

## RECENSIES

Gelasius I, Lodewijk de Heilige, die dit predicaat zou verdienen 'ook al omdat hij het tegendeel was van een absoluut vorst' (18), de profeet Nathan, Rousseau, Dante Alighieri, keizer Hendrik VII, koning Filips de Schone en natuurlijk Macchiavelli met Frederik de Grote: een illuster, maar al te bont gezelschap, waarbinnen nu uitgerekend Willem van Oranje moet gaan excelleren, want 'door zijn handelen' werd in de vorm van de 'Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provinciën' niet slechts 'een nieuwe staat geschapen', maar 'ook een nieuw *type-staat*, gegrondvest op het beginsel van mederegering des volks, van een zeker nog wel beperkte, maar niettemin toch reeds reële representatieve 'democratie'... hoewel geen enkele tijdgenoot dat laatste woord zou hebben gebruikt' (21).

Wat wil Brugmans nu eigenlijk? Hij poogt aan de hand van de *actuele Oranje* de historische wortels van 'onze politieke overtuiging' bloot te leggen en stelt daarbij dan ogenschijnlijk onomstotelijk vast 'dat er twee klassieke voorbeelden van 'democratische' revolutie bestaan: het Nederlandse en het Franse type'. Voor hem, de 'pragmaticus', is het dan zonder meer evident 'dat de beweging van Oranje, ondanks alles, toch in hoofdzaak is geslaagd' (22), terwijl Frankrijk twee eeuwen later gedurende enige jaren onder het Schrikbewind van de Jacobijnse terreur gebukt ging. Op eigen initiatief denkt de lezer dan zelf maar even aan hetgeen zich nog vóór het uitbreken van de Franse Revolutie heeft afgespeeld in de dertien Amerikaanse kolonies ten overstaan van Engeland, want George Washington komt in deze *actuele Oranje* pas op pagina 30 in gezelschap van stadhouder-koning Willem III opdraven. Kortom, zodanige actualisering heeft niet zoveel meer gemeen met een feeëriek reidans rond het door Brugmans ontworpen beeld van Oranje. De zin: 'De tegenstelling tussen Oranje en de Jacobijnen is die tussen Lenin en Rosa Luxemburg' (22) wordt alleen voor de twee laatstgenoemden enigszins geadstrueerd. Op deze wijze wordt van Oranje niet slechts een historiografisch factotum gemaakt, dergelijke zinloze vergelijkingen en boude exclamaties doen de man alleen maar onrecht aan; de lezer op zijn beurt doet helemaal niets met de constatering van Brugmans dat tijdens de 'bolsjewistische revolutie' de toenmalige minister van onderwijs en cultuur Loenatsjarski tot de 'oranjeklanten' kan worden gerekend (24); zo'n geactualiseerde Oranje is dan even ver van huis als Brugmans' suggestie misplaatst, als zou het ontbreken van enige terreur tijdens de 'Glorious Revolution' en de Amerikaanse Opstand, 'die op Willem I zijn gevolgd' kunnen worden beschouwd als 'goede gevolgen' van Oranjes doen en laten (30). Dit is geschiedschrijving, die doet denken aan een klompdans in de eierstruif. Toegegeven - grote mannen kunnen op tragische wijze falen, óók zij die omwille van intens en ver gezochte actualiteit zich aldus wensen te laten gaan.

A. E. M. Janssen

Hans Bots, ed., *Pieter Rabus en De Boekzaal van Europe, 1692-1702* (Studies van het Instituut voor intellectuele betrekkingen tussen Westeuropese landen van de zeventiende eeuw, Nijmegen, II; Amsterdam: Holland Universiteits Pers, 1974, viii + 420 blz.).

One positive expression of student participation in the universities of the Netherlands in recent years has been the publication of a number of works produced by student seminars upon the initiative and under the guidance of an established scholar, each consisting of a collection of studies centred upon a figure of some considerable cultural significance. Thus Lieuwe van Aitzema has been the subject of a student seminar at Groningen and

Constantijn Huygens of a student seminar at the catholic university of Nijmegen<sup>1</sup>. At Nijmegen the studies of Huygens were accomplished under the aegis of the university's energetic 'Instituut voor intellectuele betrekkingen tussen Westeuropese landen van de zeventiende eeuw', and under the editorship of Dr. Hans Bots. The same body and the same editor are responsible for the latest addition to the genre, a collection of studies on Pieter Rabus and the periodical with which his name will always be first linked, *De Boekzaal van Europe*. Representing the collective and individual labours of some 21 students assisted by the critical supervision and professional expertise of some of Nijmegen's scholars, the studies consist of a biographical sketch of Rabus and an account of the external history of the periodical; a series of essays designed to elucidate Rabus's religious affiliations or sympathies within the protestant community, and his published attitudes towards the papacy, the Jesuits, and Jansenism; a description of the controversy excited by Balthasar Bekker's, *De Betoverde Weereld*, as mirrored in *De Boekzaal van Europe*; an attempt to show Rabus's interest in, and to define his attitude towards, the dominant or growing philosophical tendencies of his age, with separate essays on the nature and degree of attention given in *De Boekzaal* to medical science and to Anthoni van Leeuwenhoek; two essays aimed to give impressions of Rabus's political stand-point and of the growing contemporary interest in travel literature, the first based upon a handful of bookreviews in *De Boekzaal*, the second upon an inventory of the travel literature cited in the periodical; and finally some thirty hitherto unpublished letters to and from Rabus.

The fare is therefore mixed and, as is to be expected in any collection of essays, the contributions vary in the importance of their subject, in their range, and in the quality of the finished product. Some contributions are slight, so slight that their justification must be sought in terms of the experience gained by their writers into the nature and techniques of historical scholarship rather than in terms of a significant advance in historical knowledge. Even the most substantial of the contributions, which is undoubtedly the account of the life of Rabus and of the genesis, composition, character, readership, and troubled publishing history of the periodical provided by Pieter Rietbergen and Jojet Lysen, is no more, and professes to be no more, than a reconnaissance into the themes with which it is concerned; and, given the limitations of time and travel imposed upon its writers, it is a remarkably successful reconnaissance, informative and suggestive. It is easy of course to suggest ways in which it might have been improved, and doubtless they occurred to participants in the endeavour. For instance, more might have been learnt about the sources from which Rabus drew in compiling *De Boekzaal* if a systematic search had been made of other contemporary periodicals, or a selection of them, with a view to establishing the existence or extent of borrowings; and such a search might also have unearthed, or pointed towards, the kind of literary agency operated slightly later by the Huguenot, Pierre des Maizeaux, the contemporary biographer of Bayle, who provided a number of periodicals published in the Dutch Republic, and elsewhere, with regular reports from London of English literary news; which news, once published, was then plagiarised by other periodicals, including it seems, the successor to *De Boekzaal*, *De Boekzaal der Geleerde Werelt*<sup>2</sup>. It is not easy to see, however, how such a search could

1. E.H. Waterbolk, ed., *Proeven van Lieuwe van Aitzema* (Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy, 1970) and Hans Bots, ed., *Constantijn Huygens. Zijn plaats in geleerd Europa* (Amsterdam: Holland Universiteits Pers, 1973).
2. J. H. Broome, 'Pierre Desmaizeaux, journaliste. Les Nouvelles littéraires de Londres entre

have been made within the time-table available to the contributors of this volume, and it seems less likely that such a search will now be made.

Certain weaknesses, therefore, spring naturally and unavoidably from the very nature of this undertaking - from the fact that it is a collection of essays -, which results in unevenness, and from the over-riding need to find projects of a sort and of a size that can be exploited from published materials and a limited range of readily accessible unpublished materials which makes for thin and inconclusive work. Not all the weaknesses of the present volume, however, spring from circumstances beyond the control of individual contributors. Some might have been removed by more careful consultation with, or of, some of the expert advisers mentioned in the foreword, and by more obvious cross-fertilization amongst the essayists themselves. It is a pity, for example, that in discussing the size of the readership of *De Boekzaal van Europe* Pieter Rietbergen invokes an article by dr. P. Buynsters in support of the statement that in order to be economically viable a periodical in c. 1720 probably required a minimum readership of 400. In fact dr. Buynsters, and his source, Justus van Effen, talk of a sale of 400 copies, and, as dr. Buynsters again makes clear in the same article, readership was always significantly higher than sales, subject to a multiplication factor which, if contemporary English estimates are a guide, would push the readership of *De Boekzaal* into the thousands<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, whatever the actual or approximate size of readership, readers of *De Boekzaal* were not confined to scholars, doctors, ministers of religion and public officials, as seems to be suggested on page 36, but probably included and, judging from the statement of Rabus quoted on page 42, were certainly intended to include their wives, another sign that women were becoming an important part of the reading public and could take serious reading.

There are other instances in the volume where the significance of what has been found seems to have insufficiently recognized, even overlooked. For example, surely more could have been essayed with the list compiled of persons to whom Rabus dedicated issues of his periodical. If, as is suggested, part of the object of Rabus in making such dedications was to win protectors amongst those in authority, then it would have been useful to have had the views of someone on the significance, or otherwise, of a spate of dedications to the burgomasters of Rotterdam made in 1698 and 1699 when Rabus may have felt in need of municipal protection and support in his continuing struggle against clerical censorship. Moreover if, as is also suggested, another purpose served by listing such dedications is to establish Rabus's circle of friends, then it is somewhat unfortunate that his friendship with Jacob Ysbrans, mentioned in one of the dedications, and an apparently long-standing and close friendship with Kornelis van Welsenens, referred to in one of Rabus's poems, should have been omitted<sup>4</sup>. At this level of detail, however, the volume leaves a

1700 et 1740', *Revue de littérature comparée*, XXIX (1955) 184-204. More information is to be found in the author's unpublished London Ph.D. thesis (1949) entitled, 'An Agent in Anglo-French Relationships: Pierre des Maizeaux 1673-1745'.

3. P. J. Buijnsters, 'Sociologie van de Spectator', *Spiegel der Letteren* (Antwerp, 1973) 1,12-13.

4. The reference to Van Welsenens is to be found in the British Museum's copy of Rabus 'Gedichten', to which work reference is made in the bibliography of Rabus's works added as an appendix to the article by Pieter Rietbergen. The poem is entitled, *Bruiloft-Zang voor den Heere Mr. Kornelius van Welsenens en Jonkvrouwe Katharine Deinoot*. The British Museum incidentally has a set of *De Boekzaal van Europe*, as has the University Library, Cambridge. See *Select List of Periodicals and Series in the Field of Dutch Language, Literature, Culture and History and Allied Subjects held by University and other Libraries in the United Kingdom* (Compiled by P.F. Vincent, Bedford College, University of London, List no. I, September 1974, a typed list) 5.

lot to be desired. To be told on p. 404, f. 17, that nothing has been discovered about Edward Browne to add to Rabus's description of him as a doctor and royal physician is a little odd in view of the fact that there is an entry on him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, VII (1886) 42-43, and that the author of the article in question twice consults the *DNB*.

Still even Homer nods, and occasional lapses of concentration in matters of minor detail are unavoidable and are not of much consequence. The identification of a host of minor historical figures and the clarification of contemporary allusions must always present such great and sometimes intractable problems that it is not surprising to be confronted in this volume with loose ends and crossed wires. More serious, more surprising, and less easily excused, however, in a work which proclaims itself to be the fruit of intensive co-operation, are the many instances of overlapping, indeed of repetition, in background material, in detail, and in quotations both in the text and in footnotes; above all there is a quite inadequate degree of cross-referencing, which, in any collection of essays, forms a partial substitute for the organic unity to be found, or to be expected, in the work of a single scholar. In short, for all its undoubted value in gathering information, in clearing the ground, and in signposting avenues for further enquiry, this book could have been shorter, and could have been better, even within its existing methodological framework. It is to be hoped that in its forthcoming project on Henri Basnage de Beauval the 'Instituut voor intellectuele betrekkingen' will give more attention to the need to cut verbal fat and to ways of achieving a more integrated and more easily used piece of scholarship. A fuller introduction drawing attention to points of intersection and differing emphases between contributors would help, though perhaps radical improvements are not to be achieved within the existing format.

G. C Gibbs

R. B. Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam*, IV, *De kerk der hervorming in de achttiende eeuw: de grote crisis* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1974, 368 blz., geïll., f 35,-).

Met vaste gang vervolgt dr. Evenhuis zijn geschiedenis van hervormd Amsterdam. Hij streeft naar afronding in 1978 bij het vierde eeuwgetij van de Alteratie. Nam hij in het voorafgaande ongeveer een halve eeuw per deel, ditmaal heeft hij de gehele achttiende eeuw behandeld. Dat lijkt me pure winst: de mogelijkheid om het werk ooit te voltooien wordt zo verdubbeld, maar bovendien moest hij nu de verleiding weerstaan om uitweidingen te geven over allerlei niet-Amsterdamse ontwikkelingen. De concentratie op Amsterdam is veel sterker. Met het geestelijk klimaat van deze, veelal door theologen haastig gepasseerde, eeuw was de auteur al sinds zijn promotie over de piëtist Bengel in 1931 vertrouwd. Zijn bedoeling bleef dezelfde en hij verantwoordt die nogmaals aan het begin: een populair-wetenschappelijk beeld geven van een stad en een geloofsgemeenschap die hem zeer ter harte gaan. In bevattelijke verteltrant rangschikt hij gegevens uit de literatuur, die voor geen andere plaats zo overvloedig is als juist voor Amsterdam, tussen wat hij uit het kerkeradsarchief heeft opgediept. In het bijzonder heeft hij voor dit deel de spectatoriale geschriften doorgenomen.

Na de sfeer van de eeuw globaal te hebben weergegeven, vooral zoals tijdgenoten die zagen, stelt hij de kerkeraad, de predikanten en de diakenen in aparte hoofdstukken aan de orde: hoe de kerkeraad de tucht hanteerde, hoeveel werk de dominees van hun preek maakten, hoe de diakonale taak naast zorg voor armen, wezen en oudelieden ook het