‘Non erubescat Hollandia’: Classical Embarrassment of Riches and the Construction of Local History in Hadrianus Junius’ *Batavia*

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1 Embarrassment of Riches and Humanism

At least since 1987, when Simon Schama published his famous study *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, it has been well known that there was a strong connection between notions of wealth and collective identity in the early modern Low Countries, or at least in Holland.¹ In this book, the incomparable wealth and the boundless consumerism in the young Dutch Republic are contrasted with the dominant moralist discourse of the seventeenth century – a discourse that was often hostile to avarice, luxury, and wasting money. According to Schama, this paradoxical phenomenon is at odds with Max Weber’s famous thesis that Calvinism denounced consumerism, praised a strong work ethic, and regarded wealth as a confirmation of God’s benevolence, that in doing so it created favourable conditions for investment as an alternative to consumption, and that it thus contributed to the rise of capitalism.² Schama argued that this theory does not explain the situation in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic very well, because despite the dominance of Calvinism, the Dutch Republic witnessed a strong consumerist culture. Moreover, Calvinism was far from unique in its critique of wealth. Most importantly, however, Calvinists often criticized

1 Schama S., *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: 1987). Schama’s study has often been criticized for its rather exclusive focus on Holland. See, for example, Price J.L., “The Dangers of Unscientific History: Schama and the Dutch Seventeenth-Century”, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 104, 1 (1989) 39–42; Haitsma Mulier E.O.G., “Tekens en symbolen in het zeventiende-eeuwse Nederland: geschiedschrijving als emblematiek”, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 104, 1 (1989) 43–50, especially 45. Lem G.A.C. van der, “Van zure druiven?... en een zoute haring. De eerste reacties in Nederland op Schama’s *Overvloed en onbehagen*”, *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 4, 2 (1988) 69–75, especially 73–74, thought that Schama’s attention to Holland was justified in view of the economic and cultural situation in the seventeenth century.

2 Weber M., *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: 1930).

the phenomenon they were supposed to have boosted: (lucrative returns on) investment.

As I just indicated, Schama did not present Calvinism as the only intellectual background to the Dutch embarrassment of riches. He also pointed to the important role played by humanism, which succeeded in reconciling ethics and wealth in a pragmatic manner: wealth did not have to be rejected, as long as its owner used it for good purposes, such as charity contributions or loans without usury:

In this working compromise, the regents acknowledged the need for some sort of antipecuniary ethic to restrain capitalism from anarchy and abuse, and the church recognized that, however perilous for a godly Republic, Dutch wealth was a fact of life and could be made to work for righteous ends. By default, then, Calvinist social teaching collapsed back onto its humanist origins.³

The Dutch attitude towards wealth was in Schama's view a synthesis of Calvinism and humanism:

The official creeds of both Calvinism and humanism, then, were agreed that lucre was indeed filthy, and that devotion to its cult constituted a kind of polluting idolatry. In its extreme forms of avarice and cupidity it could unhinge the conscience and reason and turn free souls into fawning slaves.⁴

It remains somewhat unclear, however, what exactly Schama meant by 'humanism'.⁵ In this context, he referred in particular to classical Stoicism and the work of Erasmus. In addition, Schama mentioned later humanists writing in the vernacular, such as Dirck Volkertszoon Coornhert (1522–1590), Roemer Visscher (1547–1620), and Hendrik Laurenszoon Spieghel (1549–1612), whom he regarded as Erasmians.⁶ In itself, the link with Erasmus is not a very surprising suggestion, as Erasmus was, of course, the most famous humanist from the Low Countries, and works like his successful *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (first edition 1503) indeed contained pragmatic ideas similar to the ones to which Schama referred. In the *Enchiridion*, Erasmus argued that one has to

³ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* 338.

⁴ Idem 334.

⁵ For this critique, see also Haitsma Mulier, "Tekens en symbolen" 46.

⁶ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* 295, 326–328, 330, 362, 370, 408.

focus on Christ above all, but that wealth can help one to do so by making deeds of charity possible. Riches are therefore not inherently evil, although there is always a risk that greed will be a distraction from one's true purposes in life. Moreover, the Bible demonstrates that it is by no means impossible to lead a morally sound life without great possessions.⁷ It seems natural to connect these ideas with Stoic thought, because in this passage Erasmus explicitly refers to the distinction made by Epictetus between things that are within our control and things that are not.⁸ Wealth belongs to the second category, on which one ought to be as little dependent as possible. In addition, Erasmus characterizes riches as one of the *falsa bona* that should be distinguished from the *vera bona* – a distinction that would later return in Justus Lipsius' Neo-Stoic classic *De constantia* (1584).⁹

However, by conflating humanism and Stoicism, Schama oversimplified humanist discourse on wealth.¹⁰ Humanism was a loose movement that aimed to revive all facets of classical culture without propagating a single morality or ideology, let alone a systematic philosophy.¹¹ This also applies to ideas about wealth. Different humanists thought about ownership and consumption in very different ways, and if they relied on classical philosophy to support their ideas – as they often did – their philosopher of choice could be Aristotle as well as Epictetus or Seneca. The humanist and reformer Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), for instance, defended a Peripatetic approach in which the acquisition of property was an essential means to maintain a household. To this extent, it could be conducive to a virtuous life, but wealth must never be an end in itself (as happened in the case of merchants and usurers).¹² Moreover, antiquity provided Epicurean ideas about riches, emphasizing that a state

7 Erasmus Desiderius, *Enchiridion de milite Christiano in quo taxatis vulgi superstitionibus ad priscæ religionis puritatem* (Leipzig, Valentin Schumann: 1515) fols. L v–LII r ('Aduersum irritamenta auaritiæ').

8 Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 1, referred to by Erasmus, *Enchiridion* fol. LI v. As the title already suggests, Epictetus' work was an important model for Erasmus' moral handbook.

9 Erasmus, *Enchiridion* fol. LII r. See also Lipsius Justus, *De constantia* (Leiden, Christoffel Plantijn: 1584) 18–19. For the Stoic idea of wealth as *bonum falsum*, see, for instance, Seneca the Younger, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* 17, 87, and 119.

10 It has been observed before that Schama's generalizations are often at odds with the available historical sources. See, amongst others, Price, "The Dangers of Unscientific History" 42; Deursen A.Th. van, "Simon Schama: de band met de zeventiende eeuw", *Ons erfdeel* 32, 4 (1989) 565–571, especially 569–570.

11 See, for instance, Kristeller P.O., *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources* (New York: 1979).

12 A good example can be found in Melanchthon's *Philosophiæ moralis epitome* (1538): see Melanchthon Philipp, *Opera quæ supersunt omnia*, eds. K.G. Bretschneider – H.E. Bindseil, vol. XVI, 37–38. See also his scriptural exegeses in vol. XXV, 28–42 and 244–270. In the Middle Ages, similar ideas were not unusual either. See, for instance, Thomas Aquinas,

of *voluptas* could be reached more easily if one needed little in order to be satisfied.¹³ Finally, there were the exemplary lives of Cynic philosophers, such as Diogenes of Sinope and Crates of Thebes, which presented poverty and asceticism as a way to live in accordance with nature. Erasmus, for instance, also referred to the example of Crates, who gave away all his money to live a penniless life on the streets of Athens.¹⁴

This wide variety of philosophical, religious, and political positions taken by humanist men of learning with regard to the phenomenon of wealth, as well as the heterogeneity of the classical heritage they employed to authorize their claims, makes any single overarching thesis about the relationship between 'humanist thought' and the embarrassment of riches in the early modern Low Countries hard to sustain. Therefore, in order to better understand the development of ideas about wealth in the early modern Low Countries, as well as the role of classical philosophical commonplaces in this process, it seems that rather than collect isolated manifestations of ideas about wealth, a more fruitful type of approach would be to begin by studying individual authors and examining how such ideas fit into the larger arguments they develop.¹⁵ This focus on the use to which ideas are put within the rhetorical design of a text has the additional advantage that it not only shows that particular authors employed particular notions and authorities, but also why they did so. It also fits in better with humanist practices of reading and writing, which often involved a careful integration of excerpts from a wide array of texts into coherent new writings.¹⁶

Summa theologiae 1–11, 2, i. The key source for such peripatetic notions is Aristotle, *Politics* 1256b27–1257a4.

- 13 See, for instance, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* v, 1117–1119: 'Quod si quis vera vitam ratione gubernet, / Divitiae grandes homini sunt vivere parce / Aeque animo; neque enim est umquam penuria parvi'. Another example would be Horace, *Carmina* 111, 1, 25–26: 'Desiderantem quod satis est neque / tumultuosum sollicitat mare'. For the ideas of Epicurus himself, see Usener H. (ed.), *Epicurea* (Leipzig: 1887), fragments 135, 202, 476, and 548.
- 14 Erasmus, *Enchiridion* fol. XXI v.
- 15 Cf. Quentin Skinner's approach to the history of ideas as 'treat[ing] the understanding of concepts as always, in part, a matter of understanding what can be done with them in argument': Skinner Q.R.D., "Rhetoric and Conceptual Change", *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* 3 (1999) 60–73, especially 62.
- 16 See, for instance, Erasmus Desiderius, *Opera omnia, recognita et adnotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata* (Amsterdam: 1969ff.), vol. 1, 2, 652: 'Concoquendum est, quod varia diutinaque lectione devoraris, meditatione traiciendum in vaenas animi, potius quam in memoriam aut indicem, ut omni pabulorum genere saginatum ingenium ex sese signat orationem, quae non hunc aut illum florem, frondem, gramenve redolet: sed indolem affectusque pectoris tui'.

2 A Case Study: Junius’ *Batavia*

In this article, I would like to exemplify the above-mentioned approach, demonstrating how classical sources about wealth were incorporated into the argument of a humanist text about the identity of Holland and what the purpose of this incorporation was. The object of my analysis will be the work of history called *Batavia* [Fig. 13.1], written by Hadrianus Junius (1511–1575) [Fig. 13.2], a humanist from the city of Haarlem in Holland who belonged to the same circles as Coornhert. Junius was the official historian of the States of Holland and wrote the book, which is a chorographic description of Holland, in the period between 1565 and 1570.¹⁷ It was published posthumously in 1588, and proved to be one of the most important historiographical works in sixteenth-century Holland.¹⁸ Apart from the wide reception of the *Batavia* in the Low Countries and its humanist character, the *Batavia* is also an interesting work for the purposes of this article because it was written around the start of the Dutch Revolt (1568–1648) that would soon lead to the establishment of the Dutch Republic (1581) and contains outspokenly critical passages about the consequences of luxury, even though Junius – like Erasmus, Coornhert, Visscher, and Spieghel – was not a Calvinist: his religious position is perhaps best described as tolerant Catholicism.¹⁹

17 Junius Hadrianus, *Batavia* (Leiden, Franciscus Raphelengius: 1588). A Dutch translation with an introduction and annotations is available in Junius Hadrianus, *Holland is een eiland. De Batavia van Hadrianus Junius (1511–1575)*, trans. N. de Glas (Hilversum: 2011). For more historical background with regard to the *Batavia*, see Vermaseren B.A., “Het ontstaan van Hadrianus Junius’ *Batavia*”, in *Huldeboek Pater Dr. Bonaventura Kruitwagen O.F.M.* (’s-Gravenhage: 1949) 407–426. For Junius’ biography, see Miert D. van, *Hadrianus Junius (1511–1575). Een humanist uit Hoorn* (Hoorn: 2011). For the relationship between Junius and Coornhert, see Miert D. van, “Introduction: Hadrianus Junius and Northern Dutch Humanism”, in Miert D. van (ed.), *The Kaleidoscopic Scholarship of Hadrianus Junius (1511–1575): Northern Humanism at the Dawn of the Dutch Golden Age*, Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 199 (Leiden: 2011) 1–15, especially 10.

18 For the importance of the *Batavia* in the historiographical tradition, see Glas N. de, “Context, Conception and Content of Hadrianus Junius’ *Batavia*”, in Van Miert (ed.), *Kaleidoscopic Scholarship* 69–95; Maas C., “Hadrianus Junius’ *Batavia* and the Formation of a Historiographical Canon in Holland”, in Van Miert (ed.), *Kaleidoscopic Scholarship* 38–68.

19 Miert D. van, “The Religious Beliefs of Hadrianus Junius (1511–1575)”, in Schnur R. et al. (eds.), *Acta Conventus Neolatini Cantabrigiensis: Proceedings of the Eleventh International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, Cambridge. 2000* (Tempe, AZ: 2003) 583–594.

FIGURE 13.1 Hadrianus Junius, *Batavia* (Leiden, Franciscus Raphelengius: 1588, title page.)

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FIGURE 13.2 Philip Galle, *Portrait of Hadrianus Junius* (1572). Engraving
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3 Ancient Roman Frugality and Junius' Embarrassment of Riches

The starting point of my analysis will be the following passage from the *Batavia* about excesses of wealth, especially with regard to foreign delicacies. This passage illustrates that humanist writings from the sixteenth century indeed provided a rich soil for the embarrassment of riches in the seventeenth century that was described by Schama.²⁰

Paulo ante haec tempora luxus mensarum citra exemplum maximus et nepotinis tantum non prodigisque sumptibus exercitus, et in immensum auctus, profligatis iam moribus civilibus, finem modumque omnem transierat, quando pretiosa fames et macelli conturbatrix (ut Epigrammatarii verba ad eam rem aptius exprimendam adducam) terra marique exquisitas ciborum delicias et cupediarum indagines vestigabat, donec dites et generis etiam claritate celebres familiae, studio magnificentiae in epularum apparatu ad summa progressae, aut comesis devoratisque patrimoniis decoxere, aut in vetere aere alieno obstrictae ac vacillantes fortunas suas conturbarunt, posteris nihil praeter luctum et querelas relinquentes.

Not long before my time, the luxury at the tables had reached an incredible climax, and one could almost speak of an insane extravagance. It exceeded all bounds, and the ordinary way of life was utterly destroyed. It was beyond every limit and measure. Hunger costs plenty and the market makes you go broke! (I quote Martial in order to better represent the situation.) By land and sea, people searched for the most exquisite delicacies; it was a true hunt for pleasure, until the rich and also the famous noble families had gone so far in their passion for sumptuous dinners that they had become bankrupt by eating and swallowing their family heritage or had become struck and staggering by long-contracted debt and had upset their fortune, leaving nothing but mourning and lamentations for posterity.²¹

Like many other humanists, Junius was a man of encyclopaedic learning; he wrote *Animadversa*, textual comments on various classical writings, and a

20 Perhaps even so rich that Calvinism is no longer needed to explain the appearance of the phenomenon: see McCants A.E.C., *Civic Charity in a Golden Age: Orphan Care in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Urbana, IL: 1997) 14–15.

21 Junius, *Batavia* 224 (all translations are mine, although in many cases they are indebted to De Glas' Dutch translation). Junius quotes Martial, *Epigrammata* x, 96, 9.

collection of *Adagia* in the style of Erasmus. Moreover, he published a number of lexicographical works. The passage quoted above also testifies to his learning. In addition to the explicit quote from Martial, it implicitly incorporates a lot of other classical materials. I will discuss the most important subtexts, which provide some clues as to the intellectual orientation of Junius' invective against wealth.

The most important source for Junius' text is Roman historiography. First of all, Junius borrows a phrase from Suetonius' biography of Caligula, in which the Emperor's extravagant luxury is criticized.²² In addition, and more interestingly, Junius uses a sentence from Tacitus' *Annales* that stems from a longer passage in which Emperor Tiberius argues that he is not in a position to curb the excessive wealth (*luxus*) that was the result of foreign wars.²³ In this passage, both the character of Tiberius and the narrator point to the frugality (*parsimonia*) of the ancient Romans that had been lost, although the narrator observes a revival of this virtue in the time of Emperor Vespasian.²⁴ A similar narrative about the decline of ancient Roman parsimony can be found in the so-called *archaeologia* in Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*: the Romans used to be parsimonious, but they lost this virtue after the conquest of the East and the victory over Carthage. Junius also adopted a phrase from this passage.²⁵

Apparently, the main intellectual source of Junius' invective against wealth is not so much any one philosophical school, such as the Stoa, but rather a traditional Roman cocktail of chauvinism, moralism, and conservatism that found expression in a historical narrative about the decline of ancient frugality. However, Junius did not limit his quest for proponents of the primeval Roman virtue of thriftiness to the genre of historiography. Satire, for instance, also provided a rich source of materials. In this passage, Junius includes a fragment from the Roman satirist Lucilius that was preserved in the work of Lactantius.²⁶ Moreover, he is using an essay by Aulus Gellius, another proponent of ancient Romanness, in which the value of home-grown food is defended, with references to poems by the Roman satirist Varro and the Greek

22 Suetonius, *Vita Gai* 37: 'nepotinis sumptibus omnium prodigorum ingenia superavit'. Modern texts usually read *nepotatus* instead of *nepotinis*.

23 Tacitus, *Annales* III, 55: 'luxusque mensae [...] profusis sumptibus exerciti paulatim exolvere. [...] dites olim familiae nobilium aut claritudine insignes studio magnificentiae prolabeantur'.

24 Tiberius' speech can be found in Tacitus, *Annales* III, 53–54. Tacitus expresses his own views in *Annales* III, 55.

25 Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 13: 'vescendi causa terra marique omnia exquirere'. The excursus on Roman history (*archaeologia*) is found in *Bellum Catilinae* 6–13.

26 Lucilius, *Satiren*, ed. W. Krenkel (Leiden: 1970), fr. 1347: 'virtus quaerendae finem re scire modumque'. The fragment was preserved in Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* VI, 5.

tragedian Euripides.²⁷ Finally, Junius uses two passages from Cicero's second Catilinarian oration, which incorporates traditional Roman values to serve a function similar to that in Sallust's work: portraying Catiline as the product of moral decline.²⁸

Schama acknowledges the importance of these ancient ideas in the Dutch Golden Age as well, referring to them as 'the Roman stoic lament for the sybaritic corruption of republican virtue'.²⁹ Such a characterization is not entirely accurate for Junius' ideas about wealth in the *Batavia*, however, and it might not be for many seventeenth-century writings either. Most importantly, Stoicism was by no means the only school of thought to express reservations about riches, and it was certainly not the most critical in this respect, as it placed wealth into the category of *indifferentia* and did not regard it as a moral evil per se. Moreover, it is difficult to label the Roman authors Junius did rely on in this context as clear-cut Stoics, even though some of their works may contain ideas compatible with Stoicism.³⁰

4 Marcus Porcius Cato the Elder and the Frugality of the Roman Farmer

In brief, Junius does not rely on a single philosophical school or even a single literary genre to find inspiration and authority for the content and wording of his attack on luxury in Holland. Neither Stoic ideas³¹ nor religious motives, let alone specifically Erasmian or Calvinist views, are visible in this passage. Instead, Junius leaned on a diverse body of classical texts – historiography and satire in particular – that express the traditional Roman commonplace that the influx of riches from the East corrupted the pristine Roman morality of

27 Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* VI, 16: 'cenarum ciborum exquisitas delicias [...] terra et mari conquirunt [...] indagines cuppediarum'.

28 Cicero, *In Catilinam oratio secunda* 10: 'patrimonia sua profuderunt, fortunas suas obligaverunt'; Cicero, *In Catilinam oratio secunda* 21: 'in vetere aere alieno vacillant'.

29 Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* 295.

30 With the possible exception of Persius, who in his fifth satire – which is quoted by Junius, as mentioned below – discusses the Stoic paradox that only the Stoic sage is truly free and explains how luxury and avarice may endanger this freedom.

31 The reason for this cannot be that Junius was unaware of Stoic views on wealth, since Junius clearly relied on such ideas in one of his emblems: see emblem XIII (Principum opes, plebis adminicula) in Junius Hadrianus, *Emblemata* (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin: 1565) 20, as well as the commentary on this emblem on pp. 90–91, in which Junius explains that the 'magnanimus et fortis vir' with his 'constans animus' will not be disturbed by the extravagant riches of the powerful.

parsimony.³² This eclecticism does not, of course, preclude the existence of prototypical characters who function as symbols for the ethics of frugality on which Junius' rhetoric relies. One such figure, Marcus Porcius Cato the Elder, is encountered in the following passage from the *Batavia*:

Iam si velim, postquam piscario in foro res vertitur, nostri maris delicias omnes recensere, tempus me deficiat. Neque vero obsonivororum (quo nomine dicebantur olim qui piscibus delectabantur) convitium in nos distringi velim, aut Romanae luxuriae nota inuri, quam non veritus fuit attingere Cato, quum nimium vero elogio testatus est, pluris Romae piscem vaenire, quam bovem, propterea quod piscibus luxum metirentur, (ut Asinius Celer, qui mullum piscem octo millibus nummum emit:) [...].

Since we are talking about the fish market anyway: if I would like, I could discuss all the delicacies from our sea, but that would require too much time. And I would not wish that we Hollanders would be labelled as 'obsonivores' (people who like fish used to go by that name), and that we would receive the brand of Roman decadence (*Romanae luxuriae nota*). Cato did not hesitate to mention this with his very true observation that fish is sold in Rome against a higher price than beef. For luxury was measured by the fish (for instance in the case of Asinius Celer, who bought one mullet for eight thousand sesterces).³³

Again, the intellectual movement that Junius seems to adhere to here is not Stoicism or any other philosophy, but the conservative Roman tradition which recounts how the old virtuous Rome became corrupted as a result of the exotic riches that flooded the city after its conquests in the decadent East. Polybius, one of the first authors who expressed this idea, made an explicit connection with the thought of Cato, who is also mentioned by Junius here and who had said that the decline of the Roman Republic could be observed in the fact that

32 At some points, Schama does seem to be aware of this approach: see, for instance, Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* 42, where he refers to Andries Vierlingh's use of aphorisms drawn from the 'standard canon of northern humanism', which was supposed to include such authors as Ovid and Cato.

33 Junius, *Batavia* 204. In what follows, Junius also discusses the verses from Varro's satires that appear in Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* vi, 16, mentioned above. The story about Asinius can be found in Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* ix, 31, 67. For fish as a symbol of extreme luxury (especially the *mullus*), see also Déry C.A., "Fish and Food as Symbol in Ancient Rome", in Walker H. (ed.), *Fish: Food from the Waters. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1997* (Totnes: 1998) 94–115. Juvenal's fourth satire provides a fine parallel to Pliny's anecdote.

male prostitutes were more profitable than farming land, and pots of caviar more than ploughmen.³⁴ The idea of Roman decadence caused by (Oriental) riches subsequently became a stock ingredient of the Roman historiographical tradition,³⁵ taken up by authors such as Sallust, Tacitus, and Gellius, who all shared an admiration for Cato.³⁶

The moral views of Cato and many later writers in which austerity was presented as an original Roman virtue, however, did not imply that all forms of property were rejected. Specific forms of property acquisition were regarded as superior to others. Cato expressed this succinctly in the *praefatio* to his work *De agricultura*, where he emphasized that trade and money-lending were dangerous and dishonourable, while farming brought respectable profit and turned men into good soldiers.³⁷ These values were associated specifically with the senatorial class.³⁸ This aristocratic attitude towards wealth would remain a recurring theme in Roman literature. Key elements of this tradition were the ancient Roman austerity of agrarian life, set against exotic luxuriance, and the decay of this austerity due to successful foreign wars.

Junius applies this combination of ideas to his own context. A good example is his discussion of cheese. In his view, the consumption of expensive foreign cheese was an undesirable form of decadence.

De Caseorum bonitate cum quibusuis etiam nationibus in certamen venire non erubescat Hollandia, non dubitanda palma gloriae, nisi exoticas delitias fracta luxurie et profunda ingluvie palata praeferrent, nisi rerum venalium pretiis maioribus accenderetur gulae ingenium, et (ut dictitabat Heliogabalus) orexis.

34 Polybius, *Historiae* xxxi, 25, 4–7. The quote from Cato included by Junius is drawn from Plutarch, *Cato Maior* 8: 'Κατηγορώων δὲ τῆς πολυτελείας ἔφη χαλεπὸν εἶναι σωθῆναι πόλιν, ἐν ᾗ πωλεῖται πλείονος ἰχθὺς ἢ βοῦς'.

35 See, for instance, Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, praefatio 11–12; Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 10–13. Another excellent illustration of the tradition can be found in Juvenal, *Saturae* vi, 292–300, who refers to the *paupertas Romana*.

36 For Sallust, see Levene D.S., "Sallust's *Catiline* and Cato the Censor", *Classical Quarterly* 50, 1 (2000) 170–191. For Tacitus, see Martin R.H., *Tacitus* (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 1981) 15–16; Gowing A.M., "From the Annalists to the *Annales*: Latin Historiography before Tacitus", in Woodman A.J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus* (Cambridge: 2009) 17–30, especially 19. For Gellius, see Ceaicovschi K., "Cato the Elder in Aulus Gellius", *Illinois Classical Studies* 33–34 (2008–2009) 25–39.

37 Marcus Porcius Cato, *De agricultura*, praefatio.

38 See, for instance, Cicero, *De officiis* 1, 151 and Livy, *Ab urbe condita* xx1, 63. Aristocratic overtones are also present in Cato's *praefatio*, which speaks about the *vir bonus* and what is *honestum*. Junius was familiar with such ideas: see Junius, *Batavia* 323, where he refers to the Roman preference for agriculture among the nobility.

As regards the quality of our cheese, Holland does not have to be embarrassed to compete with any other people. And we would even be sure about the palm of victory if our gastronomes would not be so spoiled by their gluttonous extravagance and if they would not only fancy foreign delicacies; a gluttony and (as Elagabalus called it) an *orexis*, which is further stimulated by the fact that those articles are much more expensive.³⁹

Subsequently, Junius discusses two epigrams by Martial about the nutritional value of particular Italian cheeses. Then he returns to the subject of cheese from Holland and explains how his fellow countrymen crave cheese from Parma and Piacenza rather than from Texel, Griend, 's-Gravenzande, and Edam.⁴⁰ Junius explicitly presents this local production of cheese as a source of riches (*aurea ubertas, opum affluentia*) or even a rich Horn of Amalthea, but he leaves no room for doubt: this is in itself not a reason for embarrassment (*non erubescat Hollandia*). Junius becomes concerned about undesirable gluttony (*ingluvies, orexis*), intemperance (*luxuries, luxuria*) and licentiousness (*lascivia*) only at the point at which the inhabitants of Holland despise their own agricultural wealth and develop a penchant for foreign products obtained by trade.⁴¹

5 Roman Frugality and the Simplicity of Holland

The passages discussed above demonstrate that in expressing his attitude towards wealth, Junius called on a tradition of Roman chauvinist moralism. This raises the question whether Junius' embarrassment of riches can also in any way be called chauvinistic or patriotic. In this respect, it should be pointed out that his ideas on wealth seem to have some connection with sixteenth-century

39 Junius, *Batavia* 198. The text erroneously reads *palmae gloria*. The anecdote about Emperor Elagabalus derives from the *Historia Augusta*: Aelius Lampridius, *Vita Antonini Heliogabali* 29. The quote from Cicero is *In Verrem* IV, 47.

40 Junius, *Batavia* 198–199. The poems referred to are Martial, *Epigrammata* XIII, 30 and 31. In this section, too, the intellectual background recurs that we have already noticed in an earlier passage, in particular the section from Aulus Gellius. See Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* VI, 16: 'genera autem nominaque edulium et domicilia ciborum omnibus aliis praestantia, quae profunda ingluvies vestigavit [...] per luxum animi parata atque facilia fastidientis per inprobam satietatis lasciviam'.

41 Similar remarks can be found in two passages devoted to rabbit fur and wine: Junius, *Batavia* 209–210 and 213. See also Junius, *Batavia* 222, about the farmers in the northern parts of Holland, who live a harsh life of parsimony and survive on a diet of rye bread, cheese, milk, and whey.

stereotypes about Hollanders, and especially their 'simplicity'. In Erasmus' famous essay about the expression *Auris Batava* (1508), for instance, the *ingenium simplex* of the Hollanders had already been discussed and praised. In the footsteps of the humanist from Rotterdam, Reynier Snoy (1474/1475–1537), from Gouda, had called his fellow countrymen 'remarkable for their faithfulness, simple and dove-like' (*fidelitate conspicua, simplex ac columbina*). Gerardus Listrius (ca. 1490–after 1522), from Utrecht, referred to the 'simplicity of their character, and their unadorned manners' (*ingenii simplicitatem, et mores minime fucatos*), while Hadrianus Barlandus (1486–1538), from Zeeland, said that the Hollanders were 'diligent, busy, simple and very much inclined to every form of gentleness and friendliness' (*industrii, negotiosi, simplices, et ad omnem humanitatem benignitatemque propensissimi*).⁴²

In all these texts, the *simplicitas* of the Hollanders seems to refer in particular to their moral sincerity and verbal directness or even bluntness.⁴³ This concept recurs in the *Batavia* in the context of an ethnographic description which also features their frugality:

Genus hominum procerum habet Hollandia, alta magis quam humili statura, corporibus validum, forma liberali, ingenio aperto et facili, quod olim dolis atque exterorum artibus obnoxium propterea fuisse notatum est: sed nunc ea simplicitas, tanquam cos attritu, peregrinationibus longoque commerciorum usu exercita, vafricie nonnihil attraxit, quod mercaturae et negotiationis studio bona pars hominum quantumvis longinquas totoque terrarum orbe semotas ac dissitas regiones peragrat, unde multiplex linguarum et ingeniorum cognitio mores imbuunt, et in Ulysseos mutavit, homines a barbarie prima quam Romani scriptores illis dant, multum diuersi, sermo et congressus comis illis est, laboris patientia summa. Id in genere dicendum est et vere, et cum laude, imo et finitimorum confessione, Hollandos esse frugi et attentos oeconomos patresque familias: qui formicae exemplum secuti condunt sub hyemem, quae illa anni partis iniuria negatura videtur, coemptis piscibus carnibusque, quae vel muria domant, vel fumo durant.

42 Erasmus, *Opera omnia* II, 8, 40; Snoy Reynier, *De rebus Batavicis libri XIII*, ed. Jacobus Brassica (Frankfurt, Daniel and David Aubry and Clemens Schleich: 1620) 13; Erasmus, *Opera omnia* IV, 3, 85 (for the remark by Listrius); Barlandus Hadrianus, *Rerum gestarum a Brabantiae ducibus historia usque in annum vigesimum sextum supra MD restitutae salutis* (Antwerp, Johannes Hillen van Hoochstraten: 1526) fol. s4 v.

43 Junius knew this stereotype and refers to it in Junius, *Batavia* 219–220, but there he uses terms like *crassus* and *stupidus*, rather than *simplex*.

Holland has a tall sort of people, who have a long rather than a short stature; they have strong bodies and the appearance of freeborn men. They are open-minded and easy-going, so that they used to be known for their susceptibility to the fraud and deceit of foreigners. But nowadays that simplicity (*simplicitas*) – as happens to a whetstone by rubbing – has been eroded by journeys and long-lasting trading experience and has adopted some cunning. For as a result of their eagerness for trade and business, a large part of the population traverses the entire world to its most remote angles. Their acquaintance with many languages and cultures has influenced them and changed them into people like Ulysses. They are very different now from what they used to be, when the Roman writers attributed to them that primitive character: they are friendly in their contacts and conversations, and they do not avoid making an effort. One thing can be said about them with certainty and praise, and even the neighbouring people acknowledge this: the Hollanders are frugal, they carefully manage their financial position, and they are responsible heads of the family. In accordance with the example of the ant, they build up a stock towards the winter of what that unjust season will likely withhold: they buy meat and fish, and they conserve them by means of salt or smoke.⁴⁴

This passage combines a number of themes I have discussed above. It presents the Hollanders as frugal housekeepers stocking agricultural products. And just like parsimony is often threatened by riches – a risk that is actually not mentioned in this specific passage – the old *simplicitas* of Holland lost out to distant trade voyages.⁴⁵ This allows me to make two points. First of all, the passage shows that an embarrassment of riches is for Junius partly a matter of collective identity: it characterizes the Hollanders as much as their *simplicitas* does. Just like the Roman narrative he incorporates, it contributes to a sense of chauvinistic pride. Secondly, both this passage and several other passages discussed above – including those from the *Batavia* – bear witness to the idea that deviations from ancient virtue are due to luxury resulting from foreign trade rather than from local production, in a fashion similar to that of the primordial

44 Junius, *Batavia* 220.

45 At the time that Junius wrote the *Batavia*, the Hollanders were not yet involved in trade in East Indies. The distant trade voyages Junius refers to should therefore rather be thought of as voyages to Norway, the Baltic Sea, Denmark, Brittany, Spain, and the African coast (see Junius, *Batavia* 198, 205–206, 222 and 278–279).

Roman *paupertas ac parsimonia* (as Livy called it⁴⁶), which perished due to the rich spoils of the Eastern campaigns.

6 The Point of Frugality: Scholars and Noblemen

In the previous sections, I argued that Junius was enhancing the traditional self-presentation of Holland as a simple and frugal community by drawing on a conservative Roman tradition preserved in genres such as historiography and satire. But what was the socio-economical context in which his emphasis on these literary motives made sense?

As has been noted in scholarly literature about the subject, Junius had been dependent on aristocratic patronage for much of his life, and his appointment as a historian of the States of Holland was largely due to the nobility, while some cities had opposed it.⁴⁷ In the years just around the beginning of the Dutch Revolt, when Junius wrote the *Batavia*, the position of the nobility in Holland was still strong. Noble families like those of Egmont, Wassenaer, and Brederode performed many important military and administrative functions in the county. Junius remarks that ‘God gave them the command over the ruler of power, and he assigned to them the helm of the community with lawful authority’.⁴⁸ It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Junius adopts a very positive attitude towards the nobility in *Batavia*.⁴⁹ My suggestion would be that his emphasis on frugality and his rejection of trade can also be understood from this perspective. According to Junius, the nobility of his time had become diluted by despicable persons, such as ‘handicraftsmen, rope-makers, and sons of merchants’.⁵⁰ Just like the crafts, apparently, trade was not a noble pursuit

46 Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, praefatio, 11.

47 Vermaseren, “Het ontstaan” 409–416; Waterbolk E.H., “Zeventiende-eeuwers in de Republiek over de grondslagen van het geschiedverhaal. Mondelinge of schriftelijke overlevering”, in *Verspreide opstellen* (Amsterdam: 1981) 189–204, especially 196–198.

48 Junius, *Batavia* 230: ‘quod his rerum clavum regendum Deus dederit, et Reipublicae gubernacula cum iusta potestate commiserit’. For the position of the nobility in sixteenth-century Holland, see Nierop H.F.K. van, *Van ridders tot regenten. De Hollandse adel in de zestiende en de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw* (Dieren: 1984).

49 See in particular Junius, *Batavia* 317–347. On p. 321 Junius makes it quite explicit himself: ‘nobilitatisque studiose faveo’. See also Junius, *Holland is een eiland* 10 n. 14 (‘Junius’ obsessie met de adel’), 210 n. 19, and 321 n. 53 (‘Junius als fanatiek bewonderaar van de adel’).

50 Junius, *Batavia* 317: ‘cerdones, schoenoplocos, restiones, mercatorum liberos’. See also p. 324, where Junius contemptuously refers to a tendency to treat noble titles as *emptitia merx* for *homines opulenti*. Obviously, this choice of words again betrays disdain for trade.

from Junius’ perspective. It is important to note that this is exactly the point of view taken by many contemporary noblemen, who thought that trade, crafts, and industry were incompatible with their social status⁵¹ – an aristocratic idea that we also already encountered in the works of the ancient and early modern writers like Cato the Elder and Melanchthon on which Junius may have drawn. True nobility, in this view, comprised something else, and it had nothing to do with wealth:

Neminem enim aliter opinaturum existimo, quam quod genuina nobilitas ea sit, quam vel virtus vitae socia exornet, vel mortis comes gloria cohonestarit. Neque vero torques, non armillae, non abaci argentea suppellectile graves, non pretiosa synthesis, non segmentatae et intercurstantibus maeandris laciniosae vestium orae, non in astragalis lunulae, non latifundiorum possessio, non ampla haereditas, non fumosae imagines, quibus atria fulgeant, non obsoleti clypeorum umbones, non denique opum apparatus et splendor nobilitatem secum adferunt [...].

For everyone will agree on this point: true nobility is always accompanied and graced by a virtuous life, or glorified by a heroic death. It is not a matter of necklaces, bracelets, cupboards full of silver, precious crockery, clothes with glittering hems and intricate, meandering patterns, moon-shaped ornaments on columns, the possession of estates, a large inheritance, the faded glory of ancient portraits in the atrium, ancient coats of arms; in brief, it is not a matter of a dazzling display of wealth. That does not confer nobility on anyone.⁵²

Instead, Junius presented the nobility in Holland as originally characterized by frugality and simplicity:

[...] quae cuncta non plebeiis sordibus, sed olim comparata fuere Nobilitati. Primum et antiquissimum aedificari coeptum ad annum 876 a primo Hollandiae Principe ligneum virginitati, mox a filio lapideum factum, viris destinatum fuit et quidem nobili loco genitis, quos generis clades et opprobrium excludere non poterat, Egmondæ vicini pagi

51 Van Nierop, *Van ridders tot regenten* 44, 51, 224. Junius, *Batavia* 320–323 discusses similar ideas (especially ideas that were widespread among the nobility of foreign countries), although he does offer some critique of these ideas.

52 Junius, *Batavia* 318.

nomine clarum et Praesulis infulati titulo. Ex quo maiorum nostrorum simplicitas discere licet; cuius, ut et pietatis ex professo amatores, in aedificando luxum profusis sumptibus non quaesiverunt, nec insanas illas substructiones e quadratis saxis⁵³ expetiverunt. Testantur id tot principum ibi sepulcorum singulae tessellae singulorum sepulchris inhumatorum impositae, indices atque testes memoriae [...].

[all these rich monasteries with large revenues] were founded, then, not for common people but for the nobility. The first and oldest, built in wood, was a nunnery for which the first count of Holland laid the foundation in the year 876. His son rebuilt it in stone and destined it for men from the nobility, who could not be rejected even if the status and reputation of their family had perished. This is the abbey that is famous under the name of the neighbouring village of Egmond and because the abbot holds the title of bishop. In the monastery, you can really see the simplicity of our forefathers (*maiorum nostrorum simplicitas*). They overtly loved piety and in their buildings they did not seek luxury by large expenditures and they did not like those absurd constructions of stone blocks. In Egmond, the simple tiles on the many individual resting places of the counts of Holland testify to this [Fig. 13.3]. That is the only indication and reminder of them.⁵⁴

It might be inferred that the simplicity of the nobility – which here refers to frugality rather than honesty – reinforces the legitimacy of their rule: the Hollanders are admirably parsimonious, and they will thrive under leaders who share this virtue. At first sight, this idea might seem to be contradicted by Junius' observation in my first quotation from the *Batavia* above that not long before his own time, the nobility had fallen prey to a 'passion for sumptuous dinners'. However, Junius also thought that the new generation of noblemen had rectified this mistake:

Sed ea vesania et profusio paulatim, Diis gratia, iam exolescit, postquam magnitudo famae exitio esse coepit, et exemplo docti ditiores, ad

53 A quote from Cicero, *Pro Milone* 53. Perhaps Junius' stance also reflects the old Roman rejection of architectural exuberance. See, for instance, Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* xxxvi, 7 (Marcus Licinius Crassus is mocked by Marcus Innus Brutus for having pillars of Hymettian marble in his house), or Livy, *Ab urbe condita* xxxiv, 4 (a speech by Cato referring to the simple terra cotta decorations of ancient Roman temples).

54 Junius, *Batavia* 343–344.

FIGURE 13.3

The abbey of Egmond. Woodcut, taken from: Cornelius Aurelius, *Die cronyke van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vrieslant* (Leiden, Jan Seversz.: 1517)

IMAGE © KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK, THE HAGUE

sapientiora animos convertere, et novi exorti homines ac Reipublicae clavo adhibiti, parsimoniam invexere, aut ad pecuniosam senectam (ubi egestas quovis flagitio deterior habetur) priorem animum adiungunt. Caeterum fieri potest, ut cum temporum vicibus, etiam morum vertantur: sicut res mundanae omnes velut orbe iactatae volvuntur.

But (the gods be thanked!) this mad extravagance has now gradually decreased, after the magnitude of the fame it conferred brought people to the brink of destruction. The rich learned from the example and became wiser. A new generation came to the helm of the state. They reintroduced parsimony, and think about saving for retirement as they used to do, as poverty is considered a disgrace at that age. Incidentally, it is possible that in the cycle of time, the *mores* also change; indeed, all the things of this world come by again and again, as if they were running on a wheel.⁵⁵

The most obvious reason why Junius portrays the contemporary nobility as thrifty persons fit to rule the parsimonious county of Holland, thus echoing their own self-presentation, is that he had enjoyed the patronage of this group in the recent past. Just like Tacitus credits Vespasian with the restoration of *parsimonia* – a passage Junius seems to be alluding to again here⁵⁶ – Junius

55 Junius, *Batavia* 224.

56 Cf. Tacitus, *Annales* III, 55: 'ut quem ad modum temporum vices ita morum vertantur'.

tries to please the ruling elite of Holland by ascribing a similar moral revival to them. Another reason could be that Junius hoped that the lustre of the nobility would also illuminate his own profession, humanist scholarship. This works as follows. In the *Batavia*, he explains that there exist three kinds of nobility. The first is based on descent, the second on memorable deeds. The third has to do with learning:

Tertii ordinis sunt, quos ex doctrina nobiles et claros appellat Cicero, qui praestanti eruditione et scientia imbutis animis in commune prosunt, aut liberalis artis ope atque adiumento inclarescunt.

In the third array stand those whom Cicero refers to as ‘noble and famous on the basis of their scholarly activity’. Because their minds are imbued with great erudition and knowledge, they are of benefit to the community or they become famous through one of the liberal arts.⁵⁷

With this thought in mind, one cannot help but notice that Junius’ scholarly elite are supposed to adhere to an aristocratic lifestyle of frugality and aversion to trade:

Venio ad ingenia, quae producit Hollandia non infelicia neque sterilia: quorum nonnulla, nisi luxu protererentur obruerenturque, ac velut in herba interirent, aut nisi e medio studiorum cursu retracta ad negotiationem et lucrosas artes, a Mercuriali saliva alienas, spem luderent atque abrumperent, poterant cum veteribus illis in dubiam certaminis aleam ire.

I come to the ingenious people. Holland certainly brings forth good and productive ones. Some of them could rival the famous ancient authors, if they were not controlled and overwhelmed by luxury and nipped in the bud, as it were, and if they were not lured from the study by commercial professions, which make them salivate with greed and which make them risk and ruin their future.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Junius, *Batavia* 320. Junius refers to Cicero, *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 1X, 23.

⁵⁸ Junius, *Batavia* 234. The expression *Mercurialis saliva* is drawn from Persius v, 112 (which seems to be the only text with a clearly Stoic character on which Junius is drawing in the passages I have discussed).

7 Conclusion

With this remark, I have come full circle. Junius appropriates conservative Roman ideas about the importance of frugality as a 'national' virtue and about rich spoils from the East as the cause of the Republic's decline, and transfers them to his own context, where the economic imperialism of Holland takes the place of Roman military expansionism as a driver of decadence. Ultimately, the embarrassment of riches described by Schama – and perhaps also the spirit of capitalism identified by Weber – comes from a clearly non-Calvinist perspective and seems to have found its inspiration in the Roman world view of men like Cato just as much as in the ideas of Erasmus. An approach to intellectual history that would stop with this observation, however, would be incomplete. After all, the most relevant question here is why Junius made his selection from these different intellectual sources the way he did. In this article, I have argued that the main unifying principle behind Junius' eclecticism is the aristocratic ideal of agrarian simplicity and disdain for commerce that was common among the contemporary nobility in Holland. Junius' work thus reproduces the values of his aristocratic patrons and legitimizes their dominant position on the eve of the Dutch Revolt, while it also attempts to let some of their dignity reflect on the world of scholars like himself by attributing to them an equally sober attitude, averse to mercantile gain.

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