



SNH Newsletter

September 2002

PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR NETHERLANDIC HISTORY

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Attend the
2nd SNH
Conference

New York

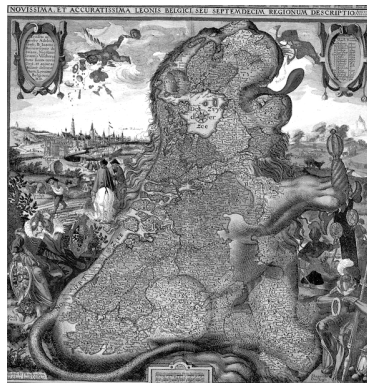
June 2-3, 2003

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A Note from the President

The *Leo Belgicus*, first designed by Michael Eitzinger in 1583, is a widely copied cartographic curiosity. Like so many other images and symbols from the late sixteenth century, the Belgian Lion proved to be adaptable to a variety of purposes. When he was standing on his hind legs and clutching a variety of weapons, he was the very image of bellicose defiance; when seated, his mood could be much more peaceful. When his shape was used to incorporate all seventeen of the Netherlandic provinces, *Leo* could express the solidarity and hopeful aspirations of the Pacification of Ghent; when a leaner, and perhaps meaner, model encompassed only Holland or just the seven northern provinces, *Leo Hollandicus* just as easily expressed the defiance of the rebellious Dutch Republic. In all, H. A. M. van der Heijden describes and catalogues no less than 32 separate printing platforms and 65 distinct examples of this remarkable motif. (See *Leo Belgicus. An Illustrated and Annotated Carto-Bibliography*. Alphen a/d Rijn: Canaletto, 1990)

For this inaugural issue of the *SNH Newsletter*, I have chosen the version of *Leo Belgicus* published by Claes Jansz. Visscher ca. 1611 as the model for our new organizational logo. This decidedly inclusive and pacific iteration symbolizes, I trust, the goals of an organization



that seeks to be both inclusive and constructive.

With this new twice-yearly Newsletter the Society for Netherlandic history invites all those who are interested in the history of the Low Countries to become active SNH members: By contributing notices of new and noteworthy books, by proposing papers for and attending our Second International Conference, by sending items for a calendar of significant events in our March Newsletter, but as well by making a modest annual contribution to ensure our financial stability. (See the membership form on page 7)

Wayne te Brake, Purchase College
<wtebrake@bestweb.net>

Book Notices

Daalder, Remmelt, Andrea Kieskamp, and Dirk J. Tang ed., *Slaven en schepen. Enkele reis, bestemming onbekend*

Leiden: Primavera Pers, Amsterdam: Stichting Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam, 2001.

One introductory article and ten short essays make up this lavishly illustrated collection, which will probably be the first of several books on the Dutch experience with slavery to be published on the eve of the sesquicentennial of Dutch abolition. In his contribution, Victor Enthoven provides numerous data on life aboard slave ships. Interest-

ingly, a ship would not be ready yet to receive slaves at the moment of departure from a Dutch port. It was only during the voyage to Africa that carpenters constructed the slave quarters. Slaves' meals during the Middle Passage were frugal: they ate little else than barley porridge and drank water and (light) beer. Once ashore in Curacao, author Han Jordaan relates, food conditions did not improve: only exceptionally did a slave get meat and vegetables instead of the usual allowance of corn.

Natalie Everts explains the nature of slavery in Africa, in particular among the Akan in the western part of the continent, while Boudewijn Sirks discusses slavery in the Dutch East Indies.

Whereas the slave trade to the Americas was driven by economic necessity, African slaves sent to the East ended up in households rather than on plantations. The plantation labor that characterized Dutch colonies in the West was almost unknown in the fortified settlements ruled by the VOC. Only on the Moluccas did the Company run nutmeg production in a similar fashion. Although the overall numbers of slaves sent East was small, the slave population of Batavia, the VOC headquarters in Java, was remarkably large: 20,000 (30% of the total population) in 1699 and 34,000 (25%) in 1779. There was certainly no New World town that had such a large enslaved population.

Finally, Piet Boon highlights the vicissitudes of Dutch sailors who were captured by North African ships and taken to Muslim territories, where they became the slaves of either the local bey (Algiers, Tunis) or king (Morocco). Many were subsequently sold in local slave markets. Previous estimates of the number of enslaved Dutchmen in North Africa were apparently exaggerated. They totaled 7,000 at most and at any given time, there were no more than 600. The average sailor re-

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<http://www.as.udayton.edu/history/snh.htm>

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Book Notices (continued)

gained his freedom after five or six years, often after the payment of ransom; the amount of money depended on the person's rank on board.

Wim Klooster, University of Southern Maine

Wim Blockmans. *Keizer Karl V, 1500-1558: de utopie van het keizerschap.* Van Halewyck/Balans. 2000. 284 pages.

A decade ago, the quincentenary of Columbus' voyages to the Caribbean generated an enormous scholarly output that mixed critical reappraisal with academic and popular commemorations and exhibitions. The same combination of historical reevaluation and public celebration occurred in Belgium and the Netherlands in 2000, five hundred years after the birth of the Habsburg emperor Charles V in Ghent. Polished exhibitions, academic conferences, even a salacious comic book took stock of the legacy of this Habsburg Burgundian ruler who had sovereignty over more territory than any other Holy Roman Emperor. As a leading authority both on the Burgundian Netherlands and the urban and state systems in premodern Europe, Wim Blockmans has produced a compact and fascinating critical evaluation of Charles V's reign. Blockmans' wide-lens overview of Charles' political and cultural world is geared toward both a scholarly and a popular audience. Among the book's many contributions is Blockmans' pan-European perspective on the emperor, discarding the nationalist narratives that have dominated scholarship on the subject. While Blockmans provides the key details about Charles' life, the book functions less as a biography than as a critical look at the political challenges Charles confronted. A core strength of the book is Blockmans' comparative framework. For example, while the Netherlands is given noticeable atten-

tion, its political and religious issues are compared with other pressing concerns Charles faced, including the Reformation in Germany, urban dissent in Spain, the never-ending Ottoman threat, and, most importantly, the enduring Valois-Habsburg conflict that cost so Charles so much political capital.

Blockmans paints a portrait of Charles as a ruler divided between the imperial ideal of the universal Christian prince and realpolitik exigencies, particularly the intractable religious strife of the Reformation and the ambitions of other powerful princes such as Francis I and Suleiman I. In style, Charles was the consummate late-medieval Burgundian prince, with a taste for chivalric romance, jousts and crusades, and a peripatetic court. But he faced a much different world than the late medieval princes whose manner he inherited. The progress of the Reformation could be contested but not satisfactorily contained, and constant warfare, especially with France, required heavy financial burdens on his subject and cities, especially in Castile and the Netherlands, where delicate negotiations with representative estates provoked irresolvable friction. Blockmans details Charles constant political machinations and war plans, even using a close examination of the siege of Florence in 1530 led by his distant relative Philibert of Chalon to recount how poor support and inefficient communications led to misery and dissension among the troops. He reminds readers that whatever the ideals of universal emperorship so well articulated by court painters and urban ceremonialists, Charles empire was resoundingly local. He held seven-two separate titles of rule—and was reminded by provincial opponents, as in Ghent in 1539, that his authority was only as good as its regional inflection. While Blockmans is at pains to point out shortcomings of Charles' reign—including most apparently his tenacious

Book Notices (continued)

inflexibility— his portrait of Charles' reign is not without its sympathy for a ruler of late-medieval Burgundian appetites who by dynastic strategy and luck ruled a world of tremendous change and heterogeneity.

Peter Arnade, California State University San Marcos

Dutch Literature and Culture

Pending budgetary approval, the Department of German invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor, or a tenured Associate Professor or Professor, in Dutch literature and culture to hold the *Queen Beatrix Chair in Dutch Studies*, effective 1 July 2003.

Candidates with proven interdisciplinary interests and specialization in the modern field are particularly encouraged to apply. Minimum qualifications: PhD and evidence of commitment to research and teaching.

Candidates applying for an Assistant Professor position should send complete dossier to Dutch Search Committee, Department of German, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-3243. Candidates applying for a tenured position should send a current C.V., a list of publications, and the names of three referees. All applications must be postmarked no later than 15 November 2002. Late postmarks cannot be considered. No electronic submissions, please.

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Gabrielle Dorren. *Eenheid en verscheidenheid. De burgers van Haarlem in de Gouden Eeuw*. Amsterdam: Prometheus/Bert Bakker, 2001. ISBN 9053338837.

This fine group portrait of the city of Frans Hals examines the ways in which Harlemmers sustained and exercised their sense of community in the seventeenth century. Despite the city's considerable economic, social, ethnic and religious diversity its leaders and citizens were remarkably successful at preserving civic harmony and order during the tumultuous "golden age" of the Dutch Republic. Haarlem, the third largest town in Holland, weathered the economic and political storms of the 1600s comparatively unscathed.

Explaining the absence of conflict is never easy, but Dorren ably reconstructs the intricate and overlapping social networks and institutions that gave the city its informal yet powerful sense of cohesion: family, neighborhood, guilds, churches, militias and chambers of rhetoric. In particular she analyzes with skill and insight two of these structures, neighborhoods (*gebuurten*) and religious congregations. With their dual function of providing security and sociability neighborhood organizations bound Harlemmers to each other most immediately at everyday street level, and the availability of a wide variety of religious choices helped to defuse confessional tensions.

At times this study runs more to description than analysis; nevertheless it remains a fascinating snapshot of the communal and civic mentalities of seventeenth-century Dutch society. It should be required reading for all students of the rich urban culture of Golden Age Holland.

Christine Kooi, Louisiana State University

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Society for Netherlandic History will convene its Second International Conference at New York University, June 2-3, 2003, on the theme:

The Boundaries of the Netherlands: Ambiguities, Exchanges, Transgressions

No region has a name more rooted in geography than the Netherlands. Summoning up iconic images of polder, dike, and canal, the name seems to indicate a specific, readily-identifiable place with a unique topography. Yet over the centuries definitions of “the Netherlands” and their boundaries have changed repeatedly, from the seventeen provinces assembled by Burgundians and Habsburgs to the modern state that is but one of three Benelux countries. Linguistic, cultural, and other sorts of boundaries have not been contiguous with political ones. Until the modern era, even political boundaries were defined less by lines on a map than by jurisdictions, which could overlap or be shared (e.g. Maastricht). Sometimes ambiguous, the boundaries of the Netherlands have always been porous, allowing people, ideas, and goods to flow in and out. They have also been fragile, easily transgressed by European powers with great armies. The same qualities characterize the boundaries of many Dutch overseas colonies.

This conference will explore the boundaries, both political and non-political, that historically have defined The Netherlands, Belgium, and their colonies. It will give special attention to the ambiguities of those boundaries, the exchanges that took place across them, and transgressions that pierced them. In this way it will look at the place of the Netherlands in Europe and of overseas Netherlandic settlements in the broader project of European colonization. It will seek to explain how “the Netherlands” – however defined – could be at once parochial and cosmopolitan, distinctive and open to foreign influences, self-determining and yet intensely engaged with its neighbors.

Possible topics for papers include:

- ? Definitions of Citizenship and Nationhood
- ? Foreign Policy & Vulnerability to Outside Aggression
- ? The Flow of People, Capital, and Goods
- ? Intercultural Contacts and Conflicts

Paper proposals, including a brief abstract, should be sent to each of the members of the Program Committee by February 1, 2003: Ben Kaplan <b.kaplan@ucl.ac.uk>, Sophie de Schaepdrijver <scd10@psu.edu> and Walter Simons <Walter.P.Simons@dartmouth.edu>

Still More Book Notices

Milton M. Klein, ed. *The Empire State: A History of New York*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press with the New York State Historical Association, 2001. 837 pages.

Much of the history of New Netherland took place within the boundaries of what is now New York state. This multi-authored volume sponsored by the New York State Historical Association and intended to “incorporat[e] the monographic studies and new historical emphases of the past three decades” [xiii] therefore merits close scrutiny by members of the Society for Netherlandic History because the version of New Netherland’s history it presents is destined to gain wide currency among students, teachers, librarians and the reading public. Specialists in early modern Dutch history might well rejoice that Oliver Rink, author of the acclaimed *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (1986), has been allotted over 100 pages (not to mention space for a comprehensive bibliographical essay) to tell the story of New Netherland, if it were not for the fact that the section on Dutch colonization is called “Before the English [1609-1664].” One hesitates to implicate Rink in the choice of a title that resoundingly reduces the Dutch era to insignificance, but his references to New Netherland as “the colony that would become New York in 1664” (60) and a “somewhat quaint backwater of colonial history” (740) seem to seal the case.

Faced with the daunting task of synthesizing the abundant research of the last quarter-century, Rink has had to make difficult decisions regarding organization and emphases. For the most part, he has hewed to a conventional political-economic narrative. Diplomacy bulks large in this rendering of the colony’s history, while social history garners

minimal attention. A brief review of the precontact history of the region’s Native Americans is followed by chronological chapters dealing with Dutch claims to the region, the initial efforts to build the colony, and the achievement of stability and prosperity under the governance of Peter Stuyvesant. At this point, the chronicle is interrupted by an encyclopedic chapter on “Life in New Netherland,” which deals with subjects as varied as “crops and farming practices,” “art, music, architecture and tools,” “family life,” “sports and recreation,” “gender rights and family law” and “religious life.” The political narrative resumes in “New Netherland’s Last Years,” a chapter devoted to military and diplomatic encounters with the Native Americans, Swedes and English, and the contest between Stuyvesant and local merchants over granting New Amsterdam a municipal charter. Rink’s final comments, framed in terms of conventional homage to the cultural legacy of the Dutch, imply that Dutch men and women stopped being a force in the region’s history after the English invasion of 1664.

Rink’s clear delineation of the major elements of New Netherland’s history, coupled with his engaging prose, should appeal to readers. His considered analysis of slavery and “half freedom” in the colony breaks new ground, though he tends to minimize the agency of African Americans. Scholars will yearn for a more complex narrative, one that probes the cultural dimensions of interactions between the Native Americans and the Dutch, delves into the dynamics of communal life in New Amsterdam and Beverwijck, links developments in New Netherland to those in the homeland, and does not resort to compartmentalizing religious history.

Joyce Goodfriend, University of Denver

Book Notices (continued)

Chris van der Heijden, *Grijs Verleden: Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog*.
Amsterdam/Antwerp: Contact, 2001.

The unique characteristic of Dutch historiography of the Second World War is that the war's definitive history was written by a single person, Louis De Jong, whose vast multi-volume work, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, has gone unrivaled as the chronicle of the war years (1940-1945). Chris van der Heijden's *Grijs verleden* is the first book to present itself as a definitive account of the Second World War in the Netherlands since De Jong. For this reason, among others, it has received much attention in the Dutch media.

Following a trend among Dutch historians since the 1980s, Van der Heijden relativizes the traditional distinctions between collaboration and resistance, arguing that most Dutch in the war were neither good nor bad, but *grijs*, gray, surviving the war through a variety of accommodating strategies. The story of the occupied Dutch as heroic resisters he dismisses as a postwar myth propagated by De Jong and held by most post-war Dutch. To combat this view, Van der Heijden offers evidence that until 1942, the quality of life for most Dutch was not worse than before the war (and better than in neighboring Belgium), and

that most of the population was prepared to make the best of the situation. Moreover, he emphasizes the lack of Dutch armed resistance to Nazi rule, and further suggests that such resistance, to the extent that it was exercised, often was ineffective – or led to worse suffering.

If *Grijs verleden* had restricted itself to providing a more sober view of the Dutch public's opinions and actions during the Second World War, it would have offered a stimulating, if not totally original, reinterpretation of the Occupation. And if Van der Heijden had been content to link the relative passivity of many Dutch under German occupation to the country's prewar political culture, he would have offered a richer contextualization of Dutch behavior during the war. But the author also wants to argue that almost all human beings, as human beings, are morally "gray," and that it is virtually impossible to label people "good" or "bad." This thesis, recurring throughout the book, comes closer to obliterating moral distinctions than it does to explaining a historical context by which to nuance such judgments. If there are historical works on the Second World War which are too moralistic, Van der Heijden's *Grijs verleden* suggests that there is also another extreme to avoid.

James Kennedy, Hope College

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SNH Conference Save the Dates!

?? Theme: The Boundaries of the
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?? Place: New York University, New
York City, June 2-3, 2003

?? Look for Updates in the March
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