

Mörke, O., *Wilhelm von Oranien (1533-1584). Fürst und 'Vater' der Republik* (Urban Taschenbücher 609; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2007, 316 blz., €20,-, ISBN 978 3 17 017669 0).

Yet another biography of the 'Father of the Fatherland'! After the exhaustive lives of Rachfahl, Blok, Van Schelven, Van Roosbroeck and Swart, to name but the best known, the sated reader might readily suppose that this unassuming paperback of around 80,000 words will add little to his understanding of William of Orange. That, however, would be a serious error. In this succinct biography Mörke gives prominence to Orange's ideological development, setting this in the context of the constitutional debates current in the *Alte Reich* and in the early modern Low Countries. He is able to do this all the more authoritatively because of his intimate knowledge of contemporary German and Netherlandish political cultures. For all their differences, the constitutions of both the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg Netherlands fall into the category of *monarchia mixta*. This was an inherently unstable form of government, for policy-making was a matter of constant bargaining between, in the former, the emperor and the territorial princes and in the latter between the prince and the privileged elites. In the Low Countries, the default position of the great nobles was loyalty to the ruler, though their loyalty was not unconditional, for government was the shared (if unequal) responsibility of the prince, who was moreover expected to abide by the terms of the oath he had sworn at his state entry. As the foremost noble in Brabant and the King's *stadhouder* in Holland, William concurred, but his allegiances were complicated by virtue of his position as the sovereign prince of Orange and, from 1559, as the senior member of the Nassau dynasty. Sometimes, as in the case of his marriage to the Lutheran Anna of Saxony in 1561, family interests collided with his allegiance to the King. In such circumstances, Orange learnt to speak with two voices, re-assuring Philip II of the sincerity of his Catholicism whilst leaving Anna's Lutheran guardians with the impression that he remained an evangelical at heart. While acknowledging that Orange was a masterly tactician, Mörke is at pains to exonerate him of the charge of opportunism levelled by contemporaries, insisting that the Prince, unlike the King, was a Catholic eirenecist, who genuinely believed that reconciliation between the confessions was still possible. As for his political ideology, Orange remained wedded to the notion of *monarchia mixta* until as late as 1567, when others, notably Granvelle, wanted to rebalance the constitution by reducing the influence of the *grandees*.

But if Orange were a constitutional conservative, his pragmatic approach to politics and his willingness to learn from experience enabled him to think boldly about the future relationship between the state and religion now that the Reformation had called the Church's teaching into question. Consideration for his Protestant relatives, his own dealings with Calvinists in his Orange principality and the instances of confessional co-existence in the Empire led him to abandon the notion that religious uniformity was essential for political stability. In confessionally divided communities, harmony and prosperity could better be secured by permitting individual Christians freedom of conscience.

Mörke sees Orange as an irenic Catholic, who then slowly edged towards a non-confessional Protestantism, which rendered him thoroughly suspect in the eyes of both hard-line Catholics and Calvinists. Few would wish to take issue with the author's interpretation here, though his scepticism about Orange's membership of the Reformed Church is probably unwarranted.¹

Mörke attaches great significance to what he calls the 'gesamtniederländische' dimension of Orangist propaganda. This originated with the pamphlets published in 1568, where the Prince was presented as the defender of the whole country's constitution against the usurping Alba. This went a stage further when the States of Holland took the radical step of recognising Orange as the 'voorneempste gelidmaet der Nederlanden' and their head in the absence of the King. At the same time, the Prince was first saluted as the 'pater patriae'. In 1576 Orange's 'konfessionsneutrale Rhetorik' gained a fresh momentum with the Pacification, but the gush of Netherlandish patriotism proved too flimsy to withstand the refusal of both Catholics and Calvinists to accept the possibility of confessional co-existence. Though Orange continued to cling to his vision of liberating the whole Netherlands, which partly explains his disquiet about the Union of Utrecht, his 'gesamtniederländische' concept was no match for the particularist tendencies entrenched in the provincial states and the town corporations. Orange was, as Mörke reminds us, very far from being the master of the situation, and never less so than during his final years.

Yet the manner of his death redeemed his failing reputation. In a particularly insightful last chapter, Mörke shows how William's apotheosis endowed his heirs with an 'Erbcharisma' that survived the *stadhouderlose* period. Consequently, the Orange dynasty was rather anomalously embedded in the quasi-republican constitution of the nascent Dutch state while historians from P.C. Hooft on acknowledged William as the founding father. That process began with his magnificent state funeral the cortege of which deliberately echoed that held in Brussels for Charles V in 1555 and was perpetuated in the mausoleum erected in the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft in William's memory. Though Mörke's dense prose does not always make for easy reading, the effort is amply repaid by the fresh insights offered in this suggestive life. One can only hope that a Dutch or English translation will soon be forthcoming.

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¹ Two Reformed ministers reported late in 1573 that the Prince had formally joined the Reformed congregation. Nor, without being a full member, could he have participated in the Lord's Supper at Dordrecht in March 1574. Though Orange's name does not appear on any extant roll of church members, he might have belonged to the Walloon congregation at Delft, of whose membership nothing is known. It was while attending service in Delft on Sunday 3 October 1574 at the Walloon church that Orange first heard about the relief of Leiden. The Walloon congregation met in a former religious house that formed part of the Prinsenhof complex.

Adriaenssen, L., *Staatsvormend geweld. Overleven aan de frontlinies in de meierij van Den Bosch, 1572-1629* (Dissertatie Universiteit van Tilburg 2007, Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het Zuiden van Nederland. Derde reeks [32]; Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 2007, 487 blz., ISBN 978 90 70641 82 5).

De gecompliceerde wisselwerking tussen oorlog en staatsvorming in heden en verleden wordt steeds beter begrepen door historici en sociale wetenschappers. Sinds Charles Tilly op systematische manier onderzocht en agendeerde *how states made war, and war made states*, hebben talrijke onderzoekers de handschoen opgenomen om de oorsprong van de moderne (nationale) staten in de laatmiddeleeuwse en vroegmoderne oorlogvoering te zoeken, dan wel stevige vraagtekens te plaatsen bij zulk al te teleologisch perspectief. In de Nederlanden wordt het complex staat, oorlog en financiën al lange tijd druk besproken, al blijft de juiste samenhang tussen deze factoren in het ontstaan van de Republikeinse *bourgeois state* nog steeds deels onopgelost (slechts enkele recente namen zijn 't Hart, Fritschy, Tracy, Swart, Vermeesch, etc.).

Met een diepgravende en bijzonder indringende studie van een van de frontlinies van de Nederlandse Opstand, de meierij van 's-Hertogenbosch en vooral haar vele kleine stadjes en dorpjes, brengt Leo Adriaenssen een originele – en tot dusver onbegrijpelijk onderbelichte – bijdrage aan deze debatten. Hoewel, misschien niet zo onbegrijpelijk. Zo bewijst Adriaenssen dat al tijdens de Opstand de belangstelling voor en consideratie van alles buiten de kerngewesten Holland, Zeeland en Utrecht minimaal was. De Republiek was er immers al zeer vroeg in geslaagd het oorlogsgeweld uit het hartland te weren, terwijl beide oorlogvoerende staten (de Spanjaarden evenzeer) zich in Noord-Brabant zonder meer gedroegen als 'misdad syndicaten'.

Met deze stelling is de toon van dit proefschrift meteen gezet. Door het boek heen speelt Adriaenssen de keuzes en acties van 'Staatsen' en 'Spaansen' uit tegen de overlevingsstrategieën van de Bossche dorpelingen. Het mag duidelijk zijn dat voor deze laatsten er weinig mogelijkheden restten, en des te meer plichten en lasten. Hoewel het aantal directe oorlogsslachtoffers beperkt bleef, zorgde de continue druk van beide bezettende staten – meer dan een halve eeuw was de meierij in staat van oorlog – voor ontredde. De opzettelijke verwoesting van akkers en oogsten (de verschroeide aarde politiek) en het roven van vee waren zeker tijdens de vroege jaren van de Opstand schering en inslag. De boeren konden zich fysiek niet verweren tegen de professionele maar steeds onderbetaalde militairen, en vooral de rondtrekkende, vaak muitende en dus oncontroleerbare soldatenbendes. Oorlogsmisdaden werden in naam veroordeeld, maar al te vaak ontlieden de militairen straf en blaam. Veiligheid kon afgekocht worden, zij het vooral in theorie. Al te vaak betaalden de dorpen verscheidene malen voor dezelfde bede, dingtaal of brandschatting, om vervolgens toch te worden afgeperst, geplunderd, of erger. Dorpingen werden verplicht de soldaten te onderhouden op velerlei manieren. Nabijgelegen garnizoenen of eigenmachtige (maar uiteindelijk