

patronen plus mogelijke verklaringen daarvoor en levert zo een waardevolle bijdrage aan onze kennis van de vroegmoderne geschiedenis.

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Lomonaco, Fabrizio, ***New Studies on Lex Regia: Right, Philology and Fides Historica in Holland between the 17th and 18th Centuries*** (Studies in Early Modern European Culture 5; Bern [etc.]: Peter Lang, 2011, 351 pp., ISBN 978 3 0343 0543 3).

The existence of a strong Italian tradition of studies on Dutch seventeenth-century philology and legal philosophy is not very widely known among Dutch historians. This book is the latest contribution to this brand of scholarship, as well as to its specific Neapolitan manifestation. In the introduction, Lomonaco provides us with an historical explanation of why Italian authors (Neapolitans in particular) became so interested in Dutch seventeenth-century philosophy: it started with Vico, as it were (to paraphrase Lomonaco's *A partire da Giambattista Vico* (Rome 2010), which discusses Vico's legacy in the second half of the eighteenth century), or rather, with Benedetto Croce's reassessment of Giambattista Vico's historical methodology. Croce's redevelopment of Vico's original 'uniting philosophy with philology' into the modern idea of 'uniting philosophy with historiography' (18) gave rise to a sequence of Vico studies in Naples. Formed by this tradition, Lomonaco found himself drawn to the *Lex Regia de Imperio Vespasiani* and the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Dutch debate about the correct historical and political interpretation of a 'given' piece of Roman legislation.

Lomonaco's involvement in the post-Crocean process of retracing Vico's historical perspective meant he was confronted with the challenge of integrating methods ranging from Arnaldo Momigliano's antiquarianism, Santo Mazzarino's

Pyrrhonism and Croce's neo-idealism. Inspired by a specific branch within Neapolitan Vico studies, which focuses on Grotius (famously Vico's 'fourth author') and the model of Dutch politics in eighteenth-century Naples, Lomonaco recognises the *Lex Regia* debate as a momentous instantiation of the balancing of fact and meaning, precisely when the Dutch 'transition from *provincia* to *respublica*' required 'guaranteeing as well as enhancing' (30). Here one becomes aware of the reasons for the Neapolitan interest in Dutch culture in the early eighteenth century when the tension between *provincia* and *regno* was predominant, and writers like Vico and Doria witnessed the political shifts from Spanish and Austrian rule to independence in 1734. A tension not unfamiliar to present-day Neapolitan intellectuals and politicians in search of a suitable identity that serves to confront the region's social and economic problems.

These latter aspects, however, are not the core of Lomonaco's interest in the transmission of Dutch debates, in which Grotius played a role, to Vico's Naples. What makes the unravelling of a local historiographical tradition in the introduction of this book worth reading by scholars who have no affinity with the topics of the subsequent chapters is its culmination in a wider methodological insight. Lomonaco's outlook on history and politics is essentially shaped by his awareness that the *Lex Regia* debate and Dutch intellectual discussions from the late seventeenth century developed from (post-)Cartesian notions of historical certitude. This is the central concern in the five main chapters that focus on, respectively, Gronovius, Huber, Perizonius, Noodt and Barbeyrac. Vico had derived the same concern from his study of Grotius and subsequently incorporated it into his early works and his *Scienza nuova*.

Vico thus took from Grotius a refined sceptical philosophical understanding of the relation between historical change and politics. The key to Vico's *Scienza nuova* was not the movement of *corsi e ricorsi*, but the analysis of the principles

of movement itself. Amidst the flux of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic and of early eighteenth-century Naples the *Lex Regia* debate and the development of a 'Vichian moment' provided counterpoints of stability.

Simultaneous to this historical argument, Lomonaco also construes a methodological understanding of philosophical history that might be placed in the same frame as John Pocock's 'Machiavellian moment' and his 'Barbarism and Religion' volume dedicated to enlightened histories. Lomonaco's approach also has the advantage over Pocock's perspective that it is less liable to distorting eighteenth-century political debate through the imposition of simplified historical schemes onto given facts. Reading Michael Sonenscher's recent study, *Sans-Culottes: An Eighteenth-Century Emblem in the French Revolution* (Princeton 2008), one actually recognises connections between Lomonaco's post-Cartesian Pyrrhonism and the post-Rousseauian intellectual horizons of Revolutionary France.

For all its sophistication many readers will, however, be troubled by the inaccessibility of this book. Undoubtedly, the five main chapters display great scholarly refinement and will be eagerly read by pockets of specialised historians of philosophy and law. Yet, it takes effort to grasp the historical and methodological innovations of the book as a whole. The literal style and some idiomatic and syntactic Italianisms in the translation may also deter some readers. Presumably to help out the reader a second, autobiographical, introduction was included, along with a foreword by Leon Pompa and an afterword by Fulvio Tessitore. The contribution by Tessitore, a former senator and noted public intellectual, forms an intriguing pointer. It remains not to be underestimated how much weight historical-philosophical analyses carry in present-day Naples where academic learning about law and philosophy feeds into political debate in a more comprehensive fashion than one imagines.

Kooijmans, Luuc, *Death Defied: The Anatomy Lessons of Frederick Ruysch* (History of Science and Medicine Library 18; Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011, xi + 470 pp., ISBN 978 90 04 18784 9).

One of the many curious consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall was the renewal of interest in the anatomical specimens of Frederik Ruysch. His famous collection was purchased by Tsar Peter, and could be seen in his capital city from 1719 onwards; parts of it were known to have survived into the later twentieth century, and in 1960 a Frankfurt physician, Günter Mann, reported having seen many of Ruysch's preparations in the Leningrad Kunstkamera. Unfortunately, the famous compositions of virtuosity made from fetal skeletons and dried body parts that taught moral lessons (such as the shortness of life), had perished, but many of the wet specimens survived. When a large exhibition on early modern Dutch *kunst- en rariteitenverzamelingen* was mounted at the Amsterdams Historisch Museum in 1992, then, further lines of communication were opened to explore the possibility of bringing back some of the items to Amsterdam for display. In the same year, some of Rosemond Purcell's photographs from the Russian collections (among others), including some of Ruysch's preparations, were published in her *Finders, Keepers: Eight Collectors*. In 2003, a new permanent exhibition of Ruysch's work, as restored by Willem J. Mulder, opened in St Petersburg.

Ruysch's legacy at the beginning of the twenty-first century therefore properly opens and closes this book, an English translation of the definitive biography of Ruysch, first published by Luuc Kooijmans in 2004. It will be welcomed by the many without access to the Dutch original. There are some slight differences between the two versions. A few illustrations (such as some of Purcell's photographs) have been dropped while others have been added (such as Ruysch's coat of arms, 204), and all now appear in black-and-white. Some other silent changes have been made for the sake of the reader: for instance, Kooijmans' original