

Peter Arnade. *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt.*

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In this formidable book, Peter Arnade takes us on a grand tour of the Burgundian Netherlands and its process of identity formation in the public realm in the century leading up to the Dutch Revolt. Arnade traces the development of two conflicting strains in Netherlandish public culture: princely power — invoked by the dukes of Burgundy through their courtly splendor and increasingly elaborate Joyous Entries — and civic republicanism — enacted by guilds, deputies of the States General, and other guardians of traditional freedoms.

In the first chapter, Arnade shows how successive dukes added classical, biblical, and imperial elements to their joyous entries — a hitherto rather businesslike affirmation of mutual rights and obligations. They managed to transform a cultural event benefiting city fathers into an iconic happening glorifying their dynasty and princely authority. The addition of sacral elements to these entries gave Catholic worship a central role in the celebration of princely authority. The role the dukes played as actors in these displays meant that Burgundian authority came to rely heavily on the prince's presence.

In chapters 2 to 4, Arnade persuasively argues how this fabric was coming undone after Philip II left the Netherlands in 1559, leaving only his half-sister Margaret of Parma as regent. As an illegitimate daughter, married to a mere duke, “Madama” could hardly fulfill the ceremonial role expected from a Burgundian ruler. She was also confronted with general reluctance to follow Philip's repressive religious policy against Calvinists in the Netherlands. Arnade shows that the great lords and lesser nobility, the “Beggars,” started to encroach on the public domain shortly after Philip's departure, using inversion to nibble away at their prince's dominance of the public realm, to declare their opposition to his religious policies. The iconoclasts of 1566 literally did away with the Catholic foundations of public culture. Both pillars of Burgundian ceremonial display were therefore fatally undermined.

Chapters 5 to 7 describe the ascendancy of civic republicanism in the public realm. Alba's terror created a propagandistic counter-offensive, casting the Netherlandish communities in the role of imperiled families: Spanish violence towards laws, economical infrastructure, and to wives and daughters called for fathers and brothers to band together and protect their liberties, families, and livelihoods. Although hard-line Calvinists, moderate Protestants, and Catholics were all somewhat ambiguous about William of Orange, this German-born *pater patriae* — a grandee educated at the Habsburg court who sacrificed three brothers to the Revolt — had the right background to fill the Burgundian ceremonial role while allowing civic republicanism to take precedence over princely authority in the public realm. The last chapters chart the decay of unity in the Netherlands after William of Orange was assassinated in 1584.

Arnade presents an eminently persuasive argument, which is all the stronger because of his careful analysis of Burgundian precedent. However, there is one slight weakness in his treatment of the pivotal years after Philip's departure. Whereas Arnade analyzes what the different dukes from Philip the Good to Emperor Charles V added to Burgundian political culture, this feature is strangely absent in Philip's case. Philip spent little time in the Netherlands and the three grand occasions in which he participated — his *Felicitísimo viaje* in 1549–50, the abdication of Charles V in 1555 and the emperor's funeral in 1558 — were staged mostly by his father. But to argue that Philip's only role in Burgundian display after 1559 was his absence is to miss the point that he was heir to Burgundy, but also to the Catholic kings. His upbringing taught him the typical Castilian *gravitas*, the suppressing of emotions, moderation in food and drink, and the cultivation of dignity through a statue-like stillness (see for example José Luis Gonzalo Sánchez-Molero, *El aprendizaje cortesano de Felipe II (1527–1546): la formación de un príncipe del Renacimiento* [1999]). Without arguing that his Spanish “nationality” disqualified him as lord of the Netherlands, I would say that these cultural elements led to both a physical and cultural “absence” of the Burgundian ruler in the public realm after 1559.

However, this book provides a beautifully argued analysis of the formation of political identity in the public realm which is a must-read for anyone interested in the political culture of both the Dutch Republic and the Spanish Netherlands.

LIESBETH GEEVERS
Utrecht University