

## Visiting the Theatre of War Fortresses, battlefields, and the bellicose past of the southern Low Countries (1697-1750)

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Foreign travellers to the Dutch Republic were often astounded by its numerous and spacious towns – a feature that was also fêted in urban topographies, chronicles, chorographies, and travel guides.<sup>1</sup> Amsterdam, for example, garnered much praise in Jan ten Hoorn's *Reis-boek door de Vereenigde Nederlandsche Provincien* (Amsterdam, 1700), or *Guidebook through the United Provinces*. Tribute was paid to the city's favourable location, its function as *le magasin de l'univers*, and its scenic townscape, criss-crossed by peaceful canals and dotted with monumental buildings, including the New Church, the town hall, the Admiralty, and the Stock Exchange. Praise was also directed at Amsterdam's massive urban expansion, its outstanding welfare provisions, the vibrancy of the city's harbour, its religious diversity, and numerous other aspects that merited note or admiration from foreign and native visitors alike.<sup>2</sup> The *reis-boek* extolled myriad other Netherlandish towns and boroughs, from Leeuwarden in the north to Maastricht in the south, generally portraying them in terms of affluence, growth, and modernity. Most likely, the author drew inspiration from the recent profusion of urban topographies and chorographies, which had proliferated in the seventeenth-century Republic.<sup>3</sup>

However, when it came to describing the Spanish Netherlands, the laudatory hymn seemed to falter. Flemish and Brabantine towns garnered fewer pages of coverage and were depicted in darker thematic shades. Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent, though once prosperous, had long since seen their splendour diminish.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, Jan ten Hoorn's gloomy representation of the Spanish Netherlands hardly stemmed from any figment of his imagination. Indeed, during the late seventeenth century, Flanders and Brabant had been ravaged by the successive wars of Louis XIV and were decimated by severe economic crises, which had wrought soaring unemployment, poverty, and de-urbanization.<sup>5</sup> It was little wonder that travel books

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<sup>1</sup> T. van Strien, *Touring the Low Countries. Accounts of British Travellers, 1660-1720*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1998; M. van Strien-Chardonneau, *Le Voyage de Hollande: récits des voyageurs français dans les Provinces-Unies, 1748-1795*, Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1994, pp. 46-81; A. Chales de Beaulieu, *Deutsche Reisende in den Niederlanden. Das Bild eines Nachbarn zwischen 1648 und 1759*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 75-100.

<sup>2</sup> J. ten Hoorn, *Reis-boek door de Vereenigde Nederlandsche Provincien*, Amsterdam, Ten Hoorn, 1700.

<sup>3</sup> E. Verbaan, *De woonplaats van de faam. Grondslagen van de stadsbeschrijving in de zeventiende-eeuwse Republiek*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2011, pp. 9-40; E.O.G. Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste Hollandse stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw', in: *De zeventiende eeuw*, 9 (1993), pp. 97-116.

<sup>4</sup> J. ten Hoorn, *Reis-boek*, cit., pp. 330-360.

<sup>5</sup> B. Blondé & I. van Damme, 'Retail growth and consumer changes in a declining urban economy: Antwerp (1650-1750)', in: *Economic History Review*, 63 (2010), pp. 638-641; E. Aerts, 'Welvaart en welzijn in de zogenaamde ongelukseeuw', in: R. van Uytven (ed.) *Geschiedenis van Brabant. Van het hertogdom tot heden*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2004, pp. 421-443.

tended to portray the Southern Netherlands as the less appealing part of the Low Countries.

Yet, another approach was tested in the *Délices des Pays-Bas* (Brussels, 1711), a pioneering chorography authored by the Brabantine jurist Jean-Baptiste II Christyn.<sup>6</sup> By focussing on the wartime past of the Spanish Netherlands and its repute as Europe's principal theatre of war, the Brussels lawyer managed to present a far more alluring portrait of the southern Low Countries – a stratagem that was soon adopted by other chorographies and guidebooks. This article draws upon these sources and endeavours to explore the *Délices des Pays-Bas* in particular as a leading example of late seventeenth-century city branding. Early modern travel books have enjoyed no small degree of academic scrutiny; however, such attentions have tended to focus primarily on French and Italian examples, and so the Netherlandish materials discussed here can offer a fresh perspective. Moreover, the process itself by which these travel books actively and purposefully branded towns and destinations as *vaut-le-voyage* remains unclear. Indeed, experts have usually sought to concretize the overly general idea that the genre was simply unreceptive and passive. Prevailing textbook-wisdom holds that such guidebooks were unable to anticipate or respond effectively to abrupt evolutions in early modern travel culture.<sup>7</sup>

By looking more closely at the *Délices des Pays-Bas* and its epigones this article aims to endorse, hone and, where necessary, counter these hypotheses. Three main questions stand out. First, we will explore the major spatial evolutions. How did late seventeenth-century guidebooks introduce new regions, towns, and monuments that they claimed were worth visiting? Were battlegrounds, bastions, keeps, and other such memorial sites from the wars of Louis XIV effectively branded as new places of interest? Next, we will scrutinise the narrative stratagems employed to dramatise the region's war-related history. How were tales of heroism, bravery, sacrifice, and hardship exploited so as to entice foreign and native travellers into visiting the southern Low Countries? Academic literature on contemporary place branding, heritage and dark tourism will be helpful in our analysis.<sup>8</sup> Last but not least, the issue of the appropriation of the *Délices des Pays-Bas* by its readers is addressed. Were the Austrian Netherlands truly refashioned into a popular destination? Did branding the southern Low Countries as Europe's theatre of war succeed? Before answering these questions, the *Délices* should be framed in the historical context.

### Branding Mars' playground

François Foppens' printing house published the *Délices des Pays-Bas* in 1697, from a manuscript most likely written by the Brussels lawyer and amateur antiquarian Jean-Baptiste II Christyn [Fig. 1]. It was a real bombshell. Between 1697 and 1786 no less than nine editions appeared in Brussels, Liège, Antwerp and even Paris. The book

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<sup>6</sup> This article is based on the edition of 1711: J.-B. Christijn, *Les délices des Pays-Bas*, Bruxelles, Foppens, 1711. More background: G. Verhoeven, 'Reizen. Joannes Baptista I Christyn, Histoire générale des Pays-Bas, contenant la description des XVII provinces', in: P. Delsaerd & A. Renard (eds), *Het dagelijks boek. Zeventiende-eeuwse lectuur anders bekeken*, Antwerpen, Erfgoedbibliotheek Vlaanderen, 2007, pp. 95-99; C. Engrand, 'Les Délices des Pays-Bas, miroir des Dix-sept provinces?', in: *Revue du Nord*, 87 (2005), pp. 491-511.

<sup>7</sup> Some examples in: G. Chabaud (ed.), *Les guides imprimés du XVIe au XXe siècle. Villes, paysages, voyages*, Paris, Belin, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> J.J. Lennon & M. Foley, *Dark tourism: the attraction of death and disaster*, London, Cengage Learning, 2000; C. Ryan (ed.), *Battlefield Tourism: History, Place, and Interpretation*, Amsterdam, Elsevier, 2007; N. Morgan & A. Pritchard & R. Pride, 'Destination Branding in Context: introduction', in: R. Morgan & A. Pritchard & R. Pride (eds), *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*, Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2010, pp. XXIII-XXXVII; M. Kavatzis & G. Ashworth, 'Place branding: where do we stand?', in: G. Ashworth & M. Kavatzis (eds), *Towards Effective Place Brand Management. Branding European Cities and Regions*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2010, pp. 1-14.

came in a handy size (8° or 12°) and was illustrated with some well-chosen engravings. Even though the Spanoghe edition of 1769 claimed that the book had been 'revue, corrigée & considérablement augmentée de remarques curieuses & intéressantes', the body of the text remained unaltered, except for some minor changes. Later editions also recycled the original engravings designed by Jacobus Harrewijn and Pieter Pilsen.<sup>9</sup> Jean-Baptiste Christyn established his intentions in the introduction. His chorography would not only present an overall picture of the towns worth visiting and of other places of interest in the Low Countries, including monumental palaces, baroque churches, guildhalls, belfries, chapels, nunneries; it would also devote considerable attention to the region's past, with military history receiving especially thorough assessment. Pitched battles, bombardments, sieges, and other dark episodes would even serve as unique selling points for promoting the southern Low Countries as a fascinating destination for foreign and native travellers:

Comme il y a peu de Pais dans le monde qui ont plus de part à l'histoire des derniers siècles & particulièrement à celle du siècle présent que les XVII. Provinces des Pais-Bas [...] Mais ce qui surprendra agréablement le lecteur, ce sera de voir que des Provinces, qui ont été si longtemps & qui sont encore aujourd'hui le principal théâtre où le dieu Mars représente les plus sanglants spectacles, aient pû conserver tant de beautéz parmi les horreurs de la guerre & posséder l'affluence des délices au milieu du tumulte des armes. C'est ce qui attire en ces lieux de jour en jour tant d'étrangers.<sup>10</sup>

In portraying the Low Countries as a tumultuous playground of Mars, Jean-Baptiste Christyn veered away from the conventional rules of the genre. Chorographies, guidebooks, and urban topographies usually emphasized more positive features, ranging from expositions about population, trade and industry, crops and livestock to details about the fertility of the land and the quality of the air.<sup>11</sup> Jan ten Hoorn, for example, branded the Dutch Republic as Europe's commercial hub: a densely populated and prosperous country, thanks to the fishing and shipping trades, the beer and textile industries, and other sectors, and a region abundant with healthy livestock, milk, vegetables and other such essentials. Glorious events from the past were incorporated into Ten Hoorn's laudation, yet the positive image of a modern nation prevailed.<sup>12</sup> Christyn, in contrast, created a brand of a tormented realm with an extensive martial past. Hence, the *Délices des Pais-Bas* therefore delves deep into local history. Readers were informed about the Roman settlements in Maastricht, Katwijk, and Tongeren; the epic battles between Caesar's legions and the ancient Belgians are discussed at length.<sup>13</sup> References to medieval history were also ubiquitous, with tribute paid to the counts of Flanders and Holland and to other illustrious feudal lords and their war campaigns. Philip the Good, Charles the Bold and the other dukes of Burgundy were introduced,<sup>14</sup> and the most notorious incidents from the wars of religion were evoked in a lively manner.<sup>15</sup>

The *Délices* were hardly unique in their inclination towards historical expostulation; long digressions about a glorious past had been a standard feature of surveys, travel guides, and urban topographies since the late sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup> A

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<sup>9</sup> Verhoeven, 'Reizen', cit., pp. 95-99.

<sup>10</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., préface.

<sup>11</sup> Verbaan, *De woonplaats*, cit., pp. 96-97, 146.

<sup>12</sup> Ten Hoorn, *Reis-boek*, cit., pp. 29-39.

<sup>13</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 1-5, 185, II: 290, III: 276.

<sup>14</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 225, 265 & 286; III: 264.

<sup>15</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 78, II: 281-283, III: 39.

<sup>16</sup> Chabaud, 'Images de la ville', cit., pp. 323-345; Verbaan, *De woonplaats*, cit., pp. 45-70; Haitsma Mulier, 'De eerste Hollandse stadsbeschrijvingen', cit., pp. 97-116.

more pioneering element about this work, however, was its predilection for contemporary history. Jean-Baptiste Christyn's attentions were focused primarily on the last chapter in the long, war-ridden history of the Low Countries. Louis XIV's wars of conquest were given acute consideration, with excessive information devoted to the siege of Namur (1692), the pitched battle of Landen (1693), and the bombardment of Brussels (1695). In the edition of 1711, inquisitive readers were encouraged to visit the battleground of Ramillies, where the French legions had suffered bitter defeat against the Great Alliance.<sup>17</sup> The following years saw widespread diffusion of the cliché of the southern Low Countries as Europe's principal theatre of war. Gilbert Le Roy, author of the *Groot wereldlyck toneel des hertogdoms van Brabant* (Brussels, 1730), a chorography of Brabant, echoed the introduction of the *Délices des Pays-Bas* in labelling the Southern Netherlands as the playground of Mars. Protracted passages on martial history also appeared in Bossu's *Histoire de Mons* (1725), Marne's *Histoire du comté de Namur* (Liège, 1754), and Pierre de Sauméry's *Délices du Pays de Liège* (Liège, 1764).<sup>18</sup> In evoking the siege of Namur De Sauméry channelled a most theatrical style:

Ces deux sièges des plus mémorables dont il soit mention dans l'histoires, firent éprouver à cette ville & au país qui en dépend, les suites ruineuses de la plus cruelle guerre qui ait été faite dans les Pays-Bas, dont la plupart des territoires ont été les théâtres d'un grand nombre de batailles ou le sang humain a été répandu sans ménagement.<sup>19</sup>

Drawing upon the recent wartime past, these chorographies addressed a topical matter, one that had stirred the imaginations of people throughout Europe. For decades, news publications like the *Amsterdamsche Courant*, the *Daily Courant*, and the *Gazette [de France]* had related details of the various military campaigns in Flanders and Hainaut, troop movements of the Grand Alliance and the French armies, the innumerable bloody battles and endless sieges, and similar events.<sup>20</sup> Lampoons and broadsheets had pilloried Louis XIV as a warmonger,<sup>21</sup> even as his victories were lauded and glorified in French sources ranging from history books and the battle scenes painted by Adam Frans van der Meulen to commemorative medals, panegyrics, triumphal arches, and tapestries.<sup>22</sup> The image of Louis XIV was unambiguously contingent on the audience in question. The French king was depicted, often clad in Roman armour, as heroic, perseverant, and invincible by his supporters; pamphleteers and other critics besmirched his repute and derided him as *Louis Devastator*, an aggressor whose legions did not flinch at slaughtering innocent men, women, and children.<sup>23</sup> Such polemical portraits were honed into less starkly

<sup>17</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 45, 95, 156, II:132.

<sup>18</sup> T. Verschaffel, *De hoed en de hond. Geschiedschrijving in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1715-1794*, Hilversum, Verloren, 1998, pp. 371-373; J.B. Marne, *Histoire du comté de Namur*, Liège, Bassompierre, 1754, pp. 515-517.

<sup>19</sup> P.L. de Sauméry, *Les Délices du Pays de Liège*, Liège, Kints, 1743, pp. II: 133-135.

<sup>20</sup> Some examples of the breaking news on the siege of Namur in 1692: *Amsterdamsche Courant*, Jan. 1, July 10 & 29, 1692; *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant*, July 8, Oct. 10, 1692; *La Gazette [de France]*, July 16 & 23, Aug. 6 & 27, Sep. 24, 1695; *Newcastle Courant*, Aug. 8 & 25, Sep. 8 & 29, Oct. 3, 1711.

<sup>21</sup> P.J.W. Malssen, *Louis XIV d'après les pamphlets répandus en Hollande*, Amsterdam, Paris, 1936, pp. 23-129; P. de Vries, *Het beeld van Lodewijk XIV in de Franse geschiedschrijving*, Amsterdam, Druck van Coster, 1948, pp. 102-106.

<sup>22</sup> P. Burke, *Het beeld van een koning. De propaganda van Lodewijk XIV*, Amsterdam, Agon, 1991, pp. 72-79; T.C.W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture. Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 35-38.

<sup>23</sup> Malssen, *Louis XIV*, cit., pp. 28, 73; De Vries, *Het beeld van Lodewijk XIV*, cit., pp. 102-106; L.H.M. Wessels, 'Het pamflet. De polsslag van het heden', in: J. Tollebeek (ed.), *De palimpsest. Geschiedschrijving in de Nederlanden, 1500-2000*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2002, p. 91.

controversial images in the *Délices des Pays-Bas* and other guidebooks, yet these works nonetheless capitalised on the widespread public interest in these recent military campaigns.

### Creating memorial grounds

The *Reis-boek door de Vereenigde Nederlandsche Provinciën* (Amsterdam 1700) was not particularly attentive towards the southern Low Countries, with few pages devoted to the Spanish Netherlands (16%), and fewer still to French Flanders (2,8%) and the Prince Bishopric of Liège (0,7%). The northern Netherlands, in contrast, were discussed throughout most of the book (80,5%). Much ink is given over to protracted descriptions of town halls, churches, orphanages, shooting ranges, and other such places considered worth visiting in Leiden, The Hague and Amsterdam. Jan ten Hoorn's pioneering guidebook thus gave short shrift to earlier chorographies, such as Lodovico Guicciardini's famous *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (Antwerp, 1567), which had waxed lyrical over Brabant, Flanders, and other southern provinces, and usually covered the north in just a few pages.<sup>24</sup> By shifting this rhetorical balance, Ten Hoorn voiced the idea that the political, economic, and cultural core zone of the Low Countries had moved northwards. However, the equilibrium was somewhat restored in the *Délices des Pays-Bas* (Brussels, 1711) [Fig. 2]. The work devoted the largest proportion of its pages to the Dutch Republic (43%), yet this was counterbalanced by the numbers of pages on the Southern Netherlands (39,1%), French Flanders (11,3%), and the Prince Bishopric of Liège (5,8%). Brussels, Antwerp, Bruges, and certain other traditional destinations played an important role in the revaluation of the south. Lengthy descriptions of the archducal palace in Brussels, the Renaissance town hall in Antwerp, the university in Louvain, and the Gothic *Hallen* in Bruges were intended to entice foreign travellers into visiting the southern Netherlands.<sup>25</sup>

Martial histories functioned to enhance the allure of these towns. For example, native and foreign travellers to Ghent were encouraged to commemorate the siege of the city in 1678, when the Flemish metropolis had surrendered barely six days after the French had opened their trenches.<sup>26</sup> Yet, warfare of the past proved more central to the city branding of Brussels. With a sense of tragedy, Jean-Baptiste II Christyn recounted the bombardment of 1695, when, during the summer, French troops had laid siege to Brussels; mortars and other heavy artillery had opened fire, reducing the town to cinders. It was said that more than four thousand houses and fourteen churches were destroyed. In an attempt to provoke intense memories, readers were spurred to visit the *Grote Markt* (the main square), which had been obliterated during the conflict.<sup>27</sup> The tale of Brussels' destruction at the hands of French forces became a staple of Netherlandish guidebooks. Louis de Wainne's *Déscription du Pays-Bas* (Paris, 1720) offered a compelling narrative in which all of Brussels was set ablaze; the story was detailed even further in Nicolaas ten Hoorn's *Reisboek* (Amsterdam, 1729), a reworking of his father's guidebook through the Netherlands.<sup>28</sup> It could easily be argued, of course, that this labelling of Brussels as a casualty of war was not actually vital to the city's branding and that wartime histories, at best, simply added value to the attraction of the archducal palace, the gothic town hall,

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<sup>24</sup> Verbaan, *De woonplaats*, cit., pp. 61-63.

<sup>25</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I : 75-76, 101-103, 124, 263.

<sup>26</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., p. I: 254

<sup>27</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 77, 95.

<sup>28</sup> *Description du Pays-Bas*, Paris, De Wainne, 1720, p. 31; N. ten Hoorn, *Reisboek door de voornaamste Koningryken van Europa*, Amsterdam, Ten Hoorn, 1729, pp. 106-107.

the baroque churches, chapels, and monasteries, lawns and gardens, the Munt opera, and myriad other entertainments to be enjoyed in Brussels.<sup>29</sup>

However, tragic tales about bombardments, sieges, and battlefields were far more important in the depictions of several smaller towns in the southern Low Countries. The *Délices des Pays-Bas* present a series of memorial grounds linked to the wars of Louis XIV, ranging from Cambrai in the west to Maastricht in the east. Christyn's portrayal of Namur included only a few lines about the old cathedral and the baroque Jesuit church, yet the author's attention was focused foremost on the unassailable citadel and the town's outer defences. Bastions, half-moon batteries, ravelins, dry ditches, and covered roads are described with gusto, while the tales of the two sieges (1692 and 1695) are related in great detail [Fig. 3]. Christyn elaborates upon the stiff resistance of the Dutch engineer Menno Coehoorn and his troops, who surrendered their fortress, but only after exhausting all their ammunition, food, and hope.<sup>30</sup> Wartime histories also prevailed in the descriptions of Valenciennes, Charleroi, Liège and smaller towns like Huy, Dinant, and Montmédy.<sup>31</sup> Pierre de Sauméry employed a similar technique in his *Délices du Pays de Liège* (Liège, 1764) so as to draw foreign travellers to the Prince Bishopric, and a series of other chorographies and urban topographies followed suit.<sup>32</sup>

Martial history was not only a crucial element in the place branding of Charleroi, Liège, Namur, Valenciennes, and various smaller towns; it also proved essential in the regional branding of the provinces of Namur, Hainaut, Cambrésis, French Flanders and the Prince Bishopric of Liège. Jan ten Hoorn afforded just a few lines to these southern Low Countries, but the *Délices* and its epigones radically changed tack and deliberately portrayed the region as having been Mars' playground. Wainne, Saumery, and Christyn thereby endorsed the idea that the southern provinces could not compete with Flanders, Holland, Brabant, and other traditional destinations in terms of monumental palaces, churches, town halls, and other spectacular sights; instead, these authors opted to capitalise on the region's enthralling (if not sensational) wartime past and its remnants to brand the south as *vaut-le-voyage*.

### Dramatizing history

Fortresses, battlefields, and other memorial grounds did not necessarily stir the imaginations of foreign and native travellers. Newspapers, broadsheets, and history books had ranked the Battle of Malplaquet (1709) among the most crucial stages in the Wars of Spanish Succession, yet the site itself, in Hainaut, was far from impressive. Visitors gazed upon an uninspiring scene of ridges, woodland, and open fields. Dramatic tales of bravery, loss, and endurance needed to be projected onto the landscape to arouse any interest.<sup>33</sup> Jean-Baptiste II Christyn used this stratagem to brand Malplaquet as a place worth visiting. Enhancing the tale with a sense of tragedy, the Brussels lawyer spiritedly described the clash between the French and the allied forces in the autumn of 1709. The outnumbered French troops, led by field marshal De Villars, had taken up a strategic position between the wooded hills of La

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<sup>29</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 70-95.

<sup>30</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. II: 131-136.

<sup>31</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. II: 141-146, 177, III: 264-265, 271-273, 277.

<sup>32</sup> Sauméry, *Les Délices du Pays de Liège*, cit., pp. II: 133-137; Ten Hoorn, *Reisboek door de voornaamste Koningryken*, cit., pp. 116-117, 119; Marne, *Histoire du comté de Namur*, cit., pp. 515-517.

<sup>33</sup> On this process, see: M. Piekarz, 'It's Just a Bloody Field! Approaches, Opportunities, and Dilemmas of Interpreting English Battlefields', in: Ryan, *Battlefield Tourism*, cit., pp. 29-47; F. McClean, 'Romanticising Tragedy: Culloden Battle Site in Scotland', in: Ryan, *Battlefield Tourism*, cit., pp. 221-234; D. Knox, 'The Sacralised Landscapes of Glencoe from Massacre to Mass Tourism, and Back Again', in: *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 8 (2006), pp. 185-197.

Lanière and the forest of Tasnière. De Villars and his men held off the assaults of the Duke of Marlborough and the Prince of Orange, Johan Willem Friso, for several hours, until Eugène de Savoye, commander of the Austrian regiment, managed to breach the lines. The French were butchered and the survivors fled to Valenciennes. Christyn's description emphasised the shocking number of casualties: 'Le massacre fut si grand, qu'il y eut plus de 20.000 hommes tuez & blessés de deux côtez' [Fig. 4].<sup>34</sup>

Dramatic figures and tales also helped to spur interest in other memorial grounds. Namur, for example, was a most impressive fortress, yet its portrayal as a setting of abandoned bastions, casemates, powder magazines, and underground hospitals stirred imaginations ever further, especially when coupled with tragic scenes from the wartime past. Describing the siege of Namur of 1695, the *Délices des Pays-Bas* detailed the decimation of the French garrison, emphasizing such details as the fact that less than a quarter of the initial 16.000 French soldiers departed the battleground unharmed after the citadel had surrendered to the troops of William III.<sup>35</sup> Similarly dramatic figures seasoned presentations of the massacre of Seneffe (1674), the siege of Maastricht (1676), and the gruesome bombardment of Brussels (1695).<sup>36</sup> Nicolaas ten Hoorn adopted the same strategy, replete with a barrage of tragic numbers: 'zynde na gissing, omtrent drie duizend bomben, en over de twaalf hondert gloeyende kogels, in de stad geschooten. Zeventien zo parochie-kerken, kloosters als kapellen, en niet veel minder dan vyf duizend huizen, waren hier door vernield'.<sup>37</sup>

Both factual and not-so-factual stories – of heavy bombardments, razed cities, heaps of wounded and dead soldiers, and the like – helped to strengthen the brand of the southern Low Countries as having been Europe's theatre of war, as did legends about heroes and villains. Cassel, a small town in French Flanders, is portrayed in the *Délices* as a provincial backwater, devoid of remarkable monuments and notable sights, yet a site laden with significant wartime history. Here, French armies had routed the Dutch troops in 1677, capturing more than 2.000 Dutch infantrymen and almost every banner. Christyn focused on the *petite histoire*: for example, according to legend, the Prince of Orange had, in a blind fury, gashed the face of one of his leading officers for having acted with cowardice.<sup>38</sup> Heroes were also fêted in the *Délices*, with tribute paid to Don Francisco del Castillo y Fajardo, Marquis of Villadrarias and commander of Charleroi, who had fiercely defended the fortress in 1693 against the superior numbers of Field Marshal Luxembourg. Castillo refused to surrender, and declared a cease-fire only after the west wall had been breached.<sup>39</sup> Focusing on such heroic deeds, the *Délices des Pays-Bas* labelled the small, fortified town of Charleroi, which had been entirely overlooked in earlier guidebooks, as *vaut-le-détour*. Montmédy – where, in 1657, the Spanish commander Jean d'Allamont had offered fierce resistance to the French besiegers, until being struck by a cannonball – received similar assessment.<sup>40</sup>

Compelling tales about heroes and villains, blood-soaked battlefields, and endless sieges were also standard elements in local history books and chronicles.

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<sup>34</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. II: 63.

<sup>35</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. II: 132.

<sup>36</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 94-95, 187-188, 194.

<sup>37</sup> 'It was estimated, that Brussels was hit by three thousand artillery shells and twelve hundred fire bombs. More than seventeen churches, monasteries, and chapels were torched, while no less than five thousand houses went up in flames'. Ten Hoorn, *Reisboek door de voornaamste Koningryken*, cit., pp. 106-107.

<sup>38</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 333.

<sup>39</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. I: 142.

<sup>40</sup> Christijn, *Les délices*, cit., pp. II: 177.

Drawing on the wartime past, works such as Bossu's *Histoire de Mons* (1725) and Marne's *Histoire du comté de Namur* (Liège, 1754) exhaustively mined the heroic tales of the Duke of Marlborough, Prince Eugène de Savoye, William of Orange, and various other 'minor' heroes, all the while reviling the roguery of Villeroy, Luxembourg and De Villars.<sup>41</sup> Jean-Baptiste II Christyn simply used these gripping tales to brand a new series of destinations for foreign and native travellers. Hence, the attendant prestige of having recently been Mars' playground not only clung to impressive fortresses, desolate battlefields, and other memorial grounds, but was also painstakingly forged through the dissemination and popularisation of awe-inspiring histories, legends, and tall tales of the wartime past.<sup>42</sup>

### Luring visitors

In portraying the Low Countries as Europe's theatre of war, Jean-Baptiste II Christyn created a most powerful brand, which, in theory, aided Namur, Charleroi, and other provincial towns to attract more foreign and native visitors. However, the link between early modern travel behaviour and place branding remains ambiguous. How successful was this branding of Mars' playground, and did it in fact draw more English, French, German, and Netherlandish travellers to the Low Countries? Unfortunately, these questions still await answers, for most research has focused on the composition and development of early modern guidebooks and chorographies; the appropriation of these genres by actual readers remains hardly scrutinised. Furthermore, contemporary research argues that place branding is not always successful. Even carefully designed place brands fail on occasion, resulting in travellers favouring other towns, regions or destinations.<sup>43</sup> We sought to resolve this issue via drawing upon a small sample of Netherlandish travel books. Hence, we gathered travel diaries, stories and memoirs in manuscript, all written between 1640 and 1750 by Flemish, Dutch, and Brabantine burghers on their respective journeys through the Low Countries.<sup>44</sup> Literature on English, French, and German travel behaviour was also scrutinised so as to assess the effects of the *Délices des Pays-Bas* (Brussels 1711) on a broader scale.<sup>45</sup>

During the late seventeenth century, the northern and southern Netherlands were a popular destination for foreign and native travellers [Fig. 5]. Noblemen from England, France, and the Holy Roman Empire had long crossed through the Low

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<sup>41</sup> Marne, *Histoire du comté de Mons*, cit., pp. 515-517; Verschaffel, *De hoed en de hond*, cit., pp. 371-373.

<sup>42</sup> Contemporary place branding uses the same techniques: Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 'Place branding', cit., pp. 1-14; G.J. Ashworth, 'From history to heritage - From heritage to identity. In search of concepts and models', in: G.J. Ashworth & P.J. Larkham (eds), *Building a new Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe*, London, Routledge, 1994, pp. 16-17.

<sup>43</sup> Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 'Place branding', cit., pp. 1-14; Morgan & Pritchard & Pride, 'Destination Branding', cit., pp. XXIII-XXV; G. Ashworth & H. Voogd, 'Can places be sold for tourism?', in: G. Ashworth & B. Goodall (eds), *Marketing Tourism Places*, London, Routledge, 1990, pp. 2-3.

<sup>44</sup> Thirty-nine travel books were scrutinised in detail. This sample includes virtually all early modern travel books in manuscript, preserved in the archives and libraries of Amsterdam, Leiden, The Hague, Brussels and Antwerp. The sample was initially taken within the framework of large-scale research into early modern Netherlandish travel culture. More information in: G. Verhoeven, *Anders reizen? Evoluties in vroegmoderne reiservaringen van Hollandse en Brabantse elites (1600-1750)*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2009, pp. 40-50; G. Verhoeven, 'Foreshadowing tourism? Looking for modern and obsolete features - or a missing link - in early modern travel behaviour (1600-1750)', in: *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42 (2013), pp. 262-283.

<sup>45</sup> Strien-Chardonneau, *Le Voyage de Hollande*, cit., p. 139; Strien, *Touring the Low Countries*, cit., p. 2; E. Stols, 'De Oostenrijkse Nederlanden in de kijker van de buitenlanders', in: H. Hasquin (ed.), *Oostenrijks België (1713-1794). De Zuidelijke Nederlanden onder de Oostenrijkse Habsburgers*, Gent, Gemeentekrediet, 1987, pp. 509-510; W. Frijhoff, 'Prins Hendrik van Pruisen in de Republiek, 1768', in: *De Achttiende Eeuw*, 34 (2002), pp. 77-125.

Countries on their *Grand Tours* to Italy; now, however, the provinces of Flanders, Holland, and Brabant had gradually evolved into fully constituted travel destinations in their own right. Usually, cosmopolitan visitors combined their tours through the Low Countries with brief excursions to London or Paris, or a modish *cours pittoresque* along the Rhine.<sup>46</sup> ‘Divertissante somertogjes’ (pleasurable summer trips) became the latest vogue among Netherlandish travellers. For example, Balthasar Bekker, a minister in Franeker, embarked on a roundtrip to London, Paris, and the Spanish Netherlands in the summer of 1683. Like most travellers, he wrote favourably about the baroque churches of Antwerp and the monumental palaces of Brussels, and enthusiastically described the sights of Leuven, Ghent, Bruges and Ostend. Mons, Valenciennes and Cambrai, however, garnered just a few lines.<sup>47</sup> Bekker’s focus was in fact fairly standard. In the late seventeenth century Flanders and Brabant remained at centre stage in the regional arena, and most travellers spilled little if any ink on the southern provinces of Namur, Hainaut, Cambrésis, and the Prince Bishopric of Liège.

However, Netherlandish travellers broke new ground in the early eighteenth century, by gradually mapping the southern Low Countries as a region worth visiting. Liège, Valenciennes, and Maastricht were even the subject of highly positive portrayals, in which they easily measured up against Brussels, Antwerp, and other traditional destinations. Mons, Namur, Cambrai, and a series of smaller towns were similarly branded as *vaut-le-détour* [Fig 6]. English, French, and German noblemen followed suit and in the eighteenth century began travelling in increasing numbers to the Low Countries. French Flanders, the Prince Bishopric of Liège, and the southern provinces of Namur, Hainaut, and Maastricht were gradually integrated into these itineraries.<sup>48</sup>

Foreign and native travellers were drawn to the southern Low Countries for various reasons. In the early eighteenth century, the small Ardennes town of Spa reaped international fame as a health resort. Jan Carel van Eck, burgomaster of Wageningen, sipped from the healing waters of the Pouhon source and enjoyed the medicinal baths of Chaudfontaine during his journey through the Austrian Netherlands in the autumn of 1742.<sup>49</sup> Like most eighteenth-century travellers who visited the region, he waxed lyrical over the sublime landscapes and natural scenery of the southern Low Countries. Depictions of crests and towering rock faces, of small cascades and vast woodlands, and of picturesque castle ruins transformed the meandering Meuse River into a tourist hotspot.<sup>50</sup> Yet, travellers were most

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<sup>46</sup> Strien, *Touring the Low Countries*, cit., pp. 1-8; Chales de Beaulieu, *Deutsche Reisende*, cit., pp. 34-56.

<sup>47</sup> B. Bekker, *Beschrijving van de reise door de Vereenigde Nederlanden*, 1683 [Royal Library, The Hague 131 G 29], pp. 6-14, 140-160.

<sup>48</sup> L. Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV*, Paris, Fayard, 1990, p. 625; J. Rees, ‘Wahrnehmen in fremden Orten, was zu Hause Vortheil bringen und nachgeahmet werden könne. Europareisen und Kulturtransfer adeliger Eliten im Alten Reich, 1750-1800’, in: R. Babel & W. Paravicini (eds), *Grand Tour. Adeliges Reisen und Europäische Kultur vom 14. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Ostfildern, Thorbecke, 2005, pp. 529-530; Strien, *Touring the Low Countries*, cit., pp. 4-8; Stols, ‘De Oostenrijkse Nederlanden’, cit., pp. 506-507; Strien-Chardonneau, *Le Voyage de Hollande*, cit., pp. 6-7, 25-32.

<sup>49</sup> J.C. van Eck, *Journal gehouden van de reijs*, 1742 [National Archives The Hague, FA Panthalon van Eck 183] pp. 63-65. Some other examples in: P. Dorp, *Kort verhaal van het divertissant somertogje en pleijsier-reijsje*, 1732 [Central Bureau for Genealogy The Hague, FA Mispelblom Beijer 47], pp. 93v-96r; A.P. de la Court, *Beschrijving van een reis naar Maastricht, Spa en Kleef*, 1733 [High Council for the Nobility, FA Van Spaen 182] p. 2v.

<sup>50</sup> Van Eck, *Journal*, cit., p. 62. Some other illustrative examples: Court, *Beschrijving van een reis naar Maastricht*, cit., p. 2v.; J. van der Streng, *Memorij van een plaisier reijsje*, 1731 [University Library Leiden, Ltk 862] p. 26; A. de la Court, *Reis naar Luik, Keulen en Dusseldorf*, 1724 [University Library Amsterdam, coll. Hss. IV J 10:2] p. 27.

spellbound by the fortresses, battlefields, and other memorial grounds linked to the War of the Spanish Succession. In Namur, Eck exhaustively explored the citadel's bastions, gun emplacements, pillboxes, and myriad other defences; his guided tour through the keep lasted more than four hours.<sup>51</sup>

The region's recent martial history clearly intrigued Eck, and his visits (a few days earlier) to Mons, Valenciennes, Cambrai, and other towns had been spent largely in undertaking extended walks over embankments, bulwarks, covered roads, ravelins, and half-moon batteries. He even rode to the desolate battlefield of Malplaquet, to view the spot where the legions of the Grand Alliance had crushed the French armies in 1709; while walking through the site, he discovered some broken cannon and other remnants.<sup>52</sup> One could argue that Eck's lively interest in recent military history was exceptional due to the rationale underlying his trip. The burgomaster was hardly roaming the Austrian Netherlands for sheer pleasure; in fact, he had been dispatched as a representative of the States General to review the garrisons in the barrier towns. The entire regiment of Namur, Mons and Valenciennes stood at attention upon his arrival. The region's wartime past similarly piqued the imaginations of other Netherlandish travellers, who visited its fortresses, battlefields, and other memorial grounds. Pieter van Dorp, a lawyer from Leiden, called at Namur during his 'divertissant somertogje' through the Austrian Netherlands in the summer of 1732. The town made little impression on him, but Van Dorp was awestruck by the citadel and roamed for hours through its pitch-dark caverns, pillboxes, powder magazines, underground hospital, chapel, and dormitories, where officers had slept as the town was besieged.<sup>53</sup>

In 1726, an anonymous traveller from Limbourg (near Aachen) enthused similarly about Namur. This traveller's written record portrayed the town's spectacular defences in extensive detail and evoked the two historic sieges, the latter of which, in 1695, had seen more than 16.000 French soldiers captured. During his trip through the Austrian Netherlands, the anonymous author visited famous battlegrounds of the Wars of Succession, including Fleurus (1690) and Steenkerque (1692), where the Allied armies had been massacred by French troops. In Brussels, he commemorated the dreadful bombardment of 1695.<sup>54</sup> During the early eighteenth century, the pioneering, martial-themed branding clearly succeeded with Netherlandish travellers. Having been tagged as Europe's principal theatre of war by the *Délices des Pays-Bas* and other chorographies, French Flanders, Hainaut, Namur, and the Prince Bishopric of Liège had now emerged as popular travel destinations [Fig. 6].

This also held true for English, French, and German travellers, who were keen to visit the region's unassailable fortresses, battlefields, and other famous memorial grounds during their time in the Low Countries.<sup>55</sup> Pierre Gaudron, a senior official from Paris, embarked in the summer of 1715 on a round trip through Northern France, the Low Countries, and England. War-related histories figured prominently in his travel diary. He presented Valenciennes, for instance, as a tormented town that had endured a dreadful siege in 1677, and evocatively detailed the bombardment of Mons in 1691. Gaudron's discussion of Mons takes a bitter turn with the lost battle of 1678, when, according to legend, the French Field Marshal François Henri de Luxembourg had still been dining when the troops of William of Orange took the

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<sup>51</sup> Van Eck, *Journal*, cit., pp. 59-60.

<sup>52</sup> Van Eck, *Journal*, cit., pp. 47-52.

<sup>53</sup> Dorp, *Kort verhaal*, cit., pp. 75v-76v.

<sup>54</sup> Anonymous, *Voyages d'Italie*, 1726 [Royal Library Brussels, hss.II: 171] pp. 19r, 20r, 28v, 29v-31v.

<sup>55</sup> Stols, 'De Oostenrijkse Nederlanden', cit., p. 509; Strien-Chardonneau, *Le Voyage de Hollande*, cit., pp. 25-27.

French armies by surprise.<sup>56</sup> Prince Henry of Prussia, who travelled through the Austrian Netherlands in 1768, also contemplated the southern provinces as being the playground of Mars. The prince meticulously described Mons, Namur, Liège, Maastricht, and a series of other fortresses, and also visited various historic battlefields, including Ramilies (1706), Oudenaarde (1708), Malplaquet (1709), Steenkerque (1692) and Neerwinden (1693).<sup>57</sup>

### Place Branding at Work

Foreign and native travellers to the Austrian Netherlands clearly acknowledged the nation's historical status as Europe's theatre of war, yet the question remains as to how the *Délices des Pays-Bas* (Brussels, 1697) and its subsequent editions moulded this innovative branding. The work's influence was sometimes direct and explicit. Prince Henry of Prussia, for instance, bought a newly released edition of Jean-Baptiste Christyn's chorography upon returning to Brandenburg.<sup>58</sup> Pierre Gaudron penned a series of excerpts from his pristine copy of the work before boarding the coach from Paris to Brussels. Most likely, Gaudron's subsequent overview of the seemingly endless sieges of Valenciennes, Cambrai, and Mons were cribbed from Christyn's chorography, though Gaudron also relied on other useful works, including Baudran's *Dictionnaire géographique* (Utrecht, 1712) and the *Atlas historique* (Amsterdam, 1709), in elaborating his travel diary.<sup>59</sup> Thanks to its handy size (12°), travellers could easily bring the *Délices* with them. For example, the anonymous traveller from Limbourg used Christyn's work to guide him through the Austrian Netherlands; he copied his account of the tragic bombardment of Brussels from Christyn, and the earlier work served the unidentified author well when he visited Namur, Charleroi, Dinant, Luxemburg, and other fortresses. Likewise, his descriptions of the historic battlefields of Fleurus (1690) and Steenkerque (1692) and his dramatic accounts of related bravery, endurance, and suffering were also borrowed from the *Délices des Pays-Bas*.<sup>60</sup> Despite suffering such plagiarism, Christyn's pioneering chorography succeeded in becoming standard if not requisite reading material for English and French visitors to the Low Countries.<sup>61</sup>

These cases firmly substantiate the hypothesis that the martial-based branding of the region as Mars' playground inspired readers of the *Délices des Pays-Bas* and influenced their travel behaviour. However, the link between early modern travel and place branding was, in most cases, less straightforward. Numerous foreign and native visitors journeyed to the southern Low Countries to behold Europe's principal theatre of war without having encountered the *Délices*. An illustrative example is Jan Carel van Eck, who roamed the Austrian Netherlands in 1742. Even though the Guelders nobleman eagerly portrayed the southern provinces as Mars' playground, there is no indication that he ever read the *Délices des Pays-Bas*.<sup>62</sup> As concerns Eck, it is entirely plausible – not least since works of history and geography were popular reading matter in the eighteenth century – that he had earlier perused a copy of Christyn's work, perhaps just prior to his departure or years before. Urban topographies, surveys, and chorographies abounded in the private libraries of Dutch

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<sup>56</sup> P. Gaudron, *Mémoire du voyage de Hollande et d'Angleterre*, 1715 [Heritage Library Antwerp, B 271719], pp. 27, 36.

<sup>57</sup> Frijhoff, 'Prins Hendrik van Pruisen', cit., pp. 83-85.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>59</sup> Gaudron, *Mémoire du voyage*, cit., p. 1, Avis au lecteur.

<sup>60</sup> Anonymous, *Voyages d'Italie*, cit., pp. 19r, 20r, 28v, 29v-31v.

<sup>61</sup> Strien-Chardonneau, *Le Voyage de Hollande*, cit., pp. 139, 165-168; Strien, *Touring the Low Countries*, cit., pp. 2-3; Stols, 'De Oostenrijkse Nederlanden', cit., p. 510.

<sup>62</sup> Van Eck, *Journal*, cit., pp. 47-51, 58-63; Christijn, *Les délices des Pays-Bas*, cit., pp. II: 23-31, 63, 131-136, III: 249-265.

and Flemish elites.<sup>63</sup> This hypothesis holds true for other Netherlandish travellers, but it is not fully plausible in Jan Carel van Eck's case. The catalogue of his private library offers no mention of Christyn's chorography, though the collection included myriad guidebooks on France, England, Italy, and the Low Countries.<sup>64</sup>

However, Jan Carel van Eck did own a version of the *Atlas des XVI plans des villes, sièges & batailles de Flandre et de Brabant*, an oversized volume of prints and maps concerning the most famous fortresses and battles in the southern Low Countries [Fig. 7].<sup>65</sup> Maps detailing wartime history were popular and would surely have been a valuable source of information for foreign and native travellers. Prince Henri of Prussia made effective use of such plans, charts, and prints during his trip through the Austrian Netherlands.<sup>66</sup> Local guides were another resource that strengthened the branding of the Low Countries as Europe's principal theatre of war. Jan Carel van Eck was guided through the bastions, pillboxes, powder magazines, and underground hospital of Namur by a certain Colonel Randwijk; his local guides in Valenciennes, Douai, Lille, and Dunkirk included a lieutenant, a sergeant and various other soldiers.<sup>67</sup> This was a standard arrangement. It was common for English, French, and Netherlandish travellers, while touring the fortresses, barrier towns, and citadels in the southern provinces, to be assisted by local guides who enlivened their tours by relating spectacular wartime histories and related tales.<sup>68</sup> Pieter van Dorp even hired a professional guide for his trip through the Austrian Netherlands, who, together with the local guide, transformed the tour through the gloomy caverns of Namur's citadel into a thrilling adventure.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusion

Place branding is a modern concept that often seems at odds with the nature of early modern guidebooks. According to textbook wisdom, this passive and unreceptive genre was unable to anticipate or respond effectively to evolutions in early modern travel behaviour. Drawing upon the *Délices des Pais-Bas* (Brussels, 1711) and its epigones, some important revisions to this general assumption can be listed. First and foremost, Christyn's chorography created a powerfully effective and innovative brand. In labelling the southern provinces as Mars' playground, he portrayed his homeland as a region well worth visiting. Dramatic tales about heroes and villains, bombardments, endless sieges, and bloody battlefields reinforced this war-related branding. Earlier preconceptions about the Southern Netherlands being a dull and unremarkable region began to recede into oblivion. Moreover, the *Délices des Pais-Bas* opened up a whole range of new destinations. Drawing upon the region's wartime history, Jean-Baptiste II Christyn succeeded both in classifying Namur, Liège, Valenciennes, and a series of smaller towns as *vaut-le-voyage* and in transforming battlefields like Malplaquet, Steenkerque, and Fleurus into sites of interest. In light of how importantly these war-related histories figure throughout the *Délices*, it seems likely that the Brussels lawyer had fully intended his work to brand the southern Netherlands as Europe's theatre of war.

Moreover, this article has endeavoured to administer a litmus test of sorts to the efficiency of early modern place branding, an assessment that has rarely been

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<sup>63</sup> Verbaan, *De woonplaats van de faam*, cit., pp. 33-34; Verschaffel, *De hoed en de hond*, cit., pp. 409-410.

<sup>64</sup> *Catalogue de deux très magnifiques bibliothèques [...] Jean Charles, baron van Eck*, The Hague, 1761.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>66</sup> Frijhoff, 'Prins Hendrik van Pruisen', cit., pp. 77-108.

<sup>67</sup> Van Eck, *Journaal*, cit., pp. 34, 37, 48.

<sup>68</sup> Strien, *Touring the Low Countries*, cit., pp. 2, 5; Strien-Chardonneau, *Le Voyage de Hollande*, cit., pp. 41-42; Verhoeven, *Anders reizen*, cit., pp. 347-349.

<sup>69</sup> Dorp, *Kort verhaal*, cit., pp. 7r, 75r-76r.

undertaken in historiography. In looking more closely at foreign and native visitors to the Low Countries it becomes evident that the branding of the region as Mars' playground was quite successful. Not only did numerous English, French, German, and Netherlandish travellers gradually begin to make their way to the southern provinces of Namur, Hainaut, Cambrésis, French Flanders and the Prince Bishopric of Liège, but the written accounts of their journeys reiterated the same body of tragic tales (the massacre at Malplaquet, the endless siege of Namur, the devastation of Brussels, etc.). Frequently, there were direct links between Christyn's place branding and subsequent travel behaviour. Indeed, some travellers visited the Low Countries with their copies of the *Délices des Pays-Bas* within reach. However, the relation was not always entirely straightforward. Maps, prints, and history books were also incorporated into efforts to brand the southern Low Countries as Europe's principal theatre of war, and tall tales and dramatic wartime histories were promulgated by local guides. Moreover, this martial-themed branding, which would bestir a generation of travellers, was also propagated by newspapers, broadsheets, songs, and other popular media. From this point of view, the *Délices des Pays-Bas* were but one emanation of the collective memory.

#### Keywords

Jean-Baptiste II Christyn, war memories, guidebooks, Southern Netherlands, battlefield tourism

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#### RIASSUNTO

#### **Visitando il teatro della guerra. Fortezze, campi di battaglia, e memorie di guerra nei Paesi Bassi meridionali (1697-1750)**

Dagli ultimissimi anni del Seicento in poi, la zona sud-orientale dei Paesi Bassi meridionali, con città quali Liegi e Namur, diventava meta di viaggiatori e turisti curiosi di visitare i luoghi che solo alcuni anni prima erano stati devastati nelle campagne militari di Luigi XIV. A cominciare dalla guida di Jean-Baptiste II Christyn, *Les Délices des Pays-Bas* (1697), una produzione corografica chiaramente modellata su esempi precedenti relativi soprattutto ai Paesi Bassi settentrionali cominciava a stimolare tale nuovo fenomeno di 'turismo dei campi di battaglia', presentando la regione in una veste militare appositamente accentuata per soddisfare questo nuovo mercato turistico. Verhoeven dimostra il successo di questo tentativo di 'region branding', illustrando non solo il crescente flusso di viaggiatori a questa regione prima solo raramente visitata, ma anche l'impatto preciso di alcuni testi corografici, la cui impronta è chiaramente riconoscibile negli appunti di alcuni viaggiatori e perfino nei percorsi turistici offerti sul luogo a questi visitatori.



Fig. 1 Jean-Baptiste II Christijn, *Les Délices des Pays-Bas*, Bruxelles, Foppens, 1711, frontispice. (© 2014, Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience, Antwerpen)

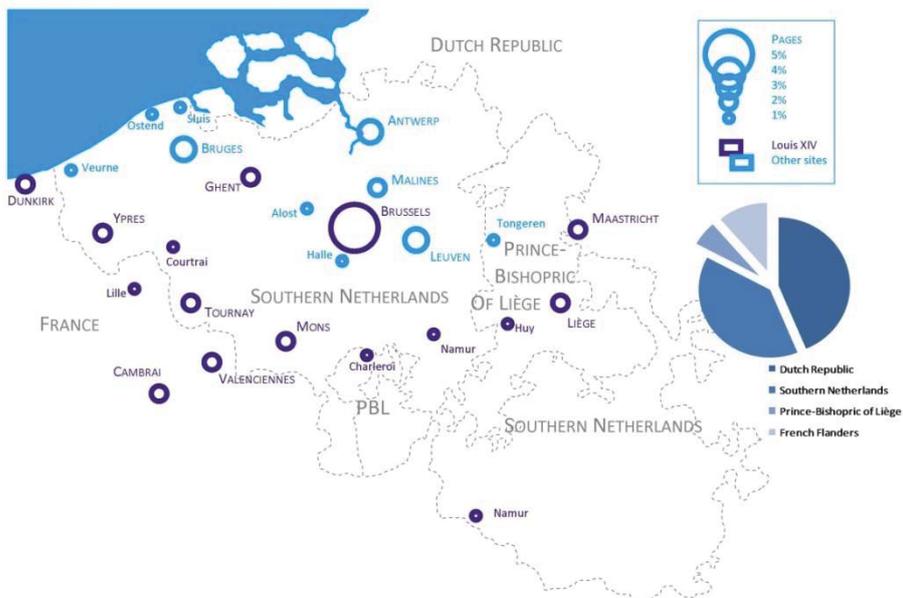


Fig. 2 Destinations in the southern Low Countries, as described in the *Délices des Pays-Bas* (Bruxelles, 1711) (in percentages of all pages). (© 2014, Gerrit Verhoeven)

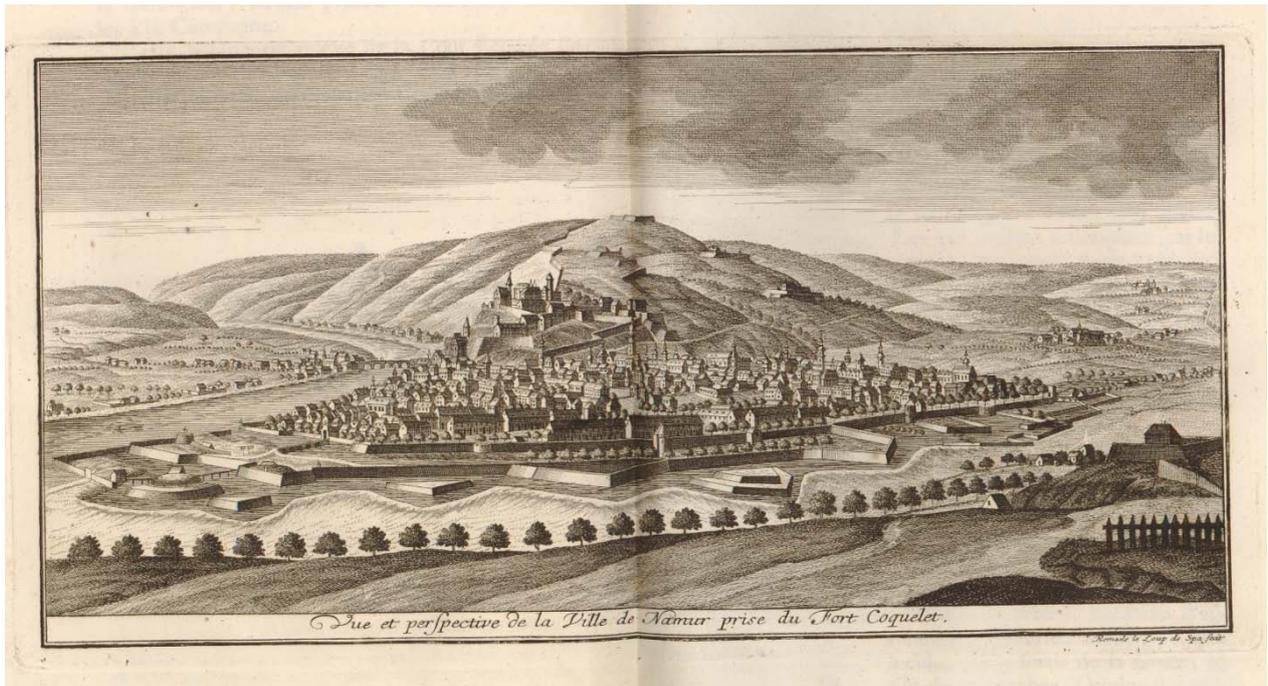


Fig. 3 Namur, as pictured in Jean-Baptiste II Christijn, *Les Délices des Pays-Bas*, Bruxelles, Foppens, 1711(© 2014, Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience, Antwerpen)



Fig. 4 Jan van Hugtenburg, *Battle at Malplaquet (1709)*. Etching from Jean du Mont, *Oorlogskundige beschryving van de veldslagen en belegeringen der drie wydvermaarde krygsoversten den Prins Eugenius van Savoie, den Hertog van Marlborough en den Prins van Oranje (1729)* (© 2014, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)

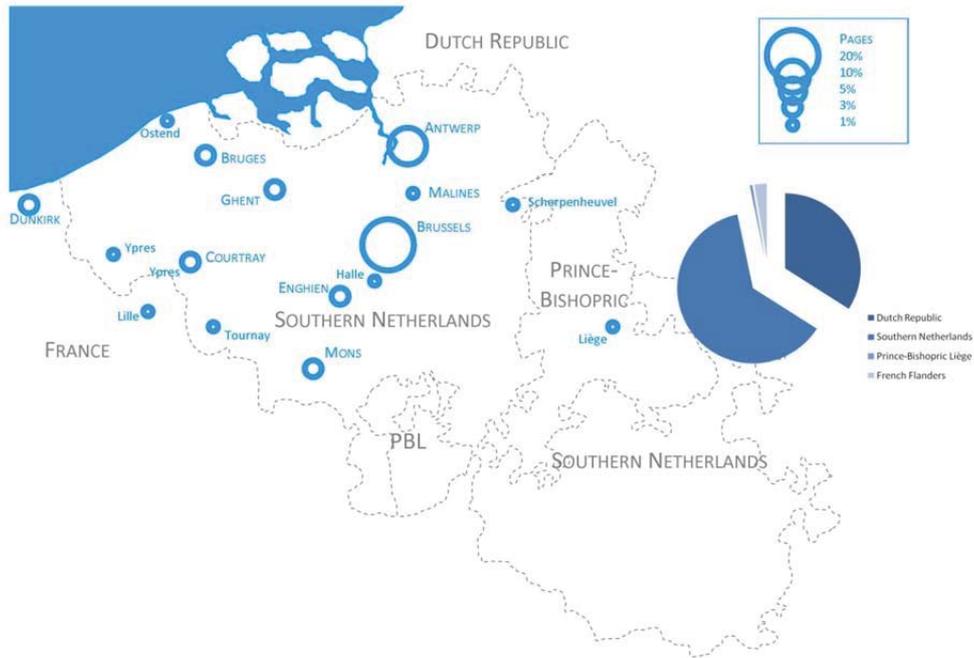


Fig. 5 Netherlandish travellers in the southern Low Countries (1640-1700). The map shows the attraction of destinations in the Southern Netherlands as a percentage of aggregated folios of all travel diaries in our sample. For more information see footnote 44. (© 2014, Gerrit Verhoeven)

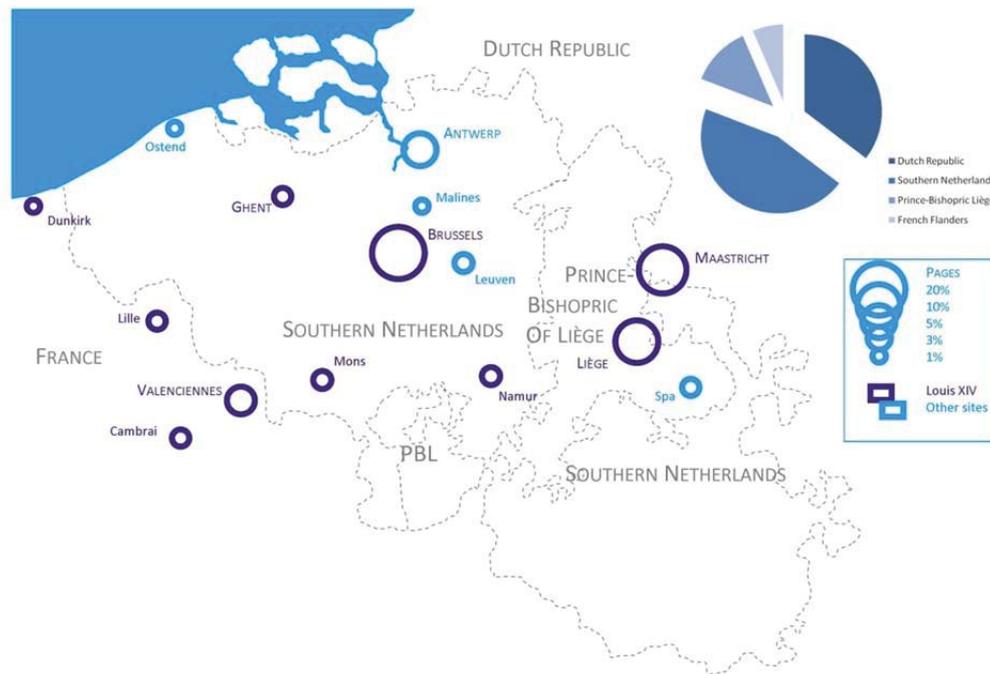


Fig. 6 Netherlandish travellers in the southern Low Countries (1700-1750). The map shows the attraction of destinations in the Southern Netherlands as a percentage of aggregated folios of all travel diaries in our sample. For more information see footnote 44. (©2014, Gerrit Verhoeven)

