

The Faded Emotions of Scheveningen, Vienna, Waterloo. Remembrance cultures in the Netherlands in a European context

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Introduction

The year 1815 has imprinted itself on the year 2015 with great vigour and variety; and not only because of the *hausse* in studies, monographs and novels that have been published on the topic of Vienna, Waterloo, Napoleon, Alexander, etc. Outside this academic scope of interest, there were huge re-enactment parties at Waterloo and elsewhere, and ringing public statements from ministers and chancellors were disseminated, from Vienna to The Hague, from New York to Brazil. All told, these activities definitely ranked the year 2015 among the most successful celebrations since 1815. That was especially so in the Netherlands where the celebrations started in 2013 already, with the commemoration of the return of the House of Orange to the Low Countries in November 1813, and lasted until 21 September 2015, the bicentennial of the formal coronation of King William I.

The year 1815 is not only back as a memorial moment, it has also returned and re-presented itself in its material, physical form. For example, Operation Nightingale, a program initiated and conducted by British military personnel with a background in archaeology, enables veterans with posttraumatic stress symptoms to participate in excavations at the site of Waterloo, searching for more historical details, the remains of killing grounds and tracing battle movements.² Excava-

tions are also organised throughout Belgium and the Netherlands to locate other battle fields in the slipstream of the last Napoleonic resistance between 1813 and 1815, or to look for lost fortresses and defence bulwarks that were created during these years of European warfare. Traces of that strife can still be found just below the surface of many First World War remembrance sites, simply begging for excavation and attention.

This juxtaposition and interplay of amateur interest in the historical events of 1815, with appealing novels and romantic stories, straightforward archaeological digging and a wave of deft and detailed Congress of Vienna publications have created a space of remembrance, of memory and history that can only be described as multi-layered, a bit edgy sometimes (when British and German versions of the Battle of Waterloo clash, for example), but overall fairly positive in their basic tone. Be it martial, military demonstrations of victor's pride, re-enactments of the 'landing' of King William I on the beach of Scheveningen in 1813 (with live coverage of real helicopters and special forces, to the bewilderment of the historians amongst the spectators)³, or very artful and creative presentations of Viennese culture, of diplomatic master craft and European peace-making – everything was allowed. This eclectic cavalcade of totally diverse commemorations of the 1813–1815 events was especially visible in the way that the Netherlands carried out its bicentennial celebrations. For this country, not only were the defeat of Napoleon and the peace-making process of Vienna honoured, the bicentennial of the creation of the Dutch monarchy, as restoration and promotion of the House of Orange (the former *Stadholders*),

1 Thanks to John Kok for his assistance with the editing. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007-2013) / ERC Grant Agreement n.615313.

2 Theo TOEBOSCH, Waterloo: Veteranen op het slagveld, in: NRC Handelsblad, 21–22 November 2015; Glasgow archaeologists begin dig at Waterloo battlefield, BBC News, 29 April 2015.

3 (Terug)kijken: de aankomst van prins Willem Frederik in Scheveningen, in: NRC Handelsblad, 30 November 2013.

was also celebrated. In the story of the 1813/15 bicentennial, as it was remembered and re-enacted in the Low Countries (the current Netherlands and Belgium taken together), everything comes together: martial and pacifist strands, the Congress of Vienna, the two Paris peace conferences, the return of the House of Orange, the battle of Waterloo, national and international sentiments, northern Dutch and southern Belgian identities.

In this article, I will consider to what extent the year 1815, to be more specific, the years 1813–1815, initiated the establishment of a *myth of national unity* (of the northern and southern parts of the country) *within a context of European peace and security*. I will show how different meanings were inscribed in this historical space, how conflicting images of national and international, European, and specifically Dutch importance vied for dominance, which agents influenced this process of myth- and memory-making, and in which guise, in the end, the myth of 1813/15 lived on. In describing this process, there is an intricate and inextricable linkage between ‘Scheveningen’, ‘Vienna’, and ‘Waterloo’ as veritable geographic *lieux de mémoires*. We could argue that Vienna had its origin, its reason for being and its military foundation in Waterloo, and on the fields of Flanders. For the making of the Dutch 1813/15-myth, both Waterloo and Vienna started with Scheveningen, symbolizing the return of the Sovereign Prince, Stadholder William VI (the later King William I). I will describe how the newly inaugurated king of the Netherlands, William I, keyed in on the emotional capital of 1813/15 and how under his rule (and that of his heirs) a culture of remembrance was created and constructed, pivoting around the two harbinger moments to their houses: national reinstallation (1813) and international confirmation (1815). These moments invoked different, even contradictory emotions and influenced an ambivalent course of remembrance – only to peter out altogether in the second half of the 20th century.

The emotional turn in history and the emotions of 1813/15

Remembrance cultures are shaped by powerful agents, by opinion brokers, and by monuments erected. These cultures can, however, only thrive

and consolidate within the limits and confines of a space demarcated by the sentiments that can be effectively triggered and mobilized. Populations, elites, poets and armies can be aroused and mobilized, but not to every whim. That is why we introduce the emotional turn in history here.

Elsewhere, I have made the case for applying this emotional approach to the history of security, in particular to the history of 1815 and the emergence of a European security culture.⁴ That one’s emotions influence one’s thoughts and behaviour needs little documentation, although how and why they do is a matter of continuing debate. Nonetheless, taking the role that emotions have played into account when studying the past is increasingly recognized as a legitimate historiographic approach. Although many different and contrasting understandings still come into play, even on the basic level of what is meant by the ‘emotional turn in history’ and concerning how these emotional states in past times may be accessed, Frevert and others have done much to professionalize the field of the study of emotions in history.⁵

Windows of opportunity for collective emotions to be aroused and mobilized open up especially in times of crisis and upheaval, as in 1813/15. The ‘emotions of 1815’ were a mixed bag of very

4 Beatrice DE GRAAF, Bringing Sense and Sensibility to the Continent. Vienna 1815 revisited, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 13/4 (2015), pp. 447–457. The lines that follow are taken from that paper.

5 Cf. Ute FREVERT, *Emotions in History. Lost and found*, New York 2011; Ute FREVERT/Monique SCHEER/Anne SCHMIDT/Pascal EITLER/Bettina HITZER/Nina VERHEYEN/Benno GAMMERL/ Christian BAILEY/Margrit PERNAU, *Emotional Lexicons. Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling 1700–2000*, Oxford 2014; Jan PLAMPER, *Geschichte und Gefühl. Grundlagen der Emotionsgeschichte*, München 2012. See also Nicole EUSTACE/Eugenia LEAN/Julie LIVINGSTON/Jan PLAMPER/William M. REDDY/Barbara H. ROSENWEIN, AHR Conversation. The historical Study of Emotions, in: *The American Historical Review* 117/5 (2012), pp. 1487–1531. Other attempts have, for example, already addressed the emotion of “trust” in the history of international relations. Cf. Eric VAN RYTHOVEN, Learning to Feel, Learning to Fear? Emotions, Imaginaries, and Limits in the Politics of Securitization, in: *Security Dialogue* 46/5 (2015), pp. 458–475; Michael TORSTEN, Time to get Emotional. Phronetic reflections on the concept of trust in international relations; in: *European Journal of International Relations* 19/4 (2013), pp. 869–890.

strong sentiments and desires. Feelings of fear and anxiety on the one hand, and a longing for peace, tranquillity and order on the other, were translated into political metaphors (old and new alike) and informed new concepts of and ways of thinking about international relations. A novelist like Sir Walter Scott, famous in those days, found audiences for his nostalgic, romantic and highly ‘historical’ works in a time when millions of people had been affected by the Napoleonic wars, repercussions of which had spread from Egypt to Russia. In the words of Lukács, “hence the concrete possibilities for men to comprehend their own existence as something historically conditioned, for them to see in history something which deeply affects their daily lives and immediately concerns them”⁶.

So, which feelings dominated, which appealed to the masses and elites alike in 1813/15 within Dutch society? Sense and sensibility, national pathos, victor’s pride or a yearning for peace? Love for the newly inaugurated king, desire for unity and an end to civil war and strife, a craving for liberty and commercial opportunities? How international were these sentiments, how much was 1815, the Congress of Vienna, and the international context of the resurrection of the House of Orange and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands acknowledged? We will see how different kinds of sentiments were mobilized, triggered, aroused and intentionally set in motion after the defeat of Napoleon. But only a specific set of emotions came to be inscribed in Dutch national memory, solidified in stone monuments, iconic paintings and poems – and only very little of it survives in collective memory today.

The narrative invoked: The Scheveningen Landing and the myth of 1813

The remembrance of 1815 in the Netherlands cannot be rightly understood without pointing to the ‘myth of 1813’ as it is described and contested in Dutch historiography.⁷ Not the *divide-et-impera*

at Vienna, the impressive and illustrious meeting ground of monarchs and emperors at the lavish dinners and salons of the Austrian capital, but the total dedication and loyalty of a handful of Dutch royalists in Holland kept the spirit of the Dutch independence alive. Not the redistribution and rearrangement of the European map and the carving out of bits and pieces amongst the European diplomats, but the early and timely resurrection of national resistance sealed the fate of the Kingdom. Moreover, the ‘myth of 1813’ especially features William I, the son of the fugitive Stadholder William V who, on hearing the news of the invading Napoleonic armies, fled the country by a shipping boat in its darkest hours on 18 January 1795. Through numerous adventures and hardships, including schemes and plottings with his mother Wilhelmina of Prussia (the niece of Frederick the Great, king of Prussia) and with the support of the British government – this Prince of Orange returned to his fatherland in 1813.⁸

The myth of his return, as it became inscribed in collective memory after 1813, reads as follows. On 17 November 1813, sympathizers to the House of Orange, the counts Hogendorp, van Limburg Stirum and van der Duyn Maasdam, issued a proclamation to the “People of the Netherlands”, which one-sidedly announced the re-installment of an independent government, headed by the Prince of Orange, and based on a new, liberal constitution. On November 19, van Hogendorp sent his famous letter to William, calling him back “home” and offering him the sovereign rule over the Netherlands (not yet the Crown). He sent couriers to London and Frankfurt, since no one knew the whereabouts of the Prince – who was on his way to England at that time.⁹ Two days later, at his domicile, van Hogendorp and his companions assumed power on behalf of the Prince of Orange – a scene famously portrayed by Jan Willem Pi-

6 Georg LUKÁCS, *The Historical Novel*, Lincoln 1983, p. 24.

7 Cf. Ido DE HAAN, *Een nieuwe staat*, and Henk TE VELDE, *De herdenkingen en betekenis van 1813*, in: Ido DE HAAN / Paul DEN HOED / Henk TE VELDE (ed.), *Een nieuwe staat*.

Het begin van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, Amsterdam 2014, pp. 9–33, 363–383.

8 See amongst others: Jeroen KOCH, *Willem I 1772–1843*, Amsterdam 2013.

9 Darmstadt, Hessisches Staatsarchiv (HStD), O11 B 108, Letter from van Hogendorp to William, The Hague, 19 November 1813; Cf. Edwin VAN MEERKERK, Gijsbert Karel van Hogendorp. *De man van 1813*, in: de Haan et al. (ed.), *Een nieuwe staat*, pp. 34–41.

eneman in 1828 (a masterpiece on view at the Rijksmuseum).¹⁰

In the meantime, after having received the proclamation by van Hogendorp, the German knight and William's loyal emissary Hans Christoph von Gagern, together with Castlereagh, announced in Frankfurt (where the Allied Powers of the Sixth Coalition had their headquarters and convened to discuss the future European order) the resurrection of the state of the Netherlands, sending a copy of van Hogendorp's letter to all the allied parties, including Sweden, as a *de facto* confirmation and proclamation by the people of the Netherlands of William's sovereign rule.¹¹ Gagern negotiated and consequently signed the treaties that recognized the Netherlands as an ally in the battle against Napoleon in December 1813.¹² These were major accomplishments for a country that still was not liberated from the French, was financially exhausted, and had no army to speak of. And it created new facts. From now on, the House of Orange was back in business on the continent, and the idea of a resurrection of the Low Countries (in whatever form this was to take) was firmly put on the agenda of the Allied Powers. Of course, as it has been thoroughly described by Niek van Sas, the creation of a strong bulwark against France and Prussia along the North Sea

coast had always been part of the British strategic plans for Europe.¹³

Without falling into the trap of *post hoc* projecting national sentiments onto a dispersed and distraught population that did not perceive itself as Dutch in the modern sense of the word at all, Henk te Velde¹⁴, Matthijs Lok¹⁵ and Lotte Jensen¹⁶ have indeed pointed to strong sentiments of resistance and rejection (of the French yoke) and relief within the population upon hearing about the news of the return of the hereditary Prince of Orange in November 1813. His return was celebrated as a "redemption from slavery", as a feast for the country, its population and the elites alike. Former minister, theologian and professor van der Palm composed a famous jubilant poem in 1816: "Never before was such a joy – exalted as drunkenness, in such diverse fashions to everyone's liking – experienced. [...] To the elders, a child had been regained from death, to the men a brother had returned, for the young ones, a father! [...] Thousand cloths were waved, drenched in tears".¹⁷ According to Henk te Velde, these sentiments of relief, sympathy and support should not be confused with late-19th century nationalism, for they were an expression of immense relief and a desire for stability; nationalism was projected upon the House of Orange and meant the recreation of a

10 Jan Willem Pieneman (1779–1853) was an artist, already famous in his lifetime, director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (1820–1853) and director of the Rijksmuseum (1844–1847). The title of the 1828 painting was *De aanvaarding van het Algemeen Bestuur in naam van de Prins van Oranje ten huize van Van Hogendorp op 21 november 1813*.

11 HStD, O11 B108, Letter from Gagern to van Hogendorp, Frankfurt, 30 November 1813.

12 HStD, O11 B32, Letter from Prince William to Gagern, 1 December 1813. Gagern's efforts and importance were acknowledged in The Hague: The Hague, National Archives (NA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1813–1870, pl. nr. 2.04.01, inv. nr. 747, Letter from van der Duyn van Maasdam, also on behalf of van Hogendorp (the then Secretary of State, and member of the triumvirate that proclaimed the Dutch independence on 17 November) to Fagel, 8 December 1813. See: Beatrice DE GRAAF, Second-tier Diplomacy. Hans von Gagern and William I in their quest for an alternative European order, 1813–1818; in: *Journal for Modern European History* 12/4 (2014), pp. 546–566.

13 Niek VAN SAS, *Onze Natuurlijkste Bondgenoot. Nederland, Engeland en Europa, 1813–1831*, Groningen 1985.

14 Henk TE VELDE, *De herdenkingen en betekenis van 1813*. See footnote 7.

15 Matthijs LOK, The bicentennial of "1813" and national history writing. Remarks on a new consensus, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 130/4 (2015), pp. 111–120; Matthijs LOK, "Een geheel nieuw tijdperk van ons bestaan". De herinnering aan de Nederlandse Opstand en de temporaliteit van "1813"; in: *De Negentiende Eeuw* 38/2 (2014), pp. 67–82.

16 Lotte JENSEN/Bart VERHEIJEN, *De betekenis van 1813 voor het gewone volk. Oranje boven!*, in: *Thema Tijdschrift* 4 (2013/14), pp. 10–11; Lotte JENSEN, *Verzet tegen Napoleon*, Nijmegen 2013.

17 "Nooit werd vreugde, tot dronkenschap opgevoerd, op zoo verschillende wijzen, naar ieders aard vertoond. [...] Den ouden was het als hadden zij een kind uit den dood wedergekregen, de mannen een broeder, de jongelingen een vader! [...] en duizend doeken zwaaiden, met tranen besproeid!". Johannes VAN DER PALM, *Geschieden redekunstig gedenkschrift van Nederlands herstelling in den jare 1813*, Amsterdam 1816, pp. 156–157.

stable state, and an end to partisan unrest, disorder and insecurity.¹⁸

These sentiments were translated into a series of iconic paintings and gravures in the immediate post-Napoleonic years. Images depicting the arrival of William Frederick, hereditary prince, on the beach of Scheveningen, in a small fleet of simple little boats on a cold November morning were widely disseminated.¹⁹ This simple moment of joy, of love even, for the returning Prince and for his House, swiftly made it into collective memory. It not only demonstrated pride in being an independent country again (with a ruler of its own), it also proved the Dutch autonomy as opposed to Napoleon's repression, as well as a movement that showed how the Dutch took matters into their own hand, and did not have to wait for others to return their power to them. In these pictures, not the Allied Powers, but William himself came to liberate his Fatherland. This scene was invoked and reiterated in the decades to come. Drawn from these first historical etchings and paintings by Penning and others, the painter Johan Herman Isings (1884–1977) eternalized the so-called *Landing at Scheveningen* in the 1950s in one of his famous school murals. This watercolour picture, that adorned thousands of school rooms throughout the country for half a century (in my early school years, it still decorated the school hall, but was removed in the 1990s), by then had come to symbolize the eternal Dutch national spirit in opposition to repressive regimes (demonstrating the collective uprisings against Spain in the 16/17th century, against Napoleon in the 18/19th and against the Nazi-regime in the 20th century). This was a true spirit of independence and resistance, symbolized by the pride in the House of Orange.

The myth of 1813 – national liberation from an oppressor, return of the house of Orange and subsequent independence as a monarchy – was cemented with the creation of the National Monument for 1813 in The Hague's Willemspark between 1863 and 1869, and by numerous other memorabilia from that period. All of them bran-

dished a typical Dutch, patriotic view of the years 1813/15. The National Monument, this typically nineteenth century edifice, is adorned with a statue of William I, images of van Hogendorp, van der Duyn van Maasdam and van Limburg Stirum (who helped organise his return and issued the proclamation of 17 November), two female figures symbolizing History and Religion, and is crowned with the Dutch Maiden on top of it all. Hence, the monument was a highly eclectic attempt to reconcile liberal, conservative/monarchical, secular, catholic and protestant sentiments regarding Dutch independence and the creation of the United Kingdom in 1813.²⁰

The myth did not even last half a century. At its first centennial in 1913, the legend of self-imposed independence, a new start and the halo of the House of Orange was shattered by the country's most famous historian, Johan Huizinga. He denounced the narrative of the King's return at Scheveningen as a retrospective restyling and fashioning of a quasi-independent uprising, whereas in reality the Allied Powers had already decided the fate of the Netherlands. Moreover, as Huizinga sharply remarked, not 1813, but 1848 should be celebrated as the birth date of the modern Dutch state.²¹ Since Huizinga's famous address, debate about the exact date for this newly regained Dutch independence became incessant. The moment of 30 November (the landing of the Prince) was set against 17 November (the proclamation by the Dutch elites). The former moment was claimed by more conservative, orangist and monarchical parties, the second by liberal historians and politicians alike. Other dates vied for acknowledgement as well: 31 March 1814, being the adoption of the new Constitution in March 1814, as the real founding date for the constitutional monarchy; 16 March 1815, the proclamation of William I as king of the Netherlands (up until then he had shunned this royal title because of fear for antimonarchical reactionaries); 31 May 1815, the formal unification with the Austrian provinces

18 Henk TE VELDE, *Over het begrijpen van 1813 twee-honderd jaar later*, The Hague 2013, pp. 34–38.

19 See, for example, Simon LEVIE et al., *Het vaderlandsch gevoel. Vergeten negentiende-eeuwse schilderijen over onze geschiedenis*, Amsterdam 1978.

20 Paul DEN HOED, *Het nationaal monument voor 1813 als meerduldig beeldverhaal*, in: DE HAAN et al. (ed.), *Een nieuwe staat*, pp. 348–361.

21 Johan HUIZINGA, *Bijlage II. Voordracht van den heer Dr. J. Huizinga. De beteekenis van 1813 voor Nederland's geestelijke beschaving*; in: *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij de Nederlandse Letterkunde*, Leiden 1913, pp. 25–46.

(Belgium) into the United Kingdom; or 21 September 1815, the formal coronation of William I in Brussels – which was it? Each of these moments was constitutive to another sense of ‘Dutchness’, another branch of national sentiment.

Considering today’s bicentennial celebrations, historians have concluded that 1813 has disappeared again and did not become a lasting part of the Dutch collective memory. Moreover, the myth *an sich* has been thoroughly deconstructed. ‘1813’ was not the *Stunde Null* for which it had been celebrated during the 19th century; for that, too many continuities (personal, administrative, judicial and political ones) could be discerned, bridging the Napoleonic gap from 1795 to 1813. Furthermore, the loss of Belgium, the ambivalent evaluation of the authoritarian William I, and the overtowering importance of the Second World War to Dutch national identity and cultural memory have undermined the myth of 1813 beyond repair.²²

Joining the large Powers: the Congress of Vienna & more

This leads us on to the next train of sentiments connected to the years 1813/15. Whereas the national pathos of 1813 – and its various rejections – in retrospect have perhaps gained too much attention in historiography, the sentiments surrounding the Congress of Vienna have left but a little imprint on Dutch collective memory. This is not to say that the powerbrokers of those days were not aware of the importance of Vienna, or that the population was not aware of the dedication by the Allied Powers to liberate their country. Sentiments heralding the allied support for the return of the King and the liberation of the Low Countries were very well articulated by contemporaries in the years 1813/15 and its aftermath.

Collective sentiments in the Netherlands were voiced in pamphlets and poems to rally the Dutch citizens (from the northern and southern parts of the new kingdom alike) against the old tyrant and

behind the banner of the European powers. Petronella Moens (1762–1843), a very popular Dutch female writer, published a poem in 1815 entitled *Bij het intrekken van Napoleon Buonaparte in Parijs* (*On Napoleon Bonaparte’s Entering Paris*). She articulates the emotions of women confronted with the danger of the returning tyrant and new wars. “Dutch virgins” are invoked to spread feelings of patriotism, and to encourage fathers, sons and loved ones to join the allied forces. In all of this, the poet’s words are also very reassuring: there is no doubt that reason and patriotic love will overcome the despotic tyrant, especially since the beloved father of the Dutch nation, the newly crowned King William, and God are all on their side.²³ And another poem issued a passionate appeal to allied unity and solidarity:

“Help God! Inspire and strengthen the great Alexander!

Help Austria! – Germany! The noble Prussians and Brits!

Screw the hands of all our princes together

In order to reach your holy goal and aim.”²⁴

Already in 1816, Pieter Cornelis van Os produced a vivid image of wild Russian Cossacks liberating the town of Utrecht on horseback and shying the remaining French garrisons away – a story that came to be rehearsed in the decades to come, up until the influential children’s novel *Van Hollandse jongens in de Franse tijd* by the Utrecht schoolteacher W. G. van de Hulst, published on the occasion of the 1913 centennial.²⁵ William I

22 See Henk TE VELDE, *Herdenk 1813 alleen als begin*, in: NRC Handelsblad, 19 January 2013; Matthijs LOK, *The bicentennial of “1813–1815”*; ID., *‘Herwonnen vrijheid’. ‘1813’ als Nederlandse oorsprongsmythe*, in: *Jaarboek Parlementaire Geschiedenis 2013. De Republiek van Oranje, 1813–2013*, Nijmegen 2013, pp. 13–22.

23 See Lotte JENSEN, *A Poem by Petronella Moens: “Bij het intrekken van Napoleon Buonaparte in Parijs”*, [<http://www.100days.eu/items/show/61>], accessed 9 January 2016.

24 *Vaderlander, Strijd! voor God! den Koning! en het Vaderland*, Amsterdam 1815. For an analysis of popular reactions in the northern and southern provinces of the Netherlands during the Hundred Days, see Lotte JENSEN, *“De hand van broederschap toegereikt”*. *Nederlandse identiteiten en identiteitsbesef in 1815*, in: Frank JUDO/Stijn VAN DE PERRE (ed.), *In Belg of Bataaf. De wording van het Verenigd Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, Antwerp 2015, pp. 79–101.

25 Pieter G. VAN OS, *Aankomst der kozakken in Utrecht* 28 November 1813, in: *Centraal Museum Utrecht 1816*; Willem G. VAN DE HULST, *Van Hollandsche jongens in den Franschen tijd*, n. p. 1913.

himself, during the first week of his arrival in early December 1813 (when he was still Sovereign Prince), expressed to Czar Alexander his gratitude for the support of his troops in restoring the Netherlands to “one of the independent European nations”.²⁶

What we find across the continent during the days of the Vienna Congress, the 100 days of Napoleon’s return and his final defeat, is an emotional vocabulary that denounces extremism, revolutionary upheaval, hegemonic egotism and arbitrary rule. These notions are countered with praise for stable, organic constitutions (such as monarchies), for international unity and an allied effort for peace – as compared to the belligerent zealotry and despotic *Alleingang* of Napoleon, and the destruction left in his wake.²⁷

More attempts were made to indeed underscore and celebrate this allied unity, as manifested by the Congress of Vienna and its results by means of a national cultural event. This Congress was definitely known to Dutch citizens at that time. The *’s Gravenhaagsche Courant* of Wednesday 8 June 1814 printed the text of the Treaty of Paris together with an announcement that a “general congress” would take place in Vienna where these matters would be further settled.²⁸ On the last page of this newspaper, the poetry society *Kunstliefde spaart geen vlijt* (*Love of Art Spares no Diligence*) announced a competition for the best poem on the theme of “the Peace of 1814”. Notwithstanding the large advertisement and appeal, this contest

did not attract much enthusiasm. A year later, this society announced a change of title, and the call was now made for the best ode to “Europe’s General Peace Restored”.²⁹ In the autumn of 1816, the *Kunstliefde spaart geen vlijt* convened in The Hague to assess the submissions. Only four poems were submitted, all of them of poor quality (their obligatory titles being “Non ego bella canam”, “Ho de logos tautais” [...] “Truth lives in peace and liberty” and “God reigns, the earth rejoices”). The society therefore decided to annul the contest and issued a new one, a competition to compose a panegyric to a well-known lord.³⁰

The peace of 1814/15 turned out to be too bloodless a sentiment to inspire many citizens beyond a few individual poets. However, neither the citizens nor society at large, but the power-brokers themselves did keep the memory of allied solidarity and the European context of the newly gained collective peace alive. Traces of this international spirit, of being part of a larger community of European powers in whose midst the House of Orange and the Kingdom of the Netherlands had found their rightful place again, can be found in the monuments dedicated to the national liberation of 1813 – and commissioned by King William III himself (William I’s grandson). As mentioned above, in 1869, a celebrated national monument was dedicated commemorating the restoration of the Netherlands’ independence in 1813. On the monument, above the female figure representing history, there is a quote attributed to van Hogendorp: “Het vaderland wederom geplaagt in den rang der volken van Europa” – which may be loosely translated as: “The fatherland once again placed amidst the rank and file of Europe’s nations”.³¹ Thus, in 1869, the rulers of the day felt the need to record in stone the role of Allied solidarity, and that of the Netherlands as a power to be reckoned with amongst the larger powers of Europe. To this extent, not nationalism as supported by the populace, not the Dutch nation (which had already split in two by that time, into a northern Netherlands and a southern Belgium part), but the state-building process as initiated by the elites

26 Letters of William I to Czar Alexander can be found in the Archives of the Russian Foreign Policies. Quoted in Ad VAN DER ZWAAN, *Holland is vrij. Dankzij Rusland*, in: *Thema Tijdschrift* 4 (2013/14) pp. 44–47; Anne AALDERS, *Met geveld lans en losse teugel. Kozakken in Nederland, 1813–1814*, Bedum 2002.

27 Cf. DE GRAAF, *Bringing sense and sensibility to the continent*; Christoph NÜBEL, *Auf der Suche nach Stabilität. 1813 und die Restauration der Monarchie im europäischen Vergleich*; in: Birgit ASCHMANN/Thomas STAMM-KUHLMANN (ed.), *1813 im Europäische Kontext*, Stuttgart 2015, pp. 163–186; Volker SELLIN, *Gewalt und Legitimität. Die europäische Monarchie im Zeitalter der Revolutionen*, München 2011.

28 With thanks to Ronald Gonsalves, who brought this contest to my attention by including a reference to it in the opening speech of Jozias van Aartsen, the current mayor of The Hague, during the conference “Vienna 1815: The making of a European Security Culture”, 5–7 November 2014, The Hague/Amsterdam.

29 *Rotterdamsche Courant*, 7 March 1815.

30 *Rotterdamsche Courant*, 5 November 1816.

31 For more details, see Kees SCHULTEN, *Plein 1813. Het Nationaal Monument in Den Haag*, The Hague 2013.

(*primus inter pares* being the Prince of Orange and his relatives themselves) was celebrated here within the international context of other well-respected powers of the day.³²

The Lion Roars: Waterloo and the Menin Gate

The bloodless sentiments of Vienna were topped by the surge of national pathos originating from the battle of Waterloo. Again, an iconic painting by Jan Willem Pieneman from 1824³³ (now in the Rijksmuseum) portrays this seminal moment in the creation of the Dutch national spirit. Nothing else symbolized the defeat of the Oppressor and the restoration of the House of Orange and that of their country so much as the blood let by Crown Prince William Frederick (the later King William II) on the fields of Flanders on 18 June 1815. Although the Hereditary Prince William Frederick had returned and was welcomed as the legitimate ruler of the country, there was still a military price to be paid and impressions to be made to gain real, substantial status amongst the new rulers of Europe.³⁴ Within the allied ranks, the Dutch had not left much of an impression. Dutch men were still part of Napoleon's army, although one of William Frederick's first orders was to announce capital punishment for any of his citizens still fighting alongside Napoleon (in the *garde d'honneur*).³⁵ To belong to the victor's

camp meant to invest with legions, soldiers and substantial military participation. William knew about this very well. Gagern raised Nassovian troops from William's hereditary lands in Germany; others tried to construct a Dutch army out of the remnants of Dutch brigades that had deserted Napoleon's *Le Belle Armée*. William also arranged for his son (the later William II, who had already earned his spurs in Wellington's continental army and campaign on the Iberian Peninsula) to be appointed commander of the Dutch forces within Wellington's Allied Army. Historiography still provides a battlefield for German and British military historians to wage a small war over their respective country's contribution to the victory over Napoleon. Within this historiographical battle of titans the role of the Dutch forces has been somewhat diminished, and even ridiculed.³⁶ Without entering into this delicate dispute in detail, what stands out here is the fact that the wounds that were inflicted on Prince William in the battle were (intentionally, while commissioned by the king) immortalized on canvas and in national memory and came to symbolize the heroic efforts of the House of Orange to regain their country from the claws of the French Imperial Eagle – on an even footing with that of their allied partners.

Walter Scott noticed, while on his trip to the continent in 1815, how Prince William is extolled at every street corner.³⁷ William I immediately realized what the contribution and bloodletting of his son (and also by himself, he also suffered some minor bruises) could mean for bolstering national sympathy and support for his *maison*. The above-mentioned painting of Pieneman was commissioned immediately afterwards. The Dutch lion had roared and had become victorious alongside the Allied Powers. William I proclaimed Welling-

32 As Henk TE VELDE nicely explains in his essay: Over het begrijpen van 1813.

33 Jan Willem PIENEMAN, *Slag bij Waterloo*, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam 1824. Other contemporary painters had tried to catch the scene as well, for example Louis MORITZ, *De Prins van Oranje gewond in de slag bij Waterloo*, City Hall Tilburg 1815. See Marita MATHIJSEN, *Nationalisme op het 19e eeuwse doek*, in: *Thema Tijdschrift* 4 (2013/14) pp. 73–78. See also a contemporary brochure, describing Moritz's painting: E. MAASKAMP, *Beschrijving van den roemrijken veldslag van Waterloo, voorgesteld in het Panorama op het Leidsche Plein over den Hollandschen Schouwburg*, Amsterdam 1816.

34 Patrick NEFORS, *Het ontstaan van het leger van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1814–1815*; in: JUDO/VAN DE PERRE (ed.), *Belg en Bataaf*, pp. 104–137.

35 Cf. Bijlage bij een brief van het secretarie 28 November 1813, aan Heren onze Commissarissen te Amsterdam. Toegangsnummer 2.02.01, Algemene Staatssecretarie en Kabinet des Konings met daarbij gedeponeerde archieven), Inventarisnummer 5654, in: *National Archives The Hague*.

36 The source of this ridicule was printed in a bestseller already in 1844: William SIBORNE, *History of the war in France and Belgium in 1815*, London 1844. See also Louis Ph. SLOOS, *Onze Slag bij Waterloo. De beleving van de overwinning op Napoleon in Nederland*, Nijmegen 2015, pp. 46–59.

37 Sir Walter SCOTT, *Pauls brieven, in 1815, van de velden van Waterloo en Quatre Bras tot Partij*, geschreven aan zyne vrienden, Dordrecht 1817, pp. 8–11; see also Eveline KOOLHAAS-GROSFELD, *Een reisboek, een schilderij en de oude meesters. Propaganda voor het koningschap van Willem I, 1814–1816*; in: DE HAAN et al (ed.), *Een nieuwe staat*, pp. 43–65, here pp. 53–60.

ton “Prince of Waterloo”, and his son a national hero. In 1820 he ordered the construction of a monumental conical mound, topped by a heavy lion. Ever since, the artificial hill dominates the countryside as it looks out over the fields of Waterloo – although according to Wellington, the monument ruined his battlefield.³⁸

Because Waterloo also became a seminal point of celebration for the British and the Prussians alike, the Netherlands would come to host an ever ongoing series of re-enactments, veterans’ days, military parades and tourist trips. William had reckoned shrewdly with this and used the memory of Waterloo to forge national sentiments with love for the House of Orange and thus create an inseparable myth of independence, royal pride and international status all at the same time. He topped his efforts off by proclaiming the 18th day of June to be a National Day of Festivities. Until the Second World War, Waterloo Day would be the nation’s ‘4th of July’, a feast of independence, joy and pride, rung in with religious services at noon, after which it was domesticated into a day of leisure and family activities.³⁹

Was this a totally inward looking celebration of national military honour and victor’s pride? For the population, it probably was just a national holiday, a day of leisure. For the elites, especially the monarchical ones, it was more than that, especially during the years of the United Kingdom (from 1815 to 1830). The outcomes of Vienna and, more in particular, the two Paris treaties bestowed upon the Netherlands a pivotal role in the collective peace and defence system of Europe. The Netherlands were to become the ‘barrier of Europe’, a mutually assured defence system against future oppressors and *revolteurs*. For William I the seminal date for himself, his dynasty and his country was not 30 November 1813, not 18 June 1815, not even March 1815 or September 1815, but 20 November 1815. With the second treaty of Paris, the territory of the Netherlands was finally sealed off and defined for real. The Netherlands

augmented their territory with Belgium and some areas east of the Meuse. The country regained its border control, the Prussian governors had to leave, the French had to return art works they had looted and pay their indemnities. In sum, as with the monument of 1813, the military pride earned at Waterloo had a distinctive European ring to it – a European dimension also cherished by the King himself.⁴⁰

In close cooperation with and, in fact, under the command of the Duke of Wellington as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces and the Allied Army of Occupation (1815–1818), King William commissioned the creation of a huge system of fortresses and barriers spreading from (near) the coast of the North Sea (Ieper, Dendermonde and Oudenaarde) to Maastricht, Liège and the border of Prussia. A vast sum – French, Dutch and English money altogether – of 70 million guilders was spent on this huge security infrastructure, the importance of which was symbolized in the Menin Gate. The fortress of Ieper, previously part of the Barrier Treaties of 1713, demolished by Joseph II (under Habsburg rule) and Napoleon, was now augmented and reinforced.⁴¹ William I’s new (1822) inscription above the portal gate professed a combination of martial pride and paternalistic care, embedded within a context of international recognition and historical progress. Squared against previous rulers who prohibited the city to defend itself, William I summons the citizens of Ieper to feel secure, since he is providing that security for them – both by physical means (fortresses) and political and paternal care. With this inscription, the king self-consciously accepts and acquires the Netherlands’ role as defender of the European realm, the “boulevard de l’Europe”:

38 LEVIE, *Het vaderlandsch gevoel*, pp. 186–187; SLOOS, *Onze Slag*, pp. 97–121.

39 SLOOS, *Onze Slag*, pp. 167–184. For a European context of Waterloo commemorations, see Jasper HEINZEN, *A Negotiated Truce. The Battle of Waterloo in European Memory since the Second World War*, in: *History & Memory* 26/1 (2014), pp. 39–74.

40 Cf. VAN SAS, *Onze Natuurlijkste Bondgenoot*; Wilfried UITTERHOEVE, *Cornelis Kraijenhoff 1758–1840. Een loopbaan onder vijf regeervormen*, Nijmegen 2009, pp. 289–299.

41 For more details see Pol BORREMANS, *Het Kezelfort van de vesting Oudenaarde*, Erpe 2009; Robert GILS, *De versterkingen van de Wellingtonbarrière in Oost-Vlaanderen*, Gent 2005.

“Pacata Europa subverso Napoleonte
 Gulielmius I
 Urbem Ipreensem olim vale munieam a Ludovico
 XIV.
 Validioribus propugnaculis cirxlm datam
 novis denvo suppressis allies niuimtonibus resti-
 tuit
 civs felici imperio neiper restitu sicupupi estote
 rex magnanimus consilio sagm animo fortis lab-
 ore indefessus
 Incolumitati vestrae toto iectore incumbit
 Anno MDCCCXX”

(After Europe regained peace and after Napoleon had been defeated, William I provided the city of Ieper – formerly barely fortified, then surrounded with stronger bastions by Louis XIV – with new fortifications after having brought down the old ones. Burghers, recently restored to a felicitous reign, feel secure! A magnanimous king, considerate, wise and brave is incessantly and wholeheartedly working for your security. Anno 1820.)⁴²

This expressed sentiment of Dutch (military and monarchical) pride and pathos within a European context could have been preserved and retained in today’s memories and commemorations. Traces of it are in fact visible, and are again being unearthed by the excavations mentioned above. But the demolition of the fortresses, the anachronism of the defence system already during its erection, industrialization and, of course, new European wars (most notably the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War) have undone almost all traces of this European effort for collective defence, peace and security in which the Netherlands and her King had such an important role to play. Only the Waterloo painting remains to remind the Dutch of their royal family’s military credentials and its place amongst the other notable European victors.

Conclusion: From Waterloo’s pathos to the Queen’s Day celebration

After 1830, allied support for the resurrection of the Netherlands and the creation of the United Kingdom became tainted when the Belgian revolt led to a split of the country – and the Allied Powers acquiesced in this split and condoned the Belgian independence. With the loss of Belgium, the whole effort of the Wellington *Barrière* – its newly and costly created fortresses and bulwarks – became useless and obsolete. As did the role of the Netherlands as “boulevard de l’Europe”. From 1830–1839 onwards, its role as aspiring power amidst the Allied Forces and its key position within the Allied Defence system came to an end. The House of Orange was back to its pre-1815 size, confined within the borders of the northern provinces – a small, modest country, headed by a very civil king, and after 1848 kept in check by a liberal constitution. The battle of Waterloo was still remembered, but the actual site (including William I’s Lion Mound) was lost to Belgium. The National Holiday of June 18 was, moreover, after 1890, gradually outflanked by a new national holiday, that of the Queen’s birthday. Rather than martial pride, female complacency and national snugness came to characterize its festivities. At the same time, the last remains of the costly fortresses were demolished to give way to the construction of new roads and industrial enterprise. World War One commemorations took in the memories of Flanders Fields and the Menin Gate. But the loss of Belgium and other sharp criticisms of William’s reign (his autocratic rule and outrageous investments) eventually undermined the Dutch myth of 1813 and 1815.

To conclude: the sentiments of national independence in the Netherlands lived on in paintings and the memories of the landing at Scheveningen, and were reinforced through the connection to other myths of national resistance and liberation and love for the House of Orange – for example, to the myth of Dutch resistance to the Spanish yoke and the Eighty Year’s War, as well as to the myth of national resistance to the Nazi-occupation. The memories of Waterloo did fade a bit, but live on as well in specific branches of the memory industry, in particular, in the re-enactments and veterans’ culture surrounding Waterloo Day, up until

42 Menenpoort [<http://www.forumeerstewereldoorlog.nl/wiki/index.php/Menenpoort>], accessed 9 January 2016. Translated by the author.

the massive celebrations in 2015. However, when celebrating Waterloo Day was abandoned after 1945 for Queen's Day (with its connotation of inward looking, pacifist and snug celebrations of the House of Orange), the last memories of 1813/15 were erased from the official, national remembrance culture.

The 1813/15 *Erinnerungskultur* in the Netherlands is at best shattered, and at worst non-existent. Apart from some illegible and for the most part even unintelligible inscriptions on a monument (the National Monument for 1813 or De Naald) or an old (Menin) city gate, Vienna 1815 has been forgotten. Historiographically, the myth of Dutch national independence has produced too many national histories and descriptions of national, provincial and even local Dutch actors to leave room

for the international context – of which Vienna 1815 was a part – to be noticed. This oblivion set in after 1830 already, with the loss of Belgium and the unravelling of the Concert of Europe (in which the Netherlands had been scheduled to play a substantial part). The emotional thrust of 1813/15 in the Netherlands will need to be excavated or re-enacted to be understood again. Bloodless bureaucratic Vienna, proud pathetic Waterloo or self-absorbed monarchical Scheveningen: apart from the inhabitants of The Hague, who proudly honour the importance of their city with an annual re-enactment of the landing at Scheveningen, no one of these three historical places inspires much emotion within today's parliamentary democracy of the Netherlands.