

in de Republiek en bij uitbreiding over processen van identiteitsvorming, nationale beeldvorming, en de rol van mannelijkheid daarin in het algemeen. Maar daar beperkt Sturkenboom zich niet toe: steevast poogt ze ook om, vooral op basis van secundaire literatuur, na te gaan in welke sociale, economische en politieke realiteiten die beelden hun oorsprong hadden. Gezien de enorme spanwijdte van het boek – het biedt een prachtige alternatieve geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Republiek en haar plaats in de wereld doorheen drie eeuwen – is het onvermijdelijk dat Sturkenboom daarbij af en toe wat kort door de bocht gaat. Dat viel mij uiteraard vooral op bij

passages die dicht bij mijn eigen onderzoeksexpertise liggen: over sodomie en mannelijkheid kon het bijvoorbeeld wat subtieler (pp. 72-73), of over het concept ‘verinnerlijking’ (pp. 289-291, 365). In het algemeen legt Sturkenboom echter een bewonderenswaardige nuance aan de dag: de meerduidigheid van mannelijkheid, identiteiten en imago’s komt in dit magistrale werk voor het voetlicht. Het boek biedt in die zin een effectief tegengif voor de simplistische, veelal mannelijke geluiden die het publieke debat over de Nederlandse identiteit vaak domineren.

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Jonas van Tol, *Germany and the French Wars of Religion, 1560-1572* (Brill; Leiden, 2018) 276 p., ill., krt., €125,- ISBN 9789004330672

A German look on the Wars of Religion

This well informed and well written monography on the German repercussions of the French Wars of Religion results from a PhD thesis presented at the University of York in 2016. Jonas van Tol is now a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam, after having taught during two years at Leiden University. His research focusses on the transnational aspects of the confessional conflicts sparked by the Reformations, mainly in France and in the Netherlands. The German perspective, which the author develops as his central theme, is rarely dwelt upon in the quite abundant literature on religious violence in the 16th century. The major originality of his work, an important contribution to the current perception

of the ‘Wars of Religion’, lies clearly there, in the focus on the German princes, towns, armies and propagandists.

In order to be able to study the well-known story from this rather different point of view, Van Tol had to master many German sources, both archival resources and early modern printed material, from several major collections. He also used many manuscripts and prints from the *Bibliothèque nationale* de France, but unfortunately the rich secondary literature in French on the period is almost absent from the bibliography. This confirms again that the barriers between linguistic areas are difficult to overcome, even for young researchers with good knowledge of three

or four European languages and specializing in supranational political history.

The structure of Jonas van Tol's work is very coherent. He first recalls the major historiographical stages in the study of the international aspects of the French Wars of Religion, stressing the need to go 'beyond diplomatic history' and to include the study of political thought and discourse, of propaganda and its impact. An introductory chapter deals with the deeply rooted ties between France and the German Rhineland, among others within the high nobility. The second part explains how the difficult interconfessional Lutheran-Catholic and Lutheran-Reformed relations influenced German views and attitudes. A third chapter deals with the competing narratives about the nature of the French Wars of Religion, mainly through the analysis of pamphlets both from Huguenot (and Pro-Huguenot) and from Catholic (and Pro-Catholic) ranks. Further parts focus, in a quite classical way, on the military campaign of the German Protestant princes in 1567-1569 and, in a more structural way, on the German proposals for restoring peace in France. Between 1560 and 1572, different solutions were put forward: Lutheranism as a possible alternative to Calvinism, combined with a settlement similar to the Peace of Augsburg; a policy of religious tolerance; and the need to restore and to preserve royal authority by limiting the Huguenot ambitions. The Germans adapted their reflections and plans to the ever changing political and military context.

Each part has very clear concluding remarks and there is a convincing epilogue on the reception of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Germany. According to the author, this event is characteristic of the Germans' complex relationship with the French Wars of Religion: indecision, confusion, hesitation, fear of sedition, personal ambition and hidden agendas dictated most of the reactions, both in word and deed. Jonas van Tol shows that we must not overestimate the impact of religious identities and priorities on political decision-making processes. His study also shows the importance of space as a 'shaper of historical developments'. In order to understand them better, historians should concentrate on the transnational level. From van Tol's case study broader conclusions can be drawn about the transnational spreading and transformation of news and propaganda. The most interesting chapter is indeed the one dealing with the central role conspiracy rumours and theories played in the escalation of the French Wars of Religion. It analyses the fears and suspicions surrounding Catholic conspiracy plans, both in diplomacy and in print, in France as well as in Germany, and more widely. These strong apprehensions and the hopes of an international Protestant alliance they kindled should be studied more deeply as they are at the heart of the European confessional conflicts.

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