



Lisa Jardine, *Temptation in the Archives. Essays in Golden Age Culture* (London: UCL Press, 2015, xiii + 146 pp., ISBN: 978-1-910634-02-8).

One of the late Lisa Jardine's main interests in recent years were the cultural relations between the English and the Dutch during the seventeenth century, with a particular focus on Constantijn Huygens and, to a lesser extent, his family. The essays in this collection present some of the fruits of this interest. All started out as more or less formal lectures for a variety of audiences rather than as research papers. It is a rather slim volume, with barely a hundred pages of text, though with another forty pages of appendices including letters to and from Constantijn Huygens, Robert Hooke's response to Christiaan Huygens claims for his pendulum clock, and a transcript and translation of a letter describing a tour by Amalia von Solms and Elizabeth of Bohemia through northern Holland in the summer of 1625 (which the author finds disappointingly slight).

Of the six chapters, two are primarily concerned with Constantijn and another two with Christiaan Huygens; the final essay is markedly different, though also with a Dutch angle, namely the significance of Rosalie Colie in bringing the attention of English-speaking cultural historians – notably Natalie Zemon Davies – to the work of Johan Huizinga, and specifically his *Homo Ludens*. The first essay explains the title and is primarily concerned with the archival search for the letter mentioned above, but ends on a perhaps more interesting note. Jardine observes that the editor of multiple volumes of State Papers Domestic, Mary Anne Everett Green, persuaded a female friend of Jane Carlyle to destroy the letters Jane had sent to her to protect the latter's reputation from the taint of impropriety. The unanswered question is whether this was a victory for Victorian prudery, or for the protection of privacy; for the history of women's experience the loss is surely more than regrettable.

Jardine sees Constantijn's career as an example of what she terms self-fashioning, illustrated by her interpretation of his relationship with Dorothea van Dorp. She argues that he drew Dorothea into a literary trope of chaste flirting by letter, and then dropped her abruptly when a suitable marriage prospect (Susanna van Baerle) came into the picture. Her interpretation of the correspondence between the two, with its implication that Constantijn was less than totally honourable in his treatment of Dorothea, is intriguing but perhaps underestimates the inherent – and well-understood – artificiality of this literary genre (though it seems possible that the less sophisticated Dorothea may also have been misled to some extent). In another essay, Jardine decides that Constantijn can be best described as a networker, which

seems more than a little unsatisfactory for a man such varied talents and achievements. As diplomat, secretary to Frederik Hendrik, and leading literary figure, Constantijn's contacts were bound to be varied and extensive. He was indeed a consummate networker, but so were humanists such as Grotius or Salmasius within their rather different circles, but this would hardly be seen as an adequate term for the life and works of either. Perhaps Jardine's particular interest in Constantine's English connections has led to a rather skewed perspective on his career as a whole.

One of the more important contributions in this collection is the essay on the trial of Christiaan Huygens' pendulum clock at sea by Robert Holmes, who is referred to by Jardine – not entirely unjustifiably – as a pirate. She argues convincingly that the clock performed much less well in practice than Holmes reported. Some of the claims to primacy in clock design made by Huygens in his *Horologium Oscillatorium* were disputed at the time by Robert Hooke among others, with neither of the leading parties displaying the modesty that might have been more appropriate to the situation.

This collection is marked by Jardine's particular interest in the English connections of Constantijn and his sons, and this is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, this perspective throws new light on Constantijn's activities, especially during the earlier part of his long career; on the other, this approach can be misleading in terms of the broader history of this remarkable family. Nevertheless, these essays make interesting and stimulating reading, and represent a poignant reminder of her distinctive contribution to Anglo-Dutch scholarship.

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