

Holland as a Political Model in Italy in the Seventeenth Century*

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The political institutions of one country can become a political model for other countries. England became a political model in Europe during the eighteenth century: Voltaire and Montesquieu presented the monarchy of England as the constitutional example to be followed in order to avoid despotism. Scholars believe that Venice was regarded in the seventeenth century as an example of the mixed form of government so highly praised by the classical authors: Venice became a model because monarchy, aristocracy and democracy were happily mixed. Many studies have been published on the significance of Venice in the age of the Counter-Reformation. Recently Eco O.G. Haitsma Mulier has published an excellent book on *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century*¹; but during the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic was also considered a new form of government, and became a political model in Europe.

In my *Ideological History of Europe* a chapter is dedicated to the Dutch model². Althusius in his *Politica methodice digesta* had in mind the government of the Netherlands; the preface of the third edition, of 1614, is addressed to the 'ordines Frisiae': the allied provinces went to war against the King of Spain in order to liberate themselves from foreign domination, and in these provinces 'jura pertinere ad consociatam multitudinem et populum singularum provinciarum'; Althusius admits that in his book the 'exempla quoque desumpta a vobis, ad urbibus, constitutionibus, moribus, rebus gestis vestris et confoederatarum aliarum provinciarum Belgarum'. It is possible to think also that the diffusion in Europe during the seventeenth century of the works of Erasmus and Grotius was connected with the existence of the Dutch political model. Christopher Hill³ and

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1. E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Assen, 1980). On this book see my criticism: *Il Pensiero Politico*, XV (1981) 523-524.

2. Salvo Mastellone, *Storia ideologica d'Europa, da Savonarola a Adam Smith*, I (Florence, 1978) 174-191.

3. Christopher Hill, *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1965).

Charles Wilson⁴ have confirmed that the Republic of the United Provinces was admired for its political organization. In this country the citizen diffused a tolerant humanism and established centres of publishing activities; in every National Library of Europe there are splendid collections of books published in Holland in the seventeenth century. The specific problem is whether the history of the Netherlands was well known in Italy and how well-informed were the Italians about the political organization of the Low Countries.

In every history of Italian seventeenth-century literature a chapter, or at least a paragraph, is dedicated to the 'storici della guerra fiamminga'. Carmine Jannaco in his volume *Il Seicento* mentions the *De bello belgico decades duo*, by the jesuit Famiano Strada, and he writes: 'this work is very interesting regarding the art of war, but is completely lacking in political conclusions'⁵; Jannaco quotes the *Historia della guerra di Fiandra* by Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio in three volumes dealing with the events of the war between Spain and the Netherlands: this war aroused great interest in Italy due to the dramatic aspects of the military struggle. A similar judgment can be found in *Il Seicento* by Alberto Asor Rosa, who emphasizes the passage from the historical style of Guicciardini to the historical style of the Counter-Reformation; Bentivoglio is on the side of the Catholic Church, but he is very objective and blames the excesses of the Spanish military forces and the cruelty of the Duke of Alba⁶. In his study on *Ribelli, libertini e ortodossi nella storiografia barocca*, Sergio Bertelli compares the *Historia della guerra di Fiandra* by Bentivoglio with the *Historia delle guerre civili* by Caterino Davila, published two years before: Bentivoglio wrote about the religious wars in the Netherlands, and Davila about the religious wars in France⁷. Eric Cochrane also, in his important volume *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance*, believes that the Italian historians were forced during the Spanish domination to look abroad for their subjects, and they were read solely for the vigour of their language and their descriptions of the characters of the actors involved in these events⁸.

According to these scholars the seventeenth-century Italian writers on the Dutch wars were only satisfying their curiosity about the struggle between catholics and calvinists. The 'storici della guerra fiamminga' are not quoted in the bibliography of Tommaso Bozza on the Italian political writers from 1550 to 1650⁹. My impression is completely different: I think that Italian scholars have

4. Charles Wilson, *The Dutch Republic and the Civilisation of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1968).

5. C. Jannaco, *Il Seicento* (2nd. ed.; Milan, 1973) 689.

6. A. Asor Rosa, *Il Seicento* (Bari, 1974) 81 and 120.

7. S. Bertelli, *Ribelli, libertini e ortodossi nella storiografia barocca* (Florence, 1973) 203.

8. E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981) 489.

9. T. Bozza, *Scrittori politici italiani dal 1550 al 1650* (Rome, 1949).

not grasped the political function of the historians of the Flemish wars: they exercised an important influence on republican thought during the seventeenth century, and not only in Italy. In the description of the military events the new political situation of the Low Countries could not be ignored; the debate on the religious questions did not exclude the reality of the economic situation in the United Provinces. These provinces had adopted a republican political system, quite different from the authoritarian monarchy of Philip the Second.

During the first half of the seventeenth century the Italian writers of the history of the wars in the Low Countries were divided between two different tendencies: one tendency, which was openly on the side of the Counter-Reformation, believed that the war of 'Fiandra' was the catholic war against the calvinist heresy supported by ambitious princes; the second tendency tried to understand the reasons for the tenacious resistance to the Spaniards, and to explain why, notwithstanding the war, the Dutch economy developed. In order to seize the political value of this literature about the Flemish wars, I think it is necessary to follow the chronological succession of the works, and to notice the different political positions of their authors.

The *Historia di Fiandra* of Peter Cornejo, translated from Spanish into Italian by Camillo Camilli, was published in 1582. This *Historia* about the origin of the civil strife made it evident that the massacres were caused by the bad people who rebelled against the king and against the true God. Philip of Spain was 'the most heroic and kind sovereign'; the Spaniards made every effort to bring back the heretics to the catholic religion and to the Spanish King; but they stubbornly refused. Philip II promised in vain to respect privileges, to give freedom of thought, and not to impose taxes, but the 'malcontenti' did not accept the conditions offered; in other words it was the Dutch people's fault¹⁰.

In 1602 the book by Cesare Campana, *Della guerra di Fiandra fatta per difesa di religione da' Catholici re di Spagna Filippo Secondo e Filippo Terzo*, was published in Vicenza. It described the struggle of Spain from 1559 until 1601 against 'la ferocità di quei ribellanti popoli'; this description was made not only to justify the King of Spain in making war in defence of religion, but also to show the terrible consequences of the war for the Dutch people; 'to become estranged from God causes distress and poverty in the Provinces'. The war, according to Campana, 'originated from a religious movement, but was supported by the ambition of some of the nobles'; these princes intended to use popular force to increase their power¹¹. The Flemish war was seen by Cornejo and Campana from

10. Pietro Cornelio, *Historia di Fiandra* (Brescia, 1582) 40 and 106.

11. Cesare Campana, *Della guerra di Fiandra fatta per difesa di religione da' Catholici re di Spagna Filippo Secondo e Filippo Terzo* (Vicenza, 1602) 1 and 2. See: *Idem*, *Assedio e racquisto d'Anversa fatto da Alessandro Farnese* (Vicenza, 1595; incorporated in *Della guerra di Fiandra*).

the Spanish point-of-view. Tommaso Campanella too, in a pamphlet *De Belgio sub Hispanicam potestatem redigendo*, published by Arnoldus Mylius in his book *De rebus hispanicis* (Cologne, 1602) condemned the rebellion and hoped that the Catholic King would be able to recover the provinces of the Low Countries¹².

The picture presented by Pompeo Giustiniani in the history *Delle guerre di Fiandra libri sei*, published in Antwerp in 1609, is different: according to Eric Cochrane the author narrated 'only the military feats, without a single reflection of the ideological and national issues'¹³; on the contrary Giustiniani in his account, which goes from 1601 to 1609, recognized that the Dutch soldiers had fought with invincible valour, and stated positively that the wars did not cause distress but they produced wealth: the provinces of Holland and Zeeland did not suffer as a result of the damage caused by the war, because with war they became rich and populous, and so the delegates of these provinces in 1609 were opposed to asking for peace. In 1609 the Estates General of the United Provinces not only obtained the title of 'Stati liberi', but they also founded a republic where a great 'varietà di pareri' converged¹⁴. How was this government organized? Was the Dutch Republic a new political model? Was the federal system at the origin of the economic fortune of the Netherlands?

The answers to these questions were given by the Nuncio of the Pope in Brussels, Guido Bentivoglio (1577-1644), who in May 1611 prepared a *Relatione delle Provincie Unite*:

It seemed to me very interesting to know the origin, the progress, the situation of a Republic so powerful by land and by sea, founded on a form of government so different from the others, born in our days and suddenly grown.

This 'Relatione' was published with other reports in Antwerp in 1629: *Relationi del Cardinale Bentivoglio, pubblicate da Erycio Puteano* (Henry du Puy). The *Relatione* obtained an enormous success in Italy and in the rest of Europe: edition of Cologne (1630) perhaps printed in Italy, edition of Genoa (1630), of Paris (1631), of Brussels (1632), of Liège (1635), of Venice (1633, 1636), of Cologne (1640), of Rome (1647); translated into French in 1642 (Paris); translated into Dutch in 1648 (Rotterdam); translated into English as the *Historical Relation of the United Provinces and Flanders* (London, 1654).

The *Relatione* on the government of the United Provinces appear to be written

12. Tommaso Campanella, *De Belgio sub Hispanicam potestatem redigendo* (Cologne, 1602); this pamphlet was incorporated as a chapter (xxvii) in the treaty of Campanella *De monarchia hispanica*, published in a German translation in 1620 and in Latin only in 1640.

13. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, 352.

14. Pompeo Giustiniani, *Delle guerre di Fiandra libri sei* (Antwerp, 1609) 19 and 309.

by an expert politician providing a portrait of the Dutch Republic. With a 'mutazione di governo' the monarchy was dead, and the United Provinces formed a government 'in part of aristocracy and in part of democracy'¹⁵; before in the province of Holland only six towns participated with the order of the nobles to form the government of the province, but the number of the towns increased greatly so there is 'poca autorità de' nobili e quasi tutta nelle città'¹⁶; in other words the bourgeoisie had greatly enhanced its political power.

The government of every town, says Bentivoglio, is in the hands of a council composed of a limited and fixed number of people; the civil officials are changed every year, and are selected from among the people of the council; the highest authority of the town is 'il borgomastro'. When an important decision is to be taken, the assembly of the Estates of the province is convoked; the assembly is composed of nobles and people of the towns¹⁷. The working of this provincial body is democratic:

When they are assembled together, the problems before them are discussed and solutions found: and then of so many cities there is formed a single one, and there are no longer various separate members but a united body; this body is bound together by the common link of a single and agreed aim; and it happens rarely that decisions of the majority are not followed by the minority¹⁸.

Therefore this provincial government took its decisions with a view to public interest and to reason.

Bentivoglio dedicates a chapter to the government of the union of the provinces and he presents it as a harmonious body:

The body of the union consists principally of the great assembly of the Estates General of all the seven provinces. This great assembly represents the sovereignty of the union, and now retains that power over all the provinces which was formerly retained by the Prince in the old form of government. This assembly is composed of the States of each province¹⁹.

The Dutch republican form of government is different from the Spanish monarchic one: in the latter form the king represents the sovereignty of the monarchy, in the first 'l'Assemblea rappresenta la sovranità dell'Unione': when the king has

15. Guido Bentivoglio, *Relazioni, pubblicate da Erycio Puteano (Henry du Puy)* (1st. ed.; Cologne, 1630) 10.

16. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 11.

17. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 13: 'Al borgomastro appartiene il sopravvedere alle cose più importanti del governo delle Città'; 'gli schiavini, insieme con lo sculteto, amministrano la giustizia civile e la criminale; il thesoriere maneggia il danaro pubblico; e i pensionari sono dottori di legge'.

18. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 15.

19. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 18.

to deal with important matters, he decides on his own or he meets the privy council; in the republic it is the assembly which takes the resolutions concerning the common interest of the union²⁰. In a monarchy if a domain of the crown objects to the decisions of the king, the king sends troops to enforce obedience on the subjects; in the general assembly of the United Provinces the resolutions are taken unanimously, but in the case of disagreement with the deputies of one province some of the members are sent to the province to explain with the use of reason the point of view of the assembly²¹. For Bentivoglio, 'la nuova Republica delle Provincie Unite' not only is preferred to monarchical government, but it is presented to the Italian reader as the government of common interest and of reason. In the Dutch government the deliberative stage is distinct from the executive stage; 'What has been decided by the great assembly' is executed by a council which is 'stabile e fermo', and which represents the continuity of the great assembly²². If the council represents the sovereignty of the 'Unione' the union has a commander-in-chief of the army and of the navy, 'e n'ha il comando il conte Mauritio di Nassau, succeduto in questo carico al principe Guglielmo d'Oranges [sic] suo padre'²³.

Because many politicians thought the union of the Dutch provinces was weak, Bentivoglio seems to answer: 'Dalla present narratione si vede qual sia la presente forma governo in comune di tutte le sette Provincie'; from this narrative may be seen the present form of government common to all seven provinces; and in particular it can be seen that the united government of all the provinces corresponds greatly to the separate government of each of them. The assembly of every province retains its sovereignty over each 'separata Provincia', but the Estates General retain sovereignty over all the United Provinces'²⁴. Bentivoglio knows Bodin's *République* and he alludes to the 'sovrantà' of the Council, but he presents the new republic as 'un governo di forma diversa da tutte le altre'; this government, which can be defined 'governo civile', can be considered as a human body, a single organism.

20. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 18: 'Risolutioni di pace, di guerra, di tregua, di far nuove confederazioni o di dissolver le fatte, di metter nuove impositioni o levar le già imposte, o di altri simili importan affari, che tutti hanno riguardo all'Union generale'.

21. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 19: 'Sogliono in questi casi i deputati delle provincie concordi fare una scelta di alcuni di loro e mandargli a trattar con la Provincia ch'ha i deputati discordi nella grande Assemblea, per procurare in questa maniera d'indurla a consentir nella risolutione con le altre. Così la pertinacia suol finalmente cedere alla ragione'.

22. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 20: 'Per capo del Consiglio vien costituito uno de' suoi Deputati con titolo di Presidente. E perchè la prerogativa di ciascuna Provincia sia eguale alla libertà uniforme di tutte, mutansi i Presidenti di settimana in settimana' (21).

23. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 23.

24. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 23: 'Le Città e i nobili sono a guisa di muscoli che formano il membro di ciascuna Provincia, e le Provincie a guise di membri, che formano il corpo di tutta l'Unione'.

The *Relatione delle Province Unite* was based on historical reality, but when Bentivoglio was writing in 1611 the wars against Spain were not definitely finished; so the question as to whether the 'nuova Repubblica delle Provincie Unite' will be 'durabile', was well-founded; and the answer was positive: many reasons convince us that this new republic will continue, specially because it is founded on freedom: 'what matter is stronger and more natural in the human breast than the love of freedom'²⁵? This 'liberal' explanation of the Dutch political system has not been commented on by historians. Philip II had 'with force and violence' changed the laws, removed immunities, and imposed heavy taxes on the provinces, but he did not understand how natural was the people's desire to live in freedom; so 'la nuova forma di Repubblica libera' is destined to stand for a long time²⁶ and there is little hope of seeing the United Provinces return to the crown of Spain²⁷. In Bentivoglio's mind the Dutch government was a new form of free republic, characterised by a mixture of aristocracy and democracy, by a balance of local and central authority, and by a division of deliberative and executive powers.

This image was similar to the 'News' given by Traiano Boccalini in his *Ragguagli di Parnaso (Centuria prima e Centuria seconda)* published between 1612 and 1613: 'Fiandra' has become a provincia fecondissima, bellissima, amenissima', with inhabitants who are extremely civilized, wealthy, industrious, with splendid towns adorned with public buildings and magnificent private houses²⁸. The Dutch Republic had put together monarchy, aristocracy and democracy; the 'Olandesi e Zelandesi' were to be admired for their great love of freedom they resisted valiantly against Spain, animated by their great affection for 'la libertà della patria'²⁹.

But what were the Italian sources of the *Relatione delle Provincie Unite* by Guido Bentivoglio? Certainly Bentivoglio, living in Brussels, had direct experience of the Netherlands; certainly he had conversations with Dutch people and was able to read Dutch papers and books. Before he wrote the *Relatione* (1611), he had perhaps read the *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* written by Lodovico Guicciardini; Guicciardini died in 1589 and the edition 'riveduta di

25. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 23: 'Che questa nuova Repubblica delle Provincie Unite sia per durare molte ragioni possono persuaderlo. E primieramente qual cosa è più naturale e di maggior forza ne' petti humani, che l'amor della libertà?' (116).

26. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 118.

27. *Ibidem*, ed. Cologne, 127.

28. Traiano Boccalini, *Ragguagli di Parnaso e scritti minori*, a cura di Luigi Firpo (Bari, 1948) I, 70.

29. *Ibidem*, II, 23, 24: J.J. Poelhekke, 'Het thema Nederlanden in Traiano Boccalini', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, LXII (1949), 261-272; this article is limited to the works of Boccalini, without references to the Dutch model, but Boccalini, like other people, believed that the republic founded by the Dutch people was to be accepted one day by 'il mondo tutto': III, 18.

nuovo et ampliata per la terza volta' was published in Antwerp in 1588, but after the death of Guicciardini the *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* was brought up-to-date. In 1609 the French translation was published in Amsterdam, and the United Provinces were presented 'comme estat populaire' because all the social orders were presented:

Chasque Province se gouvernement par ses Estats, consistant la plus part en l'ordre des Chevaliers, Nobles et Villes, chasque selon ses anciens privileges gouvernant *suo jure* avec toute haute jurisdiction et souveraineté: traitent avec tous Roys, Duces, Princes et Republiques comme souverains. Chasque Province choisit et commet quelques personnes à l'administration avec autorité limitée.

La souveraineté des Provinces est confiée aux Estats Generaux:

Ceux-cy represent tous les pays generalment, ou tous les Confederez. Ceux ont le maniment et avancent toutes les choses concernantes la superiorité ou souveraineté des pays en general³⁰.

Perhaps other details about the political institutions of the Dutch Provinces were taken by Bentivoglio from the *Relatione degli Stati et governi di Fiandra*, included in the *Tesoro politico*, (Part I), collected by Comin Ventura and published in Frankfort in 1610.

It is important to emphasize that the image of the Dutch Republic presented by Bentivoglio was similar to the picture given by other authors. In Italy there circulated books such as F. Lanario, *Le guerre di Fiandra* (Antwerp, 1615) and P.F. Pieri, *Nove guerre di Fiandra* (Venezia, 1627); but also other books on the 'respublica Hollandiae' circulated in Italy during the seventeenth century. In the National Library in Florence there is the volume published by Petrus Scriverius (Pieter Schrijver) *Respublica Hollandiae et urbes*. This volume not only contains the *Descriptio Hollandiae* by Lodovico Guicciardini, but also the *De antiquitate Reipublicae Batavae* by Hugo Grotius, and the *De statu reipublicae Batavae* by Paulus Merula: the 'clarissima Batavorum libertas' was threatened by 'Hispania potentia', the 'Batavica respublica' was moderate 'ex triplici genere, regali, optimate, populari', and was governed by 'consilio et consensu nobilium et urbanorum magistratum'³¹.

Certainly it is not very important to know whether this fine image of the Dutch government corresponded to historical reality: the problem is to fix the characteristics of the political model drawn up by the writers favourable to the Dutch Republic. In any case the interest in the wars in Flanders can be related

30. L. Guicciardini, *Description de tous les Pays-Bas* (Amsterdam, 1609) 47.

31. Petrus Scriverius, *Respublica Hollandiae et urbes* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1630).

to the existence of a political model of Holland, but can also be related to the choice of being in favour of Spain or in favour of the United Provinces.

The first decade of *De bello belgico* written by Famiano Strada was published in 1632; the second decade was published in 1647; both were translated into Italian (Rome, 1638, Rome, 1648). The first decade dealt with the outbreak and spread of the rebellion, a rebellion instigated by the calvinists; the second decade was an account of the reconquest by the Spaniards under Alessandro Farnese; on the last page the hope was expressed of one day seeing all Flanders restored to God and to the king³².

This hope of restoration does not exist in Bentivoglio's history *Della guerra di Fiandra* published, the first part in 1632 (Cologne), the second part in 1636 (Cologne) and the third part in 1639 (Cologne). For Bentivoglio the causes of war were internal and external, but the origin of the rebellion was of political character: the Flemish people feared that 'il governo' might be altered and 'i privilegi' withdrawn³³. In the second part Bentivoglio says that after 1578 the 'Fiamminghi' rejected the monarchy:

The government in this way would have come to take the form of a republic much more than of a principate. And right from that time it could be seen that the main idea of the rioters was to obtain that form of free rule which the United Provinces of these countries now enjoy³⁴.

The third part *Della guerra di Fiandra* goes up to the truce of 1609 signed in Antwerp; Bentivoglio emphasizes the diplomatic action of the Roman Church to end the troubles in the Low Countries³⁵, and the persistent request of the Dutch Provinces to be recognised as 'Stati liberi' by Spain; but the Spaniards refused to declare 'liberi' these people considered 'ribelli', and were afraid to see freedom granted as a prize to the rebellion³⁶. The third part contains a 'breve descrizione del governo', in which is represented the model of a republic based on confederate provinces: 'Each province has its own States with separate

32. Famiano Strada, *De bello belgico decas prima (1559-1578)* (Rome, 1632) translation in Italian by the jesuit Carlo Papini (Rome, 1638); *De bello belgico decas secunda (1578-1589)* (Rome, 1647) translation in Italian by the jesuit Paolo Segneri (Rome, 1648).

33. Guido Bentivoglio, *Della guerra di Fiandra*, I (Cologne, 1632): 'Ogni corpo humano haver la sua particolare habitudine, e così ogni natione ancora il proprio suo naturale temperamento. Quello che convenisse alla Spagna et all'Italia non potere adattarsi alla Fiandra, come nè anche agli altri popoli settentrionali d'Europa, i quali naturalmente inclinavano più alla libertà' (27).

34. *Ibidem*, II (Cologne, 1636) 35.

35. Raffaele Belvederi, *Guido Bentivoglio e la politica europea del suo tempo (1607-1621)* (Padova, 1962).

36. Bentivoglio, *Della guerra di Fiandra*, III (Cologne, 1639) 545.

authorities³⁷. The United Provinces have formed a republican confederation³⁸, and almost the entire government is composed of the 'popular order of the towns'. Bentivoglio put into the mouth of a deputy these words:

Our Provinces are absolutely sovereign and free: in what corner of land or sea has not arrived the fame of their freedom and the reputation of their arms³⁹?

The editions of Bentivoglio's *Guerra di Fiandra* were very numerous; it was published in Antwerp, in Genoa, in Paris, in Brussels, in Liège, in Venice, in Rome. Bentivoglio's narrative raised many arguments: mention should be made of the *Giudizio sopra l'istoria dell'Em. Sig. Cardinale Bentivoglio* expressed by D. Scaglia and published in Naples⁴⁰. But how were these books by Bentivoglio read in Italy by the enemies of Spain? Certainly the people, discontented under Spanish domination, were encouraged to revolt. The *Raccolta delle orationi che si contengono nell'istoria di Fiandra del cardinale Bentivoglio* was published in 1641 with a political meaning⁴¹. This collection of speeches was not an exercise in rhetoric, but a charge against Spain: we need to be free from the 'crudele, superbo e insopportabil' yoke of the Spaniards because 'il paese geme da ogni lato per tante calamità'; we need 'una generale ribellione'. After the liberation from Spain there was in the Netherlands 'la felicità della repubblica'; this country offered a new model of government⁴². This model did not ignore the reality that new social classes were emerging in the towns, and that the economic activities of the third estate were stronger.

Compared with the old myth of Venice, the Dutch model seemed more modern. The Dutch Republic established new connections between the provinces; the history of Venice was of expansion over the 'terraferma'. The Dutch Republic

37. *Ibidem*, III, 551.

38. *Ibidem*, III, 579: The Dutch Republic will be for other people an admirable system: 'Quando s'anderà considerando come s'uniscano le nostre Provincie in un corpo con qual sorte di leggi e di Magistrati cospirino insieme, e quanto illesa resti la libertà in ciascheduna di loro; da ogni parte del mondo vedremo venire ambasciatori a rallegrarsi con noi, e ritornarsene poi con invidia quasi maggior che'allegrezza di tante nostre felicità' (571).

39. *Ibidem*, III, 604.

40. D. Scaglia, *Giudizio sopra l'istoria dell'Em. Cardinale Bentivoglio* (Naples, s.a. [1638]).

41. *La raccolta delle orationi che si contengono nell'istoria di Fiandra del cardinale Bentivoglio* (Cologne (?), 1641) 43 and 185. The Spanish governors 'hanno levato i privilegi alla patria', 'hanno introdotto in essa le colonie de' forestieri', 'hanno usato una lingua a noi incognita e della quale non intendiamo i veri sensi e la vera forza' (186). Also in 1641 (Cologne) was published *Il breviario delle guerre dei Paesi Bassi*, by Antonio Abbondanti.

42. Free from Spain, with a new political order, we 'pagheremo i debiti contratti di fuori', 'arricchiremo il nostro erario', 'conosceranno veramente i nostri popoli d'esser liberi, perchè godranno senza contrasto la libertà'. These hopes could be extended to other countries under the Spanish domination: *La raccolta delle orationi che si contengono nell'istoria di Fiandra del cardinale Bentivoglio*, 318.

was based on the assembly of all the social orders; the Venetian republic was based on the hegemony of the nobles. In the United Provinces offices were elective and the bourgeoisie took a very active part in public life. In Venice the offices were reserved for the families represented in the *Maggior Consiglio*. The Dutch Republic appeared to the Italians to be the result of a national revolution whose first aim was political independence from Spain. Very often was heard the grim threat to 'far peggio che nella Fiandra'. In the Netherlands anti-Spanish feeling prevailed and all classes formed a union to drive out the monarchy of Philip II; political grievances were fused with economic grievances, and the revolt took the form of national opposition. The political model of Holland was an anti-Spanish model.

In the seventeenth century the South of Italy belonged to Spain, and on the 7th July 1647 a popular rebellion broke out in Naples. This rebellion was headed by Masaniello, a fisherman, and the immediate cause was a tax imposed in Naples on fresh fruit. The story of this rebellion has very often been related in a melodramatic fashion. The mass of poor people erupted into action and burned the houses of the nobles, enemies of the people. Advised by an old jurist, Giulio Genoino, Masaniello demanded the abolition of all taxes imposed since the Emperor Charles V's time. The Viceroy accepted these requests. But the strange conduct of Masaniello alienated his followers, and on July 16th he was assassinated⁴³. The people still had arms in their hands, and during the month of August the revolutionary movement spread to every province of the kingdom of Naples⁴⁴. On the 23rd August the leaders of the rebellion elected Francesco Toraldo d'Aragona 'capitano del popolo'. When he was accused as a traitor and condemned, the leaders proclaimed the Neapolitan Republic and invited a French prince, Henry de Guise, who was in Rome, to assume command of their forces against Spain. Henry de Guise arrived in Naples on November 15th, but he had no sympathy with the mob and did not understand the situation: so his rule was a failure: on 6th April 1648 the Spanish troops entered the town and re-established authority and order.

Historians have focussed their attention upon the figures of Genoino and Masaniello: but Genoino was still attached to the old political programmes of opposition to the nobles; and the humble fisherman had no antifeudal political programme. The leaders of the 'popolo civile', after July 1647, envisaged a political system based on the Dutch model⁴⁵. In my opinion the literature on the wars of

43. Michelangelo Schipa, *Masaniello* (Bari, 1925).

44. Rosario Villari, *La rivolta antispagnola a Napoli* (Bari, 1967).

45. Salvo Mastellone, 'Les révoltes de 1647 en Italie du Sud étaient-elles paysannes ou urbaines?', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique (Colloque sur la crise européenne du XVII siècle)*, XCII (1978) 166-188.

Flanders was in great demand in Naples due to its political interest and indeed the threat was very often used to do as 'nelle Fiandre'. In the South of Italy, as in other parts of the peninsula, the *Relatione delle Provincie Unite* (1629) and the history *Della guerra di Fiandra* (1632-1636, 1639) by Bentivoglio were widely read. The decisions to elect Toraldo d'Aragona as 'capitano del popolo' and to call to Naples the Duke de Guise were dictated by the desire to have a 'stathouder' as in the United Provinces of Holland. On the 25th October 1647 the republic was proclaimed, in order to be free from 'calamità ed oppressioni'. Among the leaders of this revolution, Vincenzo d'Andrea looked to the Dutch political system and thought that only a republican government would bring Naples closer to the provinces of the South and make the citizens 'franchi e liberi d'ogni travaglio e servitù'⁴⁶. Following the example of the Low Countries he invited every province to elect 'una persona popolare e fedele' and send him to Naples in order to form a body capable of defending freedom⁴⁷. In his *Memoires* the Comte de Modène says that Vincenzo d'Andrea tried to create an independent government 'selon l'exemple récent des Provinces Unies'⁴⁸. In some letters in French, coming from Rome, and now in the Archives of Florence, we read that D'Andrea and the other leaders

sont résolus à se mettre en République, et ont choisi Monsieur de Guise pour leur capitain général et pour être avec eux ce que le Prince d'Oranges (sic) est avec les Hollandais.

M. de Guise was to have power 'à l'instar de celuy de M. le Prince d'Oranges'⁴⁹. In the *Mémoires du duc de Guise* we read that the Duke de Guise 'devait commander les armes contre les Espagnols avec la même autorité que le prince d'Oranges', and he made the promise 'de former la République et la rendre aussi puissante et aussi considérée que celle de Hollande'⁵⁰. In a public placard it is written that the Duke de Guise was given 'la medesima potestà con la quale il Serenissimo Principe d'Oranges difende Repubblica e Stati popolari d'Olanda'. The hope of the republicans is that 'questo paese diverrà un'altra Fiandra'⁵¹. Following the example of the United Provinces the Neapolitan republicans want

46. British Museum, London, Documenti sulla rivoluzione napoletana, C 55, i, 3., Napoli, 25 ottobre, 1647.

47. Francesco Capecelatro, *Diario dei tumulti del popolo napoletano*, published by A. Granito in 1850 (4 vols.; Naples, 1850, edict of Vincenzo d'Andrea, Napoli, 4 novembre 1647).

48. R. de Mormoiron, Comte de Modène, *Mémoires sur la révolution de Naples de 1647* (Paris, 1820) II.

49. Archivio Firenze, *Mediceo* 4113.

50. Henri Duc De Guise, *Les mémoires* (Paris, 1668).

51. Archivio Firenze, *Mediceo* 4113, Napoli, 24. dic. 1647.

to create a council consisting of ten members of each order, and one for each of the twelve provinces⁵².

The leaders in Naples imagined they were reciting the script of the Dutch Revolt and used the same vocabulary of freedom and independence; the political decisions in Naples can be seen against the background of the events in the Netherlands. The political model of Holland was confused with the myth of the war against Spain. The Treaty of Münster between Spain and the United Netherlands was concluded on January 30th, 1648, and at once *I capitoli della pace d'Olanda col potentissimo Monarch Filippo IV* were translated and published in Naples. Unfortunately the Duke de Guise was not the Prince of Orange, and the South of Italy was not the Netherlands.

However, in spite of the failure of the Neapolitan revolution, the Dutch political model continued to interest the Italians; this political model was considered again in the second half of the seventeenth century to be a new form of government. The history of the interest in Italy in the myth of Holland and in Dutch culture has yet to be written.

In his *Introduzione a G. Vico*, Nicola Badaloni has remarked that the name of Erasmus was very often quoted in the writings of the Neapolitan authors at the end of the seventeenth century: the 'grande Erasmo' did not accept scholasticism and he started with his ideal of 'tolleranza umana' a new culture called in Naples probabilism⁵³. But Badaloni has not realised that behind the name of Erasmus was an implied allusion to Holland as the country of liberty; the 'libertini olandesi' in the South of Italy stirred juridical and philosophical thought during the second half of the seventeenth century.

J. ter Meulen in the *Bibliographie des écrits sur Hugo Grotius imprimés au XVII^e siècle*⁵⁴ quotes about Italy only the papal condemnations of Grotius and the *Amphiteatrum legale* by Agostino Fontana (1688), but all the Italian jurists writing 'de jure devolutionis' in 1666 quoted from the *De jure belli ac pacis*, and diffused the tale of 'Grozio morto cattolico in Francia'. I have devoted a chapter of my book on Francesco D'Andrea to 'Grozio ed il suo giusnaturalismo a Napoli'⁵⁵. When Francesco Valletta decided in 1691 to prepare a *Trattato sul Santo Ufficio* on the 'movimenti e tumulti accaduti in Napoli' he accepted the point of view expounded by Grotius in the *Annales des troubles du Pays Bas depuis le départ de Philippe II* (Amsterdam, 1642) that the principal cause of the rebellion in the

52. Archivio Firenze, *Mediceo* 4146, Napoli, 22 marzo, 1648.

53. Nicola Badaloni, *Introduzione a Vico* (Milan, 1961) 224-227.

54. J. ter Meulen and P.I. Diermanse, *Bibliographie des écrits sur Hugo Grotius imprimés au XVII^e siècle* (The Hague, 1961).

55. Salvo Mastellone, *Francesco d'Andrea politico e giurista* (1648-1698) (Florence, 1969) ii, 37-50.

Dutch provinces was the introduction of the tribunal of the Holy Office.

More surprising is the influence of the 'libertini olandesi' on the 'libertinismo erudito' in Naples. Leonardo di Capua in his *Parere divisato in otto ragionamenti* (1681) praised 'i filosofanti d'Olanda' because they defended 'la libertà del filosofare'; and it is possible to understand why the Neapolitan authors were so interested in reading the 'Nouvelles de la République des lettres' published from 1684 in Holland, 'refuge des Catholiques aussi bien que des Réformés'. This 'refuge' was inside a republican political system based on the 'libertà civile'. G.B. de Benedictis in the *Lettere apologetiche in difesa della teologia scolastica* (1694) accused the 'letterati napoletani' of being 'libertini', but these libertini knew the works coming from Holland. The problem is to examine closely the influence exercised by these works. I believe that there is a connection between the ideas of Vossius, Hornius, Graevius, and the philosophical thought of Vico⁵⁶; in any case the intellectual aspects should not be separated from the political ones: the admiration for the 'libertas philosophandi' existing in 'Ollanda' was also admiration for the civic freedom.

The admiration for the 'libertini olandesi' increased the interest in the books coming from the Low Countries and the merit for this movement of books goes in great part to Antonio Magliabechi of Florence. Magliabechi not only incarnated the encyclopedia of scholarship⁵⁷, but was for many years a link between Dutch publishers and Neapolitan readers. Behind the *Epistolae Clarorum Belgarum* printed by Giovanni Targioni (Florence, 1745) and the correspondence of Magliabechi with his Dutch friends there is the myth of the 'Olanda erasmiana' model of cultural organization with its universities and its publishers⁵⁸, but there is also the image of a country with a government 'diverso da tutti gli altri'. I think that it should be underlined that there is a link between the image of the Dutch republic and the 'république des lettres'; the 'libertins d'esprit' imagined a 'Respublica litterarum' similar to the republic of the United Provinces.

All the Italian travellers who visited Holland in the second half of the seventeenth century admired its government. Giovan Francesco Buonamico lived from 1661 to 1663 in the United Provinces, and especially in Amsterdam; in his *Memorie de' viaggi* written in 1672 he notes that the men in power are merchants and craftsmen, and the inhabitants are aware of having a political regime different from the great monarchies; proud of their republic, the Dutch show an 'in-

56. *Idem*, *Pensiero politico e vita culturale a Napoli nella seconda metà del Seicento* (Florence, 1965) vii, 177-196.

57. Eric Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800* (Chicago, 1973) 267.

58. Salvo Mastellone, 'Antonio Magliabechi: un libertino fiorentino?', *Il Pensiero Politico*, VII (1975) 33-53.

credibile dispregio ed insolenza' towards the other forms of government. We can conclude that in the seventeenth century the people of the Low Countries really believed in their political model, and other people in Europe, such as the Italians, admired this country:

Gli Stati d'Olanda, che sono una picciola parte di terreno in un angolo d'Europa, ci pongono il primo esempio: un paese sterile e povero, privo d'ogni ben di natura s'è reso la più viva parte del mondo col traffico (sic) e col commercio⁵⁹.

59. Unpublished manuscript of 1707, attributed to S. Biscardi: *L'idea del governo politico*.

Problemen bij de sociaal-economische geschiedenis van het Vlaamse platteland, 1700-1850

RECENSIEARTIKEL DOOR ERIK AERTS EN JOS DELBEKE*

Chr. Vandenbroeke, *Sociale geschiedenis van het Vlaamse volk*, Orions historische bibliotheek (Beveren: Orion, Nijmegen: B. Gottmer, 1981, 304 blz., 620 BF, met tabellen, grafieken en illustraties; herdruk 1982).

De sociale geschiedenis is in de Belgische historiografie lange tijd stiefmoederlijk behandeld. De vijfdelige reeks *Flandria Nostra*, die tussen 1957 en 1960 het licht zag, kan beschouwd worden als een eerste poging om een volwaardige, autonome sociale geschiedenis te schrijven, bestemd voor een groot publiek. In de loop van de jaren zeventig mocht de sociale geschiedenis zich in een steeds groter wordende populariteit verheugen en werd er onderzoek verricht op de volgende hiervoor steeds verwaarloosde terreinen als de beroeps- en bezitsstructuur, inkomensverdeling, huisvesting en woonaccommodatie, sociale politiek, vrouwenemancipatie, alfabetiseringsgraad, socio-demografie, sexualiteit, hygiëne, verbruik (met inbegrip van de zogenaamde 'tertiaire' consumptie), arbeid, werkgelegenheid enz. Door de rijke oogst aan nieuwe gegevens en resultaten, die uit dit micro-onderzoek ter beschikking kwam, ontstond duidelijker dan voorheen de behoefte aan een nieuwe, moderne synthese van de sociale geschiedenis. Het is verheugend dat Vandenbroeke een poging heeft gewaagd deze synthese te schrijven. De titel van het boek belooft meer dan de schrijver geeft. Deze voor een groot publiek bestemde sociale geschiedenis van het Vlaamse volk is in feite beperkt tot de zeventiende, achttiende en negentiende eeuw, terwijl het accent ligt op de zogenaamde scharniereeuw, de periode 1750-1850. Onder Vlaams verstaat de schrijver de huidige Belgische provincies Oost- en West-Vlaanderen en het 'volk' blijkt enkel de plattelandsbevolking te omvatten en is beperkt tot de 'lagere klassen op de buiten', 'mensen die als keuterboer, landarbeider, dagloner of textielarbeider aan de kost kwamen' (284, onze cursivering). Deze bespreking valt in twee delen uiteen. Wij zullen ingaan op de vormgeving van het boek en wij zullen tevens trachten de door Vandenbroeke gebruikte hypothesen te analyseren.

DE VORMGEVING

Het werk is een synthese van talrijke artikelen, die de auteur, voornamelijk de laatste vijf jaar, heeft geschreven. Een synthese die niet in alle opzichten geslaagd te noemen is. In het gebruik van economische begrippen legt de auteur vaak weinig precisie aan de dag.

* Zie voor een zeer uitvoerige bespreking het paper van de auteurs (83.01) van de 'Workshop on Quantitative Economic History' (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Centrum voor economische studien).