

for innovation in medicine and surgery: surgeons were able to experiment with different drugs and observe their effects on patients and to conduct post-mortem examinations of those who died, free from all the restrictions that hampered those who worked in hospitals at home. Bruijn is therefore able to argue forcefully that the surgeons of the VOC were at the forefront in establishing what historians and sociologists have come to refer to as 'hospital medicine': a new form of medical practice in which the individuality of the patient mattered less, and in which morbid anatomy came to play a more important part than hitherto. The nature of their practise on board ships and in the VOC's hospitals was also such that it enabled the hitherto distinct disciplines of surgery and medicine to be united. In effect, VOC surgeons were proto-type general practitioners.

Although it is not Bruijn's central aim, her book sheds important light on the development of the VOC's medical provisions in the colonies. Her book contains useful information on the development of hospitals in Batavia, for instance, including the City Hospital, the Poor House and Orphanage, a Leper Hospital and a hospital for the Chinese community, some of whom worked for the Company. In the course of the eighteenth century, more attention was paid to conditions in some of these hospitals as the mortality rate began to increase, largely, it seems, due to an increase in malaria. This 'mortality crisis' also prompted preventive measures such as drainage, which aimed to remove the miasmas which were thought to cause epidemics of fever. At this point in time, the mortality in Batavia was a matter for comment even in the English East India Company's settlements, some of which were also tarnished with the reputation of being a graveyard for Europeans.

In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some 10,000 surgeons joined the VOC, treating in the region of a million employees voyaging to and from the East Indies. In view of this, the VOC clearly represented an important constituency in Dutch medicine and

one, it seems, which was at the vanguard of new medical practices and forms of organization. Iris Bruijn has done a great service by providing a thorough analysis of the VOC's surgeons and its medical services in the East Indies. There is clearly much still to be said about the nature of medical practice in the Company's settlements but a strong base has been established and Bruijn's monograph will be essential reading for anyone wishing to take this line of study further. Moreover, together with work on other European practitioners overseas, it points to a more general reappraisal of the origins of what historians and contemporaries understood as modern medicine. It would seem that we are likely to discover its origins in colonial settlements as in the infirmaries of European cities such as Paris.

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Baar-de Weerd, Claudette, *Uw sekse en de onze. Vrouwen en genootschappen in Nederland en in de ons omringende landen (1750-ca. 1810)* (Dissertatie Universiteit van Amsterdam 2009; Hilversum: Verloren, 2009, 368 blz., ISBN 978 90 8704 100 7).

Arguably within Western Europe the urban spaces of the northern Low Countries presented the richest and most vibrant forms of civil society from the late Middle Ages onward. Guilds, poetry societies, chambers of rhetoric abounded and continued to thrive into the eighteenth century. In this regard see Arjan van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten. Rederijkers in de Noordelijke Nederlanden (1480-1650)* (Amsterdam 2009). Until recently their history had been largely gendered male. But as the book under review reveals, that changed dramatically after 1700 as many more women openly socialized in those spaces. Seen comparatively and prosopographically, the women in Baar-De Weerd's book concern themselves with everything from science to useful reform, as well as poetry,

literature and music. Indeed the elite women of Middelburg in 1785 constituted – as far as we now know – the first European women’s scientific society. They continued to do experiments and learn science for three generations. At the same time new and elite male societies opened their doors and to let women listen to poetry, music, and in some cases political rhetoric.

All female sociability in the eighteenth century needs to be framed within the reality that everywhere women were excluded from universities and formal societies dedicated to scientific pursuits. This book wants the focus to remain firmly on women who have an imagined autonomy. But aside from convents, where would we find such women in the eighteenth century? The first wave of feminist scholarship to which this book belongs wanted to conceptualize women as separate and distinct. I suspect that the next wave will be more ready to take women of the past as they are found, imbedded in families, raising children and sometimes being able to have an intellectually fulfilling life that they created for themselves, more often than not, with male assistance.

None of the spaces forged by and for women in the Netherlands, France and England have been without controversy. Their elite status and preciosity was often noted disdainfully by contemporaries while present-day feminist historians have sliced and diced the character of these groups for the relative autonomy women found within them. The fact that few, if any, of these women were looking for segregation from men seems not to matter. The lead in this kind of historical writing has been taken by American historians like Dena Goodman (*The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY 1994) and her influence can be seen in some places in the book. For the most part it avoids the assumption found in Goodman that salons run by women brought decorum and civility to male enlightened discourse that otherwise would have been mired in rudeness

and controversy. The book’s great strength lies in the catholicity of its vision and its willingness to cross national boundaries. In so doing it integrates Dutch social and gender history in ways that few accounts ever attempt to do. It should be required reading for historians of sociability but that would mean that they would have to learn Dutch, or the book needs to be translated! Either way, we would have richer histories while having a panoramic view of female sociability in northern and western Europe.

There are some lacunae. Women’s role in religious societies goes largely unaddressed and an opportunity is missed to examine the tensions that may have existed between faith and enlightenment (see Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, New York 2008)). In addition women freemasons are given less attention than this reviewer would have liked. The actors and actresses in the *Comédie française*, along with Dutch gentlemen, who formed the first lodge for women and men in the Netherlands, go largely unaddressed. Meeting in The Hague in 1751 – however briefly but seriously – they present, as others have seen, a good opportunity to reassess their assertions of gendered equality (Margaret R. Hunt, *Women in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London 2010) 302-304).

The book does make clear the interest that some Dutch women took in politics, particularly in the turbulent last fifteen years of the century. They contributed financially to support many of the *patriotten* societies that flourished in the period. Their role in many societies dedicated to *Het Nut* should also be seen as having a political message of reform as well as expressing nostalgia for the glories of the Golden Age. One of the most valuable parts of the book comes in eighty pages of appendices that quantify male and female membership in the important societies in Amsterdam and elsewhere, and also give short biographical entries on all the women who could be identified. Some participated as

wives or benefactors, but others joined societies independently from their husbands.

Uw sekse en de onze expands upon the knowledge about Dutch sociability and civil society contributed by Wijnand Mijnhardt, Dorothée Sturkenboom, Rudolf Dekker and myself, while complimenting the writings of Darlene Levy, Harriet Applewhite, and Margaret Hunt, among others. The impulse to compare is to be applauded but more research and theorizing needs to be done before it is possible to assess the relative position in society enjoyed by Dutch women as opposed to German, French or English. Aristocrats within monarchical societies arguably had more leeway than Dutch elites, however wealthy they may have been. More comparison, based on the structure of various old regimes, would enhance the perspective. When not engaged in comparisons, *Uw sekse en de onze* places Dutch female sociability within a spectrum of European behavior that admitted women to civic life in unprecedented numbers. That change, while it has ebbed and flowed in different periods, set a trend distinctive to Western modernity. It also preceded the stereotypical domesticity of the nineteenth century and in the process calls that image into question.

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Winter, Anne, *Migrants and Urban Change: Newcomers to Antwerp, 1760-1860* (Perspectives in Economic and Social History 1; London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009, x + 318 pp., ISBN 978 1 8519 6646 2).

This is a valuable and interesting book which sheds wide-ranging light on the changing patterns and processes of urban migration in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Anne Winter takes as the focus of her study, which is based on her doctoral dissertation, the city of Antwerp as it moved from being a rather stagnant textile city

under Austrian rule (locked out from international trade by the Dutch closure of the river Scheldt) to a burgeoning naval port during the French occupation, and thence to a rapidly expanding international entrepot after 1815, benefiting first from access to Dutch colonial commerce and later from Belgian Independence (1830), its population rising from 50,000 (1815) to 72,000 (1830) and 101,000 (1856). After a long, critical review of the recent literature – too often concentrated, Winter indicates, either on macro-studies of the timing, intensity and direction of migration flows, or on migration experiences (social networks, information circuits and the like) – she argues for a more integrated approach, relating migration flows to processes of social integration (or otherwise). She is concerned with how economic and social conditions at the macro-level set out the limits in patterns of movement and levels of integration. There is much of significance in this introduction which migration experts will relish, but general readers may find the rest of the book more accessible.

There is an excellent wide-ranging chapter explaining general trends in migration during ‘the urban transition’ of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries stressing that natural population increase was more significant for urban growth than was once thought and that the balance with net migration fluctuated considerably over time; that gross mobility was massively higher than net migration – ‘the city was a terminus for only a small number of migrants’; that integration patterns exhibited strong marks of continuity; and that newcomers had a major social and economic impact on cities. Focussing her bright spotlight on Antwerp Anne Winter demonstrates that the city’s economic stagnation in the late eighteenth century led to a localised migration field – mainly from poorer districts to the city’s east – with other more dynamic centres out-bidding Antwerp for immigrants. Once in the city newcomers were effectively excluded from the core textile sector and channelled into service trades. By contrast, in the early nineteenth century as Antwerp