Recent Dutch-Language Publications

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Ton van der Lee, *Jan Huygen. Het gedroomde leven van de grondlegger van de VOC*. Amsterdam: Balans, 2016, 287 pp. ISBN 9789460031328. Price: EUR 19.99 (paperback).

Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1563–1611) came from a family engaged in trade activities based in Enkhuizen. In 1579, at a young age he went to Sevilla. He soon moved to Portugal and entered service with the archbishop posted for Goa, the center of Portuguese/Spanish power in the Indies. In 1583 he started his successful career as a clerk. His work also allowed him to copy the maps the Portuguese used to navigate the seas from Portugal to China, and he made drawings of the exotic East. Jan Huygen returned home in 1592 and smuggled with him the precious secret maps. The data were included in the newest atlases and maps, issued by publisher Lucas Waghenaer, and his drawings were collected in *Itinerario* (1596), an immensely popular publication, translated in almost all West-European languages. Jan Huygen was involved in two expeditions (1594, 1595) to find the route to China along the North. But twice, with Jan Huygen on board, the frozen sea prevented a successful journey, and with nothing achieved and at a great financial loss the ships returned. In the meantime another expedition under Cornelis de Houtman had left for the Indies, which turned out to be successful, thanks also to Jan Huygen's directions. Journalist and film director Ton van der Lee has made Jan Huygen the subject of his biographical novel, termed today literary nonfiction. He based himself on Jan Huygen's writings and on scholarly accounts (ten are listed). He has allowed himself 'within the framework of historical facts a certain degree of fiction to enliven the narrative'. In this way, the story is told by Jan Huygen himself as an older man, sadder, wiser, and bitter about his lack of recognition. This is probably an exaggeration. The accounts of Jan Huygen's amorous exploits enliven the story. As such this book makes pleasant reading and brings once again Jan Huygen's essential role in Dutch Asian expansion to the fore, albeit with a pretentious title.

Jan de Hond and Menno Fitski, *De smalle brug. Japan en Nederland sinds 1600*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2016, 216 pp. ISBN 97894600422638. Price: EUR 24.50 (hardback).

Jan de Hond and Menno Fitski, *A narrow bridge. Japan and the Netherlands from 1600*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2016, 216 pp. ISBN 9789460042805. Price: EUR 24.50 (hardback).

Lodewijk Wagenaar, *Kaneel & olifanten. Sri Lanka en Nederland sinds 1600*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2016, 224 pp. ISBN 9789460042737. Price: EUR 24.50 (hardback).

Lodewijk Wagenaar, *Cinnamon & elephants. Sri Lanka and the Netherlands from 1600*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2016, 224 pp. ISBN 9789460042836. Price: EUR 24.50 (hardback).

These two volumes, in Dutch and English translations, are part of the Rijksmuseum Country Series published by the Museum's History Department. Each book in the series uses objects in the Rijksmuseum collection to explore the shared history of the Netherlands and Indonesia, China, Ghana (all three already published), Japan, Sri Lanka, India, South Africa, and Suriname/Brazil. As is to be expected, the volumes are lavishly furnished with illustrations, filling about half of the pages. Text, however, is not a minor or secondary part of the narrative. The Japan volume is a solid overview of the history of Dutch-Japanese relations, drawing from a wide array of sources. It all started in 1600 with the Dutch ship 'De Liefde' stranded in Japan after a fateful journey. The Portuguese already had a firm footing in Japan and did their very best to oust their Dutch opponents, but to no avail, as their proselytization angered the authorities, who in 1639 decided to ban all foreigners from their country and to withdraw in isolation. Only the compliant Dutch were allowed to stay, restricted to the small peninsula of Deshima in the Nagasaki Bay. Here they stayed from 1641 till 1860, with a regular journey to the Shogun, the ruler of the country, to pay tribute. Thus, the Dutch were among the few who could offer glimpses of Japan, and for Japan Deshima was the window to Western knowledge. The authors, both affiliated with the Rijksmuseum, discuss the general history, the fate of Japanese settlers in the Indies, and give a tour of Deshima: its buildings, its customs, its way of life, and the often difficult Dutch-Japanese interaction. The *raison d'être* of Deshima was trade, also in luxury goods like lacquer ware, porcelain (at that time both were beyond the skill of European craftsmen), silk, and prints. On another level was the exchange of knowledge,

with Deshima residents like Engelbert Kaempfer, Isaac Titsingh, and Balthasar von Siebold relating their experiences. After more than 200 years of isolation, Western imperialism forced Japan to enter the world. In 1853 the US Admiral Perry set this process in motion that was definitely concluded in 1863 when Western war ships, including two from the Netherlands, gave Japanese isolationism the definitive blow in the battle of Shimonoseki. The exclusive role of the Dutch ended here. Japan became a strong power and was acknowledged as such from the early 1900s, when Korea was annexed, and Japan beat Russia in battle. Japanese-Dutch relations slowly concentrated on the East Indies, resulting in the Japanese occupation of the Indies, with a decades-long aftermath that influenced thousands of Dutchmen who were interned and lost their properties during the war and the ensuing decolonization of Indonesia. The book succeeds well in combining history with information from the museum objects.

The Sri Lanka (or Ceylon) volume is taken care of by Lodewijk Wagenaar (1945), former curator of the Amsterdam Museum and an expert on the Dutch presence in Ceylon. The island was exceptional as it was for the most part ruled directly by the VOC from 1638 until 1796, with centers in Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna. Thus half a million Tamils and Singhalese, Hindu and Buddhist alike, became VOC subjects. Apart from the VOC, the Kingdom of Kandy tried to maintain its independence, and their relations were always strained, with regular outbreaks of violence. Moreover, there were Western competitors, first the Portuguese, and later the French and British. Many forts, warehouses, and churches attested to these military, political, economic, and religious aspects. A number of these buildings have survived until today. This heritage is still alive, as contemporary photographs in the volume demonstrate. The main reason for the VOC settlement was cinnamon, which in 'peaceful years' was exported in bulk and yielded high profits. The process to obtain cinnamon involved teams of peelers, who often had an uneasy relation with the VOC. Compared to cinnamon, other produce was unimportant, and the furniture exported was no match for that originating from Japan. The export of elephants was spectacular; caught on Ceylon, this was documented in a number of prints. The Rijksmuseum holds an impressive number of prints, and Cornelis Steiger and Jan Brandes are notable artists. When the Dutch were forced to hand over the island to the British in 1796, knowledge of the Dutch presence was almost forgotten. This book will serve to revive interest in a fascinating and neglected period, with a fine balance of text and illustrations.

Cor Passchier, *Bouwen in Indonesië 1600–1960*. Volendam: LM Publishers, 2016, 248 pp. ISBN 9789460224249. Price: EUR 39.50 (hardback).

Cor Passchier, *Building in Indonesia 1600–1960*. Volendam: LM Publishers, 2016, 248 pp. ISBN 9789460223839. Price: EUR 39.50 (hardback).

For decades architect, researcher, and writer Cor Passchier (1945) has been an indefatigable champion of documentation and preservation of the architectural heritage of Indonesia—overwhelmingly the heritage built in colonial times by the colonial masters. The present book is the result of his endeavours, research and expertise in the field. One only wonders, were indigenous building activities not worth mentioning?

Much has been lost as a result of negligence and as a consequence of the war situation of the 1940s. Only slowly has historical sense progressed, and is now a factor to be taken into account. Thus success has occurred, but the organized proponents of preservation still have a long way to go. In *Bouwen in Indonesië 1600–1960* (published simultaneously in English), Passchier provides an overview of the history of building and the development of infrastructure in Indonesia. It starts with the VOC fortresses, scattered over the archipelago, and the luxurious mansions erected in the Batavian outskirts during the seventeenth century. In the next century, the colonial rulers developed prestigious and impressive colonial buildings. Passchier does not confine himself to these, but sketches the background and has an eye for the less spectacular but functional construction of roads, railways, bridges, and factories. These, along with local power balances, geography, and military considerations combined to shape the layout of cities and the urban landscape. Passchier illustrates this by summarizing the developments and the very diverse outcomes in five cities: Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Makassar, and Medan. He also looks at local policies to improve living conditions to prevent the outbreak of epidemics, which were called *kampung* improvement programs. Affordable housing programs for Indonesians were also attempted, but with limited results. But building neighborhoods for the middle class, the great majority of which was Dutch, yielded results. Passchier discusses a number of prominent architects, such as Piet Moojen, Eduard Cuypers, C.P. Wolff Schoemaker, H. Maclaine Pont, and H. Thomas Karsten, with examples of their designs and the discussions among them, which show a degree of inclusion of indigenous elements as a hot topic. The Japanese occupation halted all building, and only slowly, in the fifties, did building resume, but this time using designs by Indonesian architects. The book is profusely illustrated, with almost every picture of the past accompanied by the situation nowadays, with occasional hair-

raising results. Such a state of the art book inevitably suffers from an enumerative character. Apart from the praise, I must note that it was not altogether clear what determined the page or chapter where a particular building, architect, or development was discussed. The information on the architects could have been more systematic. And for such a book an index is indispensable.

Henk Bussemaker and Janet van Klink, *De tegenaanval. Anton Bussemaker 1900–1941 Onderzeebootcommandant*. Zutphen: WalburgPers, 2016, 255 pp. ISBN 9789462491526. Price: EURO 19.95 (paperback).

Anton Bussemaker (1900–1941), who was commander of the Dutch submarine O 16, sank four Japanese transport ships in a cunning action on December 11, 1941, during the first week of the Dutch-Japanese War. Four days later he lost his vessel due to a mine. Of the crew of 42, only one man survived. Posthumously, Bussemaker was awarded the highest Dutch military decoration, the Militaire Willems Orde. But his reputation was not without controversy. To this discussion his son Henk Bussemaker (1928) and his niece Janet van Klink (1985) now add the ‘real’ biography of Anton Bussemaker.

The son of a head teacher, in 1915 Anton entered navy service and was educated for seven years to become an officer. He had a special interest in submarines and actively engaged in developing technical improvements and tactical plans for the deployment of submarines, next to and in cooperation with ships and planes. Navy officers alternated between the Netherlands and the Indies in four-year shifts, and Anton was no exception. Thus, he spent the years 1922–1925, 1930–1934, and 1939–1941 in the Indies as a lieutenant-commander. In The Hague he was an outspoken advisor to the Navy Department and he published in professional journals. In the Indies, he soon became flotilla commander of all the submarines. The choices made by the Navy leaders as to tactics in the coming war were not Anton's. Especially targeted were the Navy leaders C.E.L. Helfrich and J.Th. Furstner. This is even more strongly supported by the authors who give short shrift to these ‘incompetent’ officers, who also made the wrong decision to send Karel Doorman on a hopeless mission, which resulted in the lost battle of the Java Sea. The submarines were not given specific and specialized tasks and without much ado transferred to follow British orders. Bussemaker's legacy was impaired by the accusation of negligence, as according to a number of sources and writing, he ran into a British mine. The authors are convincingly able to refute this claim, on the basis of new reports and the localization of the O 16 wreck in 1995. Thus, they rehabilitate Anton

in a well-researched monograph, wherein the sympathy of course lies with Anton Bussemaker. However, their sharp criticism of Navy policies and leadership may also give rise to a continuation of the discussion.

Marnix van Aerssen, *Driemaal Oost. François van Aerssen Beijeren van Voshol (1883–1968) marineofficier, koopman en diplomaat*. Rotterdam: Karwansaray, 2016, 506 + 24 pp. ISBN 9789490258139. Price: EUR 29.95 (paperback).

François baron van Aerssen Beijeren van Voshol was born in a well-to-do family with aristocratic roots and a tradition of military service in the Netherlands as well as in the Indies. At an early age he chose a navy career and in 1898 enlisted as a naval cadet. After four years of education he served on ships in the Netherlands, the West Indies, and the East Indies. He was involved in military action on Sulawesi and Bali. He distinguished himself in South Sulawesi in 1906 by brave and decisive action that resulted in the conquering of an impregnable fortress. It earned him the highest military decoration of the Netherlands: de Militaire Willems Orde. In 1912 he made a career change. He was offered the job of manager of the Zeehaven en Kolenstation Sabang, responsible for the harbor and the coal provision of ships that in rising numbers frequented Sabang, at the northern tip of Sumatra, their first or last Indies port of call. Sabang prospered and Van Aerssen enjoyed his private business job, with considerable governmental interference.

In 1928 Van Aerssen made another switch, probably profiting from the elite network he was part of. He entered the diplomatic service and became consul general in Hamburg. After the take-over by the Nazis he remained aloof from them, as far as his diplomatic neutrality allowed him. He helped Jews to leave Germany. In 1939 the German government indicated that he would be declared a persona non grata. Van Aerssen was recalled and sent to the vacant envoy position in Teheran, only weeks before Germany invaded the Netherlands. Iran was in a pivotal position, and Britain, Russia, and Germany intrigued and conspired to gain a foothold. Van Aerssen stayed there only for two years, when he was considered to be the most suitable person to fill in the new envoy position in Australia. At that time Australia and the Netherlands were allies in the war against Japan, and all kinds of arrangements had to be made concerning the resistance against Japan in the Indies. But by the time he arrived in Australia circumstances were completely different, once the Indies government had capitulated. His first concern was now to facilitate the smooth functioning of the thousands of Dutch who had managed to escape from the Indies before the Japanese closed all borders. All kinds of organizations were

instituted and a framework constructed within which these could function. There was slow evolution from an Indies Commission to an Indies government in exile, with H.J. van Mook in charge. There was a lot of internal dissent, and relations between Dutch exiles and Australian officials were strained at times. Van Aerssen's role was that of a mediator, and as such he was appreciated by all parties involved.

The Japanese surrender in August 1945 again fundamentally changed Van Aerssen's position. He now became the spokesman of the Dutch government and the East Indies administration. His task was not an easy one. The Australian government was in the hands of the Labour Party, which at the time had anti-colonial and anti-Dutch sentiment. Minister of Foreign Affairs H.V. Evatt was a proponent of an Australian trusteeship of Eastern Indonesia. Prime Minister J.B. Chifley more than once showed his indifference to Dutch requests. This applied in particular to his unwillingness to use his influence to lift the boycott of Dutch ships by the powerful, communist-influenced trade unions. It seriously hampered the reestablishment of Dutch rule in Indonesia, as well as the humanitarian aid to destitute Indonesia. Van Aerssen's main task was to apply incessant pressure on the government to take measures to lift or soften the boycott against a wartime ally. It was all in vain, and Van Aerssen met with official rebuffs that transgressed the usual polished manners of diplomatic relations. Van Aerssen was not involved in a meaningful measure with the decolonization. He supported Van Mook's policies, but was not outspoken, as befitting a diplomat. In 1947 he was relieved of his post to become ambassador in China, with his seat in Nanking. China was torn by the Civil War between the Nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek and the Communists of Mao Tse-tung. Chiang's army was retreating and did not put up much of a resistance. In April 1949 the inevitable happened. Nanking was occupied by Communist troops. The diplomatic representations had chosen to stay and were not harmed, but forced to inactivity. Evacuation ensued. Van Aerssen, who had consistently pleaded for recognition of the new government, retired upon return in The Hague. His career took a new turn when he was appointed to the prestigious Raad van State, the highest advisory body of the Dutch state. He was a member from 1951 till 1958.

Van Aerssen certainly followed a remarkable career in which the Indies/Indonesia played a decisive role. A biography is well-deserved. His youngest son Marnix (born 1937), himself a retired diplomat, took up this challenge—certainly a hazardous task. At first the book was meant to be a family chronicle, in limited circulation, but it developed into a book for a more extensive audience. This explains the extensive information on the family life, in particular the inclusion of childhood reminiscences of Marnix. The author, to avoid the

obvious pitfalls, asked a number of experts to comment and based his text on solid search in archives and published material. He sketches a sympathetic portrait of his father. In the Indonesian decolonization drama according to the sources and monographs published, he was not of major influence, and this is confirmed in this biography. A question that is not addressed is the magnitude of Van Aerssens's aristocratic background and the influence this may have had on his career.

'Een beladen geschiedenis. De dekolonisatieoorlog in Indonesië, 1945–1949', special issue of *Leidschrift* 31–3 (October 2016), 160 pp. Price: EUR 9.00 (to order via redactie@leidschrift.nl) (paperback).

This special issue of *Leidschrift* is based on the work of KITLV researchers and trainees, active since 2012 in the KITLV Project 'Dutch military action in Indonesia 1945–1950'. One outcome of the Project was the book of Gert Oostindie, analyzing hundreds of personal documents by Dutch soldiers, and documenting an astounding number of war crimes. The articles in *Leidschrift* were first read at a Seminar in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague on December 3, 2015, and give an impression of the results of the painstaking archival search for relevant information on the Dutch military exploits.

Bart Luttikhuis reviews the Project in his article 'Oorlog in de archieven' (War in the archives) and supplies background and explanation. Christiaan Harinck looks at the Dutch imagery of the Indonesian opponent, with the help of concepts like imagology, ethnotypes, and Orientalism, adding many convincing examples of the prejudiced and stereotyped image of the guerrilla enemy. Three trainees (Lotte Akkerman, Kimberley Bootsma and Bente de Leede) looked for evidence of war crimes noted in personal documents in the archival holdings—out of 214, 52 resulted in a match. On the basis of these findings they draw tentative conclusions on the reliability of the sources consulted. Maarten Manse, another trainee, has studied the shady world of 'trade' (for the Indonesian Republic) or 'smuggling' (for the Dutch) in such goods as weapons and opium. Singapore and the Philippines were centers of these extensive underground transactions, in which a number of Anglo-Saxons were involved, as traders or pilots of planes. Manse reconstructs one particular case, the Airabu Affair of 1948, which resulted in the arrest of five Americans and British, who were tried in 1949, given substantial sentences and pardoned before the end of the year. Tom van den Berge transgresses the boundaries of the project by making Indonesian violence in West Java the subject of his article. Violence against Europeans and Chinese—part of the

bersiap—overflow towards the Indonesians, who were killed on the flimsiest of accusations. Indonesian officials who in some way had worked with the Dutch were obvious targets. Unlike the *bersiap*, the terror directed at compatriots continued unabated till 1949. Estimates of the number of victims range from 25,000 to 100,000. A last article by Kevin W. Fogg, not affiliated with KITLV, pleads for research about the role of Islam—its leaders and organizations—during the revolution, which has been neglected, and will serve as a bridge to more understanding between the well-researched colonial era and the era of Sukarno's presidency. Two other articles are referred to below in the review of Fasseur's *Dubbelspoor*.

Dinah Marijanan, *Njonja*. No place: Marijanan, 2016, 105 pp. ISBN 9789492185259. Price: EUR 10.00 (paperback) (to order via www.facebook.com/DagboekNjonja or www.pro-book.nl/boekwinkel).

A legacy of the bloody decolonization of Indonesia was the separatist movement on the South Moluccas, which resulted in the proclamation of an independent Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) on Ambon in April 1950. Indonesia regained control of Ambon, with RMS troops and civilians retreating to Seram, which as vast and inhospitable terrain, was ideal for a sustained guerrilla war. Among the authorities who went to Seram was RMS President Chris Soumokil (1905–1966). In April 1951 Soumokil proposed to Josina Taniwel (1934), a much younger teacher's daughter on Seram. She followed him in his hopeless flight to escape from the Indonesian troops, who came ever closer. Only after 13 years, in December 1963, were Soumokil, his wife, and young son apprehended. Soumokil was tried in April 1964 and given the death sentence. He was executed in April 1966. Soon thereafter his widow and son moved to the Netherlands. Since then, with the respectful title *Njonja*, she has been influential in the Moluccan community in the Netherlands. Between 1951 and 1966 *Njonja* Soumokil irregularly made notes of her personal experiences during the guerrilla in Seram, which included a moving account of the trial and execution of her husband. These notes have been adapted to become a diary, without, however, the editor explaining what these adaptations entail. It is a pity this editor did not add background and explanation. Thus the book will be widely read by Moluccans, but will fail to attract a wider audience.

Jaap Duppen, *Waarom ik niet weigerde. Een verhaal over de Tweede Wereldoorlog die voor vele Nederlandse jongens 10 jaar duurde*. No place: Calbona, 2016, 235 pp. ISBN 9789082570397. Price: EUR 19.95 (paperback) (to order via www.calbona.nl).

The number of books in which Dutch veterans relate their experiences during the decolonization war between the Dutch and the Republic of Indonesia runs into the hundreds. They differ widely, but all have their unique personal story to tell. Among these, the memories of Jaap Duppen (born 1928) have a special place as he was inspired by his communist conviction. He was raised in an Amsterdam communist family, and after 1945 became an active member of the communist youth organization. He was drafted in 1948 and sent to Indonesia as a soldier of the Garde Regiment Jagers. He was deployed in East Java, fighting a bitter guerrilla war with the Indonesian adversary. After the cease fire of August 1949 and the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, Duppen had to wait until July 1950 to return to Amsterdam. Duppen did his best to influence his comrades in a critical sense, with limited success. He relates his own experiences with war crimes, corruption, racism, and misconduct of the leadership. Only in 1995 did Duppen record his memories. To his own story he added a considerable number of reports, mainly from the communist press, about unlawful violence. He thus provides insight into the way the communists decided on the attitude communist conscripts had to take towards service in Indonesia. Joop Morriën in his *Indonesië liet me nooit meer los* (1995) is another rare title dealing with the communist stance. Duppen's story thus is a worthy addition, notwithstanding its editorial shortcomings. Moreover, it is a timely publication in the present discussion of Dutch violence triggered by Rémy Limpach's study.

Cees Fasseur, *Dubbelspoor. Herinneringen*. Amsterdam: Balans, 2016, 368 + 16 pp. ISBN 9789460031175. Price: EUR 19.95 (paperback).

Cees Fasseur unexpectedly died on March 13, 2016. The month before he had finished his manuscript 'Dubbelspoor', the memoirs about his public life that alternated between law and history, between a high position in the Law Ministry and a professorship in Indonesian History at Leiden University. Fasseur's roots were in Leiden, but he was born in Balikpapan in 1938 where his father worked with the Dutch oil company BPM. He was interned with his mother and sister in a Japanese camp in Semarang. His family survived without too many after-effects. Although evading psychological explanations to character-

ize his own mind set, as well as that of the protagonists in his writings, he offers the readership of *Dubbelspoor* some clues about the possible influence of his internment: fear of abandonment, a strong sense of adaptability, a will to survive, a selective memory. He includes these traits with question marks, thus adding to his narrative's credibility.

In 1951 Cees Fasseur returned to Leiden for good. In 1957 he matriculated in the law faculty as well as the history department of Leiden University, the beginning of his double track. His description of student life then shows the deep changes between the elite institution of these years and the popular higher education factory of today. In 1965 he became an official with Law Ministry, the start of a successful career which involved him in the preparation of legislation in a wide field. In the meantime he worked on a Ph.D. about the nineteenth-century Cultivation System run by the Dutch colonial government in the Netherlands Indies.

In 1969 his double historical and judicial interests combined in an assignment to collect sources on possible excessive Dutch military violence during the Dutch-Indonesian conflict of 1945–1949. In a few months he collected an impressive, but far from exhaustive amount of cases, which were collected in the so-called Excessennota. There had been internal debate on the use of the word 'excesses' instead of 'war crimes', but the cabinet decided for the more moderate description. Debate on the terminology since then flared up regularly, with the choice of terminology also representing deeper contradictions. Until his last months, Fasseur was attacked for his supposed choice to minimize Dutch outrages. It was for the most part unjustified, but Fasseur added fuel to the fire by provoking his opponents, a habit he often was not able to suppress, as many instances in this book attest. In a 2014 interview by four KITLV researchers on Dutch war crimes, the Excessennota, and his view of the historian's vocation, he deals more extensively with these matters, but does not diverge from his opinion. Striking again is the disproportional influence of old colonial hands like Professor S.L. van der Wal and Professor F.W.N. Hugenholtz in blocking further research which the government was ready to facilitate. The interview with Fasseur is published in a special issue of *Leidschrift*, which is also reviewed in this issue of *BKI*, along with an article of Nico van Horn, who delved deep into the archives to investigate the implementation of the Excessennota (Interview 2016; Horn 2016).

Fasseur's Indonesia connection was always present. He obtained his Ph.D. in 1975 and became an Extraordinary Professor in 1977. In 1986 he made a major switch to become professor in the history of Indonesia. He published, mainly on the nineteenth-century Indies, taught and administered. For those involved with the history department, Fasseur's review is obligatory reading.

He had diverse tasks outside the university, for the most part springing from his career as a lawyer. He even made another career switch to become a judge. He also reached a much greater audience by his two-volume biography of Queen Wilhelmina (1998, 2001). He was highly praised for it, awarded prizes, and sold ten thousands of copies. But, there was also controversy. Sources from the Royal Archive were only exclusively accessible to Fasseur, and continuing on this tack he was accused of painting an Orange-colored account. His later book on the marriage of Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard (2008) was attacked on the same ground. His last work, on Prime Minister P.S. Gerbrandy (2014), was again well-received. In these last years, Fasseur gradually concluded his tasks, among these his advisership with the Royal Academy of Sciences (KNAW), where he fruitlessly tried to prevent 'the robbery at clear daylight' by KNAW of KITLV's independence. His efforts, and his scholarly work, were praised with a honorary KITLV membership. *Dubbelspoor* makes pleasant reading: its irony combines with a dose of vanity, which may have prevented a more critical self-evaluation.

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Bernard Bot, *Achteraf gezien. Memoires van een diplomaat en politicus*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2015, 512 + 28 pp. ISBN 9789035143920. Price: EUR 29.95 (hardcover).

Bernard Bot was Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Christian Democrats from 2003 until 2007. It was the unexpected sequel to a successful career in diplomatic service, from which he retired in 2002. Bot was born in Batavia in 1937, where his father worked as a government official. During the Japanese occupation he was interned, with his mother and sisters, in Tjideng camp. His father survived forced labor on the Burma Railway and eventually returned in government service—as a high official and later as minister. His Indies background, and his father's experiences, resulted in a special and sometimes emotional relationship with independent Indonesia.

In his chronological account Bot briefly relates some childhood memories. During his diplomatic career his involvement with Indonesia was limited. He

did his best to repair the damage Minister Jan Pronk of Development Assistance caused, when offending the Indonesians, resulting in 1992 in a complete break with development cooperation. Another subchapter tells of his interference in the file of the boisterous Willem Oltmans. A separate chapter of twenty pages is devoted to his ministerial actions in connection with Indonesia. He visited Indonesia a number of times, and gives fitting characterizations of Indonesian leaders he met. But more important was the breakthrough he accomplished in the sensitive file concerning the Decolonization War, which lasted for four years after the Indonesian Proclamation of Indonesia on August 17, 1945 and was concluded with the Transfer of Sovereignty on December 27, 1949. It took the Netherlands until 2005, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Proclamation, to recognize August 17, 1945 as the date of birth of an independent Indonesia. His Indies background made Bot in the Netherlands the suitable mouthpiece for this, which for many is still an uncomfortable message. Bot was in Jakarta in August 2005 and his curious, but much-quoted phrase that the Dutch at that time were on the wrong side of history was well received. The 'comprehensive partnership' with Indonesia that Bot strived for, however, never got off the ground.