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Recent Dutch-Language Publications

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Jos Gommans, *De verborgen wereld: Nederland en India vanaf 1550*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2018, 272 pp. ISBN 9789460043734, price: EUR 24.50 (hardback).

Jos Gommans, *The Unseen World: The Netherlands and India from 1550*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2018, 272 pp. ISBN 9789460043741, price: EUR 24.50 (hardback).

Available both in Dutch and English, this book is the seventh volume of a series of country-based studies in relation to the Netherlands, published under the auspices of the Historical Department of the Rijksmuseum, based on the Rijksmuseum holdings. In a remarkable tour de force seven volumes appeared since 2013, on Ghana, Indonesia, China, Japan, Sri Lanka, and South Africa. A forthcoming volume on Suriname will conclude the series. Except for the Ghana volume all have been reviewed in *Bijdragen*. This volume has a wealth of illustrations, 320 in total, reproduced in an exemplary way. The text approach differs considerably. Some volumes contain a collection of articles by multiple authors. Contributions vary in their emphasis on description or analysis. Some confine themselves to the VOC period, others extend their coverage to today.

Jos Gommans (1963), Professor of Colonial and Global History in Leiden, still finds another way to present his history of the relations between India and the Netherlands. He calls his study an essay, not a scholarly treatise, to probe into the unseen entanglement of India and the Netherlands. His story ends in the last decades of the seventeenth century—in this respect the title is misleading. The first part of the book gives a useful overview of the Indian regions where the VOC built trade houses or fortresses: Coromandel, Gujarat, Hindustan, Bengal, and Malabar, all with their own peculiarities. Next a biography of a VOC official in these regions is included: Daniel Havart, Pieter van den Broecke, Joan Josua Ketelaar, Jan Albert Sichterman, and Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Draken-

stein. The VOC had to compete with many other traders, from abroad as well as indigenous locals. The relation with the Mughal rulers in the north, and with unstable principalities in the south, was always hazardous. The mutual benefits of the trade relations, however, compensated for the uncertainties. These all centered around Indian textiles, which had superior quality compared to European fabrics.

This trade was a true example of the globalization, already in the beginning of the sixteenth century, as Gommans sets out in the second part of his book. Indian textiles became a common household item. The Netherlands and Mughal India became interested in each other at the same time. In both countries 'collecting, and structuring the world' became hot topics. Scholarly research was undertaken, resulting in maps, globes, publications, medicinal gardens, collections of artifacts, and the exchange of prints and miniatures. These were not incidental. Jakob van Neck, commander of a Dutch fleet to the Indies (1600–1602), for instance, had a cargo of 6,000 prints.

The third part of the book is probably the most original and controversial part of the study. Gommans here looks at the common interests and ideology of the Netherlands and India. In his opinion, they shared a basic attitude of humanism and openness and wish for universal peace and world order. In this respect Gommans identifies the underlying neo-Platonic concepts about the visible and the invisible world. In an erudite plea he centers his analysis on prints and paintings, from both countries, which showed mutual influence, and in which he detects neo-Platonism. Moreover he discusses the work of Dutch painters working in Iran and India, and to conclude he analyses Rembrandt's prints that were inspired by or based on Indian miniatures, and explores an exchange of underlying neo-Platonic concepts. The end of the seventeenth century saw an end to neo-Platonism. The Enlightenment, based on the visible world and a purification of Islam, now set the norm. Here Gommans ends his stimulating review, opening up new avenues for future research.

Hans Straver, *Vaders en dochters: Molukse historie in de Nederlandse literatuur van de negentiende eeuw en haar weerklink in Indonesië*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2018, 393 pp. ISBN 9789087047023, price: EUR 39.00 (paperback).

Hans Straver played a pivotal role in the development of a curriculum for the bicultural education of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands, who were brought there against their will in 1951. After a number of years it became clear that their residence was to be permanent, and that appropriate policies had to be developed to secure a smooth integration in Dutch society. This

became all the more urgent when young Moluccans engaged in terrorist acts. In 1987 the Steunpunt Educatie Molukkers (Support Centre for the Education of Moluccans) was established. Until his retirement in 2011, Straver was among the staff of the Steunpunt, and produced a steady flow of publications on educational policies, the Moluccan Malay language, Moluccan culture, and Moluccan history. In this Ph.D thesis, Straver has collected and coherently organized his expertise on Moluccan history and literature. In a number of articles he had already shown glimpses of the subjects he would eventually discuss.

With five parts in total, his book is organized as a triptych wrapped between an introduction and conclusion. The three central chapters each contain a publication on Moluccan history, written by eighteenth-century Dutch authors. These are: Jan Fredrik Helmers (1767–1812, 'Geschiedenis van Egeron en Akada', part of a narrative poem, published in 1812); Maurits Ver Huell (1787–1860, *Christina Martha*, 1837), and Willem Leonard Ritter (1799–1862, *Toeloecobesie*, 1844, 1861). All are inspired by an episode of Moluccan history—the first Dutchmen on Banda (early 17th century), the Hitu Wars (first half of 17th century), and the Pattimura Uprising in 1817. In their narratives the authors lack sources, and introduce fictional events and characters. Egeron and Akada have no basis in history and the roles of Christina Martha and Si Tidja (in Ritter's novel) were completely remodelled to suit the authors' purposes. Moreover, for the sake of drama, they added three fathers. Their intention was to write a historical romantic story, with a message, rooted in the concepts of the Enlightenment. In this respect there was also esteem for the indigenous enemy, who supposedly required a benevolent education. Straver gives extensive biographies of the three authors, summarizes the stories, comments on their truthfulness, and on the authors' motives to reorganize their stories. He also looks at the reception of these three titles, and how their contents found their way in other publications. This happened a number of times, with a change in facts and appreciation. On the Dutch side, the Enlightenment concepts behind the original publications made way for a colonial emphasis when Dutch authors were concerned. On the Indonesian part their rewriting was also the order of the day, this time to make Christina Martha and Si Tidja national heroines.

Inge de Wilde, *Een sterke wilskracht: Vijf ambitieuze broers en zusters van Aletta Jacobs*. Groningen: Passage, 2018, 144 pp. ISBN 9789054523543, price: EUR 18.90 (paperback).

Aletta Jacobs (1854–1929) has earned herself a name as the first female university student, the first doctor and medical practitioner of the Netherlands.

She was an activist for women's rights, in particular the suffrage. On an international level she was prominent in peace organizations. In that last capacity she also visited Java in 1912. Jacobs' background was remarkable. She was one of the eleven children of the Jewish country doctor, Abraham Jacobs. Inge de Wilde, who has written extensively on women's emancipation, explains that of her six brothers and four sisters, five had their own special careers. The Jacobs family had no Indies connections, but by coincidence all males and two females stayed in the Indies for some time. The men signed for the KNIL, the colonial army, either as professional soldiers or army doctors. Among them was Julius (1842–1895), who developed an ethnographic interest and published monographs on the Balinese, Acehnese, and Baduy, the last one published by KITLV in 1891. Johan Rudolf (1851–1906) loved the soldier's life of adventure, danger, and fighting. He served for many years in Aceh and was decorated with the highest military order. He was a prolific writer, too, publishing books and short stories glorifying the soldier's life. Charlotte (1847–1916) was the second female student at university level. She studied pharmacy, and opened her own pharmaceutical shop in Batavia, which she, as an unmarried woman, ran successfully on her own. She supported Aletta in her efforts to promote the woman's cause. Frederika (1857–1896) was the first female student at a Secondary School (HBS) in the Netherlands. She became a teacher and moved to Batavia, where she published textbooks, some specifically adapted to the Indies circumstances, and among the first to do so. Another brother, Herman (1859–1897) joined the KNIL and fell in battle in Aceh. Others has also Indies connections, but De Wilde was not able to collect enough data to write their biographies. What she brought together is admirable, and these five biographies show how seemingly ordinary men and women are extraordinary in their life stories, and deserve to be recorded. With 350 notes, index, and bibliographies, all scholarly requirements are met in a book that makes for pleasant reading.

Annemiek Bal, *De verdoemde kolonie: Pioniers in het land dat de tijd vergeten is*. Houten: Tiritirimatangi, 2018, 135 pp. ISBN 9789402176438, price: EUR 19.95 (paperback).

The first Western visitors of the island of New Ireland, now part of Papua New Guinea, were Schouten and LeMaire in 1616. In the next two centuries they only had a few successors who were deterred from lasting relations by the inhospitable nature and hostile inhabitants, Papuans, in whose culture cannibalism had an important place. Adventurers, traders, and imperialist countries showed

interest only in the nineteenth century, and France, Great Britain, and Germany made ever more serious efforts to gain footholds to expand their empires on the scattered archipelagos of the Pacific Ocean. Britain, with its priceless colonies of Australia and New Zealand, was in the best position in this scramble. Islands like Fiji and New Guinea were colonized, and put to profitable plantation use, with the help of contract laborers whose status came close to that of slaves. Tahiti and New Caledonia became French, and were also put to use as penal colonies. The islands had an exotic reputation, and were widely considered as little paradises.

The French Marquis de Rays in 1879 used this popular sentiment to start a campaign to recruit potential settlers for Port Breton, on the southern tip of New Ireland, a place he praised for its excellent harbor at a crossroads, and with agricultural potential. The first two groups, including women and children, were badly prepared and supplied, and within months they disintegrated and fell victim to torrential rains, illness, and hostile Papuan neighbors. The poor lot was evacuated. A party of 350 Italian settlers arrived in 1880, and did not escape the fate of their predecessors. Corrupt captains with badly equipped ships and unwilling British and Spanish authorities caused delays when evacuation was the only solution for the settlers to survive. In February 1881 the 300 survivors left their horror scene to disembark in Sydney, where they found new homes. Their fate was reported in Australian newspapers, and ultimately in Europe too. Marquis de Rays was brought to court in 1883, charged with deceit and swindling, and sentenced to four years in prison. Historian Annemiek Bal tells this forgotten, sad story, on the basis of some of the main characters involved and some secondary sources. The text would have profited from a more lucid organization, and a better map of the area is indispensable.

Joko Triwinarto Santoso, *Cosman Citroen (1881–1935): Architect in ‘booming’ Soerabaja*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2018, 107 pp. ISBN 9789087047191, price: EUR 15.00 (paperback).

Interest in Dutch colonial architecture, long a forgotten subject, has continuously increased since the nineteen-nineties, as demonstrated by a steady flow of publications on a general level and on specific architects. Looking at the 140 or so Dutch architects who were once active in the Indies, there is still a lot to be explored. A solid monograph has been devoted to Cosman Citroen by the Indonesian scholar Joko Triwinarto Santoso (1964), who thus earned his Ph.D at Leiden University. His thesis has been translated and reworked to become a volume of the series ‘Bibliografieën en Oeuvrelijsten van Nederlandse Archi-

tecten en Stedenbouwkundigen' (Bibliographies and Lists of Works of Dutch Architects and Town Planning Experts).

Cosman Citroen (1881–1935), with a Jewish Amsterdam background, was first educated as a specialist in decorative arts, before embarking on an architectural career. In 1915, in the midst of the World War, he moved to Surabaya, where he soon became involved in the town planning of the fast growing city. Thanks to his good relationship with the local authorities, he was assigned prestigious tasks like designing the town hall and eye-catching bridges. In total he was involved in about twenty projects in Surabaya and five outside the town of a very different nature. His style was a hybrid between modernism, with Art Deco ornaments, and tropical influences. He met an untimely death in 1935. This fine book concentrates on the architectural aspects of his work, well-documented by 322 references, and an opulence of photographs and documents. It is a pity that relatively little is related about Citroen's personality and social activities. It would have been interesting to look into the relationship between Citroen and town authorities, of whom mayor G.J. Dijkerman favored Citroen, sometimes to the chagrin of Surabaya's Town Council.

Janneke van der Veer, *'Onrustig is ons hart': Leven en schrijverschap van Diet Kramer (1907–1965)*. Schalkhaar: Eierland Press, 2018, 480 pp. ISBN 9789078554141, price: EUR 29.50 (to order via www.dietkramer.nl) (hardback).

Diet Kramer (1907–1965), of a protestant, middle-class background, was a successful author, at a young age, of bestselling novels for young adults, in particular young women. Books for adults followed, with commensurate sales and reprints. Her books were not acknowledged as belonging to the literary canon, and met with condescension from the male-dominated literary scene. Diet Kramer did not seem to care, and produced her novels, all with a positive message, based on moral values, and embedded in religion. Van der Veer characterizes all these as 'conversion' novels. Her life took a turn when she moved to the Indies in 1933. Here she married Wim Muller (1891–1945), 16 years her senior, father of three, who divorced his previous wife to start a new life. Her husband belonged to the Indies administrative elite as the principal of the Batavia grammar school of the Carpentier Alting Stichting. Interrupted by a leave in the Netherlands, she lived in the Indies—Batavia, Bandung, and Yogyakarta—for twelve years, including a forced stay in a Japanese internment camp. Her life before the war was that of the well-to-do Dutch settler, enjoying the colonial amenities. She did not question the colonial structure, and she accepted the racial order of society. Indonesians were seen as decor, discussions on nation-

alist intentions and claims were altogether absent—in this, Diet Kramer was a mainstream *totok*. She published two ‘Indies’ novels and a number of short stories. Her years in Japanese custody with two young children took a heavy toll. Her fragile health and growing psychic problems led to her early repatriation. She published one more book, *Thuisvaart* (1948), the first title on the Dutch exodus from Indonesia, next to the steady stream of camp memoirs by Dutch internees. Her health slowly declined until her untimely death in 1965.

This biography served as a Ph.D for Janneke van der Veer (1953), who, in a voluminous book, in tight print, does not leave any aspect of Diet Kramer’s life untouched. Her sketch of the background of Kramer’s activities is equally exhaustive. In interesting first and last chapters she introduces some of the key concepts through which Kramer’s work is analyzed, like her social background, her protestant faith, her gender, her relation with the literary world, and the status of her books for young adults. A key concept of her life and work, according to Van der Veer, is ‘unrest’, a struggle to find stability and purification. In this respect, Van der Veer succeeds in integrating Kramer’s biography with the contents of Kramer’s books—often a pitfall for the writers of a literary biography. Van der Veer devotes more than 150 pages to the Indies years of Diet Kramer. She wrote three novels set in the Indies. Unfortunately, she and her books have been forgotten. Rob Nieuwenhuys, who wrote *Oost-Indische Spiegel*, the compendium on Indies literature, did not find Diet Kramer worth mentioning. Consequently, she was sliding into oblivion, until a few articles in *Indische Letteren* resurrected her. For intimates, Diet Kramer was the enigma producing the memoirs of Pangeran Achmad Djajadiningrat. This unique autobiography was condensed by Diet Kramer, as requested by the publisher, as it was too voluminous. But was this true? Was the government behind this choice, unhappy with the work’s contents? And how did Diet Kramer become involved? E. du Perron points a finger at the government, as did G.W.J. Drewes, Professor of Languages, in 1951. Van der Veer cannot resolve the question (pp. 240–43). There is a lot to praise on this book, which stumbles only a few times, when saying that all nationalist parties were prohibited in 1927 (p. 234), and that the rise of nationalism expressed itself in rebellions (p. 284).

Theo van Roij, *‘Achteraf heb ik er spijt van dat ik goed kan schieten’: Indië-dagboek, 1948–1950*. Ingeleid en bewerkt door Bob de Graaff. Amsterdam: Boom, 2018, 395 + 12 pp. ISBN 9789024420438, price: EUR 32.50 (paperback).

In *Soldaat in Indonesië, 1945–1950*, Gert Oostindie identified 659 personal documents of Dutch military men about their deployment in Indonesia. These

sources consisted of letters, memorial volumes, interviews, memoirs, novels, collections, and diaries. About ten percent are contemporary documents, consisting chiefly of diaries. Probably many more were kept by their authors, or were begun but never finished. Part of these have been preserved, and with electronic facilities a number have been made accessible. And of course a number—to be estimated around thirty—have appeared in print. The last addition to this corpus is the diary of Theo van Roij (1927–1994). In comparison to other personal documents, diaries are direct and authentic, but may lack coherence and contemplation. Theo van Roij, from a devout Catholic family in the southern province of Limburg, was conscripted in 5–11 RI, the fifth battalion of the eleventh regiment infantry. He was posted in East Sumatra in March 1948, and remained there until he returned home in April 1950. He was sent to outposts, where he experienced, with a small group of brothers in arms, the heat of the guerrilla war with an unpredictable and invisible opponent, which seemed to become stronger and stronger after the Second Dutch Action in December 1948. By sheer luck his battalion only lost two soldiers.

Theo van Roij, who had obtained a technical school diploma, almost daily entered his experiences and opinions into his diary. He is a keen observer, intelligent and self-confident, and a natural leader among his comrades, who was not afraid to confront his superiors when he thought wrong decisions were made or injustice was done. After his return he refused to discuss his Indonesian years, and his diary languished in a drawer. Family members at last became aware of the value of this source and transcribed the text. A niece of Theo van Roij was involved herewith. She happened to be married to Bob de Graaff, Professor of Intelligence and Security Studies in Utrecht. This connection caused De Graaff to step beyond his scholarly interests. He edited and introduced the diary, and did so in a meticulous way, with only a few minor errors. With notes, a bibliography, glossaries and indexes it is all up to academic standards. Of course, the diary does not offer brand new facts and opinions, but it emphasizes and elucidates existing analyses. There is the current issue of excessive violence, of which Van Roij gives examples, including episodes he was involved in himself. The book title in this respect refers to an afterthought ('In hindsight I regret that I'm good at shooting').

Such violence was for a substantial part applied on the initiative of the common soldiers, who, in their outposts, set their own rules, in a scale sliding downwards, and held a lot of their direct superiors in contempt. Remarkably, their highest superiors such as P. Scholten and S.H. Spoor were held in high esteem. As for the political leaders in The Hague, they had lost all credibility in the soldier's eyes, however much the general goal of the Dutch involvement was

supported. The home front was not judged too harshly, but was guilty of lacking appreciation. The Indonesian opponent, and even the Indonesians at large, are described negatively, often in racist ways. Throughout, Van Roij remains a devout Catholic whose faith also helps him to resist the temptations of the Indonesian women. This sexuality problem returns a number of times, even with an analysis of the causes and possible solutions (p. 326). Repeatedly the book returns to indignation about the soldiers' paltry and poor quality food. They turn to hunting animals, or robbing villagers. All in all, an important source has thus been made accessible.

Laurens van Aggelen, *Van dialoog naar verzoening: Hoe de Stichting Dialoog Nederland-Japan-Indonesië mensen verbindt*. Arnhem: White Elephant Publishing, 2018, 162 pp. ISBN 9789079763221, price: EUR 15.00 (paperback).

De Stichting Nederland-Japan-Indonesië (The Netherlands-Japan-Indonesia Foundation) in 2000 organized its first conference, attended by participants from the Netherlands, Japan, and Indonesia. They talked intensively about their very different war experiences, determined by their background and nationality. The intention was to contribute to a mutual understanding, acceptance, forgiveness, guilt acknowledgement, and reconciliation. Since then, twenty conferences have been organized—and to mark this milestone, this book, giving an overview of the history and activities of Dialoog (Dialogue), was published. Apart from the conferences, Dialoog organized trips to Japan, published books, including in Japanese, erected memorials in Japan, and continues to operate a website in three languages, and give lectures at schools. It also involves second and third generation war victims. In its cooperation with Japan, Dialoog is rather unique. The group of participants is not numerous, but its impact is relatively large. This book relates the history of Dialoog, supplemented by a hundred pages of personal experiences, selected from the conference records and from interviews held by editor Van Aggelen. Most of these concern Dutch men and women who suffered in Japanese internment camps, or worked as forced laborers and experienced traumatic consequences from these years. The book, a laudable report about an admirable initiative, is somewhat fragmentary in its presentation.

Suzanne Liem, *De weduwen van Rawagede: Getuigen van de dekolonisatieoorlog*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018, 95 pp. ISBN 9789463727501, price: EUR 55.00 (hardback).

On 9 December 1947, in the West Javanese village of Rawagede, 431 Indonesian men were executed by the Dutch army—a war crime that received great coverage only in 2009, when seven widows and one surviving man summoned the Dutch government and asked for compensation. This procedure was started by the Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden (Committee Dutch Debts of Honor), and its lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld. Against most expectations, they won their case and received monetary compensation. Photographer Suzanna Liem visited Rawagede in 2010 and made penetrating portraits of these aged victims. She added photographs of four widows in South Sulawesi who suffered the same fate in similar Dutch atrocities. The resulting fourteen pictures are printed on two pages of this large-sized book (30 × 33 cm). The layout has been done with meticulous care, with artistic considerations playing a major role. The author supplies five pages of factual information and background, whereas a personal essay by Esther Captain shares information and emotions with her readership. Quotations from the verdicts of the courts in these cases are also included. Historical information is only brief. However, this is first and foremost a fine book of photos that shows how events from seventy years ago still have their effects.

Pim Oskam, *Paradiso Kaimana: Uitgezonden als soldaat naar Nieuw-Guinea*. Leeuwarden: Elikser, 2018, 171 pp. ISBN 9789463650618, price: EUR 17.50 (paperback).

In the spring of 1962, a 19 year old named Pim Oskam—who had just graduated from high school—was conscripted, received basic training and was sent to West New Guinea, the last remains of the colonial Indies empire, which was clung to with the resentment of lost prestige from the transfer of sovereignty of December 27, 1949. The Indonesian pressure to incorporate New Guinea mounted and threatened to result in a full-fledged war. Infiltrations by the Indonesian armed forces became ever more frequent. The Dutch forces were enlarged, but were no match for the massive Indonesian build-up. Moreover, as in the Decolonization War of 1945–1950, Dutch forces were badly trained and equipped. It was under strong US pressure that, in the nick of time in August 1962, an agreement was reached, which, with a few face-saving clauses for the Dutch, provided for the inclusion of New Guinea in the Indonesian Republic. A blood-

bath was thus prevented. (Inter alia, the US mediator, Bunker, was not the US Foreign Secretary (p. 102)).

Pim Oskam, later a well-known actor, received tropical training in Biak and was then posted in Kaimana, on the south coast, as an anti-aircraft gunner. He bases his reminiscences on letters sent home, and a vast array of publications, that at last served him to get over these severe experiences. His view is cynical. The deployment of soldiers was senseless and hopeless, for which politicians in The Hague and high army officers are to blame. Oskam's chronicle is well-written and is put in the perspective of military and diplomatic developments. In comparison with the abundance of soldier's memoirs of the 1945–1950 war, those on the New Guinea sequel are few. Oskam's account, with its literary pretensions, makes one think of *De balenkraai* by Aad Nuis (1967, 1983).