potential to do much more, had the effects of republishing it thirty years later been taken into account, and opportunities to reveal the importance and originality of the contributions had been taken by the editors. All the articles are well written and interesting, but at times a rigorous, detailed discussion was missing because of the general nature of some of the articles. Overall it nonetheless works well as a general introduction to the Low Countries for those interested in this period, without demanding a great deal of foreknowledge.

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