Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies, vol. 36.3 (Nov. 2012)

Editorial

It gives us pleasure to be able to report that Dutch Crossing: Journal of Low Countries Studies, after having been included in the ISI Thomson-Reuters Web of Science, arguably the most important set of citation indexes and bibliographic databases, for two years now, in July 2012 has had its first 'Impact factor' calculated. For those who are less familiar with, or sceptical about, 'bibliometrical' indicators, the impact factor of a journal in any given year is the average number of citations received per paper published in that journal during the two preceding years, and generally considered to be one of the most important metrics in research assessment.

Independent of how one views these computational methods for ranking academic journals and other publication venues, especially in the Arts and Humanities (the writer of these lines shares a good degree of the scepticism), they have become important in exercises like the (British) Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) and are widely anticipated to play an increasingly important role in the assessment of not just scientific but also Humanities research in the future. Also, in this digital day and age, there can be no doubt that they help to increase the visibility of the field of interdisciplinary Low Countries Studies and the discoverability of the excellent individual research contributions in Dutch Crossing, to which we are happy to add another stimulating set with this winter issue.

Alena M. Buis and Kevin Brown (Kingston, Ontario) make an opening with their study of an aspect of the material culture of the 17th century Dutch seaborne empire, of which the Sara Lewes memorial spoon and fork set, preserved in New York, the former New Amsterdam, are rare survivals in silver. In tracing how these widely travelled objects have been produced, consumed and valued in the context of early modern trade networks, their case study provides a starting point for a wide-ranging consideration of the cross-cultural life of things, including translations of form and transculturations of meaning in the early modern era. They argue that as a rarely noticed by-product of the Dutch colonial overseas companies' activities (both the Dutch East and West India Companies, VOC and WIC, the driving forces in the growth and expansion of the Dutch Empire), the Dutch forged a genuinely global material culture, in which objects and decorative art styles travelled often and easily from Batavia in the east to New Amsterdam in the west, and beyond.

Two articles, based on papers presented at the ALCS conference on 'Low Countries – Big Cities' in Sheffield (March 2012), look at the role of cities in different periods of Low Countries history. Firstly, Kris Steyaert (Liège) turns his attention to literary representations of Batavia (modern day Djakarta) in W.J. Hofdijk's epic poem *In 't harte van Java* ('In Java's Heart') from 1881. Founded on the island's northern coast in 1619, the city of Batavia was admired for its picturesque beauty and European character alike. The qualities for which it was praised hint at the city's hybrid nature: whilst in many respects it differed dramatically from the Netherlands, at the same time it was portrayed as quintessentially Dutch. The colonial capital functioned as an exotic, far-away place and an integral part of the nation at the same time, a dichotomy that represented an obvious complication for writers eager to extol its virtues. Steyaert analyses how Hofdijk wove a detailed description of Batavia into his narrative and, showing the city as seen through Javanese eyes, turned the city into an emblem of the fatherland itself.

Graeme Callister (York) investigates the importance of the city in the revolutionising of Dutch nationalism in the last two decades of the 18th century. By looking at the place of the city within ideas of the Dutch nation, and tracing the evolution of the concept of the nation through the revolutionary period he demonstrates how the idea of the nation during the 1780s did not preclude the corporate influence of provincial states and municipal councils, but continued to accept decentralised federal

government as able to represent national popular sovereignty. Callister argues that it was not until the nation became reconceptualised and grew in importance as a tool for legitimacy in the aftermath of the French Revolution that the corporate influence of cities became detrimental to the notion of a free and equal nation.

Continuing the theme of (cultural) nationalism and nation building, Lotte Jensen (Nijmegen) looks at the commemorative practices around the Dutch poet Hendrik Tollens (1780–1856), best known for the lyrics of *Wien Neêrlands Bloed*, the former national anthem of the Netherlands from 1815 to 1932. Starting with the recent unveiling of a monument in the city of Rijswijk (2011), Jensen analyses the sociocultural features that Tollens and his work supposedly represented, linking this particular case with one of the key questions concerned with the commemoration of 19th-century writers in general, namely what such collective adoration reveals about the role of literature as a medium of communal identity formation. She argues that the rise and fall of Tollens' reputation as a national poet can be used as a model to describe the various phases that Dutch nationalism underwent in the course of the nineteenth century.

Adelheid Ceulemans (Antwerp), turns her attention to literary societies in early 19th century Antwerp, in particular at the so far unpublished Archives of the St Luybrecht Guild and its leader Theodoor Van Ryswyck. She links the Archives, an album with obscene and even pornographic texts, unknown or deliberately concealed in puritan nineteenth- and twentieth-century Flanders (Belgium), to the European concept of Bohemianism, which in Belgium traditionally has only been associated with a later period, the turn of the century. Ceulemans argues that in fact, Van Ryswyck and his guild were contemporaries of the early 19th century European, especially Parisian, Bohème. Her article also highlights the role of the public sphere of cafés and taverns for the development of Bohemianism in the literary, sociological and political scenery in 19th century Antwerp.

A review section, like in most issues of Dutch Crossing, concludes the issues. What remains is to say good-bye and extend our thankfulness to Jeremy Toynbee who leaves the journal as production editor on the publisher's side. We are looking forward to working just as closely with his successor, Andrew Meredith. Also new in the team is Andrew Wormald from the University of Sheffield as Editorial Assistant. As always best wishes for good reading.

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