



BRILL

BIJDRAGEN TOT DE TAAL-, LAND- EN
VOLKENKUNDE 177 (2021) 165–176



brill.com/bki

Recent Dutch-Language Publications

Harry A. Poeze

KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian
and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, The Netherlands
poeze@kitlv.nl

Pepijn Brandon, Guno Jones, Nancy Jouwe and Matthias van Rossum (eds), *De slavernij in Oost en West: Het Amsterdam-onderzoek*. Amsterdam: Spectrum, 2020, 448 pp. ISBN: 9789000372874, price: EUR 24.99 (paperback).

Gert Oostindie (ed.), *Het koloniale verleden van Rotterdam*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2020, 487 pp. ISBN: 9789024432257, price: EUR 34.90 (paperback).

The Town Councils of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, independently decided in June 2019 and November 2018 to ask their boards to investigate the involvement of these cities in colonial affairs, with an emphasis on its negative aspects, particularly slavery. The Amsterdam study focuses on slavery, while the Rotterdam one opts for a broader approach, dealing with all aspects of colonialism. Curiously, the books do not cross-reference each other. 'Amsterdam' has a quartet of editors who wrote an introduction and supervised the forty (!) essays included, by more than forty experts. The editors contributed a solid introduction (40 pages) and epilogue (15 pages). Both books share a balanced attention for colonial developments in the East Indies and the Americas led by the East and West Indies Compagnie (VOC and WIC), in the process of giving the hitherto neglected East Indies slavery its appropriate place in history. About fifteen essays in the 'Amsterdam' volume are on East Indies matters.

The essays in 'Amsterdam' are of a diverse kind, some general overviews, some case-studies, and are not intended to offer a comprehensive survey. The introduction, however, succeeds in its ambitious purpose to provide an answer to the two main questions. First, in what way did Dutch town councilors influence the nature and extent of Dutch involvement in worldwide slavery. And secondly, how did this involvement translate into policies and opinions during the slavery period and thereafter, including present day intense debates. Seven themes are explored. The conclusions are crystal clear: the Amsterdam town elite was actively involved in slavery and slave trade in the East and

West. It was part of the worldwide trade networks of Amsterdam. Slavery was not solely economic, but also had political, military, social, cultural, and psychological repercussions. The expertise on worldwide slavery is vast, but still lacking in some respects. Systematic research on slavery is still necessary for many reasons, including to make slavery an integral part of Amsterdam history.

The Rotterdam motion resulted in three books. A monograph by Alex van Stipriaan, *Rotterdam in slavernij*, is exclusively devoted to Rotterdam and its role in slavery, restricted to the Atlantic and West Indies trade. A collection of essays, *Rotterdam, een postkoloniale stad in beweging*, edited by Francio Guadeloupe, Paul van de Laar, and Liane van der Linden, looks at post-colonial developments and discussions. Editor Oostindie introduces a third product, an exploratory survey about Rotterdam's colonial past, *Het koloniale verleden van Rotterdam*. In nine essays, authors are given ample room to report their extensive findings and conclusions. Thus, colonial shipping and trade, as well as industry and finance connected with colonial produce, and the close relationship of town authorities and industry directors are explored by Gerhard de Kok and Henk den Heijer. Pauline K.M. van Roosmalen and Isabelle Boon detect traces of the colonial past in architecture. A fresh approach is offered by Tom van den Berge when recording Rotterdam as actively engaged in missionary activities, Protestant as well as Catholic. This religious zeal was inevitably colored by western feelings of superiority. Rotterdam women(!), already in the early eighteenth century, stood at the forefront in their own exclusive associations. Esther Captain relates the experiences of the overseas migrants from (former) Dutch colonies who settled in Rotterdam. Rotterdam hosts a number of museums with colonial collections, recently subject of new debate. Alexandra van Dongen and Liane van der Linden tell this story. As a conclusion, the three editors of *Rotterdam, een postkoloniale stad in beweging*, give a foretaste of their book by including three postcolonial case-studies. East and West in these essays are carefully treated evenhandedly. Both titles show editorial care and are well-illustrated. The Amsterdam volume unfortunately lacks an index. These titles on slavery will be followed this year by a number of other titles, as well as an exhibition in the Rijksmuseum. Of note is a special issue of 'Nieuw Letterkundig Magazijn' (year 38, December 2020). Ten of its twelve articles are on slavery in the East Indies, the abolition movement, and the contemporary debate. The issue may be ordered via mln@library.leidenuniv.nl

Gerard Martinus Versteeg, *Eerste Zuid Nieuw-Guinea expeditie 1907: Dagboek van Gerard Martinus Versteeg*, arts. Edited by Anton Versteeg. Zwaag: Pumbo, 323 pp. No ISBN, price: EUR 18.95 (paperback), EUR 3.95 (E-book). (To order via www.boekenbestellen.nl/boek)

In BKI 176-4 (2020):624, I reviewed the diary kept by the physician Gerardus Martinus Versteeg (1876–1943) during the Third Zuid Nieuw-Guinea Expedition (1912–1913), edited by his grandson Anton Versteeg. Now, in a similar format, he has published his account of the First Expedition of 1907, which lasted eight months and was lead by H.A. Lorentz. Gerard Versteeg was a member of the expedition as a medical officer and charged with the botanical task of the explorations, mainly involving the collection of plants. He brought back to the Bogor Botanical Institute almost a thousand species, of which a quarter were never encountered before. The report on the plants collected (40 pages) is included as an appendix to his diary. Versteeg gives a lively and readable report of his journey, illustrated with drawings and photographs. He writes extensively on his experiences regarding the medical care for the indigenous staff and the Papuans they met along the way (and some of these encounters even resulted in violent confrontations). In addition, he describes the far from harmonious relations among the Dutch staff, with Lorentz causing much of the friction. The diary is a veritable enrichment of the literature on the early exploration of New Guinea.

Karel Weener, *Steinharts biecht: Zielenstrijd op de Batoe-eilanden*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2020, 260 pp. ISBN: 9789024434374, price: EUR 24.90 (paperback).

Karel Weener (1970) is a specialist researching the provenance of ethnographical objects in museums and in private collections, prioritizing objects from the former Netherlands Indies, as collected by missionaries, military expeditions, and scientific explorations. By chance he became involved in a quest to fill in the particulars of a collection of wooden artifacts, probably ancestor effigies, found in an attic in The Hague in 2009. Weener concluded, after tenacious research, that the objects originated from the Batu Islands, a group of small islands before West Sumatra's western coast, to the north of Nias Island. Instrumental in acquiring these objects, also to be found in Dutch ethnographic museums, were missionaries of the Nederlandsch-Luthersche Genootschap. From 1889 until 1942, eight of them, mostly accompanied by wives and children, served their terms. Weener relates their efforts to survive, with rather superficial results and a few hundred proselytes. It was costly: the death rate

among the missionary families was high, and their health was often permanently impaired. Still, they made these sacrifices for the sake of their faith. Their approach towards traditional beliefs was uncompromising. They effectively erased the traditional culture, requiring from new converts the surrender of all their artifacts, which were quickly buried, sent to The Netherlands, or sold to collectors.

The last missionary was Willem Steinhart (1898–1982), who served a term from 1924 until 1939. The notion slowly dawned on him that the way the missionary labor had gone and was going was destroying the culture of the Batu islanders, leaving them uprooted. Probably partly to cope with this, he turned from missionary labor to writing down the extensive songs of traditional priests, in their original form, and with translations and annotations. These came out in four installments between 1938 and 1954, the last one a KITLV publication. As to the effects of his missionary labor, he had doubts, made acute by a 1931 article by painter Rudolf Bonnet. In 1948 he travelled to Batu again, but upon disembarkation he was at once returned by the Republican forces on Batu to the ship that brought him. He never tried again. Steinhart wrestled with his past work and ideas, experienced as meaningless, and came close to a confession as such—perhaps the subtitle of the book is overstated.

Weener offers an interesting account of a communist insurrection on a substantial scale in May 1926 on the islands. It was a precursor of the communist insurrection in West Sumatra in the first months of 1927. It involved hundreds of men, from Batu and neighboring islands, and Christian-Islam controversies played a role. KNIL soldiers were brought in, followed by hundreds of arrests. They were rounded up at will, and islanders feared the KNIL force more than the communists. Steinhart is one of the few sources on this improbable revolt, in which the lives of missionaries and colonial authorities were put in great peril. The course of events merits further study, especially its background and contents. Weener argues convincingly that this insurrection also found its reflection in one of the songs he collected, a link Steinhart did not see. In sum, Weener has published a fine example of a ‘collection history’, that is, moreover, profusely illustrated.

Louis Zweers, *Buit: De roof van Nederlands-Indisch cultureel erfgoed 1942–1950*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2021, 303 pp. ISBN: 9789024427215, price: EUR 29.90 (paperback).

Since 1994, Louis Zweers (1948) has published 15 titles on the turbulent years of 1942–1950, with the Japanese occupation and the Dutch-Indonesian colonial war. His emphasis does not rest merely on basic facts of political and milit-

ary developments. Instead, he consistently surveys other aspects hitherto neglected, but informative as to the course of the conflicts. He looks at photographs as a propaganda weapon, and as such a tightly supervised subject of censorship, by the Dutch as well as the Republic. He has also written on Dutch journalists and photographers, and their difficult maneuvering to get uncensored reporting printed in the Dutch press. Another subject Zweers has researched for more than ten years, and accounted for in a number of articles, concerns the robbery of goods from the cultural heritage collections possessed by Dutch citizens and institutions. In the pioneering study *Buit* (Loot), Zweers gives a comprehensive, but inevitably incomplete review of this robbery. A lot of information is lost forever. Zweers' notes show how he persistently collected the information still available from a wide array of sources. The results are surprisingly extensive. Zweers deserves praise and admiration for his labor.

The publication of his book incidentally coincides with a renewed discussion, even worldwide, about the return to their original place of provenance of objects of cultural heritage now under the custody of former colonial powers. For The Netherlands, more than 150,000 objects may be a subject of such a discussion. Zweers' case is different. He looks at the massive robbery of art objects, contemporary and old, as well as documents and libraries, in the years 1942–1950. After the Japanese triumph, it were Japanese government and military bodies who confiscated these objects as booty, and partly sent them to Japan. Japanese individuals also collected their share, and took it home in 1945. In the first anarchical months of the Republic, a considerable part of those collections that had survived the Japanese regime was destroyed by roving Indonesian bands during the so-called *bersiap* period. The Japanese destroyed all evidence concerning their robberies.

Zweers first discusses the fate of art collections, with most attention on the western painters living in Bali, whose lot was precarious, and mostly ended, even in the 1950s, with fear, flight, and death. Next, museum and private art collections are given attention, with a special chapter on the post-1950 art collection of President Sukarno, which also included robbed paintings. Objects, often sacred, of Indonesian royalty on Sumatra and Bali were stolen and mostly taken to Japan. The collections of the National Museum and the Bogor Botanical Garden stood under special Japanese guardianship and thus survived. During the *bersiap* period, unfortunately, Bogor Garden was vandalized. Archaeological and medical research institutes were damaged. Millions of confiscated books were then lost; only a small number were returned to their owners. Substantial numbers were shipped to Japan. Zweers discovered that such books in the catalogues of Japanese university libraries are still identifiable, and may be reclaimed.

With regard to these claims, in the wake of the Japanese surrender, several US and allied agencies searched Japan for robbed goods. However, conditions for individual claimants were strict and forbidding. Evidence was destroyed by the Japanese, and in Japan ranks were closed to prevent the Allies from finding out the fate of all the booty. Compensation was never paid to the former owners, as the US blocked this for the sake of concluding an alliance with Japan to oppose Communist aggression in Asia. Zweers last sentence translates as: 'Further research is desirable'. One cannot but agree, and Zweers' efforts indeed offer enough starting-points to do so. Whether this will succeed in actually returning objects to their legitimate owners is another matter.

Hendrik Boot, *Scheepsrampen en Jappenkampen: Het verhaal van Cor Boot, verteld door zijn zoon Hendrik Boot: Over de oorlog op zee, de torpederingen, de jappenkampen, de Pakan Baroe dodenspoorweg en 40 jaar varen*. Bergen op Zoom: Hendrik Boot, 2020, 405 pp. ISBN: 9789090333366, price: EUR 29.50 (hardback) (to order via boek-boot@outlook.com).

Cor Boot (1919–2005), from the island of Voorne-Putten, south of Rotterdam, began work as a ship mechanical engineer for the Steamboat Company Nederland in 1937. He retired in 1977, after 40 years of service. This might have been an unobtrusive career, if not for the Second World War. He was torpedoed by German submarines, and fate had him stranded in Java when The Netherlands were occupied by Germany, and the Dutch Indies by Japan. Cor was interned in Japanese camps in Malang, Kesilir, Ambarawa, Bandung, and Batavia. In September 1944, he was shipped, along with 6,700 POWs and Indonesian convicts, to West Sumatra to work on the construction of a Trans-Sumatra railway. Their ship, the *Yunyo Maru*, was sunk by an Allied submarine, with 5,800 casualties as a result, one of the greatest maritime disasters ever. Cor survived, and was set to work on the railway under terrible circumstances. He managed again to stay alive, and resumed normal life in January 1946, plagued by war trauma and illness, attributable to his multiple internments. He was reluctant to share his experiences and left only a few documents and interviews. His son Hendrik (1951) took it upon himself to give content to the many white spots in his father's life. It turned out to be an intensive quest. As concrete personal details were missing, Hendrik Boot extensively describes the background of Cor's possible experiences—for instance, daily life in the internment camps, the shipwreck of the *Junyo Maru* and the construction of the railway. For the greater part he uses well-known publications, but his meticulous search has also yielded new

sources. Thus, a worthy monument is erected, in the form of a fine publication, with a lot of illustrations.

Robert J. Mokken, *Mijn oorlogstijd in Indië*. Badhoevedorp: Robert J. Mokken, 2020, 143 pp. ISBN: 9789493166387, price: EUR 19.90 (hardback) (to order via rjmokken@outlook.com).

In 2017, Robert Mokken (Batavia, 1929), professor emeritus of political science of the University of Amsterdam, was asked by his granddaughters to write down his experiences during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945) and the violent aftermath (the *bersiap*). His father, a bank director, had quickly been interned, separate from his family (mother, younger brother, and Robert). They stayed in a number of camps, among others in Bogor, Bandung, and Ambarawa. Robert was by chance reunited with his father. Daily life in these camps was a well-known litany of hunger, illness, and Japanese abuse. His mother narrowly survived. Up until their repatriation to The Netherlands in February 1946, the reunited family lived in fear of the violence unleashed by young Indonesians during the *bersiap* months.

Mokken, has narrated his experiences after 70(!) years. These are understandably fragmentary, but have been supplemented by general information from other sources. The result is a readable story, which, however, does not add substantially to our vast knowledge of life in the Japanese internment camps.

Martin Bossenbroek, *De wraak van Diponegoro: Begin en einde van Nederlands-Indië*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum—Polak & Van Genneep, 798 pp. ISBN: 9789025301514, price: EUR 39.99 (hardback).

Bossenbroek (1953), a retired historian, already published a number of solid monographs on the Indies and on the Boer Wars (*De Boerenoorlog*, 2012). The last title was translated and widely acclaimed. Now he has returned to Indonesia, with an ambitious and voluminous book on the beginning and the end of the Dutch East Indies. He selected two pairs of individuals whose influence on the course of events were decisive. For the definitive establishment in the archipelago of a colony under Dutch rule, the outcome of the Java War (1825–1930) was of crucial importance. It took great efforts of the Dutch forces to subjugate Diponegoro (1785–1855), their opponent from the Yogya Sultanate. He was motivated by his discontent at the palace intrigues, reinforced by mystical and Islamic ideas. He won the support of many common people from the

Yogya and Surakarta principalities, who were organized in an army by competent leaders as Sentot and Kjai Modjo (Kyai Mojo). At first, the Dutch army, under command of Hendrik Merkus de Kock (1779–1845), was in danger to be overrun, with the Dutch ultimately having to leave the Indies shores, some historians say. Not Bossenbroek, who, although mentioning this danger, does not elaborate on it. The pair De Kock-Diponegoro stands for a key point in Indies history, with De Kock as the winner and Diponegoro, after being trapped by the Dutch, the loser, subsequently arrested and exiled to Sulawesi. Only a century after this Dutch victory, another pair confronted each other. Bossenbroek selected Soekarno (1901–1970) and Huib van Mook (1894–1965). Now it was Soekarno who won and Van Mook, going against the spirit of the time, had to concede defeat, as all other Dutch politicians and officials had to do. It took them four years to admit this.

Bossenbroek's choices regarding his main protagonists make sense, and he writes competently on them. However, these biographies still overwhelmingly remain one-person-biographies. Thus, in a specific chapter about a specific period, biographies are put next to each other. In the second pair, the biographies of Soekarno and Van Mook are even less intertwined. What remains are the shifts in focus, which result in new viewpoints. Bossenbroek has done extensive research to achieve this.

He lists 600 titles of secondary publications, has done research in a number of archives, and made use of Delpher and other Internet sources. In his narrative, Bossenbroek allows himself a fair amount of latitude. With a basis in the sources, the thoughts and opinions of his main characters are paraphrased by Bossenbroek. It certainly adds flavor to the story, but raises doubts as to its faithfulness. It is rather difficult to translate individual motives and opinions from a Dutch early-eighteenth-century military, from a mystical and pious Javanese nobleman, and from an Indonesian nationalist politician, in a more popular and dramatic format. Bossenbroek nevertheless makes an attempt. Also, his style, with short sentences, often of dramatic content, enlivens the story—and sometimes is tiring. Thus, Bossenbroek's book comes close to or is partly a historical novel, with, ironically, 850 notes, an extensive bibliography and an index. Maybe a separate category should be created for such ambiguous publications. It is, moreover, hazardous to transform sources in striking fragments for reading. This goes especially for Diponegoro, whose sources are originally in Javanese and made available by Peter Carey. Bossenbroek relies on Carey. For Soekarno, it is yet another case. Bossenbroek's bibliography lists two titles by Soekarno, in Dutch and English—for that matter, the complete bibliography has only one or two entries in Indonesian. Indonesian-language titles on and about Soekarno run into the hundreds. And among these are a considerable

number that shed light on his personality. One may wonder whether it is polite or appropriate to probe deeply in the personality of Soekarno without mastery of his language. Would one dare to do so in similar biographies of Stalin and De Gaulle?

David Van Reybrouck, *Revolusi: Indonesië en het ontstaan van de moderne wereld*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2020, 637 pp. ISBN: 9789403183404, price: EUR 39.99 (hardback).

The Flemish author David Van Reybrouck (1970) made himself a name as author of *Congo, een geschiedenis*, published in 2010, and since then reprinted 40 times and also translated in English as *Congo, the Epic History of a People*. Five years ago he started his research on the decolonization of Indonesia (1945–1950). His approach was similar to the Congo book. Available secondary sources (books and articles), were supplemented by the testimonies of eyewitnesses of very advanced age, most in their nineties. The author interviewed 185 men and women and went as far as Nepal and Japan to find them. These were ordinary people, not persons of authority, with one exception: Soemarsono, who was closely involved in the Communist Revolt, which started in Madiun in September 1948. Their often moving stories add new lines of approach and enliven the historical narrative, even more so as Van Reybrouck also vividly relates his quest to find his informants and sketches their backgrounds. He amply (150 pages) supplies information on the history of the archipelago until 1940, a bleak story of Dutch colonialism and racism. In 1940, when Germany occupied The Netherlands, relations between Dutch rule and aspiring nationalism in all respects were similar to those characteristic of a police state. During the interregnum of 1940 until 1942, when Japan occupied Indonesia, the immovable position of the Dutch destroyed the last chances of an agreement with Indonesian leaders. Indonesian nationalism then took its own course. The writing was on the wall, but it was not seen by the colonial power. All of this was of crucial importance, and predicted what was to follow. This continuity is still underestimated, also by Van Reybrouck. His hundred-pages devoted to the Japanese years is commensurate with its importance. The four years of war since 1945 is divided by Van Reybrouck into a British, Dutch, United States and United Nations period, which works well. Of course, it was the Republic of Indonesia that played a leading part this whole period.

In proportion, surprisingly little space is devoted to the Republic, and its internal strife, which could easily have resulted in an overthrow of the Sukarno-Hatta government. This situation could be characterized, already in 1945, as

a contest between *diplomasi* ‘diplomacy’ and *perjuangan* ‘armed struggle’. Information on these internal affairs is lacking, making real insight and understanding very difficult. Here we see the effects of Van Reybrouck’s inability to access Indonesian-language accounts. Of the 600 titles listed in his bibliography, only a handful are in Indonesian. However, relevant titles in Indonesian abound. For instance, Soemarsono, already mentioned, wrote an extensive autobiography (*Revolusi Agustus, Kesaksian seorang pelaku sejarah*, 2008) which would have been very helpful to further enlighten his role in the Madiun uprising. In addition, ten volumes are available of accounts and interviews, published by the Indonesian Veterans Legion (*Bunga rampai perjuangan & pengorbanan*), as well as hundreds of pages of interviews with Indonesian participants in the Surabaya battle of 1945 (available in the Leiden University Library). In this respect, one also wonders why the relevant collections of interviews, made under the auspices of KITLV (Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesië) were not used.

This critique apart, Van Reybrouck has written, in a fluent style, with great personal involvement and unconditionally siding with the Indonesian struggle for independence, a book that deserves to be read. This goes also for the last chapter, in which he emphasizes the importance of the 1955 Bandung Conference as the start of the Third World Movement. The book concludes with 100 pages giving a very useful bibliographic guide, notes and index.

Carolijn Visser, *De vader van Grace*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Contact, 2020, 96 pp. ISBN: 9789045042886, price: EUR 14.99 (hardback).

Carolijn Visser (1956), a well-known Dutch author of personal histories, grew up in Middelburg, Zeeland. At the age of six, she was astonished when she found out that the father of her friend Grace was a black man. Only sixty years later, when contact between Grace and Carolijn was renewed, the life-story of her father Abel Comijs (1904–1968) and his Dutch wife Nelleke attracted Carolijn to reconstruct their lives. This was much helped by the finding of a great number of letters, written by Abel to Nelleke in 1953, when she prepared to travel to Makassar to reunite as a couple. Abel was of African descent, recruited by the KNIL to replenish its ranks. These African soldiers often married Indonesian women and had their own place in the multiethnic Indies society. Abel was well educated, served in the KNIL and was a convict in Japanese service. He recovered in The Netherlands, met Nelleke, and took up a job in Makassar. He married Nelleke by proxy. They were ousted by Indonesia in 1958. Visser tells the story with a lot of empathy, alternating between the private affairs and the

historical backgrounds to explain how a black man landed in the all-white town of Middelburg.

John Sijmonsbergen (ed.), *De geest overwint: 75 Jaar 15 augustus*. Volendam: LM Publishers, 2020, 207 pp. ISBN: 9789460220180, price: EUR 24.50 (paperback).

Japan's surrender to the Allies on August 15, 1945 also put an end to the Japanese occupation of the former Netherlands Indies, which had brought misery to all of Indonesia's multi-ethnic groups, exacerbated when the Proclamation of an independent Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945 set in motion a war of independence that only ended in December 1949 by the Dutch recognition of the Republic. Until 1958, 350,000 Dutchmen who had been living in Indonesia, and were victims of occupation and war, repatriated to The Netherlands. By now, the number of Dutchmen with a background or lived experience in Indonesia are estimated to number two million. They meet each other in a myriad of organizations, with a lot of mutual controversies. Common ground since 1988 is the commemoration of August 15, under the auspices of the Stichting Nationale Herdenking 15 Augustus, 1945. Its location is the Indies Monument in The Hague, inaugurated by Queen Beatrix. The Dutch Parliament also stages a memorial service on August 14 or 15. This commemorative book, in a handsome layout, succinctly surveys the history of the memorial day ceremonies. A fixed part of the program is a speech, poem, or song, given by a well-known person (typically writers, artists, politicians, or scholars) from the first, second, or third-generation of returnees from Indonesia. 49 contributions, almost all dating after 2000, are included. Among these, about ten are by secondary-school students who connect the past with developments in contemporary society—another fixed part of the book. The contributions are of a high quality, impressive and moving. The book opens with 20 iconic photographs, of which those in black-and-white have been colorized, a successful enterprise, which brings the past closer to the contemporary observer.

Gerard Termorshuizen, *Indië en Indonesië—altijd dichtbij: Herinneringen*. Sasenheim: Termorshuizen, 2020, 213 pp. ISBN: 9789090336534, price: EUR 20.00 (paperback) (to order via gerardtermorshuizen@yahoo.com).

Gerard Termorshuizen (1935) is the prolific author of a whole range of publications, mainly on Dutch-language books, periodicals, and newspapers on the colonial Indies, with some excursions into post-colonial literature. He was

responsible for the rediscovery of P.A. Daum, about whom he wrote his PhD (1988) and whose collected works he edited. More substantial still is his two-volume history of the Dutch-language press, a mammoth labor resulting in the opening up of a hidden treasure on Indies and Indonesian history—and this was all done without the help of Delpher. Since then, he has not been idle, publishing monographs on some outstanding journalists. As a surprise, he has now also added his memoirs to his bibliography. The result is a revealing look behind the scenes of Indonesian studies in The Netherlands, still in the process of recovery and reconstruction after the traumatizing decolonization. That Termorshuizen was to play a role in these developments was most improbable. He was born in Rotterdam in a poor family, with a father who systematically mistreated his children. Termorshuizen's frank account of his youth is moving and impressive. It is a miracle how he managed to get over his dreadful past and became the kind man he is now. Gerard made up for his lack of education by taking a long road, ending with a master's degree in Dutch language and literature. Then a teacher at a secondary school in Amsterdam, he met Rob Nieuwenhuys as a colleague, who excited him about Dutch literature on the Indies. Thanks to Nieuwenhuys, Termorshuizen was sent to Jakarta in 1970, together with Jan de Vries, as a teacher at Universitas Indonesia, to establish a department of Dutch Studies. This was part of an Indonesian-Dutch cultural agreement and resumed at an official level the contacts that were so manifold in the colonial era. It was no easy task in a country ruled by the military, and characterized by a lack of interest and financial support for educational and cultural matters.

The main part of Termorshuizen's memoirs concerns his five years in Jakarta. He not only relates his experiences with Indonesian bureaucrats and students, but also his day-to-day life, including his erotic affairs. His frankness also extends to his Dutch visitors and fellow settlers, like Jacob Vredenburg, Han Resink, Beb Vuyk, Dick Hartoko, H.B. Jasin and Suwarsih Djojopuspito. His active involvement in the translation of Multatuli's *Max Havelaar* and its launching receive a lot of attention. In 1975, he returned and, as an employee of KITLV, supervised Indonesian students sent to Leiden to obtain their MA degree. In addition, his own Daum project and studies on the Indies press got under way. No more than a few dozen pages are devoted to his post-1975 experiences. Such views behind the scenes, as given in his memoirs, add valuable insights to 'official' history. In this respect, a kindred publication must be mentioned: Tim Phijffer, *Het masker van Rob Nieuwenhuys: Reconstructie van een vergeten reis naar Indonesië*, reviewed in BKI 176(2020):630–631. The book is profusely illustrated.