Recent Dutch-Language Publications

Harry A. Poeze

KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

Poeze@kitlv.nl

Lodewijk Wagenaar (ed.), *Aan de overkant. Ontmoetingen in dienst van de VOC en WIC (1600–1800)*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015, 353 pp. ISBN 9789088903175 (paperback), 9789088903205 (hardback). Price: EUR 29.95 (paperback), EUR 59.95 (hardback).

Lodewijk Wagenaar (1945), the retired curator of the Amsterdam Museum and a specialist in VOC history, took the initiative to ask friends and colleagues to contribute articles to a collective volume *Aan de overkant*, with a focus on the meeting between the European intruders and the indigenous societies in Asia and America. The main question is how did they perceive each other? The result are sixteen well-researched contributions, of which three concern themselves with the West Indies, and one with bibliographic questions concerning, in particular, older printed editions of sources. The other twelve, by a fine selection of experts, all Dutch, cover a wide range of countries and regions. They are grouped in four clusters: Japan, China and Formosa; Indonesia; Ceylon; Persia and India. They differ widely as to periods covered and in focus, from a detailed study of the exchange of state portraits in 1602 in Ceylon (Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer) to more comprehensive accounts of the Dutch rule of Formosa (Leonard Blussé) and the vicissitudes of the almost 150 years of VOC presence in Persia (Martine Gosselink). Visits of the Shogun court in Edo are the subject of Cynthia Viallé's article. Roelof van Gelder analyzes the notes of a physician on board of a VOC ship, while Tristan Mostert in detail reports about the Makassar ruler Pattingalloang and his eagerness to learn, which led to him ordering an enormous globe in Amsterdam. Menno Witteveen concentrates on the biography of Maria van Aelst, wife of Antonio van Diemen. Wagenaar himself and Alicia Schrikker write on tensions and conflict on Ceylon between Dutch officials and the rulers of the island, as Guido van Meersbergen does on strained relations with the Moghul court in India. Carolien Stolte delves deep to record the important but suppressed role of indigenous middlemen in India. Arend de Roever analyzes a case of great-scale corruption by Jacob

Mossel in 1747—in 1750 Governor-General. In his case the clichés on the pernicious VOC officials might need revision. In all, this collection comes close to a *liber amicorum*, in which quality and focus are high and consistent, and with which the editor may be content. An index would have added to its worthiness.

Bauke van der Pol, *Holland aan de Ganges. Prins Willem Frederik Hendrik in India (1837–1838)*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2016, 174 pp. ISBN 9789462490925. Price: EUR 19.95 (paperback).

Prince Hendrik (1820–1879), was the youngest son of King Willem II (r. 1840–1849) and brother of King Willem III (r. 1849–1890). He had a lively interest in maritime matters, which earned him the epithet ‘Hendrik the Seafarer’. In October 1836 he left the Netherlands for an extended tour in the Netherlands Indies, with two ships with a crew of 340 navy men. He was the first member of the House of Orange to visit the colony, and was to remain the only one to do so. On the return journey a courtesy call was planned to the Governor General of British India in Calcutta. But when the Prince arrived in November 1837 the Governor General had embarked on a tour of the northern part of his territory. Hendrik decided to visit the Governor’s train. With a few men of his staff he travelled thousands of kilometers to meet to exchange complimentary phrases. He was received with all the prescribed pomp and circumstance, and immersed in exuberant luxury. Only in February 1838 Hendrik left to return home in July 1838, after a trip of 22 months.

Hendrik related his experiences in letters to his parents, and six more reports by his staff and ship officers allow a detailed insight in the daily whereabouts of the Prince. India expert Bauke van der Pol (1952) who wrote extensively on Dutch-India relations has used these and other sources to present a fine account of this official visit, and the protocol surrounding it. As a prelude he describes the VOC presence in the Ganges delta, which lasted till 1825 with the Chinsurah settlement. The book is profusely illustrated with lots of rare illustrations, as well as photographs made by the author to allow a comparison with old drawings to show what is left of the colonial splendor. Thus this book has become an exemplary publication on a forgotten event.

Anton Stolwijk, *Atjeh. Het verhaal van de bloedigste strijd uit de Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2016, 327 pp. ISBN 9789035143760. Price: EUR 19.95 (hardcover).

Of the many conflicts the Dutch colonial army fought to establish its sovereignty in the Archipelago, the Aceh War was by far the bloodiest and longest. At first, in 1873, it looked like a predictable and swift Dutch victory, but that was not to be. Only in 1903 was Aceh proclaimed 'pacified', but until 1942 resistance regularly flared up. And in 1942, even before the Japanese occupied Aceh, the Dutch colonial apparatus and its employees were violently dislodged by the Acehnese themselves. The guerrilla war claimed a hundred thousand victims, among them many women and children. Dutch atrocities were answered by militant Acehnese resistance, inspired by Islam. The war and its excesses were a regular and hot subject of public debate in the Netherlands and the Indies, but with no consequences. On the contrary, Army leader General J.B. van Heutsz became a war hero, and his advisor C. Snouck Hurgronje embarked on a shining scholarly career. Contemporary publications on the Aceh War run into the hundreds, but recent studies are scarce. Paul van 't Veer's *De Atjeh-oorlog* (1969) is still the standard reference work. Anton Stolwijk, the author of this book, does not intend to challenge Van 't Veer's status. Between 2009 and 2015 he stayed for one and a half year in Aceh. On this basis and published sources he combines his own experiences with a chronological account of the main events. He includes traditional memories and looks for historical buildings and remains such as tomb-stones. He interviews local and regional students of history, as well as descendants of Acehnese fighters. Taken together an instructive picture of Aceh today emerges. Unfortunately, not much is left from the past: war, revolution, civil war, and the 2004 Tsunami destroyed a lot. Stolwijk attractively combines historical Aceh with the Aceh of today. Together with his eye for the salient detail in past and present it makes his *Atjeh* suitable for a wider audience.

Cees van der Laan, *Moesje Alt. 50 jaar zendeling in Nederlands-Indië*. Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2016, 280 pp. ISBN 9789051945300. Price: EUR 24.95 (paperback).

The history of Protestantism in the Netherlands Indies has been recorded in numerous publications, popular and scholarly, over many decades and continues today. One branch of Protestantism, however, has been purposely neglected because it was considered harmful to the development and growth of the religion. The scant attention it did receive was almost entirely negative. Thus

Pentecostal activities remained underreported. This may have been justified at the beginning of the twentieth century when single pioneers struggled to build up a church according to their own interpretations, but later Pentecostal organizations grew steadily, with the biggest concentration now forming the Gereja Sidang-sidang Jemaat Allah (Assemblies of God) across 2,200 parishes with almost 200,000 members. Thus, its history is ongoing, and insight into its current growth may be found in the first decades of the last century in colonial Indonesia, particularly regarding the establishment of the particular articles of faith. Among the first missionaries of the Pentecostal church was the remarkable Margot Alt (1883–1962), commonly called ‘Moesje’ (Mother).

In her background were no specific indications that she was to become a tireless advocate for the Pentecostals. She went to the Indies as a nanny and changed to become a nurse, and experienced her conversion in 1908, which changed the course of her life. She embarked on a path of service to God in the Seventh Day Baptists denomination. Hers was a life of dedication in unshakable trust in God. She was plagued by a lifelong malaria, a continuous lack of funds in the first decades, opposition from the mainstream Protestants and—not unusual on the fringes of the Protestant faith—internal conflicts, which were sometimes based on the difficulty of recognizing Alt (a rare women missionary) as equal to the male missionaries. Alt started as head of a remote colony of orphans and handicapped children in Java, where she faced years of poverty and attracted few followers. In the early twenties she shifted to the Pinkstergemeente in Nederlandsch-Indië (Pentecostal Community in the Netherlands Indies, PGNI). It was a radical change: she spoke in tongues, practiced faith healing, and the laying on of hands, and took no medicines. Alt was involved in the duties of the central organization. She travelled widely and edited the magazine ‘Gouden Schooven’ (Golden Sheafs) for 32 years. Internal disagreements caused another split in 1935. Alt now left to found the Pinksterzending (Pentecostal Mission), which later merged with the Assemblies of God. Progress came to a halt with the Japanese onslaught. Alt was interned by the Japanese, and then for another year by the Republican Indonesians in 1945. Only in 1946 did she resume work in Surabaya. For Dutch nationals, life in the Republic of Indonesia became difficult. Alt received a vision in which God called her to go to New Guinea to spread her creed. She did, and worked for ten years in Manokwari, before repatriating to the Netherlands—after 58 years—in 1961. She died in 1962. Alt published memoirs, edited magazines and song books, and wrote a 500-page guide to Bible studies. She certainly deserves a biography, and Cees van der Laan was undoubtedly the best choice to write one. As a former Professor in Pentecostalism he possesses the necessary knowledge and understanding to explain the decisive role of religious

phenomena that are not commonly understood or accepted. For Van der Laan these are all part and parcel of his biography, but a bit more explanation for the layman would have been helpful. Nevertheless, he has done pioneer's work with this book, which also constitutes a history of the Pentecostal movement in the Indies. Archival research, publications consulted, interviews, bibliographic research are all carefully documented in almost 700 notes. Many illustrations add to the value of this book.

Han Gieske, *Met liefde vertrekken. Vrouwen uit Nederlands-Indië naar Japan (1946) en Japans Indische kinderen*. Zoetermeer: Free Musketeers, 2016, 214 pp. ISBN 9789048439355. Price: EUR 17.95 (paperback).

The Japanese assault on Indonesia in 1942, the ensuing occupation of more than three years, and in its wake the decolonization war between the Republic of Indonesia and the Dutch had immense effects on the Indonesian population, the Dutch settlers, who were interned or shipped to perform forced labour, and the Indo-Europeans, of which the women and children led a precarious existence outside the camps, mistrusted by Indonesians and Japanese alike. As was to happen in the period 1945–49 between Dutch soldiers and Indonesian women, it did not exclude sexual relations between Indo-European women and Japanese military and civilians. It also resulted in children being born. Japanese rules forbade marriages of its subjects, but this changed after Japan's surrender in August 1945. British occupation forces facilitated such marriages, with active support of Japanese and Dutch Catholic clergy. When the husbands were repatriated, 120 wives, and their children followed them. The social gap and the miserable material conditions made most of the women soon opt for a return to Indonesia and ultimately the Netherlands. In this respect the Dutch Military Mission in Japan played a pivotal and dubious role. It considered the women to have lost their Dutch nationality, but a Dutch Royal Decree of May 1943 exempted them from this measure. The author, Han Gieske, found out why this Decree was promulgated: it was to counter a possible Japanese ploy to naturalize, for instance, prominent Indonesians. Gieske, himself a lawyer, and married to a Japan Indies woman, delves deep to write this forgotten story, on the basis of archival material and reminiscences of people involved. He did not find clear evidence of the number of such children, but his guess is around 800. In the Netherlands, at first, mothers and children—understandably—kept a low profile. It was only in 1983 that a liaison committee was formed, and that developed into an association, Japan Indische Nakomelingen (JIN) in 1991. Its goal was to break the silence, and find accep-

tance as they were. An important part of the activities was the search in Japan for the fathers—with some but not great success. Important were the journeys to Japan, supported by the Japanese government, to acquaint the Japan Indies men and women with the Japanese part of their identity. The story of JIN is told in detail. A chapter on the Bersiap violence and two personal histories complete this laudable book, which documents another postcolonial piece of history.

Maarten Hidskes, *Thuis geloof niemand mij. Zuid-Celebes 1946–1947*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Contact, 2016, 207 + 16 pp. ISBN 9789045032436. Price: EUR 18.99 (paperback).

Among the personal documents on the Dutch military actions that try to come to grips with the Indonesian decolonization, Maarten Hidskes' *Thuis geloof niemand mij* is remarkable. It is a historically wrenching tale made even more powerful by the father-son subtext of the story. The author's father, Piet Hidskes (1922–1992), volunteered for service in Indonesia. While there he asked to be transferred to the Depot Speciale Troepen (DST), commanded by Captain Raymond Westerling, who enjoyed a reputation as a fearless, merciless, and successful counter guerrilla fighter. His elite troops were considered the last resort to restore order in South Celebes, where anarchy reigned. The Dutch, as well as the Indonesian regular army, failed to take control. For twelve weeks, from December 1946 on, Westerling and his deputy J.B. Vermeulen purposely applied terror, public executions on a grand scale, and the burning of villages. The death toll may have been about three thousand. At first the immediate results of Westerling were applauded. Doubts about the legitimacy of these actions were suppressed. It took a number of months before the highest employees of the Justice Department, with Attorney General H.W. Felderhof in the forefront, took action. Their judgement was devastating, also about the civil and military authorities who had given Westerling free rein. There was no summary justice rule or other justification in law for his actions—it was brutal murder. Later enquiry commissions only confirmed this—and their reports were stamped highly confidential.

Maarten Hidskes (1967) in his younger years knew that his father had been in the Indies, but about his DST service he had been evasive, and Maarten did not ask him about it. Only after his father's death did Maarten start his quest to uncover the extent of his father's involvement. In this book he reconstructs, on the basis of a wide range of sources, including interviews with his father's comrades, what happened in these ominous twelve weeks in South Celebes,

and the exact role of his father. His research is impressive and has after almost 25 years resulted in this book. In itself it is a worthy addition to the literature on the South Celebes massacres. The personal and sometimes desperate involvement of the son, who loves his father whatever he did, adds something special.