

HISTORY OF ZEELAND IN THE WORLD

VOLUME 2

Exploring the World from Zeeland

ARJAN VAN DIXHOORN AND MARIJN THIJS (EDS.)

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Preface

ARJAN VAN DIXHOORN AND MARIJN THIJS

In 2013, the *Familiefonds Hurgronje* (a charity foundation on the island of Walcheren), established a special chair in the History of Zeeland in the World, at Utrecht University. In 2018, the special chair was prolonged with another five years. The holder of the chair was charged to teach a course on the history of Zeeland at University College Roosevelt in Middelburg and engage in outreach activities in the area. In 2019, a first edited volume with student papers was published. This second volume presents sixteen papers written by students of the research seminar (taught since 2013) between 2016 and 2021. A few papers were written as bachelor papers or during a research internship. In line with the aim of the course, all papers are based on primary sources either from archives or libraries. The edited volumes have two aims: disseminating the most interesting results in the history of Zeeland achieved by students of the special chair, and showing the type of work that bachelor students at UCR can produce.

Like the first volume, this second volume has two sections. The papers in the first part study aspects of Zeeland's history, with most of them focusing on the region's position in world-wide networks of knowledge and information. A few papers were inspired by the history of tourism and new military history (both topics also taught at UCR). The papers in the first part have been organized in a chronological order. They discuss the history of the Scottish Nation in early modern Veere (Hulsmann), cultures of experimentation in early-eighteenth-century Zeeland (Den Hollander), the eighteenth-century tea-trade with China (Leijnse and Schijvenaars), the information networks of the Pensionary of Zeeland around 1795 (Halkes), the transition of the *Commercie Compagnie* of Middelburg (MCC) from a trading to an industrial company around 1800 (Beelen), the experiences of soldiers in the Napoleonic War and the Dutch-Belgian War (De Graaf and Ten Have), lobbying for a railway from

mid-nineteenth-century Zeeland (Van Willigen) the making of a museum in late nineteenth-century Middelburg (Van Selm), the rise of a women's movement in Zeeland (Van Lent), and the role of the medieval Lange Jan tower in the early-twentieth-century tourism of Middelburg (Frascadore). Most papers are based on archival material preserved in the *Zeeuws Archief*.

The papers in the second section of the volume focus on three institutions of learning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. They were written during the research seminar of 2019. This seminar focused on the role of learned societies in the history of knowledge, in the eighteenth century, in the context of the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the *Zeeuws Genootschap der Wetenschappen* (the Society of the Arts and Sciences of Zeeland), established in the city of Flushing in 1769. One of the papers from this edition of the course, on the international network surrounding the Zeeland society in the eighteenth-century, was separately published in the journal of this society.¹ The papers published here provide an international context to the role of learned societies in the history of knowledge around 1800: the first paper discusses the learned academy of Brussels during French rule around 1790 (Van Ysseldijk), the second investigates the *Institut d'Egypte* founded during the Napoleonic campaign in Egypt (Shamaa), and the final paper delves into the discussions on the Italian language in the *Accademia della Crusca* of Florence in the Napoleonic era (Bertoldini).

The papers in this volume bring together the various approaches in academic history writing that are also taught at UCR: social and economic history, political and military history, cultural history and more specifically also the history of tourism and the history of knowledge. In the introduction to this volume, the holder of the special chair in the History of Zeeland in the World discusses a series of cases from Zeeland's world-entangled history engaging with these various subfields; with particular attention to the shaping of the county of Zeeland in the 1300s (and its legacy both in Zeeland, but also, for example, in early modern Genoa). Since, in a 300-level (or third-year bachelor-level) research seminar the work by students should (ideally) be grounded in the expertise of the teacher, since 2013, the framework within which most papers were written

1 Judith Brouwer, "The Zeeuwsch Genootschap and the Formation of its Correspondence Network, 1766-1771," *Archief KZGW*, 2020, 97-122.

was the new historical field of the history of knowledge and information. This field grew out of the earlier social history of science, using many approaches from social and cultural history. The history of knowledge and information can also be seen as the result of a reflection (both philosophically, historically and politically) of the recognition that modern society had developed into a knowledge and information society; in which more than ever before, knowledge and information have become productive forces, alongside labor, capital and natural resources. The premise of the history of knowledge and information is that, although our society is certainly unique in its integration of explicit and theoretical knowledge in the everyday world of practice, all societies have been based on knowledge and information. Many papers in this volume investigate how trading, lobbying and other forms of human action are always intertwined with the use and making of knowledge and information.

The papers are presented here largely as they were submitted for grading at the end of their production process (be it in a course, during an internship, or as an individual project). They have been redacted only on language, stylistic aspects and formatting. The content of the papers, the interpretation of sources and argumentation, has not been altered. The editing process was coordinated by the holder of the special chair, Arjan van Dixhoorn, and Marijn Thijs, a professional journalist and editor, alumnus of UCR with a degree in journalism from the University of Groningen (and editor and contributor to volume one). A group of (former) UCR-students has assisted in the redaction of the papers. As a result of this redaction and peer-review-process, the readers will get a good sense of papers written by history students at UCR, bearing in mind that only the best papers have been selected. They were selected based on quality of interpretation, argumentation and originality of topic and thought. Obviously, then, the papers in this volume should be read as work-in-progress. They are certainly meant to inform, but also, in particular, to inspire future work.

This volume would never have come into existence without the support of the *Familiefonds Hurgronje* for the special chair in general and for the publication in particular. At the end of the special chair, with the inevitable ten-year-limit in sight, the holder of the special chair wishes to thank the members of the *Familiefonds*, the administrators and their representative on the chair's *curatorium* (supervisory board), Matthijs Snouck Hurgronje, for their generosity and support in the decade between 2013 and 2023. Special thanks also to colleagues at UCR for their support of the chair, and for making teaching at

our college such a pleasure. The students who took courses with the holder of the chair, in particular the students that took the research seminar or did individual research work, made teaching a great experience. Their critical but also curious attitude, their creative ideas and insights, their knowledge developed in the course of their education, have turned teaching at the university into what it should be: the students become the teachers, with the teacher learning just as much (or more) from the students than vice versa. Many of the papers presented here could not have been written without the support and advice from the staff at the *Zeeuws Archief*, the *Zeeuws Museum*, and the *Zeeuwse Bibliotheek*. The editors also wish to thank the students of the editorial board for their time and effort: Tim Beelen, Lucia Bertoldini, Clarissa Frascadore, Rayke van Lent, Tess Schijvenaars and Zoé van Ysseldijk.

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