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Henk F. K. van Nierop. *Treason in the Northern Quarter: War, Terror, and the Rule of Law in the Dutch Revolt.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. x + 297 pp. $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-13564-9.

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Lisy-Wagner on Nierop

Henk van Nierop's *Treason in the Northern Quarter: War, Terror, and the Rule of Law in the Dutch Revolt* is a lively, engaging account of a treason investigation and its unique consequences in northern Holland in 1575-79. In May 1575, the Spanish army was encamped on the borders of the Northern Quarter. Rumors of conspiracy and of collusion with Hierges's army spread through the towns and countryside. Diedrick Sonoy, the Prince of Orange's governor in that region, appointed a commission to investigate the matter. The commissioners systematically worked through tiers of suspects from ascending social strata–first vagrants, then peasants, and finally prominent townsmen. During the course of the trial and torture of their suspects, the commissioners ignored many of the procedural rules set down by the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*. They asked leading questions, tortured the accused more frequently than was prescribed, and used extreme measures in their interrogation. Among their innovations was a machine called the "running windlass," which was a box into which the suspect was placed with rats, while hot coals were placed in a copper tray above. All of the suspects from the first two groups were executed, except for one who died under the strain of torture. International affairs intervened for the townsmen, who were freed following the Pacification of Ghent, after more than a year of imprisonment.

Two very important factors distinguish these proceedings. First, this is not a case that comes before the Spanish Catholic general Alba's Council of Troubles. The commissioners are Protestant locals and acting under the authority of Sonoy and William of Orange. The second is that we have extensive archival evidence of the proceedings because one of the prominent townsmen who were accused and imprisoned, an advocate from Hoorn named Jan Jeroenszoon, brought legal actions against the commissioners and Sonoy himself. Though the articles of the Pacification of Ghent were supposed to erase the misdeeds done by both sides during the Revolt, Jeroenszoon and his colleagues did not want the taint of being released only because of the treaty and did not want forgotten what had happened to them. In 1621, Pieter Bor used the documentary evidence created by Jeroenszoon's suit to construct a detailed account of the trial proceedings as a part of his history of the wars between the Netherlands and Spain. One of van Nierop's main goals is to go back to the archival sources, where they still exist, and to reconstruct the events and their significance for the twenty-first-century reader.

The book assumes that the reader has a solid knowledge of the large-scale context for the events of the trial and its aftermath. Van Nierop gives little background about the general political situation of the Netherlands, the histories of the religious confessions that play a role in the narrative, or the basic contours of the conflict between the Netherlands and Spain. The reader who already has this background will enjoy the patient unfolding of local detail that occurs over several chapters. The book weaves a dense, archival web of information about the land, the people, local government, the local religious situation, and even the weather of the Northern Quarter. The descriptions of "hedge preaching," of peasants cutting a channel in the ice of the flooded and frozen lowlands to stop the advances of Hierges, and of the political machinations behind each town's decision whether to support the Prince of Orange give vivid images of a fiercely independent and isolated people with a strong relationship to the rule of law. The background chapters make it clear why this particular region would produce a Jan Jeroenszoon and a court that would listen to him.

After the background chapters, the book reconstructs each stage of the treason proceedings, from the interrogation of the vagrants to the imprisonment of the townsmen. The sources that van Nierop uses come from a wide range of archives in the Netherlands, but the most illumi-

nating were generated as a result of the actions brought against the commissioners. People directly involved in the investigation were deposed before notaries, including the executioner Jacob Michielszoon. Depositions like these have preserved for the historical record the excesses of the commission, so that the historian can see the disparity between the standard of the law and its practice during this investigation. Van Nierop also situates his book amidst the rich historiography of the Dutch Revolt, from Pieter Bor's 1621 work to the scholarship of today. This translation helps to give an entry for readers of English into the Dutch-language historiography of the Dutch Revolt.

Henk van Nierop's *Treason in the Northern Quarter* addresses a variety of issues important for scholars of early modern Europe, for legal historians, and for today's world as a whole. For the scholar of early modern Europe, this case provides a corrective for pro-Protestant histories of the Dutch Revolt and Wars of Religion and also shows local, "on the ground" reactions to confessional conflict. For legal historians, the unique documentation of these proceedings gives insight into early modern European trial proceedings, the use of torture, and the difference between the written law and its practice. Readers in general will find that the book resonates with contemporary concerns about the extralegal power of the state in times of crisis, about reconciliation after civil war and internal conflicts, and about the horrific impact of war on the average person. The level of detail and necessity of background knowledge may make the book too involved to assign in an undergraduate class, but despite its narrow geographic and temporal focus, is an enriching read for historians with a wide range of interests.

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