

Invitation and Call for Papers

Annual Conference

Vlaams-Nederlandse Vereniging voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis [Flemish-Dutch Society for Early Modern History]

26-27 October 2017
Groningen, the Netherlands



FESTIVITIES IN THE EARLY MODERN LOW COUNTRIES

To celebrate its 15th anniversary, the Flemish-Dutch Society for Early Modern History will organize a conference in 2017 on festivities in the early modern Low Countries. Several festive occasions, such as joyous entries or celebrations surrounding the conclusion of peace treaties, have been extensively researched in the past few decades. The same is true for the origins of recurring feast-days in religious calendars, such as carnival (Mardi Gras) and the name days of saints. Scholars have also paid attention to festive events organized by chambers of rhetoric, guilds and confraternities. Nevertheless, the specific meanings of festivities in early modern society still raise questions that justify further research. The main idea of this conference is that early modern festivities functioned as interruptions in a cyclic notion of time. Special attention will go to transformations in the sociability of the early modern period, which were reflected in the ways in which festivities were shaped and organized.

The conference will focus on four research themes:

1. *The role of tradition and innovation in the organization of festivities.*

Which traditions and/or innovative aspects can be discerned in the celebration of 'lifecycle' events such as births, baptisms or weddings? How did regime changes and religious conflicts affect the organization of festive events? Which other factors underpinned changes and evolutions in both the public and the private festive sphere?

2. *The role of material culture in festivities.*

The availability of different resources in different seasons has always impacted the organization of festivities. This theme focuses on the uses of clothing, food, musical instruments and other cultural artefacts in celebrations of all kinds. Here too, the role of tradition and innovation may be examined. For example, how did the introduction of foreign fashion trends and new products such as tobacco change the ways in which feasts were held?

3. *The representation of festivities in visual media and the arts.*

This theme addresses the ways in which festivities were announced, discussed, and remembered. How were the splendour and spectacle of such festive events communicated towards an (inter)national audience? How were celebrations commemorated in visual media, historiography and the arts? In what way(s) were authors, publishers and artists involved in the organization of recurring festivities? And how did propaganda and censorship come into play?

4. *Festivities in different social milieus*

Festivities were organized and experienced differently in different social settings. Who was allowed to do what, and when? Which roles were set apart for men, women, and children? How did situations of wealth and poverty affect the organization of festivities, and who gained access to the latter? How were festivities experienced by different generations? How did the majority deal with festive occasions organized by minorities such as Jews, travelers and immigrants?

Submitting proposals

We kindly invite you to submit a paper proposal (max. 300 words, in Dutch or English) before 1 February 2017 via <secretaris@vnnvng.eu>. Presentations will last 20 minutes, followed by a discussion. Please include your contact details. You may also indicate the theme that best describes the subject of your paper. Questions can be directed to the secretary. The VNVNG intends to reimburse the costs for travel (2nd class) and accommodation in Groningen for the night of 26 October.

All papers will be published in the Society's yearbook.

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