Book Reviews

L.Hellinga, A.Duke, J.Harskamp, T. Hermans, eds. *The Bookshop of the world : the role of the Low Countries in the book-trade 1473-1941*. 't Goy-Houten: Hes and De Graaf Publishers BV, 2001.

This book consists of twenty-five interesting and wide-ranging papers from the conference "The Bookshop of the World" held in London on 15-17 September 1999. The conference was the brainchild of Jacob Harskamp of the British Library and was organized by The Association for Low Countries Studies, University College London (Centre for Dutch and Flemish Culture), The British Library (Dutch and Flemish Section), and the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

Lotte Hellinga (Consortium of European Research Libraries) points out in her opening article "The Bookshop of the World: books and their makers as agents of cultural exchange" that "dealing in books is usually a matter of finding common ground with clients" and that therefore the book trade in the North and South Netherlands dealt with a community extending beyond those boundaries. Sharing the same language is one factor that defines a community, and Latin was the common written language of the earliest clientele for printed books. Conspiring against authority and suppression created another community and brought the book trades in Antwerp and London closer together in the 16th century; the press became for the first time an agent of subversion. In England, in spite of censorship and legal restrictions on printed material from the continent, the first official Bible translation, supported by Henry VIII, appeared in 1539. As an example of the book trade's international nature, Hellinga highlights the life and work of Frederick van Egmont. Born in Holland, he was active from the 1490s until 1511, with a career that saw him in Venice, later in the English provinces with an agent in London, and subsequently extending his business to Paris. He was indeed a good example of the Dutch saying "van alle markten thuis " - at home in every market.

From the beginning of printing a few large centres dominated the production and trade in Latin books: Nuremberg, Basel, Paris and Cologne. Antwerp, Louvain and to a lesser extent Deventer were the centres in the Low Countries, but Venice was the largest and most important centre of all. The books printed there were exported and read by the whole Latin-reading world: scholars, clerics, lawyers, doctors and teachers. The Dutch printer Gheraert Leeu, who had started printing Dutch texts in Gouda in 1477,went to Venice to obtain the city's famous high-quality printing type. In 1480 he printed some books in Latin, of which one became famous and was translated into Dutch, French and English. He moved to Antwerp where the book-trade was livelier, and in 1492, on the death of Caxton, he decided to print works in English, including reprinting some of Caxton's work.

A later Antwerp printer, Jan van Doesborch, produced books in English as well, but he i introduced translations from the Dutch which were new to the English, such as *Mariken van Nimweghen*, c.1518. How the English version of this story came about, is the topic of the late Ricardo Rizza (Bologna) in "Mariken van Nieumeghen and Mary of Nemmegen: a hopeless case?" Rizza's article applies academic methodology to the debate about the

differences between the two earliest existing printed editions of the Middle Netherlandic miracle play, a Dutch version which combines prose and verse, printed by Willem Vorsterman in Antwerp in 1515, and the English prose version printed by Jan van Doesborch in 1518. Rizza explains why, in comparing both the language and the technical production of the two texts, it is widely accepted that there was an earlier printed edition from which the first was adapted and the second translated. He lists the main questions that scholars still grapple with: Who wrote it? When? Was it a verse play written by and performed for the Chambers of Rhetoric, so popular at the time in the Low Lands? Was the printed edition preceded by a "volksboek" (chapbook) in prose only? What is the relationship between the English and the Dutch version, and how did the translation take place? Rizza reminds us of another research trajectory, proposed by W.H.Beuken in 1972: by evaluating books from the early sixteenth century as physical objects, a study can be made of the technical properties of hand-setting and printing of blocks of text. The compositor's trade is a fascinating one and can lead to purely physical causes for differences in the two extant editions of the *Mariken*. Rizza suggests some interesting sociological, economic and historical lines of inquiry into Netherlandic and English society in order to explain editorial modifications of the text to suit English readers. Rather than considering the pure prose style superior to the enigmatic Dutch mixed verse and prose, he suggests that omission of the crucial "play within a play" of the Masscheroen *wagenspel*, and the complete absence in England of the rhetoricians' tradition, render the English version the poorer of the two known oldest editions.

Hellinga explains that in Britain those in need of Latin books were almost wholly dependent on imports until around 1670, when Vice-Chancellor Fell established a publishing house in Oxford, soon to be followed by the Cambridge University Press. These would equal the best printing houses on the Continent. In the 18th century English printers and publishers became net exporters, leading in technical innovation and contributing much to the position of the English language in modern times.

In "Anglo-Dutch publishing during the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648)", Hugh Dunthorne (Swansea) examines the traffic in news and ideas from the Netherlands to England. Pamphlets, which ranged widely from propaganda to factual record, fed the English appetite for information about the struggles of their fellow Protestants against the great Catholic powers of the continent. The English authorities were nevertheless uneasy about tales of revolution against legitimate authority, and as Hellinga pointed out earlier, the translators and printers who made these pamphlets did so at some risk to themselves. The legacy of the ideas they promoted can be found, Dunthorne suggests, in the armed resistance against Charles I and, almost half a century later, in the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Another example of the press as "an agent of subversion" is highlighted by Jonathan Israel (UC London) in his article "The publishing of forbidden philosophical works in the Dutch republic (1666-1710) and their European distribution," where he discusses *livres de Hollande*. These books encompassed a wide spectrum, of which the four primary categories were: prohibited theological literature, books of an erotic character, satirical and scandalous high-society chronicles and most importantly,

philosophical books, especially on Spinoza. Israel argues that "the clandestine export of forbidden books from the Dutch Republic to France played a not inconsiderable part in breaking down the authoritarian, absolutist conception of culture and society championed by Louis XIV and the French Church."

In "The Elzeviers and England," Frans Korsten (Nijmegen) examines both the trade relations that the Dutch publishing dynasty had with English booksellers and their contacts with the English authors they published. The proportion of English authors published by the company between 1580 and 1712 varied from four to ten percent of their total output, and included some English or Scottish authors who had their works published because the political or religious climate at home was too hostile. Korsten explains that the Elzeviers' role in respect of their English authors is now often difficult to unravel: it could have been straightforward piracy, a formal contract to publish, or a variety of initiatives falling between the two. Likewise in "The English book in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic," Paul Hoftijzer (Leiden and Amsterdam) remarks that Dutch publishers did a brisk trade on the continent in French and Latin translations of English works, mostly on religious themes, but they did not seem to need the original author's permission. International copyright agreements were still a long way in the future. Hoftijzer also shows that judging by the amount of book sales and holdings, British readers were often more interested in Dutch ideas than the other way around.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Netherlands exported not only books to Britain, but printers themselves. In "Credit, cash and customers: Cornelius Crownfield and Anglo-Dutch trade in the early eighteenth century," David McKitterick (Cambridge) writes about one of the men who became a printer at Cambridge. The records of Cambridge University Press allow many details of Crownfield's business to be examined. The contemporary records of Dutch libraries and booksellers also show the extent, fairly limited as it appears, to which Cambridge succeeded in exporting its books to the Netherlands.

The Anglo-Dutch picture is rounded out by B.P.M. Dongelmans (Leiden) in "The widening circle: contacts between Dutch and English publishers in the second half of the nineteenth century". Using mainly letters written by English booksellers to their Dutch colleagues, Dongelmans sketches a trade in which the importation of books from England for the Dutch market was on the rise. While there were English buyers of Dutch books, mainly libraries, the author concludes that by this time, on the whole, England supplied and the Netherlands consumed - a very different balance from two hundred years before.

Two articles examine the history of the printing of Dutch medical texts.Vivian Nutton (UC London) in "James' legacy: Dutch printing and the history of medicine" focuses on Leiden, its doctors and its university in the first century after its foundation. James is John James, an MD from Cambridge, who enrolled at Leiden in 1578 to get a medical degree, but also to act as spy for the Earl of Leicester. He returned to London to become a royal physician. More important is the first professor of medicine in Leiden, Pieter van Foreest (1521-1597), originally from Alkmaar, who had studied in Louvain and graduated from Bologna in 1543. He was *Stadsgeneesheer*

in Delft from 1558 till his death; his most famous patient was William of Orange. At the opening festivities of Leiden University in 1575, he gave the first lecture in medicine, but since he had no students, he returned to Delft within a week. He was a prolific writer, describing in detail the diseases of his patients, revealing remarkable powers of observation, and giving us a valuable insight into the health problems of those years.He produced a large number of octavo volumes in excellent Latin, of which 27 were published in his lifetime and some posthumously, by Plantin in Antwerp and Plantin's son-in-law in Leiden. The medical writings of both van Foreest and Jan van Beverwijk(1594-1647), physician, magistrate and mayor of Dordrecht, had a significant influence on the history of Dutch printing. Dutch printers established the Netherlands as the major medical European publication centre for the next 150 years.They were assisted by medical professors at the University of Leiden, most notably by Herman Boerhave, whose students carried the Leiden message to Edinburgh, Philadelphia and Japan.

Annette Munt (UC London) in "The impact of Dutch medical authors in German translation (1680-1720)" tells us that Dutch and Latin medical texts were translated into German for the large number of German medical students who came to study in the Netherlands during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.The medical authors most represented were Bontekoe, Blankaart, and Overkamp, who stood out by their rejection of the classical medical authors and the old methods of bloodletting, purging and using leeches; they recommended modern methods such as alkaline solutions to counteract acidity, and warm fluids, especially tea, which was becoming known in Europe and considered medicinal.

Both Nutton and Munt show in their articles how the Netherlands created an extensive medical community for the Bookshop of the World. Nutton poses a final challenge: in light of the decline in Dutch medical publishing from the 1760s onwards, how are we to explain the enormous impact on medicine over the last half century of medical journals and books printed in the Netherlands, a country which does not do as much medical research today as Britain, France or Germany, let alone the USA?

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