

Jarenlang is het onderzoek aangaande Hendrik van Bommel gemonopoliseerd door de predikant F.S. Knipscheer. Zijn artikelen, zoals die van 1941 tot 1954 waren te volgen in het *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* en blijkbaar door die redactie als serieus werk geaccepteerd, gingen steeds meer werken aan Bomelius toeschrijven. Nu komt terecht de nuchtere reactie. Maar het blijft de vraag of nu de slinger weer zo ver naar de andere kant moet doorslaan.

O.J. de Jong

G. Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands 1559-1659. Ten Studies* (Glasgow: Fontana-Collins, 1979, 288 blz., ISBN 000635405x).

This addition to Geoffrey Parker's impressive body of titles, a collection of ten of his essays, brilliant, vivid and thoroughly readable though most of them are, will inevitably meet, as has much of his previous work, with a somewhat mixed reception. Indeed, except for his first book, *The Army of Flanders* (1972) which deservedly received high praise from all sides as a solid piece of research, breaking much new ground and well-written into the bargain, his output has been greeted in a remarkable, even slightly, bewildering mixture of terms. This is particularly true of the *Dutch Revolt* (1977) which, on the one hand, was welcomed with glowing admiration, especially in Britain, as an outstanding and comprehensive study of the subject while on the other, it met, notably in the Netherlands, on the part of several important scholars with a barage of thoroughly dampening criticism. While it is by no means wholly inconceivable that part of this extraordinary discrepancy is attributable to the lack of expertise in the field of certain of the British reviewers, the major element in the explanation is surely the unevenness of Parker himself. He is, without question, a historian of exceptional abilities, erudite on a wide-ranging front and full of novel ideas and intuitions. Yet, at the same time, he is entirely capable of being careless, superficial and even, on occasion, downright slap-dash. Bursting with stimulating insights, he is also prone to dish up blunders which at times are seriously misleading. While some reviewers, as happens in such cases, tend to concentrate on the good and others on the bad qualities, the essential difficulty is to arrive at a fair and balanced judgment of the whole.

The most important batch among these studies is the group in which the author seeks to place the Dutch Revolt against Spain firmly and adequately in its European setting. The very best of the essays indeed is the first, 'Spain, her Enemies and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1559-1648', originally published in the journal *Past and Present*. Parker's claim that Dutch historians have in the past failed to achieve a proper interpretative framework for the Revolt because of their habit of concentrating narrowly on what was happening in the Low Countries is perfectly justified. It is simply no use endeavouring to make sense of the various phases of the Revolt without first enquiring into the shifting pattern of Spanish priorities in international affairs. In the early stages of the Netherlands crisis, the most important of these external factors was the Spanish-Ottoman confrontation in the Mediterranean. Parker demonstrates that almost every significant occurrence in the Low Countries from the end of Charles V's reign until the late 1570s was profoundly influenced by the Spanish entanglement with the Turks. The first half of the essay is consistently excellent. Unfortunately, as is usual with Parker, as one proceeds to the later period, after 1609, the grip markedly loosens and frequency of error mounts. If one badly erroneous contention in the first version of the essay, concerning the effect of

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the outbreak of war between France and Spain in 1635 on the Spanish-Dutch conflict, has now largely been put right, several serious slips remain. To regard the Mantuan Succession Crisis of 1628-1631 as a diversion that saved the Dutch Republic from a Spanish plan of reconquest of which Spinola's capture of Breda (1625) was part is almost tantamount to confessing that one has not read the Spanish papers of state of these years relating to the Dutch. For anyone who has can not possibly fail to know that the army of Flanders was placed and remained strictly on a defensive footing after the fall of Breda, fully three years before the Mantuan crisis, or that from its inception the Breda campaign had nothing to do with any wider plan, or indeed that there was no such thing as a Spanish plan of reconquest of the United Provinces in the 1620s.

The remaining essays dealing with the European setting of the Eighty Years War mostly constitute a similar mixture of fine work marred by bad. Certain passages such as those dealing with Philip II's financial difficulties and their bearing on Low Countries developments are indispensable but elsewhere the author perceptibly flags sinking periodically into the most astounding errors. To claim a 'remarkable consistency of outlook' as between Philip II and Olivares on the religious issue in the Netherlands, for example, is totally devoid of sense. The issue in the eyes of Philip II was to prevent at all costs the exercise on Dutch territory of any form of protestantism. For Olivares, the point (though in his case hardly a very pressing one) was to secure the wholly dissimilar object of toleration on Dutch territory for catholicism!

As regards the specifically economic as distinct from financial impact of the Spanish-Dutch struggle, Parker generally tends to be well beneath his best. Indeed here, as the footnotes amply confirm, the author has relatively much less grounding in either Dutch or Spanish sources. In discussing the cost of the long conflict to the Dutch, for instance, he argues that only the colonial sector of the Dutch economy benefitted while the rest, owing to high taxation, Spanish measures and other factors, suffered considerably. But in a state in which vested economic interests were so influential, had matters really been thus, the States General's policy of continuing the war until 1646 would not only have met with far more resistance than it did but would have been impossible. The colonial interest was of only limited importance compared with the European carrying trade or the home industries. The reality is both more complex and more interesting in that certain other economic interests including several industries also profited from the war. Equally, on the Spanish side, it is hard to avoid having grave doubts about the conclusions put forward. Here, Parker largely echoes the traditional approach and refers to the 'virtual destruction of the Castilian economy in order to finance the war against the Dutch'. But is it at all likely, even in a state constituted as was the Spanish monarchy, that economic ruin can have been deliberately courted for so long and so obstinately? In any case, there is no denying that in 1621 Philip IV's ministers advised resumption of the Dutch conflict in part precisely in order to preserve the Castilian economy from destruction and by no means should the historian be too ready to assume that there was no reasonable basis for their collective view. But then, as is the case with virtually all the themes touched on in this stimulating book, this is a subject which requires a good deal of further investigation.

Finally, in the contributions dealing with military history proper one is on more consistently firm and rewarding ground. The principal piece among this group, 'Mutiny and Discontent in the Spanish Army of Flanders, 1572-1607', again published originally in *Past and Present*, is by any reckoning a masterly article and one which will long hold an honoured place in historical literature. From it, one gains a most vivid impression of the workings of the Spanish Army of Flanders and a wealth of detail on the way of life of the

troops. Equally, the revision to Michael Roberts' views put forward in 'The Military Revolution, 1560-1660', brings the entire subject of early modern warfare, tactics and armies into a more balanced perspective with Spanish military practice and experience assuming a fittingly central place in the debate. One can only applaud the author's pointing out, for instance, that it makes little sense to try to evaluate Prince Maurice of Nassau's military innovations without relating these to the various changes adopted by the Spanish and a number of Italian standing armies during the course of the previous century.

Jonathan I. Israël

H. Bongers, *Leven en werk van D.V. Coornhert* (Amsterdam: G.A. van Oorschot, 1978, 428 blz., f59,50).

Haast even lang als Bruno Becker, aan wiens nagedachtenis dit boek is opgedragen, heeft nu H. Bongers zich gewijd aan Coornhert. In 1941 publiceerde hij over dezelfde een 'Studie over een nuchter en vroom Nederlander'. In 1954 kwam hij met een proefschrift over 'De motivering van de godsdienstvrijheid bij D.V. Coornhert'. Hij was al lang de aangewezen man om zowel de algemeen belangstellenden alsook de vaklieden te dienen met zijn visie. Die aanwijzing is gelukkig ook officieel gebeurd: dit nieuwe boek is geschreven in opdracht van het ministerie van CRM, en de vorm is de inhoud waardig. Dat is zeker een gelukwens waard. Het feit dat Becker nooit zelf zo'n omvangrijke biografie heeft gegeven, stimuleerde Bongers kennelijk. Hij heeft hier het resultaat van Beckers vele onderzoeken en van zijn eigen studies kunnen harmoniseren en samenvatten.

Wie jarenlang met eenzelfde onderwerp bezig is, verandert soms ongemerkt van methode en notering. Bij proefschriften komt dat dan meestal wel in het overleg met de promotor aan het licht en is dat nog te verhelpen. Dit boek draagt ook de sporen van een lange weg. Soms zijn namen (en voorletters!) wat wisselend gespeld. De opbouw van het boek is wat ongelijk. Deel I, over Coornherts levensloop, is wel onderverdeeld maar niet in hoofdstukken, en het krijgt aan het einde het volle pakket noten. Deel II over Coornherts denkbeelden telt acht hoofdstukken die elk van hun eigen noten zijn voorzien. Maar wat ook veranderde, niet de bewondering voor Coornhert, niet de overtuiging dat hij, en hij alleen, het bij het rechte eind had temidden van ieder die hem toen bestreed of later beoordeelde. Dat geeft aan het boek een zeer persoonlijk karakter zoals ook de opstellen van Becker die hadden.

Het aandeel van Becker in dit nieuwe boek is in de noten precies verantwoord voor zover het gedrukte stukken van hem betreft. Maar Bongers deelt mee, ook de inhoud van 23 dozen te hebben gebruikt die in de Amsterdamse Universiteitsbibliotheek staan. Dat blijkt verder niet in de noten. Met een enkele nummervwijzing was dat toch mogelijk geweest? Het boek is gebaseerd op literatuur, en een lijst daarvan is uit de noten wel te reconstrueren. Archivalia zijn niet geraadpleegd, zo lijkt het, maar allerlei archiefkenners hebben de auteur bijgestaan met hun vondsten.

Het levensverhaal van Coornhert is ook van elders bekend. Van Beckers hand hebben we er zelfs een, in het *NVBW*, gelukkig nog in deel X uit 1937 waarin hij de meeste literatuur over Coornhert opnoemde (kol. 207-215). Dit meest toegankelijke en waarschijnlijk ook meest bekend overzichtje is in Bongers boek wat merkwaardig weggestopt in noot 27 op bladzijde 159, en enkel daar genoemd omdat Bongers het op een puntje niet met Becker eens is: Coornherts leerlingenschap bij Basius, waarvan Becker een leraarschap wilde maken. Hier lijkt Bongers gelijk te hebben. Het blijft merkwaardig dat Coornhert zo'n laatbloeiër