

is. Kastelen, al of niet inclusief heerlijkheid, hebben onder dezelfde naam soms naast elkaar bestaan, op grond waarvan zich dan ook twee 'heren' manifesteerden. Bij voorbeelden als Vliet (Bisdom en Barchman Wuytiers) en Woudenberg (Hooft en Taets van Amerongen) ontbreken beide laatstgenoemden in de lijst. En waar is een bewering op gebaseerd dat wanbeheer en uitbuiting slechts bij hoge uitzondering voorkomen omdat deze nooit in het financiële voordeel van de eigenaar zouden zijn? Zat de wereld maar zo rationeel in elkaar, dan zouden er immers weinig misstanden zijn. Maar ook weinig stof voor historici om over te schrijven!

Egbert Wolleswinkel

- <sup>1</sup> De voorzitter van de Hoge Raad van Adel berekende bij het in ontvangst nemen (d.d. Amsterdam 27 nov. 2007) van een van de eerste exemplaren van het eerstgenoemde boek, dat vanaf de oprichting van de Raad in 1814 tot heden toe van alle leden 65 % een samengestelde geslachtsnaam droeg en maar liefst 77 % van alle voorzitters. Bij de secretarissen, voor wie adeldom geen voorwaarde voor benoeming is, was het percentage 'slechts' 45 %.
- <sup>2</sup> Kees Bruin, 'Wat heet dubbel; de sanering van dubbele namen rond de Tweede Wereldoorlog', *De Gids* (1999) 102-111.
- <sup>3</sup> F. de Josselin de Jong, 'Samengestelde geslachtsnamen', *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, III (1949) 11-72; IV (1950) 205; XII (1958) 65-80.
- <sup>4</sup> *Nederlands repertorium van familienamen*, I-XIV (1963-1988). In 2009 geactualiseerd op [www.meertens.knaw.nl/info](http://www.meertens.knaw.nl/info)
- <sup>5</sup> *Gens nostra*, II (1947) 185-187.
- <sup>6</sup> C.E.G. ten Houte de Lange, *Repertorium familiewapens van bekende Nederlandse geslachten. Een overzicht van de wapens van de adel, het patriciaat en aanverwante geslachten van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* ('s-Gravenhage-Rotterdam, 2001).
- <sup>7</sup> Koninklijk Besluit d.d. 6 okt. 1997 (*Staatsblad* 463). De wijzigingsbesluiten van 20 jan. 2001 (*Stb.* 42) en van 29 okt. 2002 (*Stb.* 531) hebben geen wezenlijke verandering gebracht in het hier behandelde artikel.
- <sup>8</sup> De wetgever was kennelijk minder bezorgd om het verdwijnende verband van adellijke geslachtsnamen en de daarbij behorende titulatuur waar impliciet de mogelijkheid ontstond de (adellijke) geslachtsnaam van de moeder aan de kinderen door te geven. Zie in dit verband de gesignaleerde discrepantie in het jaarverslag over 2008 (ten geleide) van de Hoge Raad van Adel. [www.hogeraadvanadel.nl/actueel.php](http://www.hogeraadvanadel.nl/actueel.php) (geraadpleegd 30 okt. 2009).
- <sup>9</sup> G.R. de Groot, 'Namen op drift', *Burgerzaken & recht*, XI (2004) 212-217 (de casus García Avello).
- <sup>10</sup> F.C.J. Ketelaar, *Oude zakelijke rechten vroeger, nu en in de toekomst* (Leiden, 1978), met literatuurvermelding; idem, 'De notaris als archivaris van oude zakelijke rechten: de toekomst van het verleden', *Symposium* [over het notariaat t.g.v. het afscheid van mr. J.T. Anema als notaris in 2006] (Rotterdam, 2007).
- <sup>11</sup> V.A.M. van der Burg, 'Heerlijkheden na 1848', *Virtus. Jaarboek voor adelsgeschiedenis*, XI (2004) 203-207.
- <sup>12</sup> *De Hoge Raad van Adel. Geschiedenis en werkzaamheden* ('s-Gravenhage 1966), 203-206. Koninklijk Besluit d.d. 20 febr. 1816, nr. 69.
- <sup>13</sup> *De Hoge Raad van Adel*, 209-210.
- <sup>14</sup> Ketelaar, *Oud zakelijke rechten*, 20-30, 11-113, 133-135.
- <sup>15</sup> Het beleid van de Hoge Raad van Adel ten aanzien van de bevestiging van heerlijkheidswapens werd uitvoeriger gepubliceerd in *De Nederlandsche Leeuw*, CXXI (2004) 396-399.



## ROYALS, NOBLES AND CONFIDANTS

### Case-studies chronicling the courts of France, England and the Low Countries (1649-1718)

David Onnekink, *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite: The Career of Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland* (1649-1709) (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007, 322 p., ill.); Georgia J. Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and the Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008, 336 p., ill.)

*The Anglo-Dutch Favourite* by David Onnekink and *The Triumph of Pleasure* by Georgia J. Cowart, two recent publications, direct their gaze towards the courts of William III (in Great-Britain and the Low Countries) and Louis XIV (in Paris and Versailles). In *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite* the protagonist is Hans Willem Bentinck, earl of Portland, close confidant of William



Diepenheim, place of birth of Hans Willem Bentinck (photo by author)

III. Bentinck's and William's renowned adversary Louis XIV takes centre stage in *The Triumph of Pleasure*. It is, however, only in a circumvent way that the latter book deals with the French king. The musicologist Georgia J. Cowart concentrates on the arts – for the most part various forms of stage arts – during the realm of Louis XIV, and sheds light on 'the politics of power and pleasure'. Refreshingly, she focuses on the various strategies artists pursued vis-à-vis the well-known Royal propaganda, instead of this absolutist propaganda machine itself. The historian David Onnekink tackles court life in Great-Britain and the Low Countries during the same time period in a markedly different way. Onnekink has written a thorough and knowledgeable, as well as a long-awaited (its precursor dates back to 1924), political biography of Hans Willem Bentinck. Both books subject traditional narratives to a subtle and nuanced revisionism. Through the lens of cultural and political developments, power relations between the king – whose power, it becomes once again clear, was anything but unchallenged – and the wider nobility (as well as other elites) come to light.

David Onnekink, though undoubtedly contributing to the recent biographical turn, presents his book (based on his MA- and PhD-thesis) as 'a case study in Williamite policy', instead of a biography. Investigating 'the role of the favourite within the Anglo-Dutch union', he moves beyond the illustrious Glorious Revolution, taking seriously Jonathan Israel's proposition that instead of a narrow British focus, the history of William III should be situated within a wider European context.<sup>1</sup> William III's recent biographers Wout Troost and Tony Claydon already took up this challenge and discussed both Great Britain and the Low Countries. However, Onnekink argues, they considered neither the joint enterprise of the two countries nor the significance of various political developments occurring in other parts of north-western Europe for the course of events in England.<sup>2</sup> According to Onnekink, in 1688, it was not so much England

that William worried about, but the succession crises in Germany (Palatine, Cologne) and the war in Flanders. Bentinck's correspondence of that period reflects this concern and the bearings these international developments had on the political reality concerning Ireland and Scotland.

Onnekink does not only base himself on the correspondence of William III and Bentinck disclosed by Nicolas Japikse<sup>3</sup> (now published online); he also consulted documents in Scottish and French archives that have so far been overlooked. His account is chronological but – and this is an achievement – it reads as a thematically organised book. Assuming much of the history of the reign of William III to be common knowledge for his audience, Onnekink only relates this history in so far it concerns Bentinck.

Contemporary opinions and estimations of Bentinck distilled by Onnekink from letters and other primary sources can hardly be called flattering. Bentinck was believed to be a 'wooden fellow', 'a dull animal', and 'as great a dince as ever I knew'. Onnekink surmises that 'not even Portland's associates had a high opinion of his intelligence'. Curiously, this impression does not correlate entirely with the picture of the man that the book conjures up. Onnekink portrays him as a competent and confident soldier and, albeit not a cunning and streetwise diplomat, at least as a fairly capable one. For the most part of his adult life William III trusted Bentinck more than he trusted any other man; and this was not, so it appears, on account of childhood friendship alone. Stephen Baxter reduced Bentinck as William's male-nurse, Japikse on the other hand puffed him up as the king's alter-ego. Onnekink wisely steers clear of both ends of the spectrum, yet concludes perhaps a little too safely that he was 'neither insignificant nor omnipotent'.

Bentinck is continually referred to in the book as William's 'mouthpiece'. He functioned as a gate keeper to William III; it was only through Bentinck that other courtiers, diplomats and politicians could see the King. 'Benting up-locks / His King in a box / And you see him no more till supper', was one of the rhymes that circulated at the time.<sup>4</sup> Bentinck was not an independent mind. In Cabinet Council sessions he played no important part, being present simultaneously with, and in support of, William III, rather than operating (semi-)independently. His epicentre was the Royal Household, not Parliament. Seeing Bentinck was William's (guarding) confidant, Bentinck was loved by few and 'accused of a standard repertoire of vices'. He absorbed the critique that concerned William III, but that people did not dare to express openly. This anti-favourite rhetoric – traditionally referring to sodomy in England, to excesses of power in Holland – has been taken too much at face-value by previous historians, Onnekink argues. The oft-repeated and persistent assertion that William III's and Bentinck's relationship was physical as much as cerebral, is also seen by the author in the light of the notoriously offensive pamphlet-war.

The favourite was generally held to be arrogant, corrupt and greedy. The accusations in Bentinck's case were worse still, being a member of the 'Dutch junto', or the 'cabal of Dutchmen'. It caused offence that this stranger, believed to be of humble background, became Baron of Cirencester, Viscount Woodstock and Earl of Portland. Having started out by merely 'fetching the slippers' of the prince, he was subsequently created Groom of the Stool, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Keeper of the Privy Purse and superintendant of the royal palaces. Onnekink notes that Bentinck was, for a long time at least, the only man to be elevated by William III into the nobility. 'The Archbishop of Toledo' (who was notoriously wealthy) alias 'Groot-Hans' was actually not excessively immodest according to Onnekink; his houses, for one thing, were in no way palatial. True, Bentinck returned lands he had been granted by William III in the 1690s, but only after mounting protest against this endowment. The Irish grants he shrewdly bestowed on Lord Woodstock, his son. His houses may have been somewhat inconspicuous, even still, the sheer number of them, the vast wealth he accumulated and the expensive taste he acquired, suggests the pamphleteers may not have been too far off on this account.

While challenging the greedy image of Bentinck that has gone down in history, the author at the same time puts his supposedly humble background into perspective. 'Myn-heer' Bentinck,



'Zéphire et Flore', by Jean-Baptiste Lully's sons Louis and Jean-Louis was first performed in the Palais Royale in Paris in 1688; the opening dialogue in which Louis XIV was praised was set in the gardens of the Trianon (*photo by author*)

as he was dubbed, in actual fact descended from an old noble family, as is well known to Onnekink's Dutch audience. His rise to power, perhaps surprising considering he was not the oldest son, followed from his role as William's page, a role he took up when both boys were just about fourteen. It was only from the late 1670s onwards, it is contended, that Bentinck became William's closest confidant. Much has been made of the period of William's spell of the smallpox, when Bentinck famously stayed with him, thus risking his own life, yet Onnekink relegates such accounts to the realm of panegyric literature. Nevertheless, Bentinck's loyalty to William comes across loud and clear throughout the book. Interesting in this context is Bentinck's pronouncement that he identified with Ganymede, cup-bearer of the Gods. Other self-observations include a reference to his obstinate nature and his self-image as a soldier. Like William III, he fought a war that was religious in origin. Uncharacteristically disagreeing with Israel, Onnekink states that 'Bentinck made it very clear that the main reason for the intended invasion of England in 1688 was that James could expect a favourable parliament [...] after which Protestantism would be overturned'. Not coincidentally, it was when war had grinded to a halt that Bentinck started to think of his retirement. Bentinck's decision to step down – against the explicit wishes of William III – is unique in the history of the favourite who usually at some point fell from grace and was replaced by another. It is often believed this was also Bentinck's fate following the rise, during William's later life, of that other favourite, Arnold Joost van Keppel. Onnekink paints another picture. Bentinck was undoubtedly jealous of Keppel, however, he stepped down for various different reasons, most of which were quite unrelated to Keppel. All the same, the accounts of the antagonism between Bentinck and Keppel – or the 'impertinent puppy' in the words of Bentinck – are quite hilarious.

Apart from the fact that the war had ended, one of the other reasons behind Bentinck's retirement was related to his not all that successful embassy to Paris in 1698, ostensibly the pinnacle of his career. 'It was widely believed that Louis was trying to blind the Ambassador by the brilliance of his reception, of which Portland himself was aware, although 'I admit that if everything that I have seen from the King's person is not sincere it is a comedy well played'.

The 'splendour' – the spectacle, pleasure and propaganda – that Bentinck experienced in Paris is the subject of Georgia J. Cowart's *The Triumph of Pleasure*. Like *The Anglo-Dutch Favourite* it relates a chronological narrative made up of case-studies, which is in this case dedicated to various arts-forms and their protagonists. The at times dazzling number of arts-forms include court ballet with *ballet a entrées* and *vers de personnage*, mascarades, *comédie-ballet*, operas or *tragédie en musique*, opera-ballet, carnival, *commedia dell'arte*, as well as the visual arts; the protagonists include De Benserade, Molière, Quinault, Jean-Baptiste Lully and his sons Louis and Jean-Louis, Campra and Watteau. By closely examining these various arts-forms as well as their producers and spectators, Cowart relates a different story of the reign of Louis XIV than the one that is traditionally heard. Here no all-powerful sun-king but a monarch challenged by both artists and audiences, who cautiously and ambiguously voiced objection to the king's hunger for combat. Cowart mentions Jeroen Duindam en Peter Burke who took issue with the legendary and enduring image of the absolute monarch Louis XIV. It is Cowart who questions not just the power of Louis XIV, but also the success of his propaganda machine that is believed to have been at the centre of this absolutist image.

Cowart commences her book in the year 1651 when Louis XIV, the young king, was still an enthusiast participant in the French genre of court ballet. Court ballet presented a 'utopian noble world', which in the mid-seventeenth century no longer harked back to valorous battles, heroic war efforts and duels; the 'happy isle' now centred on peace, pleasure and plenty. It was in the next decade, in the 1660s, with the rise of a more mature and, after the death of Mazarin, more independent king, that royal propaganda became part and parcel of court ballet. Cowart notes that when the king at this point in time participated in ballets his roles were in some instances gallant, yet they were seldom comic and, most importantly, they were increasingly absolutist. More apparent still was the fact that instead of the enthusiast participant he had been, Louis XIV now became foremost a patron of the arts. He held a firm grip on the arts through the academies that he either established or controlled, which 'dedicated taste in the service of the king's *gloire*'. This centralisation of the arts, Cowart argues, was subtly undermined through lamentation, satire and parody, paradoxically by those very men whom Louis relied on for the production of art and propaganda. Undermining the king's propaganda became easier when the arena of the arts, with time, moved from court to the Paris theatres. Instead of Jean-Baptiste Lully and Charles Lebrun, André Campra and Antoine Watteau did not depend on Louis' patronage, hence they were more free to voice a, still veiled, opinion.

Besides the king, it now became important to please a wider audience, consisting of nobles as well as other elites. It was, Cowart stresses, a 'noble aesthetic' that had come to fruition both at court and in the salons that this audience demanded and obtained. The various theatres, involved in the *guerre des théâtre* in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, were parodying court as much as each other; however, a similar ideological position was adopted by these theatres. The plays voiced a need for a new society; *Le triomphe des arts* (1700) by Michel de la Barre and Antoine Houdar de la Motte is taken as a case in point. Cowart writes: 'Through the omission of the art of war and the showcasing of the arts of architecture, poetry, painting, music, and dance, *Le triomphe des arts* presents the united arts of the stage ballet as a utopian alternative to Louis XIV's arts of war and flattery'. It inverted, it is argued, absolutist praise; it equally inverted the idea of the liberal arts that flourishes through royal patronage, as well as monarchical flattery and the idea of triumph. Cowart distinguishes the cabal around the Dauphin and that of his son the Duc de Bourgogne as oppositional factions or counter-courts that were much frequented by members of the nobility. The Dauphin provided a haven of hedonism and artistic expertise in which two of Lully's sons, Louis and Jean-Louis, played a prominent role. The Duc de Bourgogne, to which La Motte can be linked, surrounded himself with reformists who busied themselves with peace, pacifism and the predicaments of the poor. The art coming from or inspired by these reformist centres bridged, Cowart believes, seventeenth century libertinism and eighteenth century Enlightenment thought.



Whilst Louis XIV is famous for his dying words ‘I loved war too much’ – a war that was equally Bentinck’s *raison d’être* – it was peace that the people in his realm were longing for. During the French-Dutch wars of the 1670s, the artists through their operas tried to persuade Louis XIV to focus on the pleasures of peace instead of war. By staging Apollo and the Muses vis-à-vis Fame, or Venus opposite Mars, the art- and peace-loving king was juxtaposed with a king infatuated with war. *Cadmus et Hermione a tragédie en musique* by Jean-Baptiste Lully and Philippe Quinault was written during the war with Holland in 1673 and portrays Louis XIV as Apollo, yet the dedication laments: ‘Mais je viens vainement vous en offrir les charmes; / Vous ne tournez les yeux que du côté des armes’. More specifically even, it is observed that France is not reliant on territorial expansions as it is sufficiently grand with Louis XIV as king. Lully and Quinault plead the king, in vain it would transpire, for *tranquillité*.

Hanneke Ronnes

- <sup>1</sup> J.I. Isreal, ed., *The Anglo-Dutch Moment. Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World impact* (Cambridge, 1991).
- <sup>2</sup> W. Troost, *Stadhouder-koning Willem III. Een Politieke Biografie* (Hilversum, 2001); T. Claydon, *William III. Profiles in Power* (London, 2002).
- <sup>3</sup> N. Japikse, *Correspondentie van Willem III en van Hans Willem Bentinck, eersten graaf van Portland* (5 dln.; 's-Gravenhage, 1927-1937).
- <sup>4</sup> D. Onnekink, ‘Craignez honte. Hans Willem Bentinck, graaf van Portland en diens Engelse jaren’, *Virtus. Jaarboek voor adelsgeschiedenis*, VIII (2001) 20-34.



## ADELSGESCHIEDENIS OF FAMILIEHISTORIE?

Ursula den Tex, *Erfgenamen. Het verhaal van een Nederlandse familie van aanzien en vermogen* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2009, 392 p.)

Eigen geschiedenis is in. Nadat alweer zo'n tien jaar geleden Geert Mak het spits afbeet met zijn *De eeuw van mijn vader*<sup>1</sup>, is in de tussentijd een hele reeks vergelijkbare boeken verschenen. Veel van deze boeken zijn bijna meer therapeutisch dan historisch. Judith Koelemeijers *Het zwijgen van Maria Zachea*<sup>2</sup> houdt zich vooral bezig met de geestesgesteldheid van haar grootmoeder. Eenzelfde achtergrond geldt voor Jansens *Het Pauperparadijs*<sup>3</sup>, om maar een even succesvol boek als dat van Mak te noemen. *Het Pauperparadijs* is een zoektocht naar de wortels van een generatielange *Verelendung*, die pas na de Tweede Wereldoorlog doorbroken werd. Het eindigt in het doorprikken van de gekoesterde mythe dat een door de neus geboorde erfenis aan de wieg stond van die *Verelendung*.

Met haar nieuwste boek *Erfgenamen* probeert de voormalig Vrij Nederland-journaliste Ursula den Tex een combinatie te maken van *De eeuw van mijn vader* en *Het pauperparadijs*, door een familiegeschiedenis te presenteren die niet alleen draait om de lotgevallen van vijf generaties Den Tex, maar ook de (min of meer) wijde wereld daarbij betreft. Eerder al had zij met *Anna baronesse Bentinck*<sup>4</sup> een mooi en lezenswaardig boek gepubliceerd, dat niet alleen een levensbeschrijving van haar eigen moeder geeft maar *en passant* ook een interessante inkijk biedt in de veranderingen in de leefomstandigheden en mentaliteit van de generatie adellijke vrouwen die opgroeide voor de Eerste Wereldoorlog en voor, tijdens en na de Tweede Wereldoorlog de modernisering van de Nederlandse elite beleefde. Die modernisering werd weliswaar afgedwongen door toevaligheden als het dienstbodetekort – waardoor de barones zelf moest gaan koken – of de Tweede Wereldoorlog – waardoor ze er alleen voor kwam te staan – maar vond ook zijn pendant in een veranderende houding ten aanzien van de eigen cultuur en de eigen echtgenoot.

In *Erfgenamen* komen deze echtgenoot en zijn voorgelacht aan bod. Zo volgen we de levens van vijf generaties Den Tex. We beginnen met de Betuwse boerenzoon Cornelis den Tex,