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Review of R. Dückers and P. Roelofs (eds.). The Limbourg Brothers. Reflections on the Origins and Legacy of Three Illuminators from Nijmegen

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the concept of the general mortgage, meaning that all the property of all the town's burghers was put at risk, and explains the distinctions among the different grades of reprisal that creditors could invoke in case of non-payment. In keeping with contemporary theories about the importance of secure property rights for the development of capital markets, as explained in the Introduction, Chapter 5 gives a good account of how courts in Holland's towns and bailiwicks asserted and maintained control over the registration of property transfers. Using the land records mentioned above, Chapter 6 argues that 'market structures were capable of reallocating savings among large segments of the population' (240), a finding that fits with results for other parts of Europe summarized in Chapter 7: 'by and large the rich lent money to less wealthy people' (258).

The critical thrust of *Medieval Capital Markets* is directed against my contention that massive issues of *renten* by the States of Holland during Charles V's reign, especially after such *renten* were funded by new revenues controlled by the States, constituted a 'financial revolution' (*A Financial Revolution in the Habsburg Netherlands*, 1985). Zuijderduijn observes, correctly, that the institutional pieces from which Holland's funded debt was built in the Habsburg era can all be documented in the previous two or three centuries. Towns stood surety for debts contracted by the counts, either individually or in groups. At times, the count would assign a portion of his revenues to the administration of a town or towns that had guaranteed his debt, and now had to pay his creditors. In some cases, and notably in 1482/1483, towns acted together to issue *renten* to meet specific needs presented by the sovereign. I do think Zuijderduijn underestimates the importance of the hard-to-pin-down transition from a time when the towns sometimes acted together to a time when they regularly acted together (despite their differences) under the aegis of the States of Holland, an institution that claimed to represent the 'body' of Holland, and

acted as if it did. But it should also be noted that the concept of 'revolution' has not fared well in the historiography of recent decades. When selected fiscal practices from the past are put together in a repetitive pattern of public-debt creation, does one more properly speak of a revolution, or a 'slow evolutionary process' (73)? Knowing that there are now scholars with the interest and discernment to decide such matters, I am content to leave the question to their judgment.

Many years ago, I had the benefit of an academic system that allowed a young Ph.D. several years for reflection and revision before plunging into print. My overall impression of this book is that it was a good dissertation (2007) pressed too hastily into hard covers (2009).

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Dücker, Rob, Roelofs, Pieter (eds.), *The Limbourg Brothers: Reflections on the Origins and the Legacy of Three Illuminators from Nijmegen* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009, 216 pp., ISBN 978 90 04 17512 9).

The volume presents papers delivered in connection with the exhibition: *The Limbourg Brothers: Nijmegen Masters at the French Court* (1400-1416). In their introduction, the editors note that this book is intended as an addendum to the catalog produced for the exhibit that took place at the Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen in 2005 (3). The text is primarily codicological but also includes enough contextual material to be relevant to those who do not specialize in manuscripts. The editors' stated theme is the Limbourg brothers; three of the eight articles offered in the book, however, do not neatly fit the topic at hand. One article (Schmidt) is peripherally connected to the Limbourgs – it discusses their uncle Jehan Maelwael. Two others (Colenbrander and Clark) are more tangential – one discusses the *Wapenboek Gelre* and the other

deals with the Master of Guillebert de Mets. The information that these papers offer is of general interest but their inclusion ends up being a bit of a distraction from the book's otherwise clear focus. That said, the articles presented in the book do have the virtue of covering a broad spectrum from painting and manuscript illumination among the Burgundians (Schmidt and Clark) to possible artistic exchanges between the Netherlands and France (Colenbrander), to the specific codicology of the *Très Riches Heures* and the *Belles Heures* (Lawson, König, and Dückers), to the larger social contexts in which the Limbourgs and their manuscripts operated (Van Asperen and Perkinson). Though implicit in the content of each of the papers included in the volume, these groupings are not the organizing principle behind the sequencing of the book. The actual arrangement of the articles is at times somewhat puzzling with clearly related works (e.g. Lawson and König) being separated by unrelated topics. Such issues aside, the book is a welcome addition to the scholarship on the Limbourgs and offers several interesting contributions.

In terms of codicology, Margaret Lawson's contribution provides the lynchpin for a technical analysis of the Limbourgs' working method and artistic output. Her paper not only offers readers a scientific examination of the *Belles Heures* but also provides illustrations of many of the photomicrographs and infrared reflectograms she used to reach her conclusions. Lawson uses these tools to tackle the authorship and working style of the Limbourgs in the *Belles Heures* but her conclusions likely extend to other works by the brothers as well. She rejects the notion of assigning specific images to any particular Limbourg and, instead, groups the illuminations in the manuscript according to various hallmarks or hands. She dubs these the 'drawing hand', the 'painterly hand', and the 'elegant hand'. Lawson offers a final category, 'Fourth Group: Others', that includes images that do not fall neatly into any other of the specific hand classifications. This last grouping allows

her to make her most insightful contribution.

On the basis of her analysis, she argues that the artists likely worked collaboratively and, 'achieved something far greater than any one was capable of accomplishing on their own [sic]' (49).

Eberhard König's article dovetails nicely with Lawson's paper and refers to her work. In an attempt to understand the Limbourg's working method, he explores the possibility that the brothers used Italian sources for their works rather than French sources. This thesis not only challenges the privileged status of Parisian models but it also paints the Limbourgs as well-traveled and savvy artists who could offer their patron a much wider array of approaches than previously thought. König accepts Lawson's assertion that the Limbourgs worked collaboratively and takes the idea further by asking how the Limbourgs organized their workshop and what effect that had on their working method. In the end, he concludes that while Paul may appear in known documents with the title of 'Master' he likely worked as *primus inter pares*, reserving particular subjects for himself (118). Like Lawson's paper, König's argument has the virtue of raising more questions than it purports to solve, thereby opening avenues for further analysis.

The most provocative entries in the book place the Limbourgs and their patrons in a wider context. Hanneke van Asperen explores the addition (now lost) of pilgrims' badges to the *Belles Heures*. She shows how the placement of such objects demonstrated devotion to particular saints or shrines. Van Asperen then explains how such veneration could be construed in dynastic terms once books passed from one owner to another. Stephen Perkinson examines the ways in which the Limbourgs went about personalizing the *Très Riches Heures* in response to court expectations. Such personalization not only served the patron's social goals but also provided the artists with a chance to curry favor. As a pair, these articles develop our understanding not only of the ways in which patrons used books of hours to create, maintain, and sustain various identities but also how

illuminators could forge their own status through them and how subsequent owners inherited and then modified these identities for their own ends. Rather than restricting their discussions to issues of sources or visual precedents, or relying on iconographic dissections of each miniature, both Van Asperen and Perkinson seek to situate the manuscripts they investigate in the larger historical realities of fifteenth-century European court culture. In doing so, they enrich the dialogue established in well-known studies by Alexander (*Art Bulletin* 72:3 (1990)) and Beutner (*Art Bulletin* 83:4 (2001)). Van Asperen and Perkinson make it clear that manuscripts like the *Belles Heures* and the *Très Riches Heures* were more than accumulations of artistic influences or stale storehouses of iconographic erudition. They were status objects situated in a rich network of personal and social associations.

Ultimately, the volume's contribution to the scholarship on the Limbourgs is two-fold. First, it reminds us that the books the artists produced are complicated objects that still have the ability to teach and astound us. Second, these papers demonstrate that the Limbourgs did not work in isolation but were part of a larger, pan-European artistic community.

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Blom, Peter, e.a., *Borsele Bourgondië Oranje. Heren en markiezen van Veere en Vlissingen 1400-1700* (Amsterdamse historische reeks. Grote serie 35; Hilversum: Verloren, 2009, 196 blz., ISBN 978 90 8704 005 5).

Enkele dagen voor zijn troonsafstand verhief keizer Karel de heerlijkheid Veere ten bate van Maximiliaan van Bourgondië-Beveren tot markizaat. Goed 450 jaar later buigt een aantal historici zich over de context, de betekenis en de gevolgen van die

adellijke gunst. In het openingsstuk situeert Hans Cools de verheffing tot markizaat in het Bourgondisch-Habsburgse adelsbeleid. De titel markies was zeldzaam en viel enkel trouwe aanhangers van het vorstenhuis ten deel. Louis Sicking schetst vervolgens de machtspositie die de heren van Veere op het eind van de middeleeuwen innamen. Als eigenaars van een uitgebreid heerlijk bezit en bestuurders op het lokale, regionale en centrale niveau waren ze belangrijke politieke makelaars die door de Bourgondische hertogen naar waarde werden geschat. De strategische locatie van hun machtsbasis aan de Scheldemonding maakte hen bovendien tot de aangewezen admiraals voor de Bourgondische vloot. In zijn bijdrage brengt Peter Henderikx de aan het markizaat verbonden goederen en rechten in kaart. Het blijkt een heel divers ensemble, dat zowel de stadsheerlijkheden Veere, Vlissingen, Westkapelle en Domburg, als een hele reeks ambachtsheerlijkheden beslaat. Erg opvallend is de vaststelling dat verschillende bastaardlinies uit het Bourgondische huis omstreeks 1520 het overgrote deel van Walcheren beheersten.

Nauwelijks drie jaar na de verheffing tot markizaat, liet Maximiliaan van Bourgondië bij zijn overlijden een ware financiële puinhoop achter. Het beheer kwam in handen van curatoren die het bezit opsplitsten in de hoop door de verkoop ervan de schulden te delgen. Zo werden Veere en Vlissingen in 1567 door Filips II ingekocht. De koning liet echter na de koopsom effectief te betalen. Een nieuw beslag resulteerde in een tweede openbare verkoping in 1581. Ditmaal werd het bezit aan Willem van Oranje toegewezen. Simon Groenveld onderzoekt in zijn bijdrage wat deze aankoop voor de prins van Oranje heeft betekend. Hij waarschuwt voor al te snelle conclusies door aan te tonen dat de Staten van Zeeland de band tussen het bezit van Veere en Vlissingen en de functie van Eerste Edele lang niet vanzelfsprekend vonden. In feite waren de lotgevalen van die functie een barometer van de politieke verhoudingen in de Republiek. Ter afronding brengt het boek nog twee kortere bijdragen. Paul Rem voorziet de uitgave van de inventaris van het