

Peter Arnade, Martha Howell, and Anton van der Lem, *Rereading Huizinga: Autumn of the Middle Ages, A Century Later* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019, 364 pp., ISBN 9789462983724); Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *L'odeur du sang et des roses: Relire Johan Huizinga aujourd'hui* (Lille: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2020, 220 pp., ISBN 978-2-7574-2960-0).

Two conferences, one at Columbia University in 2016 and one at the University of Lille in 2018, provided the basis for the volumes *Rereading Huizinga* and *L'odeur du sang et des roses* respectively (the latter title referring to an image used by Johan Huizinga to analyse medieval symbolism). They were published in 2019 to commemorate the centenary of the first publication of Huizinga's *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*.

Both works uncover paradoxes in the way scholars now approach *Autumn of the Middle Ages*. In their introduction to *Rereading Huizinga*, Peter Arnade and Martha Howell underline the enduring fame of this work. However, they also sum up several reasons that may explain why it has encountered a mixed reception among scholars, such as its focus on French-language literary and narrative sources to study a multilingual region blessed with rich archives, its lack of attention to civic life or to commerce in a regional space where cities offered a powerful counterpart to the ducal court, and its disregard for the usual rules of scholarship (12-13). Another paradox laid in its audiences. The editors of *Rereading Huizinga* suggest *Autumn* was more successful among a broad scholarly audience in France, England, and the United States 'thanks to the successive generations of the Annales school' (20) than in the Netherlands and in Belgium. They hint at the interest of this volume for readers in Belgium and the Netherlands to get better acquainted with a book that primarily concerns their national history. Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, however, contradicts this, stating that one of the goals of *L'odeur du sang* is to help rehabilitate a work too often neglected by French readers who are unfamiliar with Huizinga's methods and context of writing (17).

One of the main common objectives of these two volumes is to investigate in which fields Huizinga's heritage is the most tangible, a century after *Autumn*'s first publication. *Rereading Huizinga* focuses more specifically on *Autumn*'s sources of inspiration, its writing context, and its methodology. It is primarily a volume made by and for cultural historians, while *L'odeur du sang* also offers contributions by literary specialists. The structure of the latter follows the themes Huizinga dealt with in the various chapters of *Autumn*, where *Rereading Huizinga* opts for a more refined structure in three distinct parts, organising the chapters according to analytical and methodological issues. Part 1, 'Huizinga and the Late Medieval North', explores some

problematic historical themes in Huizinga's work, such as his positioning towards urban culture and the Burgundian State. The second part, 'Art, Literature and Sources in *Autumn of the Middle Ages*', deals with methodological questions regarding the corpora used by Huizinga, although literary sources are in fact dealt with only fleetingly and among other narrative sources in Graeme Small's chapter. Part 3, 'Legacies: Huizinga and Historiography', offers enlightening insights on the reach of Huizinga's work among contemporary and following generations of historians.

Several chapters in the two volumes are particularly interesting to read together. This is the case for the chapter of Anton van der Lem, first published in *Rereading Huizinga*, and translated and reworked in French for *L'odeur du sang*. The reworked French version insists on the publication history of the book in France, an important point to understand the reception of Huizinga's work in this country, especially among his colleagues of the *Annales* school. This topic is dealt with in both volumes, by Myriam Greilsammer in *Rereading Huizinga* and by Christophe de Voogd in *L'odeur du sang*. Both chapters underline the paradigmatic similarities present in both Marc Bloch's and Johan Huizinga's work, and the methodological differences in their approach. While De Voogd focuses on precise points of theoretical dissension between the two intellectuals, for instance regarding the necessity of writing a history of 'mentalities' or 'representations', Greilsammer studies more specifically the intellectual exchanges between the two historians and their contemporaries. She also describes the more favorable reception of Huizinga's work among later generations of *Annales* historians. Marc Boone's chapter in *Rereading Huizinga* sheds additional light on such intellectual debates between contemporary scholars by studying more in depth the sustained exchanges between Huizinga and the great Belgian historian Henri Pirenne.

For some disciplines, it is obvious that the legacy of *Autumn* is limited, as is made clear by art historians. Bertrand Cosnet, in *L'odeur du sang*, and Diane Wolfthal, in *Rereading Huizinga*, both underline that, despite Huizinga's deep interest for Flemish art, his central argument about its decline rather than its heralding of Renaissance innovations led many art historians to shun *Autumn*. However, Wolfthal gives a very useful overview of art historical studies over the past hundred years that have critically discussed Huizinga's ideas, many of them acknowledging some of Huizinga's most striking intuitions in this domain. Similarly, in *L'odeur du sang*, Jelle Koopmans and Estelle Doudet highlight a recurring paradox: *Autumn* remains a work in the face of which many literary scholars, while rejecting its conclusions, feel compelled to position themselves. This is made evident by Koopmans from the point of view of formalist research and by Doudet from the perspective of the history of Burgundian literature. Yet, here again, the authors discern in some of Huizinga's dazzling observations, which paved the way for new avenues of research, the origin of this constant need felt by modern researchers to discuss and assess the ideas presented in *Autumn*. In *Rereading Huizinga*, Jan Dumolyn

and Lecuppre-Desjardin make the same point from a methodological point of view, about urban culture and Huizinga's problematic legacy regarding a subject he circumvented rather than completely avoided in his work.

For other disciplines, Huizinga's legacy is easier to establish, for instance religious history, as explored by Nicole Bériou in *L'odeur du sang* and Walter Simons in *Rereading Huizinga*. Both Bériou and Simons underline how Huizinga's approach of religion from the point of view of the mentalities and perceptions takes on new importance with the development of recent trends in historiography, such as the history of emotions. This is also confirmed by Damien Bouquet and Laurent Smagghe in *L'odeur du sang*. It is impossible to do justice to the depth and nuances of all the chapters of both volumes in a short review, but a special mention should be made of the contributions that most clearly stress how influential Huizinga's approach as an 'anthropologist avant la lettre' was (to borrow the title of Peter Arnade's chapter in *Rereading Huizinga*). Andrew Brown, in *Rereading Huizinga*, underlines the fact that it is his other major work, *Homo Ludens*, that ultimately had the broadest reach in very diverse fields – some of them, such as performance studies and game studies, having only relatively recently emerged. However, several chapters, for instance by Larry Silver in *Rereading Huizinga* on the court of German ruler Maximilian I, clearly demonstrate the long-lasting impact *Autumn* had on the development of new concepts for the study of Burgundian court culture, such as ritual, used as an operative analytical framework, and the notion of 'theatre state'.

In short, these are two very enlightening collections of essays that deliver state of the art observations not only on *Autumn* but also more generally on Burgundian studies. The volumes are very useful companions for students, which will help them to read Huizinga with an informed view of important scholarly trends and research results in their field of study. They will also appeal to researchers, who will find in them a nuanced and fair assessment of the legacy, or rather, the multiple legacies, left by this work since its first publication.

Katell Lavéant, Utrecht University