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Zóó goed roomsch en zóó goed spaansch. Anthonis Mor and the Problematic Position of Sixteenth-Century Artists with Spanish Patrons in Dutch Art History

Wandering around the artworks in the Museo del Prado in Madrid, many a Dutch visitor has likely been surprised to discover that the great artist Antonio Moro (1516/1519-1574), in fact named Anthonis Mor van Dashorst, was born and raised in the Dutch city of Utrecht. He is by many considered to be the greatest portraitist of his time and his name was important enough to be engraved in the façade of the Museo del Prado, side-by-side with Holbein and Rubens (fig.1). However, contrary to his status abroad, Anthonis Mor and his work are little-known to the Dutch general public. Although he is recognised by Dutch art historians as an important portraitist, Mor has rarely been the subject of Dutch research or publications. His case can be seen as representative of the consequences which derived from the formation of the Dutch national identity. This identity took shape in the course of several centuries, but one of the main issues in its formation has been the problematic position of the Spanish involvement in the Netherlandish society in the period preceding the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648). It is deeply rooted in the Dutch culture to regard the Spanish presence almost exclusively as an external and oppressive force, part of the tradition also known as the *leyenda negra* (black legend).¹ As late as 1959 Jan Brans remarked, when mentioning Philip's II reputation; 'Even in the case of most art historians one feels the shadow of this image when they speak about Anton Moor and Willem Key'.²

Discussed in the following pages is the question of how Netherlandish artists with Spanish connections were perceived in literature on art during the different phases in which the Dutch national identity was formed. Some clarification is needed for the two terms, *Netherlandish* and *Dutch*, which are used with regard to the Netherlands. *Netherlandish* refers to the period before the Revolt and to the Southern as well as the Northern Netherlands. *Dutch* refers to the Northern Netherlands after the Revolt: the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, The Batavian Republic and the (United) Kingdom of the Netherlands. With the risk of causing confusion at times, this distinction is necessary to prevent even more confusing anachronisms; naming Mor a Dutch artist, for instance.

At the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century – during and after the Dutch Revolt – the distinct need was felt to define a Dutch national identity. The focus of the first part of this article will be on the artist biographies from this period. A following (re)defining of the national identity took place in the nineteenth century – after the French Batavian period (1795-1813) –, the literature of which shall be discussed in the second half of the article.

Jochen Becker, in his article 'Zoo praat ook Neerlands maagd in de achtbre rei der kunsten', describes how in the seventeenth as well as in the nineteenth century cultural politics were used to create a national identity.³ In both cases the new Dutch nation – respectively the Republic of the Seven United Provinces and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands – had to find a position amongst more established and larger European

¹
Anthonis Mor, *Portrait of Philip II
in armour*, 1560, oil on canvas,
198 x 102 cm,
Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El
Escorial. Photograph: Patrimonio
Nacional, Madrid.

nations. However, as Becker explains, in the two eras a different approach was used for this positioning. In the seventeenth century the national qualities were shaped by incorporating foreign, or rather international criteria, which were then to be emulated. In other words: the Dutch can do the same as the rest of Europe, but better. In the nineteenth century the emphasis shifted entirely towards the national characteristics. In other words: the Dutch qualities are equal to those of neighbouring nations, and probably better.

The first period started with a phase of transition, in which the concept of Dutch qualities was still in the early stage of its creation. The international focus originated in the preceding period and was an important characteristic of the Netherlandish intellectual and cultural communities of that time.

Pre-Revolt community

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the cultural climate in the Netherlands was predominantly transnationally oriented. The Netherlandish cities, in the South especially, housed large and long established communities of Spanish, Italian and German trading families. In addition, many of the Spanish diplomats and aristocrats, connected to the court, had resided in the North for several generations. Furthermore, as Humanism had become a very important philosophy in the Netherlands, artists, writers and scholars met and discussed their thoughts in humanist circles which had formed in cities such as Antwerp, Breda and Liège. The humanists were in general very well connected and communicated in extended transnational networks. As Raymond Fagel has described in his important work on the Hispano-Flemish world, up to the mid-sixteenth century all sorts of ideas could be exchanged freely, whether they were of a religious, political or artistic nature.⁴ Many of the Spanish inhabitants of the Netherlands were fully integrated in society and took active part in the cultural humanist environment.⁵ This involvement increased further when, in reaction to the rapid spreading of Protestantism in Europe, the Spanish Orthodox church subjected the Spanish humanists and followers of Erasmus to a growing number of restrictions.⁶ After 1550, when the humanists in Spain came under scrutiny by the Inquisition, many of them sought refuge in the Spanish lands abroad, Naples and the Netherlands being the most important.⁷ In the Netherlands, the open intellectual climate welcomed these exiles to continue their work and contribute to their new surroundings. However, towards the end of the sixteenth century the circumstances changed. As the conflicts increased in the build-up to the Dutch Revolt, the people became divided by military, political and religious matters.

Early artists biographies: Anthonis Mor and Willem Key

The need for a national identity during and after the Dutch Revolt was as urgent as it was complicated, since the new Dutch republic was created from provinces which had been semi-independent before. Nonetheless, when Netherlandish artists are described in the early Dutch and Flemish literature on art, their actual origin does not yet appear to be a matter of great importance. For instance, Anthonis Mor is mentioned by Valerius Andreas (1611) and by Hadrianus Junius (1565-1570) as one of the most important painters from the province of Holland.⁸ However, Mor worked in Utrecht (his native city), in England, Spain and in the Southern Netherlands. Unless this information is now lost, he is not known to have received or executed commissions in the Northern Netherlands. As a great Netherlandish painter, he was likely claimed as being from Holland for the occasion, as Valerius also did with Frans Floris.

A similar flexibility with regard to origin is used by Van Mander in his *Schilder-boeck* (1604).⁹ In the section *Het Leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hooghduytsche Schilders*, Van Mander groups the Netherlandish and German painters together and opposes them to the Italian artists. To define a northern artist as specifically Netherlandish

is not his main concern. A far more precarious matter Van Mander had to deal with, was that of esteemed artists who had close relations with Spanish patrons. Although he seldom explicitly expresses his opinion in the matter, he is clearly uncomfortable with these Spanish relations. This is especially apparent in the biographies which involved the man who became the personification of Spanish oppression and cruelty: Don Fernando Álvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, the Duke of Alba (1507-1582). Anthonis Mor as well as Willem Key (1516-1568) worked for the Habsburg court, and both portrayed the Duke of Alba.

In his biography of Mor – in which Mor's Spanish name Antonio Moro is used – Van Mander describes how the painter had to leave the Spanish court after having playfully touched the king: a serious and dangerous breach of decorum. Philip II was eager for his portraitist to return but, according to Van Mander, the Duke of Alba intercepted the king's letters to Mor. The reason for this was that the Duke wanted to keep Mor in Brussels, where he commissioned him to paint the portraits of all his concubines.¹⁰ Notwithstanding, documental evidence shows that Mor was well aware of the requests of Philip II and sent replies to the court in Spain. Mor was himself apparently reluctant to return and put forwards a variety of reasons for this, ranging from problems with his back to lack of finances.¹¹

Truly dramatic is Van Mander's biography of Willem Key, an esteemed artist and well-respected by his contemporaries. Key, like Mor, received commissions from high-ranking patrons such as Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle and the Duchess Margaretha of Parma.¹² Van Mander reports how the Duke of Alba was posing for Key while discussing political matters with a member of the Blood council. Although Key could not speak Spanish, he understood enough of the conversation to learn that the Count of Egmond and others were to be executed.¹³ Because he was a loyal Netherlander, Key was so upset that he became ill that very evening and died on the day of the execution. It was also told, Van Mander writes, that Key was so shocked by the cruel appearance of Alba that this made him terminally ill.¹⁴ The extreme consequences of the posing session suggest that Key was unaware of the nature of his patron; of his outward appearance as well of his actions. With regard to either aspect, this naivety would have been very unlikely for a painter such as Key, who moved in the highest echelons of society.

Although portraits of the Duke, attributed to Mor and Key, have survived, the events described by Van Mander cannot be confirmed by documentation or other evidence (fig. 2).¹⁵ It should furthermore be taken into account that Van Mander himself was a protestant refugee from Antwerp: his position towards the Spanish in general and Alba in particular can hardly have been unbiased. Van Mander puts the events in both cases in a very specific context. In his descriptions both artists are victimized in situations which are more or less beyond their control. In the case of Mor, he has been manipulated into the service of the Duke of Alba. Key may have voluntarily entered the service of the Duke, but he soon discovers and regrets his mistake. The biographies contain a very clear warning; nothing good could come from being involved with this man and his nation.

Van Mander's intentions with his approach to these biographies can be interpreted in several ways. He may simply have wanted to emphasize the cruel and harsh nature of the Duke of Alba, but his reasons were likely more complex. Mor and Key were the two greatest names in sixteenth-century portraiture, and his *Het Leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hooghduytsche Schilders* would not have been complete without them. To be able to include them, Van Mander apparently deemed it necessary to excuse their choice of patrons, a choice which he probably considered to be of poor judgement. Van Mander's approach shows that, as conflicts divided the Netherlands, the shared values which determined whether an artist could be named a great Netherlandish painter also changed. The shaping of the national identity had only just commenced and was in a transitional phase between a transnational and a national context. The sixteenth-century painters had to be fitted in this new situation; for this, the main obstacle was not their origin or place of work, but their connection with the Spanish.

Anthony Mor, *Portrait of Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alba*, 1549, oil on panel, 108 x 83.5 cm. New York, The Hispanic Society of America, inv. no. A105. Photograph: The Hispanic Society of America, New York.

Visual expressions

The same transitional process, expressed visually, can be recognised in Henrick Hondius' *Pictorum aliquot celebrium praecipuae Germaniae inferioris effigies* (1610). In this work Hondius rearranged and extended the painters' portraits from the earlier Antwerp edition by the engraver Hieronymus Cock.¹⁶ This edition, with Latin captions by Dominicus Lampsonius, was posthumously published by Cock's widow in 1572.

In Hondius' *Pictorum*, published in the Northern Netherlands, next to the mention of their city of birth, the painters were now also described as being Dutch or Flemish.¹⁷ However, as Stephanie Porras has argued, this geographical distinction was not consistent. The artists were, as in Van Mander's biographies, considered as first and foremost being Netherlandish and part of the same artistic tradition and cultural heritage.¹⁸ Or, as formulated by Porras: 'Hondius' *Effigies* produces a fluid sense of Netherlandish identity, one that encompasses a Flemish past and a Dutch present in its production of a local art history'.¹⁹ Hondius added interiors and landscapes to many of the portraits, and both the portraits of Mor and Key contain references to their Spanish patrons.

³ Johannes Wierix, *Portrait of Willem Key*, in: Hieronymus Cock, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium præcipuae Germaniae inferioris Effigies*, 1572, engraving, 15.5 x 12.1 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Photograph: Studio Tromp, Rotterdam.

⁴ Simon Frisius, *Portrait of Anthonio Moro*, in: H. Hondius, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium præcipuae Germaniae inferioris Effigies*, 1610, engraving/etching, 21.2 x 12.3 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Photograph: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

⁵ Henrick Hondius, *Portrait of Willem Key*, in: H. Hondius, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium præcipuae Germaniae inferioris Effigies*, 1610, engraving, 19.8 x 12 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Photograph: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Surprisingly, Cock did not include the portrait of Mor in his 1572 edition, even though Lampsonius here praises Mor, in the verse accompanying the portrait of Willem Key, as the greatest painter of the *Belgæ* (fig. 3).²⁰ Hondius added the portrait of Mor in his edition, with a cityscape in the background. This most likely represents Utrecht, even though the city is placed amidst an uncharacteristically hilly landscape. The portrait states the artist's position and status as a painter of the court (fig. 4). It is significant that Mor is depicted whilst painting a royal portrait; not of Philip II but of Charles V. There is no indication that Mor ever portrayed Charles, whereas his state portraits of Philip were copied and distributed all over the Habsburg Empire. It appears that Hondius did not want to emphasise Mor's relation with the Spanish court; in contrast to Philip II, Charles was by many perceived as a sovereign of Netherlandish origin and nature.

In the portrait of Willem Key, Hondius added a portrait of the Duke of Alba (fig. 5). However, this should probably not be interpreted as a comment on the Spanish patrons of Key, but as a reference to the biographical anecdote told by Van Mander. Porras has detected in the Hondius edition several other clear references to famous works, mentioned by Van Mander in his artists biographies.²¹

National and international perceptions

The problem of how to deal with artists with close Spanish relations in the pre-Revolt period would only become more complicated in the centuries that followed. That this tension was caused by the developing national identity becomes apparent when the views of Dutch writers are compared with those of their colleagues abroad.

The German painter/art historian Joachim von Sandrart (*Die Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau- Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*) in 1675 and the French painter and writer Roger De Piles (*L'Abrégé de la vie des peintres*) in 1699 incorporated Van Mander's biographies of Mor and his contemporaries.²² Also Jean-Baptiste Descamps in his *La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandais* (1753) included abridged versions of sixteenth-century biographies by Van Mander.²³ These authors did not perceive the issue or the period as problematic in any way.

In contrast, the Dutch authors of the eighteenth century seldom referred to the early sixteenth century at all. Arnold Houbraken (1718) focuses on the seventeenth century and only incidentally describes painters active before the last quarter of the sixteenth century.²⁴ In the few cases when these artists are mentioned, little if any reference is made to Spanish patrons; the Spanish presence in general is reduced to an anecdotal background. Also Jacob Weyerman (1729) lists the Netherlandish and Flemish painters of the fifteenth and seventeenth century, but mentions only a few painters from the period in between.²⁵ Nonetheless, the notably large number of Spanish sayings and expressions that especially Houbraken uses in his text is an unmistakable indication of the inter-cultural exchange that had taken place in the centuries before.²⁶

The Dutch Republic had based its national identity largely on the struggle for political and religious freedom. The sixteenth-century international community, when most of the great painters were commissioned by the court and Spanish patrons, proved either to be too difficult to incorporate in art history or was not considered to be of interest for the Republic's identity. Yet the struggle for freedom was not over, and the Dutch identity had to be redefined once more in the years to come.

A reassuring exempla

The whole of Europe was shaken to its foundations by the revolutionary events with which the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth century began. During Napoleon's conquest of Europe, both the Austrian Netherlands – the former Spanish Netherlands – (1794) and the Dutch Republic (1795) became part of France. After the fall of the French empire in 1815, the south and the north of the Netherlands were reunited. This proved to be for a short time only, and the Belgium Revolt in 1830 made the Southern Netherlands an independent nation. Still, there was more unrest to come and in 1848 a new revolutionary mood swept over Europe. One of the main results of all this political upheaval was the rise of nationalism.²⁷

The nineteenth century was the second period in which the Dutch national identity was profoundly redefined. As mentioned earlier, and not in a small part as the result of the succeeding state structures, the foundation of the Dutch national identity shifted from an international focus and shared values to the nation's borders and national characteristics. However, between 1815 en 1830 the new nation was mainly confused about this identity.²⁸ This was to be expected, as the northern identity had for the greater part been based on the separation from the south, and the two territories were now reunited. The identity of the former Spanish Netherlands had different foundations and when confiscated art was returned from France after 1815, the south experienced an 'art nationalism' frenzy, with Rubens as the bright centre. The Northern Netherlands on the contrary, were as yet unsure whether to go with international or national ideals.²⁹ Only after 1830, when the borders had been restored to the situation before the French occupation, was it clear for the new Kingdom of the Netherlands where the national characteristics were to be found: in the Dutch Golden Age of the seventeenth century.

That nationalists in the Northern Netherlands looked back to the Golden Age for a model is understandable. After all, this had been a period of great national prestige, of many accomplishments and, even more important, the Golden Age had also been preceded by a revolution. Nineteenth-century Dutch historians, therefore, recognized and emphasised the similarities between the French revolution and the Revolt. As historian Conrad Busken Huet described in the early eighteen-eighties: 'Our hairs stands on end when we read in the old histories, confirmed by Alba's own letters to the King of Spain, about the carnage caused by the soldiers of the Duke in Mechelen, Zutphen, Naarden, Haarlem (...)' Not until the last years of the last century, in Paris, in the September days and under the Reign of Terror, has Europe again witnessed executions on such a large scale (...)'.³⁰ Yet, out of the crisis of the Revolt a new and very successful nation had

emerged. Indeed a reassuring *exempla* to look back on in revolutionary and unpredictable times. Art had been one of the most important areas in which the Dutch Republic had distinguished itself. Now that the need was felt to recreate, or at least reaffirm, a Dutch national identity, the art of the Golden Age became of the utmost importance as a cultural expression of this identity.

Much has been written about what characteristics of seventeenth-century painting were thought to represent the so-called typically Dutch nature.³¹ The focus of this article, however, is on the elements of art history which were excluded, ignored or adapted in the process. The appreciation, or even the possibility, of a Spanish contribution to Netherlandish culture had practically vanished in course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In the words of Busken Huet: 'The flower of Spanish civilisation, for a long time the finest in Europe, was not transplanted to us (...). Our forefathers only knew the Spaniards, foreign oppressors and persecution prone pope-followers, from their dark side.'³² When in 1885 the construction of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam was completed, the walls of the building displayed the names of the nation's most esteemed painters. Anthonis Mor was appreciated enough to be mentioned, but his connection to the nation seems to have been presented as loosely as possible: Mor was included as *Antonio Moro* and as one of the three Southern Netherlandish artists.³³

Under the influence of nationalism Anthonis Mor, as an esteemed Netherlandish painter, resurfaced in Dutch nineteenth-century literature which listed Flemish and Dutch artists. However, the question of how to approach him remained complicated and depended greatly on the view of the author. For instance, Christiaan Kramm included Mor, extensively even, in his *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders* from 1860.³⁴ Kramm was born in Utrecht and spent his entire working life in this city. He subsequently approaches Mor not as a Flemish, Dutch or international artist but focuses on the relation of Mor with Utrecht, his apprenticeship with Van Scorel, and his family's history. Kramm's research is centred around information which was available in the Utrecht city and church archives and he only briefly discusses other periods of Mor's career. Mor was also mentioned by two important nineteenth-century nationalist writers whose work greatly impacted art history: Eugène Fromentin and Conrad Busken Huet. The juxtaposition of their approaches shows that there remained a significant difference between the national and international perceptions of Mor as a Netherlandish artist and the issue of the Spanish connection.

Eugène Fromentin, *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*

Les Maîtres d'autrefois (1876) by the French Eugène Fromentin is one of the works which most determined nineteenth-century art history. Fromentin states that in the sixteenth century there was little difference in the character of southern and northern Netherlandish painting, but his nationalistic viewpoint shows itself when he describes the origin of Dutch art.³⁵ The relation between the nation and its art could not be any closer than in his view: the Revolt was needed to create the Dutch nation as well as Dutch art. Art is not just an expression of the identity; the nation and art evolved simultaneously: 'At the same hour, under the same circumstances, are seen to appear in conjunction two events: a new state and a new art. (...) particularly the sudden manner in which it was born, on the morrow of an armistice, with the nation itself, like the quick and natural blossoming of a people glad to live, and in haste to understand itself'.³⁶ In this view the art of the seventeenth century is not a continuation of the preceding period but, like the nation to which it is inseparably linked, evolved almost independently.³⁷

How then does Fromentin deal with a painter such as Mor, with an international career and Spanish connections? Because Mor is of Netherlands origin, the nation can take pride in this painter, but his work is not considered to be representative of a specific national identity.³⁸ Fromentin solves the problem by presenting Mor as *cosmopolite*.

He does not mention the fact that Mor in the latter half of his career distanced himself from the Spanish court, and painted many portraits of burghers in the Netherlands, but he also does not perceive the Spanish connection of Mor as problematic (fig. 6). This matter would be treated in a very different way by a Dutch author such as Busken Huet.

Conrad Busken Huet, *Het land van Rubens* / *Het land van Rembrandt*

In the Netherlands, the works of the Dutch historian Busken Huet *Het land van Rubens* (1879) and *Het land van Rembrandt* (1882-1884) shaped the image of the art of the Golden Age considerably. As opposed to the earlier Dutch writers and to Fromentin, Busken Huet states that the art of the seventeenth century did originate in earlier eras. Although Busken Huet was critical of the contemporary approach which drew a parallel between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century, his views were nonetheless deeply rooted in nationalism.³⁹ In his opinion the art of the Northern Netherlands was based on a thorough study of Italian art, which was then emulated by incorporating elements of the Netherlandish nature and society.⁴⁰ The art which had thus been established was at risk of being undermined by painters who incorporated in their practice 'non-Dutch' elements, in particular foreign influences, intellectual content or art theory.⁴¹ Busken Huet suggests that the rejection of these matters resulted in the pure, spontaneous and inspired vision which characterises Dutch art.

When Busken Huet discusses Anthonis Mor, he concludes that the Northern Netherlandish painters of the sixteenth century in general failed to express the typicality of their origin. This makes them undistinguishable from Flemish or German painters, a fact which reduces the quality of their work.⁴² However, in his nationalistic view Busken Huet anachronistically includes the Southern Netherlands among the foreign influences. He furthermore ignores the fact that these painters operated in a European environment and were part of an international discourse. Like the authors before him, Busken Huet describes Mor as a court artist, but he does mention a few of the works which specifically connect Mor to the Netherlands: the portraits of burghers. Surprisingly, he subsequently states that Mor is typical of the sixteenth century, exactly because he does not paint the burgher class. To discard this part of Mor's oeuvre appears to be a choice for the sake of his argumentation. However, Busken Huet could not have been more straightforward in his statement as to why Mor was not part of the nineteenth-century pantheon of Netherlandish painters: 'Anthonis Mor was such an exemplary catholic [zóó goed roomsch] and such an exemplary Spaniard [zóó goed spaansch] that the protestants must consider him a bad Netherlander. They should at least congratulate him that he, by dying in the year of the Renouncement, only just escaped the choice between his protector Granvelle and the cause of freedom'.⁴³

Conclusion

One of the most determining factors which shaped the cultural environment in the Netherlands during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century was the humanist circle. The humanist discourse, with its transcendence of national boundaries, contributed to the shaping of the artistic as well as the national identity in a transnational context. Furthermore, the Netherlands were politically and economically part of a large empire, in which for a long time nationalist sentiments were restricted to the city or the region. After the Revolt this changed but, contrary to what nineteenth-century art historians, such as Fromentin, have suggested, it did not happen overnight.

The early criteria which determined the Dutch national identity were based on political positions and on (former) relations with the Spanish. The nineteenth-century nationalist cultural strategy added national characteristics based on the seventeenth-century Golden Age to this, as well as the limitation of national borders. Because of this process, sixteenth-century artists did not comply with the ideals of the (constructed) seventeenth century and even less with those of the nineteenth century. Art which was considered Dutch was limited to those artists and those genres which matched the selected characteristics. This selective view excluded certain artists and adapted the biographies and oeuvres of others. The case of Mor has illustrated how art historical narratives were (re)constructed for nationalistic purposes. An exhibition catalogue of the Rijksmuseum stated in 1986: 'In 1575 or 1576 Mor died in Antwerp as one of the most well-known Netherlandish painters of his time, but his celebrated position at the Spanish court of the Habsburgs is probably the cause that his name in the Netherlands later fell into oblivion'.⁴⁴ Mor as an international artist was not 'claimed' by any national state. As described, he was too problematic for the Dutch, and probably too international for the Flemish. Interestingly, Mor and his work did comply with nations who took a different position towards national art and as a result he is well-known in Spain and England.

The processes of cultural politics were so thoroughly executed that both the structures and the profound consequences became invisible, even for many of the Dutch today. Although the practice of rewriting history is as old as historiography itself, the lasting effects of these nationalistic strategies should not be underestimated. This article has argued that the relation with Spanish patrons was one of the most important criteria to regard a painter as being not Dutch, but it is the least outspoken. To this day, Dutch art history, and probably the discipline of history as a whole, has given little attention to the

Spanish impact on the cultural past of the Netherlands. In recent decades this has started to change, with the research of historians such as Wim Blockmans, Raymond Fagel and Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez.⁴⁵ However, this new interest has not yet expanded to the fields of visual culture, art history and art theory. It can safely be assumed that there is no longer a historical tension between the Dutch and the Spanish. It is rather a matter of raising awareness about cultural constructions and interpretations of the past which can create new opportunities and perspectives for the understanding of sixteenth-century art, painters and patrons.

NOTES

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- 1 The Black Legend, *La Leyenda Negra*, is a term used for a historiography of Spain and Spanish politics which presents the nation as characterised by cruelty and intolerance. The Black Legend mostly refers to the sixteenth century and the reign of Philip II and is found in particular in the work of protestant historians.
 - 2 J. Brans, *Vlaamse schilders in dienst der Koningen van Spanje*, Leuven 1959, p. 73. 'Zelfs bij de meeste kunsthistorici voelt men de schaduw van dit beeld wanneer zij spreken over Anton Moor en Willem Key.'
 - 3 J. Becker, "Zoo praat ook Néerlands maagd in de achtbre rei der kunsten". Nationalisme in de Nederlandse kunst en kunstgeschiedschrijving in de 17e en 19e eeuw', in: F.J. van Ingen *et al.*, *Eigen en Vreemd. Identiteit en ontlening in taal, literatuur en beeldende kunst*, Handelingen van het 39ste Nederlands Filologencongres, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1986, Amsterdam 1987, pp. 171, 176.
 - 4 R. Fagel, *De Hispano-Vlaamse wereld. De contacten tussen Spanjaarden en Nederlanders, 1496-1555*, Brussels, Nijmegen 1996, p. 353.
 - 5 An important name to mention here is Mencía de Mendoza y Fonseca (1508-1554), the highly educated wife of Henry III, Count of Nassau. Also her advisor and tutor Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540), whose publications were among the most read in Europe, and the art collector and author Felipe de Guevara (1500-1564) were deeply involved in the Netherlandish humanist community.
 - 6 H. Trevor-Roper, *Princes and Artists. Patronage and ideology at four Habsburg courts 1517-1633*, London 1976, pp. 20-21.
 - 7 B. Wiffen, *Life and writings of Juan de Valdés: otherwise Valdesso, Spanish reformer in the Sixteenth century*, London 1865, pp. 36-40.
 - 8 H. Junius *Batavia*, Antwerp 1588; P. van Opmeer and V. Andreas, *Opus chronographicum orbis universi a mundi exordio usque*, Antwerp 1611. All cited in: I. Veldman, 'Maarten van Heemskerck and Hadrianus Junius: The relationship between a painter and a humanist', *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 1 (1974), pp. 36, 37.
 - 9 K. van Mander, *Het schilder-boeck, waer in voor eerst de leelustighe jueght den grondt der edel vry schilderconst in verscheyden deelen wort voorgedraghen*, Haarlem 1604.
 - 10 Van Mander 1604 (note 9), fol. 231r, 231v.
 - 11 H. Miedema, *Karel van Mander. The lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German painters*, Doornspijk 1996, vol. III, p. 230; J. Woodall, *Anthonis Mor. Art and Authority*, Zwolle 2007, p. 419 and footnote 15. Miedema mentions that Mor wrote directly to a contact at the Spanish court, Woodall refers to the correspondence between Philip II and his agent concerning the matter of Mor's return.
 - 12 K. Jonckheere, *Willem Key (1516-1568). Portrait of a humanist painter*, Turnhout 2011, p. 18.
 - 13 Lamoraal, Count of Egmond, Philips van Montmorency, Count of Horn and several others were accused of treason and were beheaded in 1568. This attempt by Alba to break the resistance of the nobility had little success and raised strong protests among the population.
 - 14 Van Mander 1604 (note 9), fol. 232v, 233r.
 - 15 Anthonis Mor van Dashorst, *Portrait of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, third Duke of Alba*, 1549, oil on panel, 108 x 83,5 cm. New York, Hispanic Society of America, inv. no. A 105. For the portraits of the Duke of Alba by Key, see Jonckheere 2011 (note 12), pp. 107-110.
 - 16 H. Cock, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium Germaniae inferioris effigies*, Antwerp 1572.
 - 17 H. Hondius, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium praecipuae Germaniae inferioris effigies*, The Hague 1610.
 - 18 S. Porras, 'Repeat viewing: Hendrick Hondius' Effigies', website *Picturing the Netherlandish canon*, The Courtauld Institute of Art 2011, <http://www.courtauld.org.uk/netherlandishcanon/groups/essay01.html> (viewed 27/12/2012).
 - 19 Porras 2011 (note 18), essay01.html (viewed 27/12/2012).
 - 20 J. Woodall and S. Porras, website *Picturing the Netherlandish canon*, The Courtauld Institute of Art 2011, <http://www.courtauld.org.uk/netherlandishcanon/image-tombstone/23.html> (viewed 27/12/2012). 'De Guilielmo Caio, Bredano, Pictore / Quas hominum facies, ut eos te cernere credas / Expressit Caii pingere docta manus / (Si tamen excipias unum, me iudice, Morum) / Culpari Belgae nullius arte timent.' (*About Willem Key of Breda, painter / What faces of people the hand of Key/ learned in painting, expressed / so that you could believe you were looking at them! / if however, you except one, Mor/ in my opinion the*

- Belgians do not fear to be found wanting because of anyone's skill.*
- 21 Porras 2011 (note 18), *essay01.html*, (viewed 27/12/2012).
- 22 J. von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste. Leben der berühmte Maler, Bildhauer und Baumeister*, Nürnberg 1675; R. De Piles, *Abrege de la Vie des Peintres, avec reflexions sur leur ouvrages*, Paris 1699.
- 23 J-B Descamps, *La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandais, avec des portraits gravés en taille-douce, une indication de leurs principaux ouvrages, et des reflexions sur leur différentes manières*, vol. I, Paris 1753, pp. 98-100.
- 24 A. Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, III vols., Amsterdam 1718.
- 25 J.C. Weyerman, *De levens-beschryvingen der Nederlandsche konst-schilders en konstschilderessen*, IV vols., The Hague 1729-1769. A sixteenth-century painter mentioned by Weyerman is, for instance, Bernard van Orley.
- 26 Houbraken 1718 (note 24). For instance, Spanish proverbs and sayings are mentioned on pages 76, 258 and 284 of vol. I
- 27 N. Davies, *Europe, Europe. A history*, London 1996, pp. 729-819.
- 28 P.B.M. Blaas, 'De Gouden eeuw: overleefd en herleefd', in: P.B.M. Blaas, *Geschiedenis en nostalgie. De historiografie van een kleine natie met een groot verleden. Verspreide historiografische opstellen*, Hilversum 2000, p. 19.
- 29 Becker 1987 (note 3), pp. 171, 176.
- 30 C. Busken Huet, *Het land van Rembrand. Studiën over de Noordnederlandsche beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw*, Haarlem 1882-1884, p. 29: 'Onze haren rijzen te berge wanneer wij in de oude geschiedverhalen, bevestigd door Alba's eigen brieven aan den koning van Spanje, van de slagtingen lezen door 's hertogs soldaten aangerigt te Mechelen, te Zutphen, te Naarden, te Haarlem (...) Eerst in de laatste jaren der vorige eeuw, te Parijs, in de Septemberdagen en onder het Schrikbewind, heeft Europa op nieuw zulke exekutien op groote schaal aanschouwd (...).'
- 31 For more information about this subject, see E. de Jongh, 'Real Dutch Art and Not-So-Real Dutch Art: Some Nationalistic Views of Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting', *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 20 (1990-1991), no. 2/3, p. 199.
- 32 Busken Huet 1882-1884 (note 30), pp. 382-383: 'De bloem der Spaansche beschaving, geruimen tijd de fijnste in Europa, werd te onzent niet overgeplant (...). Onze voorouders leerden de Spanjaarden, vreemde overheerschers en vervolgzieke pausgezinden, slechts van hunne schaduwzijde kennen.'
- 33 E. Bergvelt, *Pantheon der Gouden Eeuw. Van Nationale Konst-Gallerij tot Rijksmuseum van Schilderijen (1798-1896)*, Zwolle 1998, pp. 233, 352 and note 247.
- 34 Ch. Kramm, *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders, beeldhouwers, graveurs en bouwmeesters, van den vroegsten tot op onzen tijd*, Amsterdam 1860, vol. 4, pp. 1156-1162.
- 35 E. Fromentin, *Les maîtres d'autrefois. Belgique, Hollande*, Paris 1876, pp. 32, 33.
- 36 Fromentin (note 35), p. 153: '(...) à la même heure, dans les mêmes circonstances, on voit se produire un double fait très concordant - un état nouveau, un art nouveau. L'origine de l'art hollandais, son caractère, son but, ses moyens, son à-propos, sa croissance rapide, sa physionomie sans précédents et notamment la manière soudaine dont il est né au lendemain d'un armistice, avec la nation elle-même et comme la vive et naturelle efflorescence d'un peuple heureux de vivre et pressé de se connaître (...).'
- 37 This approach can still, surprisingly often even, be detected in modern literature on the Dutch Golden Age. For instance, the similarities between the positions of Antwerp in the sixteenth century and Amsterdam in the seventeenth century as European centres of art have not been extensively studied. Rather than discussing the continuation of art practices in the Southern and Northern Netherlands, the differences have been emphasised.
- 38 Fromentin 1876 (note 35), pp. 154, 155.
- 39 P.B.M. Blaas, 'Het land van Rembrandt', *Ons Erfdeel* 31 (1988), p. 623.
- 40 Busken Huet 1882-1884 (note 30), p. 49.
- 41 De Jongh 1990-1991 (note 31), p. 200. The similarity between the statements by Becker (note 3) and Busken Huet (note 40) is worth noting here. In their view (however different in other respects) Dutch identity and Dutch art, respectively, evolved in the same way; by first emulating foreign elements before focusing on national characteristics.
- 42 Busken Huet 1882-1884 (note 30), p. 558.
- 43 Busken Huet 1882-1884 (note 30), p. 553: 'Anthonis Mor was zóó goed roomsch en zóó goed spaansch dat de protestanten hem voor een slecht Nederlander moeten houden. Zij behooren voor het minst hem geluk te wenschen dat hij, door te sterven in het jaar der afzwering, nog juist ontkomen is aan de keus tusschen zijn beschermer Granvelle en de zaak der vrijheid.' Busken Huet made several mistakes here: Mor most likely died in 1575, while the Act of Renouncement (the official rejection by the General of State of Philips II as king of the northern Provinces) took place in 1581. Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle had already left the Netherlands in 1564.
- 44 J.P. Filedt Kok (ed.), exh. cat. *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm: Noordnederlandse kunst 1525-1580*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1986, p. 334.
- 45 W. Blockmans, *Metropolen aan de Noordzee. De geschiedenis van Nederland, 1100-1560*, Amsterdam 2010; R. Fagel 1996 (note 4); Y. Rodríguez Pérez, *The Dutch revolt through Spanish eyes. Self and other in historical and literary texts of the Golden Age Spain*, Oxford 2008. An early exception was J. Brouwer, *Kronieken van Spaansche soldaten uit het begin van den tachtigjarige oorlog*, Zutphen 1933.