Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666), *On the Conversion of Indians and Heathens*. An Annotated Translation of *De conversione Indorum et gentilium* (1669) [Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 290–21], trans. and ed. Ineke Loots and Joke Spaans. Brill, Leiden/Boston 2018, x + 453 pp. ISBN 9789004255449. €129; US\$149.

During the seventeenth century, the Netherlands saw its economic tentacles expand through the world. With colonies as widespread as New Amsterdam, Guyana, the Cape of Good Hope, and Batavia (modern day Indonesia), the tiny sea-faring nation saw its economic trading posts expand across most of the world, even stretching at one point to Japan. Such expansion brought tales of mysterious creatures and people with peculiar customs to the eyes and ears of the Dutch mainland. Reports from these lands swept through the Dutch reading public. Mariners could earn a degree of celebrity as authors of these tales: Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1563–1611), a Haarlem merchant and one of the first Dutchmen to travel to the East Indies, wrote three volumes based on his travels that were republished numerous times. Willem Ysbrantsz. Bontekoe was a famous author in his day, based on the virtuous stories he told from his days as a skipper with the VOC.

Ministers and theologians considered it their duty to help those under their care come to terms with the unknown. They hoped to provide their congregations with the necessary terms with which they could make sense of the unknown and foreign. Ministers received a degree of theological training in these matters while university students. At Leiden University, two successive professors included preparation for the mission field in their teaching. Antonius Walaeus oversaw the *Seminarium Indicum* from 1622 to 1632, a preparatory school based in his home for those ministers going overseas. Walaeus's labors were soon overshadowed by his successor, Johannes Hoornbeeck. Hoornbeeck, a professor of theology at Leiden, set before himself the preparation of his theology students to understand foreign peoples and their varied cultures. He hoped this work would culminate in the creation of a missionary society to convert them to the Christian faith.

Hoornbeeck oversaw a series of disputations intended to furnish students with the requisite knowledge of the people of the “new world”—now translated and reissued in an English edition by Ineke Loots and Joke Spaans. These disputations were originally combined into a single book and published as *De conversione Indorum et gentilium* in 1669 by the Amsterdam printer Johannes Jansso-nius à Waesberge and the widow of Elizaëus Weyerstraeten. Such a source offers insight into a host of aspects of early modern history: academic training, Dutch church history, the history of missionary activities, the understanding of the “new world” in the “old.”

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Ineke Loots and Joke Spaans have made this illuminating text available to modern readers in the form of an eloquently translated and judiciously edited modern edition, *On the Conversion of Indians and Heathens*. Rather than provide a Latin-English parallel edition, the editors helpfully provide the page numbers for the Latin edition in the margin. This practice streamlines the reading process and yet provides sufficient information for the readers interested in cross reading the Latin and English. Annotations and a substantial bibliography also open an entire world of research on the topic, including both the many works Hoornbeeck cited throughout the book and modern works.

For Hoornbeeck, understanding the peoples and cultures of the non-Protestant world was a matter of life and death. It was of such importance that he paused the usual rotation of theological disputations to provide his students with concentrated time on to train formally his students in how best to win “the heathen.” In his letter to the reader, Hoornbeeck asked the critic’s rhetorical question: why devote time to understanding heathens and gentiles “when there are so many controversies at home in which the students could get their training by holding disputations according to the academic custom” (p. 35). He defended himself saying that it was of equal importance to understand heresy and error in their own land, as it was for prospective ministers to learn “the holy task that consists in winning people for Christ” (p. 39).

The introduction to this volume ought to be required reading for its quality and insight into Dutch culture and religious life during the seventeenth century. Loots and Spaans helpfully place contemporary readers back in the original Dutch context: that of a nation with a self-confessed Reformed polity expanding further and further through the known and unknown world. Hoornbeeck, they make clear, was a Reformed professor who aimed all of his intellectual fortitude into this work. He was a well-read minister who laced his work with profuse references to theological and philosophical authorities. The editors help the reader understand the academic rigor with which Hoornbeeck addressed his topic. Hoornbeeck’s disputation encouraging students to use natural reason when encountering non-Christian belief in a missionary context is illuminating in this regard. Hoornbeeck utilized classical authors to argue that natural reason could help lead non-Christians to at least belief in a higher Being, the foundation point of Christian belief. Making the case “that God should be worshipped by human beings is agreed by all more civilized people,” Hoornbeeck referenced Caesar, Tacitus, Pliny, Seneca, Lactantius, Philostratus, Aulus Gellius, Virgil, and others (pp. 260–274). Loots and Spaans provide meticulous cross references to the sources Hoornbeeck alludes to or cites.

Hoornbeeck was one of the preeminent professors of theology in the Reformed world, and few sources offer a better window into the early modern

world than his *De conversione*. It is hard to overestimate the quality of this modern edition: the translation is readable yet attempts to be faithful to the original Latin Hoornbeeck used; the editorial work is judicious and restrained; and the introduction and bibliography help illuminate a world of tremendous religious and societal change. By reissuing *De conversione* in this way, Loots and Spaans have provided a wonderful service to any scholars who study church history, global expansion, or comparative religions.

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