In the year 1516, roughly a decade after the historian Reynier Snoy had returned to his native town Gouda from an academic tour that brought him to the universities of Louvain and Bologna, he finished a voluminous history of Holland that ‘is characterised by various peculiarities that demonstrate clearly that – at least in appearance – the new school [viz. humanism] had begun to exercise its influence in our country’, as Herman Kampinga put it.\(^1\) Snoy himself was quite aware of his originality and even described his project as unprecedented. With some bravura, he wrote to his acquaintance Erasmus that ‘among a number of enthusiastic, by some fate or other, I am the only one who has undertaken to write the history of Holland’, and at the end of the first book of the Historia Hollandie, as he called the work, he said that ‘I was the very first – let there be no envy at the word – to venture upon this task on my own initiative’\(^2\). As could be expected after such statements, Snoy’s work is almost completely devoid of references to previous historians from his province.

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Approximately seventy years later, Janus Dousa the Elder was the foremost expert about Holland’s past. He related to his predecessors in a completely different way than Snoy had done, however. Even though the aesthetic conventions of classical historiography precluded meticulous documentation, Dousa supported his arguments by means of extensive quotations and numerous source references. He cited the integral text of important charters – despite their un-classical Latin – and discussed the views of both medieval and humanist historiographers on the basis of excerpts from their works. The margins of his work are strewn with exact source references, ‘wholly against the custom – or rather: fallacy – of many people’, precisely as Dousa had promised in his introduction to the vernacular verse chronicle by Melis Stoke, printed in 1591: ‘When you will read [my works of history], this poem will often come to mind, or even tickle your ears, particularly when I have led my argument to a testimony, by which we prove the truth on the basis of authentic records’.4

Assuming that Snoy and Dousa were representative of their respective generations of historians in Holland, one has reason to wonder what developments might have occurred in the intervening period that caused the complete reversal of attitudes towards the local historiographical tradition and the appearance of a new canon of historiography. In this article, the hypothesis will be brought forward that the transition from one attitude to the other was accompanied by underlying changes in the historians’ institutional and political context, and it will be argued that Hadrianus Junius, and especially his Batavia, played a key role in the shift to a new historiographical canon in a new environment. In addition, it will be shown how the work of Junius himself was given canonical status by the edition and evaluation of the

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4 H.L. Spiegel, ed., Hollandtsche riim-kroniik inhoudende de gheschiedenissen der graven van Hollandt tot het iaer MCCCV, door enen wiens naeme noch onbekent is, voor 286 iaren beschreven, Amsterdam, 1591, sig. (:)ijij: ‘Welck als ghy lesen sult, zult dicwijl u te voren / Doen comen dit gedicht: jae kitting in d’ooren. / Bysonder, als ick deez tot oircond’ heb beleydt / Int gunt wy maiken wair deur autentijk bescheydt…Recht jegens het gebruyc, of misverstandt van veelcn’.