

geen last meer van: die wist niet eens welke gegevens Boulliau voor een betrouwbare horoscoop nodig had. Belangrijker nog was de twijfel van de Inquisitie aan Boulliau's orthodoxie. Op aanraden van zijn Romeinse vriend dom Christophe Dupuy bleef hij tijdens zijn Italiëreis in Florence en vermeed hij het gebied van de kerkelijke staat om niet in dezelfde gevangenis als Galilei te eindigen. Van Florence ging hij naar Smyrna en Constantinopel, waar hij zijn proeven en experimenten voortzette. Hij vond er weliswaar niet de kennis die hij verwachtte maar er ging wel een nieuwe wereld voor hem open. De nieuwsgierige Boulliau had op Descartes voor dat hij veel meer gewicht hechtte aan experimenten dan aan redeneringen. Hij behoort al tot het baconiaanse universum. Tegelijk behoevde hem dit voor overdrijvingen of al te gewaagde stellingen. Misschien is die al vroeg aangeleerde voorzichtigheid wel Boulliau's grootste handicap geweest. De geniale trekken die hij zeker had bleven daardoor in een veredelde vorm van geleerd ambacht steken. Nellen heeft Boulliau dan ook precies het monument gegeven dat hem toekomt: het naamregister achterin leest als een Baedeker van de geleerde wereld, en wie het boek uit heeft, staat verbluft dat een zo rijk geschakeerd, ambitieus en vol leven zo stil als een nachtkars kon uitgaan. Ook dat was vroeg-moderne wetenschap.

Willem Frijhoff

W. Frijhoff, *Wegen van Evert Willemsz.: een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf 1607-1647* (SUN-Memoria; Nijmegen: SUN, 1995, 928 blz., f89,50, ISBN 90 6168 402 1).

This remarkable book has its origins in the realisation that two apparently unconnected episodes of Dutch seventeenth-century history — the visionary experiences of a fifteen-year old orphan in Woerden in the early 1620s and the career of one of the first ministers of the Reformed Church in New Netherland — were in fact intimately related as the religiously-inspired orphan, Evert Willemsz., became the minister, Ds. Everhardus Bogardus. The author has aimed to produce a 'biography in context'; this was perhaps the only practicable option as very little is known about Even's earlier life, and relatively little about the period between his brief local notoriety and his re-emergence in a prominent rôle in the new American settlement. His aim is to show not only how a particular individual was shaped by the conditions of his time, but also how he could create new opportunities for himself through a process of interaction with his cultural environment. This ambitious project necessitates an interrogation of the social and cultural context of the various episodes of Even's life, and it is this investigation which has made possible a large book about a man about whom relatively little is known.

The first part of the book (nearly 500 pages) concentrates on the two visionary episodes of 1622-1623 and their context. Next comes a brief section on Even's period as a *ziekentrooster* in Mouree, and then the second major focus of the study, Bogardus in New Netherland. Important themes in the first part are the setting in Woerden, Even's family and social background, and the beginnings of reformed pietism in the Republic. Frijhoff argues that the religious situation in Woerden was crucial: the newly-victorious contraremonstrants were firmly backed by the town government but faced by a largely-hostile community, partly lutheran and partly remonstrant. Even's visions could be represented as emblematic of the truth of the contraremonstrant position, as well as being in content an expression of orthodox pietism. The dynamic element of this part of the story is the way in which Evert was able to use his experiences to move from his artisan origins to a more elevated place in society through Latin school and the university of Leiden, ending up with a new persona, the latinised Everhardus Bogardus. The Mouree period is almost all context, for lack of other evidence, but Bogardus' career in North America offers the opportunity to match context with more conventional narrative. In particular,

the knowledge of his earlier life and experiences — not available to previous historians — is used to throw light on the minister's attitudes and perceptions in these turbulent years.

The most successful part of this study is perhaps the subtle examination of Evert's visions and their contemporary meaning. Frijhoff places these episodes in the context of other cases of possessed orphans in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and notes that in this case no suspicion of witchcraft or satanic influence seems to have occurred. His chief concern is not whether the experiences were genuine or not, but the more interesting question as to the meaning they had for Evert himself and for others at the time. The content of Evert's angelic messages was banal — a simple insistence on repentance and the need for a sinful society to turn back to God — and while the impact in Woerden itself was considerable, the affair seems to have made little impact elsewhere. Although the author does not suggest this, it may well be that, outside the rather peculiar situation of Woerden, such a message was already sounding somewhat anachronistic in the dynamic Holland of the early decades of the seventeenth century.

Indeed, one criticism that might be made of the book as a whole is its failure to recognise the extent to which the rôle of religion in Dutch society was changing in these years. Frijhoff's exposition of the centrality of religion, and in particular of the relationship between church and civil authorities, often seems rather more appropriate to earlier periods or perhaps other parts of Europe than to Holland in particular at this time. One reason for this may be that both the young Evert Willemsz. and the mature Ds. Bogardus held a quasi-theocratic vision of church and society which was never realistic for the Dutch seventeenth century. In New Netherland, Bogardus seems to have had an exaggerated view of the social and constitutional importance which attached to a minister of the Reformed Church, and this brought him into conflict with the civil authorities represented by successive governors, Van Twiller and Kieft. The author has very little sympathy, perhaps with good reason, for either of the latter but their policies towards the church and its minister were consistent with regents' attitudes *in patria*. However much they may have been unworthy or incompetent in other respects, in this matter they would appear to have been exemplary of contemporary regent attitudes.

Another mild reservation is that the context does sometimes get a little out of hand. In the early chapters on Evert's background, the connections with the main subject are often rather tenuous: the journey is colourful and fascinating but sometimes takes a very long time to reach its goal. The West African *intermezzo* takes up nearly fifty pages, although almost nothing is known about Evert's time there, and even in New Netherland the sources for Bogardus himself are exiguous and great weight has again to be placed on background materials. If the reader sometimes finds him- or herself absorbed in an account of early seventeenth-century Dutch translations of English puritan moral tracts, or the early history of New Netherland, however, the experience is instructive and the relevance eventually becomes apparent.

To say that this work is only largely successful is to measure it by the ambitious standards laid down by the author himself in his introduction. By any other criterion it is a rich and rewarding book, and it is almost certainly the finest work of Dutch cultural history to appear in recent years.

J. L. Price

H. J. M. Nellen, E. Rabbie, ed., *Hugo Grotius theologian. Essays in honour of G. H. M. Posthumus Meyjes* (Studies in the history of christian thought LV; Leiden-New York-Kelven: E. J. Brill, 1994, ix + 274 biz., f135,-, ISBN 90 04 10000 8).

in 1988 publiceerde Posthumus Meyjes de tekst van Hugo Grotius' verloren gewaande maar door hem weer teruggevonden *Meletius sive de iis quae inter christianos conveniunt epistola*.