

Obviously Huizinga did not expect his reader to grasp the meaning of a sensation described in such classic mystical terms. At any rate he added an extraordinary passage in which he compared it with a sensation of a similar nature but apparently more common and widespread:

You are walking through a street and there is a barrel-organ playing; and when you approach you feel suddenly a whiff of recognition blowing through your mind as if for one moment you were understanding things which normally remain hidden under the veils of life. You would be ashamed to explain this as delight in music; it is a pathos, a moment's intoxication and you all know it, for it is a theme used in a thousand sonnets. (*Ibidem*)

In the late 1920s Huizinga developed this more soberly in his essay 'The Task of Cultural History'. Here he writes:

There is in our historical consciousness an element of great importance that is best defined by the term historical sensation. One might also call it historical contact. Historical imagination would be too comprehensive and historical vision too definite ... This contact with the past, a contact which it is impossible to determine or analyse completely, is like going into another sphere; it is one of the many ways given to man to reach beyond himself, to experience truth. The object of this feeling is not people as individuals nor human life or human thoughts. It is hardly an image which our mind forms or experiences. If it takes on a form at all this remains composite and vague: an *Ahnung* of streets, houses, fields as well as sounds and colours or people moving or being moved. There is in this manner of contact with the past the absolute conviction of reality and truth ... The historical sensation is not the sensation of living the past again but of understanding the world as one does when listening to music. (VII, 71)

I find it difficult to understand what exactly Huizinga was trying to describe in these passages. What he calls historical sensation is by no means equivalent to a sudden, illuminating insight or to an exceptional inspiration. On the contrary, in another passage written in 1935 he states that this is a kind of experience one undergoes almost daily. (VII, 166) It seems to him to be suprarational and to possess significance of a high order. Indeed the words used by him to define it are, as my quotations show, mystic. We shall have to accept that for Huizinga 'the essential moment of all historical knowledge' is suprarational and supraindividual. (*Ibidem*) The historian's personality expands into the past and in this process extends beyond its own limitations. Of course this sensation is not clear and definite enough to be translated into an historical interpretation. You cannot and you should not write history on the basis of such a mystic feeling. But by an historian it is felt almost daily as an experience which lifts him into a reality far more comprehensive than his own.

It is beyond the scope of a postscript to explore the implications of this. Perhaps, however, it is useful to emphasize that the description of the historical sensation

never takes the form of an apology for subjectivity. Huizinga dreaded and despised subjectivism as one of the most dangerous elements in cultural decline. For him the historical sensation represented a fundamental quality of the human mind enabling it to surpass its own subjectivity and to reach a level of understanding where subject and object are undivided. Another essay would be needed to investigate whether the historical sensation is more or less equivalent with the *Ahnung* about which the German historians studied by Oestreich in relation to Huizinga's inaugural lecture¹¹ wrote in an endeavour to vindicate the value of historicism in the tradition of Ranke. Ranke wanted to exclude his personality from the exalting drama he described; his pronouncement about the 'Universaliteit des Mitgeföhls' being necessary for an historian was quoted by Huizinga with obvious approval. (VII, 21) Yet it seems to me that there is, in spite of Huizinga's professed sympathy with historicism, (cf. VII, 152 and 190)¹² a world of difference between the point of departure of the Ranke school and that of Huizinga. Huizinga himself was aware of the necessity to make a distinction between the process of 'Nacherleben' or 'Nachfühlen' (re-experiencing and re-feeling the past) which Windelband, Rickert and others had indicated as the true method of historical research, and his own historical sensation, but he was perhaps not sufficiently interested in the matter to expand his rather short notes about the subject. (VII, 69-72) My impression is that Huizinga intended to define the source of his profound and total certainty, whereas 'Nacherleben' and 'Nachfühlen' are terms indicating the cautious, respectful approach of historians towards a past which they attempted to re-experience in all its majesty. There is in the historicism of the Ranke school something tentative and aesthetic - which Huizinga explicitly declared unacceptable as epithets adequate to define what he called the historical sensation. Moreover, Huizinga never prostrated himself before the glory of the past in the manner in which Ranke did. His work does not suggest that all history as such is beautiful and admirable and that the historian performs the priestly function of transmitting to the reader God's message revealed in history.

The description or analysis of the historical sensation is not adequate enough to allow Huizinga to generalize it into a historical theory. It is essentially an attempt to indicate the highly personal reaction of a sensitive, passionate and creative man whose daily work was the study of history. But if this sensation is indeed no more than an individual experience and if its description is lyrical rather than analytical,

11. *Supra*, 143ff.

12. Huizinga used the term historicism in a broad and vague sense. Obviously the 'problem of historicism' which in Germany was discussed so extensively and with such a painful introspection did not constitute a real problem at all for the Dutch historian. Huizinga quoted Troeltsch's *Der Historismus* but I have found no references to F. Meinecke's *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (1936).

it would still seem to be essential in explaining the most personal elements in Huizinga's historical writing and determining the very nature of his originality.

I shall try to develop this somewhat without repeating what is said in the preceding papers. What strikes the present-day reader of Huizinga's work is the boldness both of his historical interpretations and of his way of putting them forward. Huizinga gives a distinct impression of self-confidence. Of course, he is far from dogmatic. He has no system or doctrine to defend and often enough he pleads for caution and agnosticism in relation to historical problems. Yet his views are clear-cut and often challenging. They were so at the outset of his career as well as at the end. This is something I should like to emphasize. It would seem that in the Netherlands a view of the deficiencies in Huizinga's thought is still being circulated which is perhaps important enough to discuss briefly here. In the early 1930s Huizinga was bitterly attacked from two sides. Menno ter Braak, a trained historian as well as a young literary critic, and P. N. van Eyck, a poet in his early forties - both men of great talent and broad erudition - felt deeply irritated and considerably disappointed by Huizinga's volume of articles published in 1929 under the title *Cultuur-historische Verkenningen* (Explorations in Cultural History) in which they did not recognize the artistic talent and the creative imagination of the author of *The Waning of the Middle Ages*. In a laborious essay¹³ Van Eyck demonstrated that Huizinga was a failure both as a philosopher and as a man of letters. Ter Braak's essay¹⁴ is incomparably more readable. It is a witty and lyrical exercise and makes some interesting points. But reconsidered to-day, it turns out to be almost totally misdirected. Huizinga appears here as an immensely cautious scholar who has decided to play safe, to forsake the imagination and generally to refuse to take sides in the vital discussions of that age. Huizinga is described as 'by birth a cautious historian in the spirit of Ranke', longing to restore historical scholarship in its traditional form. Ter Braak's whole argumentation was the protest of a youthful artistic temperament against an author whose taste made him sceptical about some of the contemporary literary tendencies in historical writing. Another attack came from Jan Romein, then a still orthodox marxist historian in his late thirties, who had been Huizinga's student. His essay¹⁵ is solid, to the point and certainly not unsympathetic. His conclusion was not fundamentally different from that of Van Eyck and Ter Braak. Romein emphasized Huizinga's caution, his Erasmian spirit - with Erasmus in the role of the intellectual who did not take sides -, his withdrawal into a clair-obscur. It is thus obvious that some of the best representatives of

13. *Leiding*, I, v (1930) 203-22.

14. 'Huizinga voor den afgrond', *Man tegen Man* (Brussels, 1931) 103-30.

15. Originally published in 1931; reprinted in J. Romein, *Het onvoltooid verleden* (2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1948) 73-107.

the Dutch world of letters in the early 1930s no longer accepted Huizinga as an author who expressed their own ambitions, aspirations and views of life.

This would be no more than an episode in Dutch cultural history were it not that Pieter Geyl decided in 1961 to use these articles in his essay on 'Huizinga as Accuser of his Age', reprinted in an English version in 1963.¹⁶ Although Geyl's emphasis was different and his admiration for Huizinga's work genuine, it is still the image of Huizinga as depicted in the polemical articles of 1930 and 1931 which re-appears in this long essay. This is somewhat disappointing. After all, the critics of 1930 could not see in what direction Huizinga was going to develop, whereas Geyl had the complete works before him and indeed concentrated on Huizinga's writings of the 1930s. Did these then confirm the sad predictions of Van Eyck, Ter Braak and Romein? Of course not. Whatever one may think of Huizinga's late production, it is not the work of a man who refuses to take sides and withdraws into a clair-obscur. On the contrary, it shows Huizinga at his most combative and provocative. Of course Geyl knew this well enough and said it clearly and emphatically. Yet he did not integrate it into his picture of Huizinga's development and allowed himself to interpret this development fundamentally as a decline leading finally to *Homo ludens*, criticized by Geyl as 'a brilliant but wrong-headed improvization'; as an error 'dating from that last period when the obsession with decline and ruin and the rancour against his own time had taken complete control over his mind'.¹⁷ Thus Geyl's criticism constitutes a prolongation of the attacks levelled against Huizinga in 1930 and 1931 when he was depicted as a cautious, aristocratic, uninspiring man, unclear about his definitions, undecided about the fundamental issues of life, a voice from the past, no leader, no fighter, no thinker. What particularly aroused Geyl's irritation was Huizinga's plea for greater sobriety and simplicity, for ascetism, for a renunciation of the supernous and meaningless elements with which life had come to be encumbered.¹⁸ Geyl did not recall Huizinga's nostalgic complaint in 1943 about the loss of the landscape, the violation of nature by man's blind technology. Yet what in 1961 seemed desperately conservative to Geyl has now become familiar to us in the form of sermons delivered daily by young progressives.

My argument so far has dealt with two aspects of Huizinga's approach to history. There is his personal experience of immediate suprarational contact with the past on the one hand, there is on the other hand the boldness of his interpretations and the firmness with which he puts them forward. Is there a connection between these two elements? This is difficult to prove but it is not unlikely. If a man regularly, almost daily, has the impression of understanding the truth, as Huizinga told us he did, he should be able, given a certain talent for putting his ideas into words, to

16. P. Geyl, *Encounters in History* (London, 1963) 188-237.

17. *Ibidem*, 235-6.

18. *Ibidem*, 194.

formulate clear, firm, bold assertions. This indeed Huizinga was able to do. One should not be led by the incomparable elegance and subtlety of Huizinga's style to misjudge the character of his views: these are indeed assertive and coherent. In all his major works Huizinga puts forward a thesis which he develops in a closely-knit, though often complicated, argumentation and an apparently carefully chosen rhythm. His critics have often indicated contradictions and paradoxes in his work - and why should one deny that there may be many? His individual works, however, do not show such uncertainties. Within their own compass they all form a coherent unity in which the subject-matter is selected and interpreted in such a way that the author is able to present a uniform picture and a uniform thesis. These pictures or theses are not themselves aspects of the truth which Huizinga felt he experienced through his historical sensation. Yet they are undoubtedly connected with this feeling of identification with a lost world and to this they owe their firmness. In other and more sober words, Huizinga who knew the importance of hypotheses in scholarly research perfectly well, himself, it appears, only rarely had use for them. His major works are not based on hypotheses, checked, rejected, reworded and reworked, but on theses, visions, elucidated, enlarged, commented upon rather than demonstrated.

Underlying Huizinga's awareness of life's antinomies and his scepticism towards attempts to reconcile these through an ambitious philosophy or synthesis, was his absolute certainty that man is capable of grasping the meaning of life and of history by mystic or religious experience.¹⁹ If future historians try once again to determine his place in intellectual history they may judge it appropriate to invoke the names of Bergson²⁰ and of the two historians who were clearly influenced by Bergson: Spengler and Toynbee, not with intent to suggest that Huizinga adopted a specific philosophy and anticipated or shared Spengler's or Toynbee's ambitions but merely to state that he belonged to the particular intellectual climate in which such philosophies and such ambitions could grow.

In the history of Dutch civilization it was what Thys has called 'the movement of the nineties' which was the main source of inspiration for the young Huizinga.²¹ And, I think, for Huizinga not only as a young man. To some extent he remained loyal to the ideas and aspirations prevailing in his youth and, as has been said before, to the antithetical mode of perceiving, and thinking about life fashionable in those circles. Although Huizinga's intellectual versatility was astonishing even in his last period, he never endeavoured to dissociate himself completely from the preoccupations of the 1890s. There are in his work some constant factors and themes that can easily be traced back to the glorious last decade of the nineteenth

19. The psychiatrist C. T. van Valkenburg underlined the significance of this element in the thought of his intimate friend: *J. Huizinga. Zijn leven en persoonlijkheid* (Amsterdam, 1946) 58-61.

20. Margolin (*supra*, 262) suggests that in his *Erasmus* Huizinga adopted 'peut-être à son insu la méthode bergsonienne de l'intuition'.

21. *Supra*, 171ff.

century when Dutch culture reached heights perhaps never since surpassed. It may be appropriate to close this postscript and this volume (a volume designed not only as a tribute to Huizinga's memory but also as an attempt to have the value of his work critically assessed by specialists from different nations) with some short notes on the suprarational element in Huizinga's patriotism.

There is in modern Dutch history no period when national feeling was stronger and more self-confident than in the decades immediately before the outbreak of the First World War. In Dutch history explosions of national or nationalistic enthusiasm are relatively rare and the outburst of the 1880s and 1890s is thus in various respects remarkable. There are a number of causes which may help explain it. From the 1890s onward, the Dutch economy grew fast and regularly and in the course of two decades it reached the same level as in the major European countries. This was accompanied by the expansion of Dutch influence in their East Indian colony, an expansion which amounted to a form of imperialism. At the same time the Dutch reacted violently to the British attack on the South African Boer Republics. The Transvaal's resistance to Britain provoked a really surprising and spontaneous reaction. Their fight, it was thought, was proof of the revival of the true Dutch spirit. In South Africa the missed opportunities in the Dutch past could be made good. In the seventeenth century Holland had lost America to Britain; in the nineteenth century, Dutch commentators wrote, the Boers were reconquering South Africa for the Dutch race.

C. van Vollenhoven, a professor of International and Indonesian Law, who after 1915 came to be one of Huizinga's most intimate friends in Leiden, published in 1913 a little book, *De eendracht van het land* (The Concord of the Country), that made quite an impression and is very representative of some Dutch attitudes in this period. The Dutch people, Van Vollenhoven wrote, as if predestined by a higher power to greater things, had become strong again through economic recovery and through the magnificent development of their authority in the East Indies. Now Van Vollenhoven called upon the nation to restore its seventeenth-century glory by assuming an international task. The nation needed a 'central mission'. This was easy enough to define: the Netherlands' duty was to start building up an international police force, the strong arm of international law fighting for peace. It was obliged by its tradition to take up the challenging role of Jeanne d'Arc, La Fayette, Saint Paul - and it was in a better position to do so than the United States or France, which perhaps felt a kindred messianic call. It was more prosperous than France and more disinterested than any other nation. As a vital young people, Van Vollenhoven wrote, we want to resume our place in the first rank of nations; our inspiration must come from 'the knowledge that we can return to glory in an international role'.

I do not suggest that Huizinga ever propounded or conceived ideas identical with those of Van Vollenhoven. At any rate, there is nothing in his published work which encourages us to presume that he expected Holland to play such a great new part in international affairs. But he did share Van Vollenhoven's national pride and he developed a theory about Dutch national characteristics which is both in spirit and content in many respects similar to that of his friend. In a number of essays and lectures he tried to define the peculiar position of the Netherlands as a country wide open to German, French, and English cultural influences but, thanks to the fact that it possessed a rich and highly articulate national language, in no danger of succumbing to them. He sees the three major streams of European civilization somehow flowing together into the Dutch delta where they enrich Dutch culture without denaturing or denationalizing it. In a somewhat hesitant and inconclusive lecture delivered in Berlin on 27 January 1933 - an ominous date - Huizinga considered Holland's position as a mediator between Central and Western Europe. His emphasis however was really on the dualism of Dutch civilization itself, on the mixture of nationalism and internationalism that characterized it, on the view that the Dutch cultural identity was not weakened but strengthened by its openness. Thanks to what he called 'its happy fate' Holland was in a better position than any other country to understand foreign cultures and better able than Switzerland or Belgium to absorb their contrasting influences without in the process losing its own highly idiosyncratic national character. Apparently the very fact that these three major influences are contrasting enables a country which undergoes them simultaneously, to neutralize them. (II, 303, cf. 331)

It might well be that in the passage which I summarized the words 'a happy fate' ('ein günstiges Geschick') are no more than a rhetorical ornament. Comparison with other passages in his work, however, may lead the reader to take them more seriously. In 1934 Huizinga wrote in a small book on the Character of the Dutch Mind (*Nederland's Geestesmerk*) the following paragraph:

It is not the merits of individuals nor the excellence of the state's organization and its policies that account for all the advantages and qualities of Dutch life in the seventeenth century; nor are these to be explained as resulting from the happy coincidence of special circumstances. If one wished to summarize the cause of this phenomenon in one term, even when using purely rational standards, it would be impossible to find a better definition than: divine blessing. If history teaches other peoples to pride themselves on and to glory in their past, she teaches us, if we understand her lesson well, only humility. (VII, 284)

In a newspaper article of 1938, Huizinga stated that the history of Dutch national origins and growth displays a succession of totally unforeseen turns. History is always unpredictable but it would be difficult to find anywhere else such almost inconceivable turns of fate as was the destiny of the Dutch. (VIII, 563) Meanwhile

he had in 1932 delivered a series of lectures in Cologne on Dutch seventeenth-century civilization and published them in German. In 1941 he expanded these into his justly famous small book in Dutch. In this work, perhaps a long essay rather than a book, Huizinga described in a perfectly clear and balanced style the wonder of Dutch seventeenth-century civilization. I shall neither discuss the merits of this book nor try to indicate its flaws.²² What matters for me is the fact that we find here the elaboration of Huizinga's view that Dutch history is a miracle. The stylistic means used in this book are the rhetorical question and the paradox, and they serve to keep the reader constantly aware of the astonishing, inexplicable character of the subject matter. And indeed, in Huizinga's interpretation there is cause enough for astonishment. The Dutch state, so runs the argument, did not grow slowly and gradually; it was born by accident. But as soon as it had so abruptly come into existence, it was a world power, it developed a form of national identity and possessed a culture more varied than that of any other country in that period. That Athens, Florence, Rome and Paris functioned as cultural centres may be understandable, Huizinga declared, but Holland's case is different, for it was a minute country without a cultural past of more than purely local interest and as a nation not yet rooted in history. The phenomenon might have been understandable if by some happy coincidence Holland had in the seventeenth century developed into a centre where the general character of seventeenth-century civilization was most purely and completely expressed. However Dutch civilization did not really reflect the European style; it was a deviation, it represented an exception rather than a norm.

Huizinga's argument is so well-known that it needs no summarizing here. What is of importance for my purpose is that in this beautifully written, lucidly argued essay, full of subtle appreciations of Dutch literature and art, we find a bold, original, coherent interpretation of the place of Holland in seventeenth-century Europe as well as an almost religious awe at the whole phenomenon of Dutch existence and achievements. Holland is represented in this book as in all respects a unique case. It is clear that the unique cannot be explained. It is there to be admired and described as a gift of God.

22. *Supra*, 356ff.

Handel in kleurstoffen op de Antwerpse markt tijdens de XVe eeuw *

G. ASAERT

De lakenververij, een van de zogenaamde veredelingsstechnieken van de oude draperie, was een ingewikkelde en dure onderneming. De verver moest niet alleen een gedegen vakmanschap bezitten en een grote lichaamskracht kunnen opbrengen maar de outillage van een ververij vergde bovendien een niet geringe investering¹.

De kleurstoffen die de middeleeuwse ververs in hun kuipen gebruikten waren van organische oorsprong. Pas in de negentiende eeuw ging men over óp synthetische kleurmiddelen. In de oude Nederlanden bedienden de lakenververs zich bijna uitsluitend van kleurstoffen die van verfplanten werden verkregen. Elke plantensoort kon slechts één hoofdkleur opleveren zodat men van diverse plantenvariëteiten moest gebruik maken. In de loop van de tijd deed zich een evolutie in de toepassing voor. Toen in de zestiende eeuw nieuwe verfplanten in de pas ontsloten gebieden van de Nieuwe Wereld werden aangetroffen gingen deze van langsom meer de van ouds gekende soorten verdringen. Zo bleek indigo een veel krachtiger en gelijkmatiger te verdelen kleurstof te zijn dan de traditionele blauwe verfstof wede die samen met de roodkleurende meekrap de twee meest gebruikte middeleeuwse kleurstoffen waren².

Van deze was wede³ beslist de belangrijkste. De wedeplant is een tweejarig kruis-

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Gebruikte afkortingen:

Adr.: Adriaen; Aern.: Aernoud; al.: alias; Andr.: Andries; CL: Claus; Corn.: Cornelis; f.: filius; Giel.: Gielis; Godt.: Godevaert; H.: Henric; Hm.: Herman; J.: Jan; Jac: Jacob; Katl.: Katline; Laur.: Laureis; lb. gro. Br.: ponden groten Brabants; lb. gro. VI.: ponden groten Vlaams; Math.: Mathijs; ML: Michiel; P.: Peter; SAA: Stadsarchief Antwerpen; SR: Schepenregister; W.: Willem; wed.: weduwe; Wr.: Wouter.

1. E. Carus-Wilson, 'The Woollen Industry', *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, II, *Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1952) 379.

2. *Ibidem*, 127.

3. Latijn: isatis tinctoria, glastum, vitrum; Frans: guède, waide, pastel; Duits: Waid, Weidt; Engels: woad, wedde; Italiaans: guado, gualo. Cf. G. de Poerck, "Wazaru' et autres noms médiévaux de la guède", *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin du Cange)*, XVI (1943) 165-178. Enkele belangrijke studies: F. Borlandi, 'Note per la storia delle produzione e del commercio di una materia prima. Il guado nel medio evo', *Studi in onori di G. Luzzato*, I (Milaan, 1950) 297-324; J. B. Hurry, *The Woad-Plant and its Dye* (Londen, 1930); E. E. Ploss, *Ein Buch von alten Farben. Technologie der Textilfarben im Mittelalter, mit einem Ausblick auf die festen Farben* (Heidelberg-

bloemig gewas dat in de lente wordt gezaaid en pas het volgende jaar tot ontwikkeling komt. Wanneer de bladeren dik en vetzig zijn worden ze geoogst, tot vier a vijf keer per jaar, en wel van het voorjaar tot september⁴. Zij werden gemalen in de zogenaamde wedemolen waarvan wij geen sporen in de Antwerpse documenten hebben teruggevonden⁵. De aldus geplette bladeren werden in de rivier gewassen, in de zon gedroogd en vervolgens in hopen gelegd en zo tot gisting gebracht. Na drogen, stampen en zeven werd het eindproduct aan de ververs verkocht⁶.

De voornaamste Europese teeltgebieden bevonden zich in Thüringen⁷ en in het land van Gulik, in de streek van Toulouse⁸, Albi en Montauban, ook in Normandië en in Picardië⁹. In Italië waren het vooral Piemont, Udine en niet te vergeten Toscane, terwijl in de Lage Landen in het bijzonder de leemstreek van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden kan worden vermeld¹⁰.

Mede of meekrap¹¹ is een overblijvend gewas dat na twee of drie jaar wordt geoogst. Hier zijn het niet de bladeren maar wel de wortelstokken, soms tot één meter lang, die als grondstof voor de rode kleur bruikbaar zijn¹². Als men de kern

Berlijn, 1962); R. Scholz, *Aus der Geschichte des Farbstoffhandels im Mittelalter* (München, 1929). Voor studies betreffende gewestelijke wedecultuur verwijzen wij naar de volgende voetnoten.

4. P. Lindemans, *Geschiedenis van de landbouw in België*, II (Antwerpen, 1952) 257-258; B. H. Slicher van Bath, *De agrarische geschiedenis van West-Europa (500-1850)* (Utrecht-Antwerpen, 1960) 279, 297.

5. Tot dezelfde conclusie is reeds gekomen R. van Passen, 'Het toponiem weemoes', *Mededelingen van de Vereniging voor Naamkunde te Leuven en de Commissie voor Naamkunde te Amsterdam*, XXXIX (1963) 176.

6. W. L. J. de Nie, *De ontwikkeling der Noordnederlandsche textielververij van de veertiende tot de achttiende eeuw* (Leiden, 1937) 63-68.

7. A. Rach, 'Die zweite Blütezeit des Erfurter Waidhandels', *Jahrbücher für National-ökonomie und Statistik*, CLXXI (1959) 24-88; W. Schnellenkamp, *Beiträge zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Thüringer Waidstädte und ihrer Nachbarstädte*, I (Erfurt-Jena, 1929); E. Wagner, 'Waidbau und Waidhandel in Thüringen. Ein wirtschaftsgeschichtlicher Überblick', *Bauernspiegel* (1935) vi-vii; D. G. Schreber, *Beschreibung des Waidtes, dessen Baues, Bereitung und Gebrauchs zum Farben... besonders in Thüringen* (Halle, 1752); K. Mohring, 'Der Waidbau, das 'goldene Vlies' Thüringens', *Thüringer Volkskalender* (1952) 45-50.

8. Ph. Wolff, *Commerces et marchands de Toulouse (vers 1350-vers 1450)* (Parijs, 1954); G. Caster, *Le commerce du pastel et de l'épicerie à Toulouse (1450-1561)* (Toulouse, 1962); *idem*, 'Types économiques et sociaux du XVIe siècle. Le pastelier toulousain', *Annales. Economies. Sociétés. Civilisations*, IX (1954) 63-74.

9. E. Carus-Wilson, 'La guède française en Angleterre: un grand commerce du moyen âge', *Revue du Nord*, XXXV (1953) 89-106.

10. L. van Acker, 'Teelt van wede (pastel) in West-Vlaanderen', *Biekorf*, LXII (1961) 87; L. Génicot, 'La guède namuroise', *Belgisch tijdschrift voor filologie en geschiedenis*, XL (1962) 685-687; J. Herbillon en A. Joris, 'Les moulins à guède en Hesbaye au moyen âge', *ibidem*, XLII (1964) 495-515; A. Joris, 'La guède en Hesbaye au moyen âge (XIIIe-XVe siècle)', *Le Moyen Age*, LXIX (1963) 773-789; *idem*, 'Les moulins à guède dans le comté de Namur pendant la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle', *ibidem*, LXV (1959) 253-278.

11. Latijn: rubia tinctorum; Frans: garance; Duits: Krapp; Engels: madder.

12. Enkele belangrijke studies: J. de Kanter, *De teling en bereiding der meekrap* (Dordrecht,

van de wortel of het vlezige deel rond die kern gebruikt spreekt men van meekrap of van mede¹³. De meekrapplant wordt niet gezaaid maar gepoot in mei, in goed gedolven en gemeste grond. In de middeleeuwen was het in de Nederlanden op de zware gronden langs de zee kust, voornamelijk in Vlaanderen en Zeeland, het belangrijkste handelsgewas¹⁴. Laatstgenoemd gewas is eeuwenlang in Europa de monopoliehouder geweest tot Franse meekrap in de negentiende eeuw een ernstige concurrent werd. Door de uitvinding van synthetische kleurstoffen tegen het einde van het derde kwart van de negentiende eeuw ging de medecultuur definitief ten onder.

Omdat de teelt- en de consumptiegebieden, vooral wat wede betreft, ver van elkaar verwijderd lagen - een uitzondering is Toscane met Florence - kan kleurstof als handelswaar heel wat stof tot studie bieden. Bovendien voelt niet alleen de geïnteresseerde in economische geschiedenis zich door dit onderwerp aangetrokken. Het is eveneens onderzoeksterrein voor de landbouwhistoricus en voor de lokaalhistoricus, ja zelfs filologen hebben, zoals reeds is gebleken, voor dit onderwerp belangstelling kunnen opbrengen.

In de Antwerpse historiografie werd dit onderwerp nog niet rechtstreeks aangesneden. Wel verneemt men terloops een en ander bij F. Prims¹⁵, O. Desmedt¹⁶, J. Craeybeckx¹⁷ en E. Coornaert¹⁸. Antwerpen kende reeds sedert het begin van de dertiende eeuw en mogelijk ook vroeger¹⁹, een bloeiende lakenproductie, die voor de stad eigenlijk nooit zo van vitaal belang is geweest als voor de meeste steden van het graafschap Vlaanderen. In tegenstelling tot elders heeft men daar de steeds groeiende hoeveelheden Engels laken die de Nederlanden binnenstroonden niet

1802); B. W. van der Kloot Meyburg, 'Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de meekrapcultuur in Nederland', *Economisch-historisch jaarboek*, XVIII (1934) 59-153; J. M. G. van der Poel, 'De teelt van meekrap', *Ceres en Clio. Zeven variaties op het thema landbouw/geschiedenis* (Wageningen, 1964) 129-165; C. Wiskerke, 'De geschiedenis van het meekrapbedrijf in Nederland', *Economisch-historisch jaarboek*, XXV (1952) 1-144.

13. N. W. Posthumus, *De geschiedenis van de Leidsche lakenindustrie*, I ('s-Gravenhage, 1908) 53, nr. 4.

14. Lindemans, *Geschiedenis van de landbouw*, II, 255; J. Mertens, *De laatmiddeleeuwse landbouw-economie in enkele gemeenten van het Brugse platteland* (Brussel, 1970) 82-83.

15. F. Prims, *Geschiedenis van het Antwerpse turfdragersambacht, 1447-1863* (Antwerpen, 1923) 81-82; *idem*, 'De statuten van de Antwerpsche lakengilden in het begin der zestiende eeuw', *Verslagen en mededeelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde* (Ledeberg-Gent, 1939) 19-45; *idem*, 'Het lakenverwersambacht', *Antverpiensia*, 20e reeks, XI (Antwerpen, 1950) 67-68.

16. O. Desmedt, *De Engelse natie te Antwerpen in de 16e eeuw (1496-1582)*, II (Antwerpen, 1954) 399-400.

17. J. Craeybeckx, *Un grand commerce d'importation: les vins de France aux anciens Pays-Bas (XIIIe-XVIe siècle)*, Ports, Routes, Trafics, IX (Parijs, 1958) 144-145.

18. E. Coornaert, *Les Français et le commerce international à Anvers (fin XVe et XVIe siècles)*, II (Parijs, 1961) 104, noot 4-5, 160.

19. Cf. A. L. J. van de Walle, 'De archeologische opgravingen in het oud stadscentrum te Antwerpen', *Antwerpen. Tijdschrift der stad*, VI (1960) ii, 48-61.

als een bedreiging aangezien. De stadsmagistraat heeft het niet noodzakelijk geacht dit laken als een gevaar voor de eigen industrie te weren. Veeleer is het tegendeel waar. Omdat de Engelse wijze van lakenbereiding op het vasteland minder op prijs werd gesteld is men te Antwerpen de appretuur resoluut gaan bevorderen en groeide de stad in de loop van de vijftiende eeuw meer en meer uit tot een belangrijk centrum van lakenbereiding²⁰. Het is duidelijk dat naast de bereiders ook de ververs uit deze evolutie voordeel haalden. Hun bedrijvigheid hing echter af van de bevoorrading in kleurstoffen. Nu is bekend dat sedert de laatste decennien van de vijftiende eeuw de Antwerpse markt als het ware overspoeld werd door pastel uit de streek van Toulouse. Vooral de zestiende eeuw, Antwerpens Gouden Eeuw, werd door een belangrijke wede-import gekenmerkt. Lodovico Gucciardini, een Florentijn die jarenlang te Antwerpen verbleef en als een tamelijk betrouwbare bron mag worden aangezien, verhaalt dat de haven jaarlijks 40.000 balen pastel importeerde²¹. Aangezien echter vóór 1480 de Toulouser wede de Nederlanden nog niet bereikte²² rijst de vraag uit welke produktiegebieden de Scheldestad zijn kleurstoffen betrok tijdens het grootste deel van de vijftiende eeuw.

Naar Prims mededeelt kwam wede uit Gulik en Erfurt, ook wel uit Frankrijk en Portugal²³. Coornaert neemt deze zienswijze over. Antwerpen ontving 'un peu de 'waid' de Juliers et d'Erfurt, même de Breslau.²⁴ Op het eind van de vijftiende eeuw verdrong de Toulouser pastel de import van wede uit Normandië en Picardië²⁵.

Picardië was inderdaad een van de belangrijkste teeltgebieden in de middeleeuwen. De roem van Amiens was op 'waide' gebouwd en Engeland was de belangrijkste afnemer²⁶. In de vijftiende eeuw behoorde de grote tijd van de Picardische wede-export naar Engeland tot het verleden. Kooplieden van Amiens gingen nog slechts hun waar aan Engelse opkopers aanbieden te Kales en op de Brabantse jaarmarkten²⁷. Het zou dus geenszins onlogisch zijn Noord-Franse wede op de Antwerpse markt aan te treffen.

20. Desmedt, *Engelse natie*, I, 83-84.

21. *Descrittione di M. Lodovico Gucciardini patritio Fiorentino, di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimente detti Germania inferiore* (Antwerpen: W. Silvius, 1567) 125. Dit cijfer lijkt geenszins overdreven. Cf. W. Brulez, 'De handelsbalans der Nederlanden in het midden van de 16e eeuw', *Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, XXI (1967) 284-285.

22. Z. W. Sneller en W. S. Unger, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den handel met Frankrijk, 753-1585*, I, RGP, Grote Serie LXX ('s-Gravenhage, 1930) 179. Vier poorters van Leiden geven op 18 december 1481, voor het gerecht van Bergen-op-Zoom, een verklaring betreffende twee partijen weed van Toulouse, die zij van Gomes de Souria, koopman uit Spanje, te Middelburg hebben gekocht.

23. Prims, *Turf dragersambacht*, 88; *idem*, 'De statuten', 17.

24. Coornaert, *Les Français*, II, 104, noot 4.

25. *Ibidem*, I, 324.

26. Carus-Wilson, 'The Woollen Industry', 377.

27. M. R. Thielemans, *Bourgogne et Angleterre. Relations politiques et économiques entre les Pays-Bas Bourguignons et l'Angleterre 1435-1467* (Brussel, 1966) 235.

Wel kwam het ons vrij zonderling voor dat de Rijnlandse inbreng door Coornaert zo laag werd geschat. Tussen Aken en Keulen, dat is niet zo heel ver van Antwerpen, bevond zich immers een uitgestrekt wedegebied. Gelet op de groeiende handelsbetrekkingen met Keulen behoort een grotere afname van Rijnlandse kleurstof tot de mogelijkheden. Een onderzoek was het ondernemen waard.

Meekrap werd volgens Prims²⁸ betrokken uit Zeeland en de eigen polderstreek, wat zeer aanvaardbaar voorkomt. Een tweede vraag die men zich mag stellen: werd alle te Antwerpen geïmporteerde kleurstof in de plaatselijke nijverheid verbruikt of fungeerde deze Scheldehaven als een distributiecentrum dat ook andere draperiesteden heeft bevoorrad?

Om deze en andere vragen te kunnen beantwoorden werd te rade gegaan bij het Antwerpse schepenenprotocol van de vijftiende eeuw²⁹ dat vrij gaaf tot ons is gekomen en voor de geschiedenis van Antwerpens late middeleeuwen zowat het enige materiaal van grotere omvang is, bruikbaar voor de geschiedenis van het economisch leven in de Scheldestad en erbuiten. In deze protocollen van vrijwillige rechtspraak, of schepenenbrieven, zoals ze enigszins ten onrechte gewoonlijk worden genoemd, vindt men de huishouding van de burgerij in een zeer groot aantal akten weerspiegeld. Wanneer men zich realiseert dat wat Antwerpen betreft, alleen al voor de vijftiende eeuw (tot 1480), een 300.000 minuten van akten bewaard zijn gebleven, groeit een gevoel van onmacht ten opzichte van de enorme en indrukwekkende hoeveelheid materiaal die nog op bewerking wacht. Dit bronnenmateriaal kan natuurlijk bezwaarlijk als statistisch worden gecatalogeerd. Toch biedt het, mits de nodige omzichtigheid in acht wordt genomen, nog een redelijke kwantitatieve bruikbaarheid.

Dank zij een, naar wij aannemen uitputtend, onderzoek van de 96 schepenenregisters van de periode 1394-1480 konden een driehonderdtal contracten betreffende verkoop van verfstoffen worden opgespoord. Omdat deze akten diverse bruikbare elementen bevatten is hun aantal groot genoeg om geldige conclusies te trekken. Er is vooreerst de datum van elke acte waardoor de spreiding in de tijd kan worden bestudeerd; er zijn de namen van de contracterende partijen met opgave van beroep en herkomst van deze mensen, wat ons voor de koper het milieu leert kennen waarin de produkten terecht komen en voor de verkoper de streek waaruit de kleurstof wordt ingevoerd. Verder wordt de kwantiteit van de verhandelde waar of de prijs van de gehele partij opgegeven. Wanneer beide elementen in eenzelfde contract worden aangetroffen kan de prijs per gewicht of per verpakkingseenheid worden berekend. De akten bevatten ook de wijze van betaling, de koers van de munt en opgaven van panden en borgen. In de meeste gevallen zijn niet al deze elementen gelijktijdig aanwezig maar door substitutie is het dikwijls mogelijk gebleken de ontbrekende gegevens aan te vullen.

28. Prims, 'De statuten', 16.

29. SAA, SR 1-96 (1394-1480) 96 registers..