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In the margin of the canon: Dutch architecture in the first architectural surveys of the nineteenth century

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This article is about the troublesome relationship between the two book genres that shaped the rapidly developing discipline in the nineteenth century: the general surveys of architectural history and the monograph on a specific country or building style. With the nineteenth-century historiography of medieval and Renaissance Dutch architecture as a case study, this article explores the interaction between both genres, paying attention to their respective terminology, descriptive methods, classification, and value judgements. Instead of a mutual exchange between the two genres, this article demonstrates that the architectural survey, with its grand narrative on architecture's stylistic development, was at the top of a hierarchy of academic writing that defined the architectural canon. Judgements presented in surveys about the unimportance of the Dutch Middle Ages and Renaissance scarcely changed over the years, despite new factual material, whereas the monographs were entirely determined by the surveys. Dutch authors devaluated themselves as the suppliers of 'additional knowledge' to the general surveys, taking over their terminology and assessment framework that lend themselves poorly to the appreciation of local architecture. The monographs on the Dutch architectural past demonstrate that national architectural history writing — mediating between local and geographical specificities and general stylistic categories — found itself at the intersection of two sweeping ideals of the nineteenth century: the ideal of Romantic nationalism and that of the professionalisation of knowledge.

A continuous storyline: the first surveys of architectural history

Three pioneering publications that appeared almost simultaneously in the 1850s defined architectural history for the first time as an independent field of knowledge:¹ James Fergusson's *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture Being a Concise and Popular Account of the Different Styles of Architecture Prevailing in All Ages and Countries* (1855), Wilhelm Lübke's *Geschichte der Architektur: Von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* (1855), and Franz Kugler's five-volume *Geschichte der Baukunst* (1856–1873).² It was seen as a 'science', a quality of great importance to architects, (art) historians,

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and artists. Architectural history developed as a specialised field of knowledge within art history, which in turn was a sub-discipline of the historical sciences, the first of its kind according to Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* of 1842.³

The aim of all three authors was to create a survey text that was a complete and balanced overview of the general history of architecture. According to Fergusson, the genre of the survey was necessary, because it was no longer possible to keep abreast of the latest architectural history studies through self-study. In his foreword, Fergusson called his survey a 'general *resumé*' in which an overview was given of 'all the principal buildings of the world'.⁴ Because the surveys necessarily had to be concise (aptly indicated by their denomination as 'handbooks'), confined to the most characteristic aspects of a building, they were less informative than monographic studies, Fergusson admitted. But their unique quality was that they offered the possibility of comparing buildings and cultures from all times and all corners of the world, and thus the potential to determine the relative value of buildings and building styles (Fig. 1.).⁵

To make the general *resumé* comprehensible, all three authors stressed the importance of a continuous storyline that guided the reader smoothly through the text.⁶ Throughout the continuous cycles of growth, blossoming, and decay, one could perceive a progressive development of architecture: from the first primitive temples and tombs to ever more intelligent constructions and refined decorations; and from monuments intended only for the monarch or a supreme god to buildings that shaped the broad spectrum of societal needs in the contemporary era, such as theatres, university buildings, and museums.⁷

The downside of this grand narrative was that it existed by virtue of a very strict selection. Any building or building style that did not fit as a 'link' in the chain of development was considered unimportant, receiving little attention or disregarded altogether. To fulfil the need for a less rigid template, Kugler, therefore, published another survey, on architecture exclusively: *Geschichte der Baukunst* (1856–1878). Within a chronological structure, Kugler paid more attention to the geographical diversity of architecture in each period. As a consequence, Kugler's architectural survey expanded in size, comprising five volumes.

While the abundance of scattered information on single buildings and local styles was cited as the main reason for the new genre of the architectural survey, the development of the genre in the mid-nineteenth century is more likely explained by the many knowledge gaps that still existed, hampering the construction of a continuous storyline. The innovation of the surveys compared to other architectural publications up to that time (the classical treatise, the encyclopaedia, and the dictionary) was their grand narrative of uninterrupted stylistic development. One of the problems Kugler encountered, for example, was the lack of information on American art and architecture. In his *Handbuch* of 1842, the chapter on North, Central and South America covers only eighteen of the 873 pages. Kugler wrote that it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the travels of Alexander von Hum-

Figure 1.
The cathedral of Amiens, in Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Graul, 1855), p. 307, private collection. In all survey texts, it was one of the outstanding examples in the Gothic style.

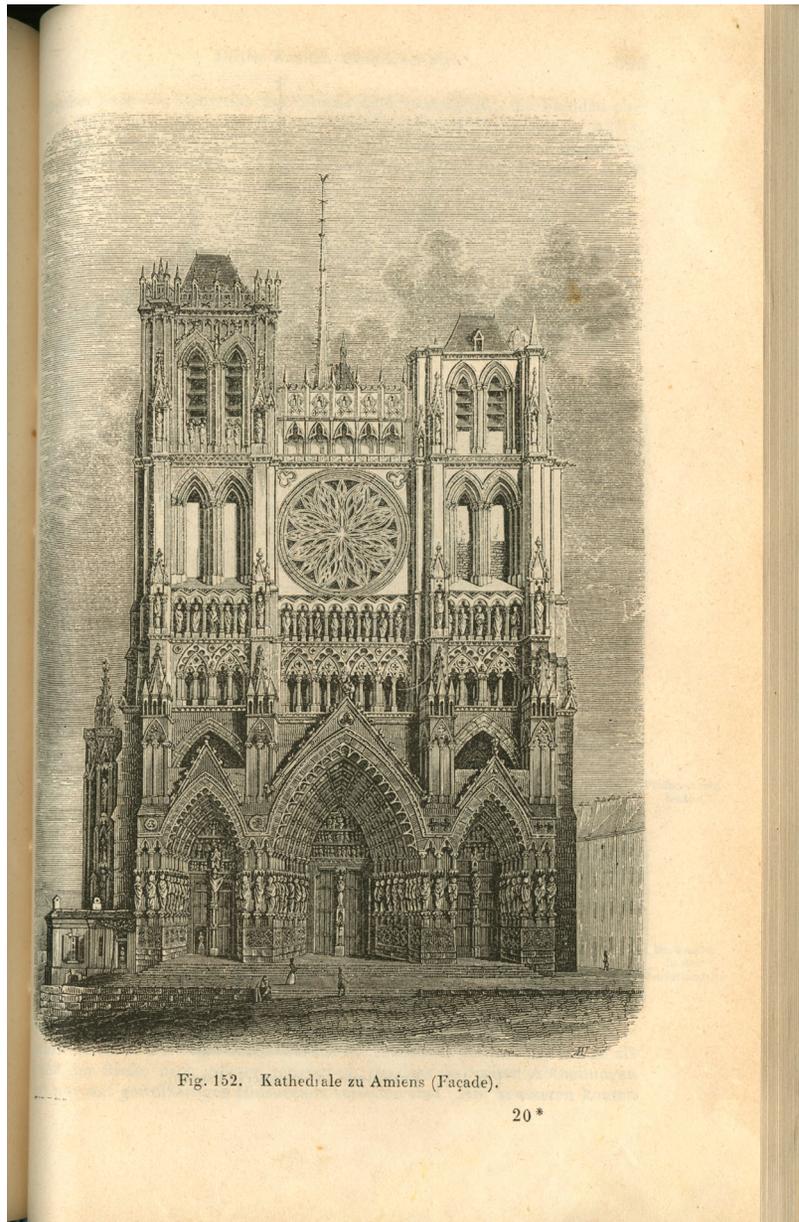


Fig. 152. Kathedrale zu Amiens (Fassade).

20*

boldt (1769–1859), that research, though minimal, into American antiquities began. With Humboldt’s accounts, Kugler felt he had just enough information to describe another missing link in the history of art: ‘what we have come to know is at least enough to determine the general significance of these monuments for the development of art’.⁸

Knowledge gaps: early research into Dutch architecture

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, little research emerged on the art and architecture of not only distant parts of the world but also most countries and regions in Europe, including the Netherlands. At the time, the common explanation for the marginal position of the Netherlands in the general surveys on art and architectural history was the lack of specialised studies.⁹ When Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* was first published, historical research into the history of Dutch architecture had yet had to be undertaken. It can be no coincidence that Kugler's survey and the deplorable state of research into the architectural history of the Netherlands both featured prominently in the first issue of the Dutch journal *Bouwkundige Bijdragen* [*Architectural Contributions*] in 1843. The journal was published by the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst* [Society for the Improvement of Architecture], founded in 1842, the first architects' association in the Netherlands.¹⁰

The introduction of Kugler's survey in the Netherlands was thus part of a larger effort in the professionalisation of the architectural discipline. As Mari Hvattum and Anne Hultsch have argued, nineteenth-century architectural print culture, with its variety of publications, was fundamental both in the public and professional discourse on architecture.¹¹ Together with the development of architectural associations, education, competitions, exhibitions, and study trips, publications helped construct an independent discipline. The art of professionalisation was often imitated from Germany, Britain, and France, which also were the model countries for the Netherlands, as they were for many others. The knowledge development in these three countries, both in terms of institutionalisation and content, was closely monitored. With the independence of the southern (predominantly French-speaking) provinces and the establishment of Belgium in 1830, Germany upstaged France as the dominant country after which the Netherlands modelled itself. This remained so until 1871, when the Netherlands began to feel that Germany was becoming too powerful in the aftermath of its unification. After that, the relationship of 'the Big Three', to quote Jürgen Osterhammel, was somewhat more equal.¹²

Ever since its first issue, *Architectural Contributions* began with a translation of the chapters on architecture from Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*. When taken together, these passages, published between 1843 and 1851, can be regarded as the first architectural history survey to appear in Dutch. Its early translation, only one year after the book's original publication, exemplifies the ambition of the Society that founded the journal to catch up with the newest scholarly standards and insights. However, Dutch architecture is barely represented in Kugler's book. In the chapter on Gothic architecture, only a page and a half is devoted to the 'monuments in the Netherlands' and the chapter on 'modern architecture' includes just a few lines about Jacob van Campen's town hall in Amsterdam (1648).¹³

In the same first issue of *Architectural Contributions*, the Society for the Improvement of Architecture announced that it would begin its own research

into the history of Dutch architecture. The idea was to publish descriptions and images of 'national buildings or parts of them', to 'resurrect them from the dust of oblivion', and to compare them with foreign buildings 'in order to draw important conclusions from these findings'.¹⁴ What those conclusions might be was not mentioned, but it is clear that the Society assumed that more knowledge of local monuments, with an international, comparative perspective, would result in a better appreciation of Dutch architecture. However, the initiative appears to have quietly dissipated.

Things went better with the publication series of the society, *Afbeeldingen van oude bestaande gebouwen* [*Illustrations of Old Existing Buildings*], the first issue of which appeared in 1854.¹⁵ The title succinctly indicates the purpose of the series. Each issue consists of images of façades, details, and sometimes floor plans of one or more historical buildings, accompanied by a brief historical description. When the last issue, the forty-seventh, was published in 1907, *Illustrations* comprised a total of 234 plates, but the series failed to provide a representative overview of Dutch architectural history. Some places were very well documented, while others were completely missing, according to an anonymous critic in 1894, who also concluded that medieval monuments were underrepresented. The reason for these imbalances was the Society's dependence on the 'taste and zest for work' of its members, who measured and made scale drawings of buildings on a voluntary basis. Obviously, they prioritised buildings in their immediate surroundings, 'even though these [buildings] might not be as important as those further away'.¹⁶ The quality of historical research carried out in different parts of the country by the corresponding members also varied. Depending on the particular correspondent, information about the possible master builder as well as dating and building history were taken from inscriptions on memorial and façade stones, local archive records, historical descriptions of towns, and private conversations with the local municipal archivist or architect. In most cases, however, the sources were not precisely mentioned, leaving a mark on the reliability of the data gathered.

The efforts of the Society for the Improvement of Architecture to increase knowledge of the national architectural past of the Netherlands with all kinds of specialist publications epitomise the type of nationalism that was developed more broadly in Europe in the nineteenth century. Joep Leerssen has argued that typical for Europe's Romantic and transnational nationalism is that it was 'set in motion more by cultural practitioners rather than by social or political agitators'.¹⁷ The Society's architect-members, correspondents, archivists, and amateur historians who collaboratively set out to construct a national architectural history, contributed to the 'increasing social spread and penetration of print and education, and the new organisation of learning in universities, academies, libraries, archives and schools', which were important factors for the 'Cultivation of Cultures, feeding national movements', as Leerssen has demonstrated.¹⁸

At the same time, the new organisation of learning also divided Europe into a culture of profound competitiveness, with 'advanced' and 'backward'

countries, and with the central powers setting the standard for scientific progress.¹⁹ In the case of architecture, the new genre of the general survey of architectural history was an important player in the rapidly developing scholarly field. The survey established norms for systematic writing and for defining architectural beauty that other countries, with the historiography of their national architectures, tried to live up and fit into. The specialised monographs on the Dutch architectural past that are under study in this article demonstrate that national architectural history writing, mediating between local and geographical specificities and general stylistic categories, found itself at the intersection of two sweeping ideals of the nineteenth century: the ideal of Romantic nationalism and of the professionalisation of knowledge.

The normative and professional standards of the surveys are clearly voiced by Fergusson's and Lübke's complaints about the state of research in the Netherlands. In the sixth edition of *Geschichte der Architektur* (1884–1886), Lübke noted that there was still a lack of thorough archival research and art criticism in the Netherlands.²⁰ In 1874, Fergusson wrote in *A History of Architecture in All Countries*, which was already the second edition of his completely revised *Handbook* from 1855, that he would have liked to include plans and illustrations of one or two Dutch Gothic churches — not because of their quality but so that he could compare them to other churches. 'But the materials do not exist', he noted, and continued:

The Dutch have shown the same indifference to the conservation of their Mediaeval monuments which their forefathers exhibited in their erection, and not one has been edited in modern times in such a manner as to admit of being quoted. The history of this variety remains for the present to be written, but fortunately it is one of the least important in its class.²¹

The survey's footnotes: monographs in service of the surveys

The complex interplay and exchange of knowledge between general survey and specialised local study is most clearly apparent in Eugen Gugel's *Geschiedenis van de bouwstijlen* [*History of Building Styles*] (1869). Gugel (1832–1905) was the first professor of architecture at the newly founded Delft Polytechnic School, and the first to publish a general architectural history in Dutch that was neither a translation nor an adaptation of a foreign work. The local perspective is immediately apparent from the greater attention the author pays to Dutch architecture, in comparison with the surveys by Kugler, Fergusson, and Lübke.²² Gugel also became an ardent advocate of the Dutch neo-Renaissance, believing it to be the most appropriate style for modern architecture, based on historical research into the Renaissance styles of the seventeenth century. Negotiating between the national and the general history of architecture, Gugel's survey, therefore, adds a unique perspective and serves as the fourth case study of this article.

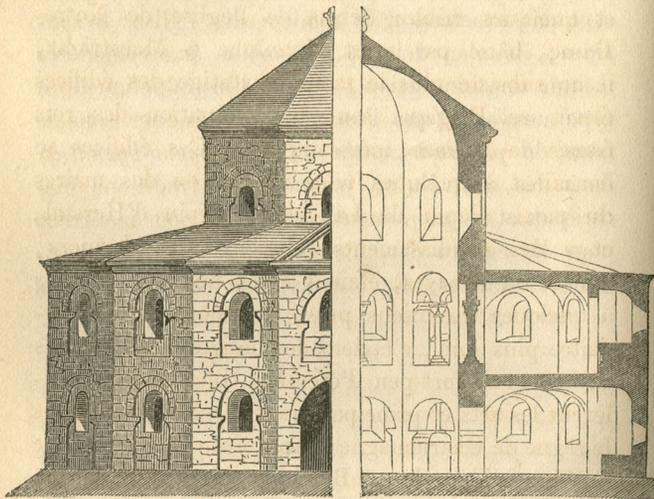
Of the four surveys, Fergusson's book is the least accurate in documenting which specialist research provided him with local knowledge of building styles. If we first look at the description of the Dutch Middle Ages in the four

Figure 2.
 The Valkhof chapel, in August G.B.
 Schayes, *Histoire de l'architecture
 en Belgique*, 3 vols (Brussels: Jamar,
 1849–50), II (1849), p. 18

18

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 de la Meuse, à Maestricht, à Ruremonde et à
 Liège; en deçà de ce fleuve, nous n'en connais-
 sons aucun exemple.

¹ Voir la description d'une vraie église byzantine dans *l'Hist. de l'Architect.*, par
 HOPE (traduct. de M. BARON), page 110.

surveys, Kugler, Lübke, and Gugel all mention several monographic studies on medieval architecture in the Netherlands, mostly written by Belgian and German scholars. By contrast, the only study that is used by Fergusson and from which he copied an illustration of the Valkhof chapel, is Antoine Schayes's *Histoire de l'architecture en Belgique* (1850), which was also used by Lübke (Fig. 2).²³ Furthermore, the sources mentioned by Lübke and Kugler in their subchapters on Dutch medieval architecture are Carl Friedrich von Wiebeking's *Theoretisch-practische bürgerliche Baukunde*, of which the third volume contained images of the cathedral in Utrecht;²⁴ a series of building descriptions and drawings by a certain Essenwein from 1856 (Fig. 3);²⁵ G. R. Herman's study of St Jan cathedral in Den Bosch, in the journal *Organ für Christliche Kunst*;²⁶ and a series of reports on Dutch buildings by Rudolf Redtenbacher (1840–1885) in *Romberg'schen Zeitschrift* (1875–1879).²⁷ Redtenbacher was, at the request of the Dutch government, a member of the College of National Counsellors in the 1870s, advising on monuments policy, and regularly reporting on the historical research carried out there. The only Dutch studies referred to in the surveys of Lübke and Kugler are two articles by Frans Eyck tot Zuylichem from the 1840s on Dutch medieval churches and the *Illustrations of Old Existing Buildings* series.²⁸

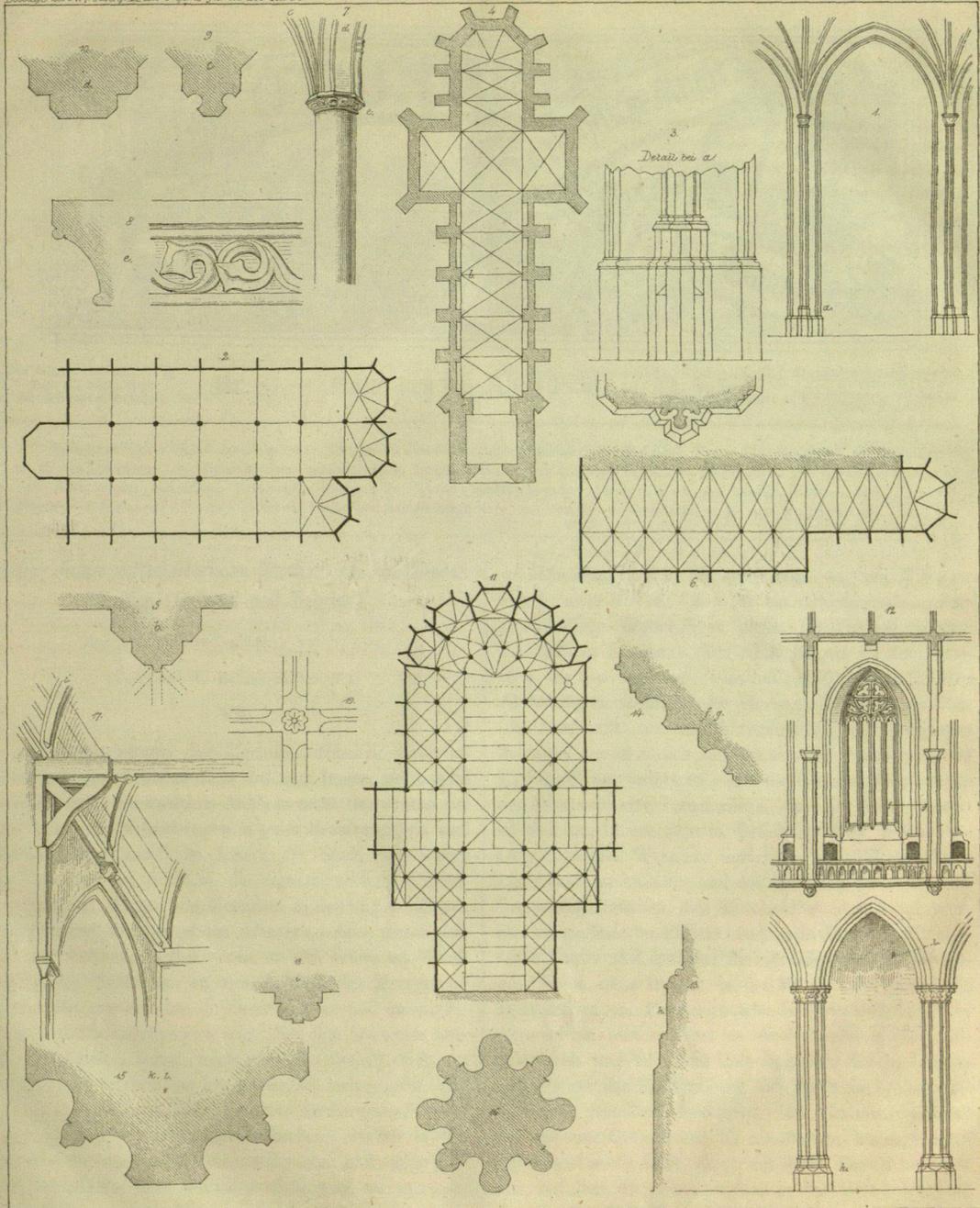
In the 1870s and 1880s, several studies on the Dutch Renaissance were published, again by German and Belgian scholars. In Fergusson's expanded and revised successive editions, the paragraph, both text and references, on the Dutch Renaissance remains the same. Lübke, however, in his sixth edition of 1886, radically expanded his text using the recent publications of Auguste Schoy's *Histoire de l'influence Italienne sur l'architecture dans les Pays-Bas* (1879); Georg Galland's *Die Renaissance in Holland in ihrer geschichtliche Hauptentwicklung* (1882); the first issue of Franz Ewerbeck's series *Die Renaissance in Belgien und Holland* (1883–1889); and a couple of articles.²⁹

When preparing the second edition of *History of Building Styles* (1886), Gugel also drastically adapted the text on the basis of these aforementioned studies.³⁰ The publication of Kugler's *Geschichte der Baukunst* had meanwhile taken a different turn, because he died in 1858; the book project was completed by Lübke and Jacob Burckhardt, with three volumes on the Renaissance in Italy, France, and Germany.³¹ In this process, Kugler's geographical refinement was abandoned: Dutch seventeenth-century architecture fell outside their narrative of 'newer' or 'modern' architecture, which began with the Renaissance.

While both Lübke and Gugel, apparently well informed about the state of scholarship, included very recent and specialised studies, they had nevertheless overlooked a number of Dutch studies that had been translated specifically to make them accessible to an international audience. Eyck tot Zuylichem's French-language publications on Dutch Roman and Gothic churches are not mentioned anywhere in their surveys.³² The same applies to *Description de la Chapelle Carlovingienne et de la Chapelle Romane* (1847) by Alexander Oltmans on the Valkhof chapel in Nijmegen (Fig. 4), previously published in Dutch in *Architectural Contributions*.³³ In this study, Oltmans disputed the contemporary idea that the Valkhof chapel in Nijmegen, near the German border,

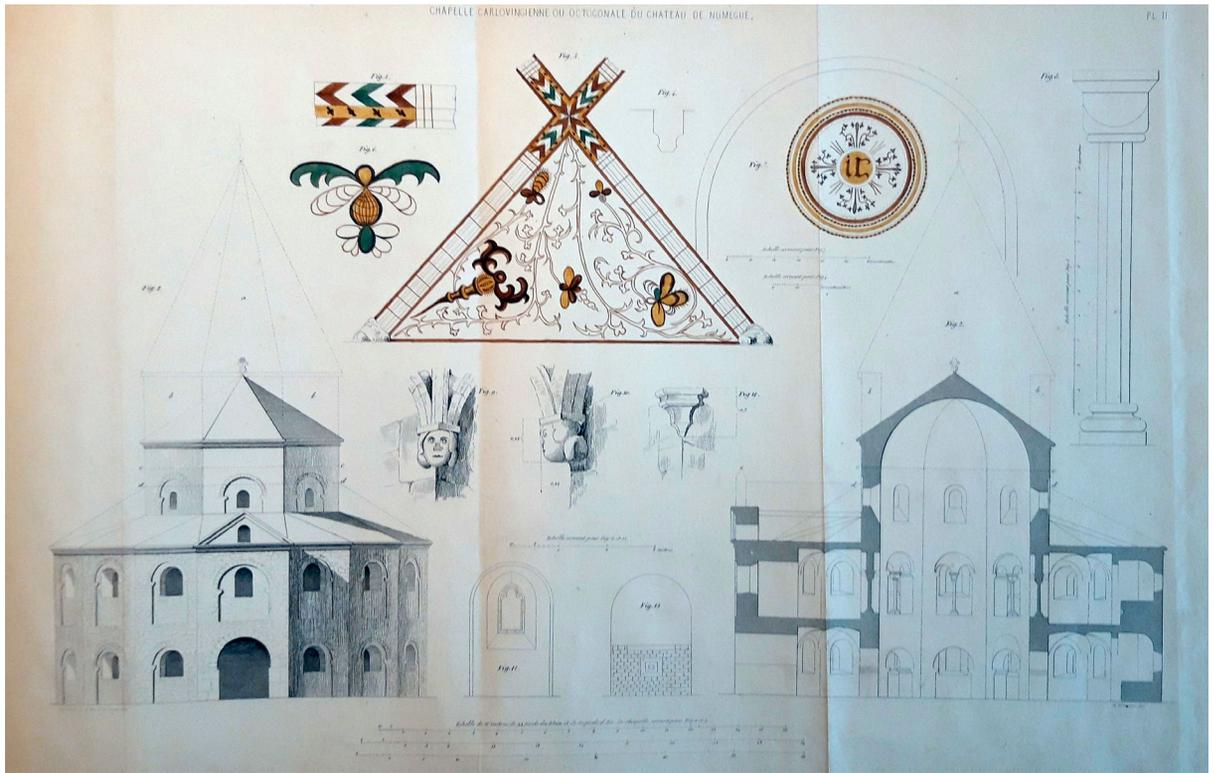
Figure 3. (overleaf)
The Big Church in Zwolle and the New Church in Amsterdam, in Essenwein, 'Über einige mittelalterliche Kirchen in den Niederlanden (Holland und Belgien)', *Organ für christliche Kunst*, 6.6 (1856), p. 7, photographed by Ton de Beer, courtesy of University of Amsterdam. A publication in fourteen parts in the 1856 volume, this is a fairly extensive and thorough series of building descriptions arranged according to the important buildings that a certain Essenwein visited when travelling in the Netherlands and Belgium, making drawings of floor plans and details.

Beilage zu Nr. 7 Jahrg. II des Organes für christl. Kunst.



Weber & Deckers lith. Coll.

Ans Zwolle und Amsterdam



was a Roman building. Oltmans assumed that the chapel dated from the eighth century and had been commissioned by Charlemagne.³⁴ Finally, the *Contribution to the knowledge of Gothic architecture or pointed style in the Netherlands* (1847–1851) by Servaas de Jong, again an article that had originally appeared in *Architectural Contributions* and was translated into English, French, and German with the financial support of the Society for the Improvement of Architecture, remained unused.³⁵

While the survey authors rightly complained about the poor state of research in the Netherlands, even the small number of sources that did exist were often not used, not even when translations provided an easy access to their findings. Over the years, however, research increased steadily, and in the successive revised and expanded editions of the surveys, the subchapters and paragraphs on Dutch architecture could be rewritten or expanded. The commitment of authors to adapt their texts differed. Fergusson's *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture* underwent radical changes in its many editions, including a new title: *A History of Architecture in All Countries*. But in the 1883 edition, the text on the Netherlands was still almost exactly the same as in 1855.³⁶ Fergusson put his energy into subjects he found more interesting: the architecture of antiquity, India and Asia, and the nineteenth century.³⁷

Figure 4.
The Valkhof chapel, in Alexander Oltmans, *Description de la Chapelle Carlovingienne et de la Chapelle Romane, restes du château de Nimègue. Recherche Archéologique* (Amsterdam: Meijer, 1847), courtesy of University of Amsterdam

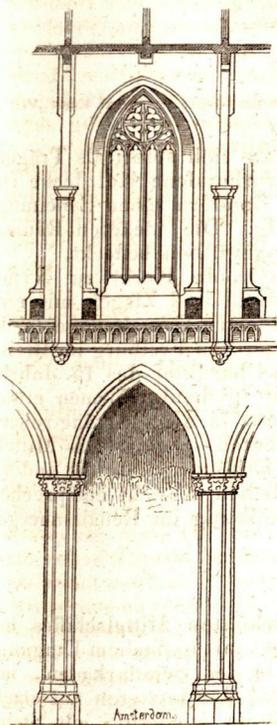
Figure 5.
De St. Jan cathedral in 's-Hertogenbosch, in Adriaan Willem Weissman, *Monumentaal Nederland* (Haarlem: De Tulp, 1910), unpaginated, private collection



The process of classification and the uses of terminology, characterisations, and value judgements in the various general surveys together provide insight into the dynamics and adaptability of the grand narrative of the survey text. They also show which aspects of historiography were subject to change and which were not. One striking aspect of persistence is the exclusive attention paid to Dutch architecture in the chapters on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As a result, only buildings from the eleventh (Romanesque) to the fifteenth (late Gothic) and seventeenth century were represented, as if nothing significant was built thereafter.³⁸ We will now look into how in the surveys Dutch architecture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was measured according to the universal standards of architectural beauty.

The Gothic and the Renaissance as local, national, and universal styles

The evaluation of medieval architecture in the Netherlands in the surveys of the 1850s was not very positive. Fergusson, as we saw earlier, was decidedly negative. He describes how the Gothic churches testified to the pragmatism of the Dutch, who demonstrated no ambition to appropriate and embrace the Gothic as a style. The buildings were meant to accommodate the largest possible religious community, which they did very well: Fergusson describes them as 'permanent warehouses of devotion' — and as 'utter failures as works of art'. The Dutch were satisfied with a minimum of decoration, which was also poorly executed, partly because the most commonly used building material was brick,



Liebfrauenkirche zu Amsterdam. Inneres System. (Nach d. Organ f. chr. Kunst, VI.)

Joche eines dreischiffigen Baues und schliesst auf der Westseite unvollendet ab. Das innere System nähert sich auffällig dem der englischen Spätgothik. Es sind gegliederte Pfeilerarkaden

des Chorumganges ist zu bemerken, dass ihre Zwischenwände durch leichte Säulen ersetzt sind und sie somit in offener gegenseitiger Verbindung stehen. Chor und Vorderschiffe sind verschiedenzeitig; jener besteht in der Masse aus Haustein, dieser aus Ziegeln. Der Bau soll aus der Frühzeit des 14. Jahrhunderts herrühren; ob diese Angabe auch nur, wie man annimmt, auf den Chor zutrifft, muss dahingestellt bleiben. — Die Lorenzkirche (Groote Kerk) zu Rotterdam, 1412 oder 1449 bis 1472 erbaut, scheint ein Gebäude von im Wesentlichen gleicher Anordnung zu sein. Doch unterscheidet sie sich von der eben genannten Kirche (wie von den vorigen) dadurch, dass Mittelschiff und Querschiff bereits, und voraussetzlich schon der ursprünglichen Absicht gemäss, mit hölzernen Kreuzgewölben bedeckt sind.

Es folgt die Liebfrauenkirche (Nieuwe Kerk) zu Amsterdam, 1408 bis nach 1470, ein Hausteinbau von grossartiger Anlage und eigenthümlicher Behandlung. Der Chor ist fünf-schiffig, mit Umgang und regelmässig geordnetem Kapellenkranz; das Schiff setzt in zwei Jochen fünf-schiffig an (dazu noch mit äussern kapellenartigen Seitenräumen), hat dann drei

Figure 6.

A travée of the New Church in Amsterdam, in Franz Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst*, 5 vols (Stuttgart: Ebner and Seubert, 1856–78), III (1859), p. 431, photographed by Ton de Beer, courtesy of University of Amsterdam. Kugler copied the illustration from the article on medieval churchbuilding in the Netherlands in *Organ für christliche Kunst*, 6.6 (1856), p. 7 (see Fig. 3).

which Fergusson considers inferior to other materials. For Fergusson, the only monuments that deserved attention were the cathedrals of Utrecht (Dom) and 's-Hertogenbosch (Sint Jan), which were relatively richly decorated and were made of natural stone. Their location on the border, in the sphere of influence of Germany and Belgium, explained their better quality (Fig. 5). Fergusson is even more critical of the medieval town halls and other public buildings. 'Even age has been unable to render them tolerably picturesque', he exclaims, providing no examples. Only the private houses, with their neat and cosy appearance, were rather nice, when seen in their urban setting of canals and trees.³⁹

In Gugel's paragraphs on medieval architecture in the Netherlands, Sint Jan is the only church illustrated with a floorplan and cross-section.⁴⁰ He also includes an illustration of the headquarters of the Delfland regional water authorities in Delft (1505), with its irregular floorplan and asymmetrical façade, a typical example of the application of the Gothic style to a town house, if exceptionally picturesque and richly decorated.⁴¹ Kugler included several Dutch town halls in his *Geschichte der Baukunst*, but the two most beautiful examples of the

Gothic style, those of Middelburg and Veere, were representative not of northern but southern Netherlands, being built by the Flemish master builder Antonie Keldermans at the turn of the fifteenth century.⁴²

Kugler's characterisation of Dutch Gothic architecture changed over time. In the *Handbuch*, his descriptions are very similar to those of Fergusson, albeit in slightly milder terms. In *Geschichte der Baukunst*, he abandons the rigid narrative of stylistic progression, literally giving more space in his book to the geographical diversity of styles (Fig. 6). Here the Dutch Gothic style is no longer disqualified as a deviation from the main style, a misfit in the stylistic development chain. Now it is a style that had gradually evolved by adopting elements from neighbouring countries, such as the elaborate choir from France and the typology of the hall church from Germany. Based on the variety in floorplan and elevation, Kugler grouped the dozen examples of Gothic churches in the Netherlands under a typological classification, which Lübke then incorporated in the later editions of his own *Geschichte der Architektur*.⁴³ Kugler interprets the austere but also spatial character of the style as a reflection of the down-to-earth attitude that is so typical for the Dutch *National-Charakter*, as well as the logical result of the application of the vernacular building materials of brick and wood. The use of wood, Kugler explains, was common among seafaring nations. In churches in the Netherlands, wooden roofs, therefore, covered the large expanse of interior space, a feature that Fergusson fails to mention.

The pragmatic national character and the use of brick as a national building material were also commonplace in explaining the characteristics of Dutch Renaissance architecture. For Fergusson, only the Amsterdam town hall of Jacob van Campen deserves mention, precisely because it left these characteristics behind: the use of natural stone and the enormous size of the building indicated a 'want of art', although the façade had peculiar proportions (Fig. 7).⁴⁴ In their first editions, Lübke and Gugel also foregrounded the Amsterdam town hall because of its uniqueness. Its 'large proportions', 'simple disposition', and 'monumental solidity' corresponded much better with the typical characteristics of the Renaissance style than any other Dutch building of the time. Renaissance motifs in the Netherlands were only visible in architectural decorations, according to Gugel.⁴⁵ Instead, with their high roofs, steep gables, and irregular façades and floor plans, the architecture of the period simply continued medieval building practices. With this tradition in mind, Lübke criticised the town hall for the horizontal design of its central *avant-corps* that did not fit with the high-pitched roofs so typical of northern architecture.⁴⁶

In the second edition of 1886, Gugel extended the three original pages on the Dutch Renaissance to twenty-one, and added a bibliography of all the recent publications, the most important being the one by Auguste Schoy, *Histoire de l'influence Italienne sur l'architecture dans les Pays-Bas* (1879). Also in Lübke's sixth edition, the chapter on the Dutch Renaissance (expanded from one paragraph to eight pages) opens with a reference to Schoy's study.⁴⁷ The typical characteristics of the Dutch Renaissance had changed. The books

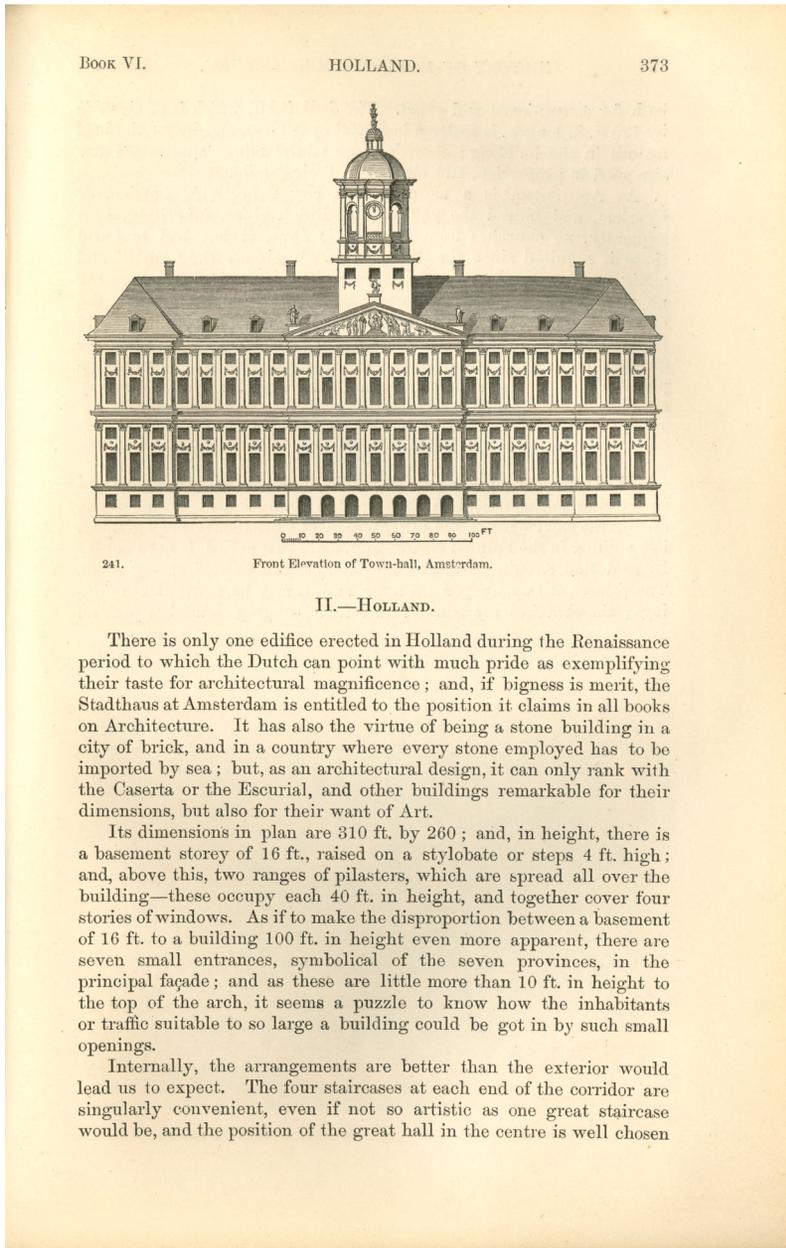


Figure 7.
The Amsterdam town hall, in James Fergusson, *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture* (London: Murray, 1862), p. 373, digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program

no longer focus on the formal similarities — balanced proportions, horizontality, symmetry, correct application of the classical orders, monumentality — between the Dutch and Italian monuments. Instead, the chapters now begin with the influence of Italian ornamentation, such as arabesques, cassettes, pilasters, and volutes, on the applied arts. Dutch artists who had been trained in

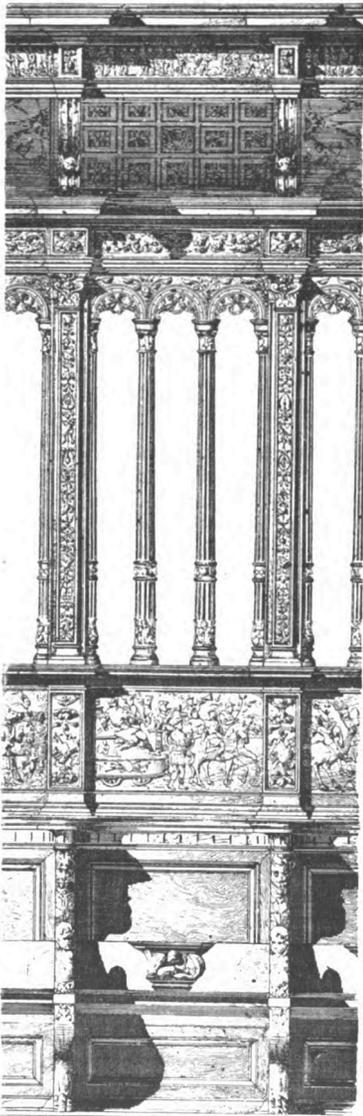


Fig. 929. Vom Chorgestühl in der Hauptkirche zu Dordrecht.

Figure 8.
Choir stalls in the Big Church in Dordrecht, in Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, 6th rev. edn, 2 vols (Leipzig: Seemann, 1884–86), II (1886), fig. 929, courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Italy applied these ornaments to altars, choir stalls, and pulpits, often assisted by Italian craftsmen. The first illustration in Lübke's chapter on the Dutch Renaissance is of the choir stalls in the church of Dordrecht (Fig. 8), while the description of Van Campen's town hall has been moved to the end of the chapter.

The surveys narrated how a few decades after the application of Renaissance elements in the applied arts, the new decoration was also widely used in architecture. As a possible stimulus for Italy's influence on Dutch applied arts and architecture, Lübke mentions the shipping industry, since the Dutch were trading with important cities such as Genoa and Venice. Another possible track of influence ran via France and Belgium, by which travelling artists brought new fashions. As in their first editions, Lübke and Gugel describe the vertical orientation of houses and public buildings and the predominant use of brick. But these characteristics were now assessed positively; detailed descriptions explain how within the existing idiom the new Renaissance ornamentation was integrated: red brick was interspersed with horizontal stone mouldings and friezes, and numerous Renaissance motifs, such as cushions, lozenges, facets, lion heads, mascarons, and cartouches decorated the corbels and imposts of the relieving arches above the windows and doors. Lübke included an early example of the new style with an illustration of the entrance gate to the old Mint in Dordrecht, which he had copied from Franz Ewerbeck, *Die Renaissance in Belgien und Holland* (1883) (Fig. 9).⁴⁸

The 'unique way of combining these building materials' and the wealth of details gave the Dutch Renaissance façades an 'uplifting and picturesque touch', according to Gugel.⁴⁹ In Lübke's view, the highlighting of important structural elements, and their execution in hard stone, was adopted from France. In combination with the relative height of the façades and the exuberant decoration, however, the style acquired a character of its own. Lübke credits the Netherlands, with its picturesque variant of the style, for an interpretation of the Renaissance that also became typical for the northern parts of Germany and the Scandinavian countries.⁵⁰ He regards the town hall in Leiden (1599) and the *Vleeshal* [Butcher's hall] in Haarlem from 1603 as the two best non-religious buildings in the style of the early Renaissance (Fig. 10). Gugel reserves this designation as best building for the Butcher's hall, dismissing Leiden's town hall as too exuberant, arbitrary in its decoration.⁵¹ Such differences of opinion, however, were unimportant in the major turnaround that had occurred in the appreciation of the Dutch Renaissance during the 1880s.

The persistent margins of Dutch architecture

The greater attention paid to Dutch Gothic architecture and the new characterisation of the Dutch Renaissance testifies to the dynamism of architectural historiography. On the basis of new research, the authors of the surveys sometimes reworked their texts, publishing extended and revised editions over the years. As a consequence, none of the original 'handbooks' remained

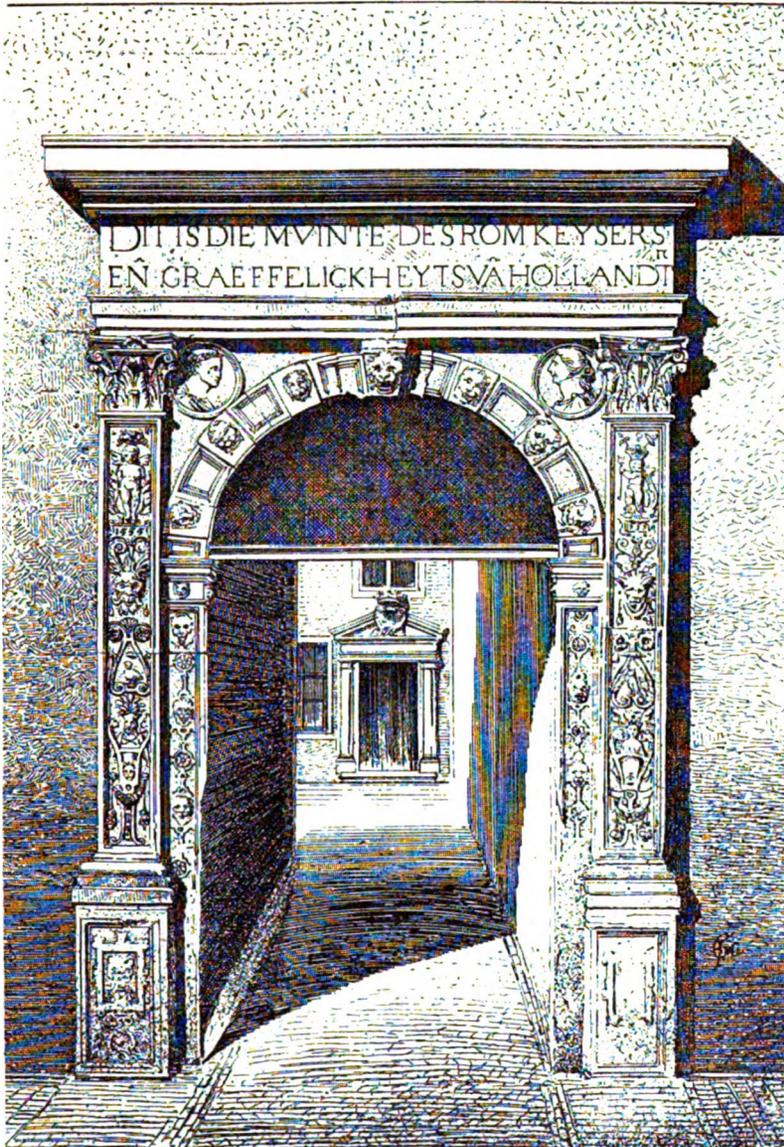


Fig. 932. Portal der alten Münze in Dordrecht. (Ewerbeck.)

Figure 9.
The entrance gate to the old Mint
in Dordrecht, in Wilhelm Lübke,
Geschichte der Architektur, 6th rev.
edn, 2 vols (Leipzig: Seemann,
1884–86), II (1886), fig. 932,
courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek
Heidelberg

compact. Lübke's *Geschichte der Archiktur* from 1855 was 380 pages long, with 174 illustrations. Thirty years later, its sixth edition consisted of two volumes with a total of 1248 pages and 1001 illustrations. Surprisingly, the master narrative, with its historical periodisation, principal styles and most important monuments, remained unchanged. Meanwhile, Kugler, for example, in the third volume of *Geschichte der Baukunst* (1859), describes

Figure 10.
The *Vleeshal* [Butcher's hall] in Haarlem from 1603, in Adriaan Willem Weissman, *Monumentaal Nederland* (Haarlem: De Tulp, 1910), unpaginated, private collection. From the 1880s onwards, it was regarded as one of the best examples of the Dutch Renaissance style.



the geographical diversity of the Gothic style, but he continues to use the same characterisations of the style as in *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (1842). The repetition of the same French and German cathedrals to illustrate stylistic perfection, and explaining the same typical elements, such as the extraordinary height and lightness of Gothic constructions, the cross-ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, and pointed arches, all reinforced the marginal importance of the Dutch Gothic churches.⁵²

Even the appreciation of the particular beauty of the Dutch Renaissance did not affect the general story of Renaissance architecture in any significant way. In all successive editions, the Italian palazzi and French castles continue to represent the style in *optima forma*. The Renaissance in the Low Countries is always discussed in a subsequent subchapter, together with 'other countries'

such as Britain and the Scandinavian countries.⁵³ In Kugler's posthumously completed *Geschichte der Baukunst*, with volumes on the Renaissance in Italy, France and Germany exclusively, the Netherlands are missing in their entirety. Thus, the result of research into the Dutch Renaissance in the last quarter of the nineteenth century amounted to no more than the promotion of a negative judgement of the Dutch variety of the style into a positive one, but leaving it still in the margin of the canon.⁵⁴

Obviously, knowledge did not freely circulate between monographs and general surveys. Instead, the genres were hierarchically related in a 'vertical art history', to use Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann's wording.⁵⁵ The systematic nature of the genre of the survey reduced the status of the specialist monograph to that of a mere supplier of additional knowledge. Dutch authors perceived this relationship precisely in these terms, describing themselves as local 'correspondents' whose research served general historiography. Alexander Oltmans (1814–1853), for example, qualifies his research in the French-language publication on the Valkhof chapel as a 'fragment' of national history of art. This, in turn, was an integral part of general history of art, as written by Kugler and Carl Schaase, who, according to Oltmans, could not be expected to do detailed research into regional art and architecture themselves. This was the task of numerous local scholars in various countries.⁵⁶

The question is why local scholars would undertake such research, if the conclusion was clear from the start. Local and national architecture constituted an imperfect or at best a fairly successful application of a style that was to be admired elsewhere: on the most representative architectural monuments. The comparative method of the surveys had been fully internalised by the authors of specialist local studies. With his study of Dutch medieval churches, Eyck tot Zuylichem's aim was to find out 'in what ways our church buildings differ from those in other countries, or to what extent they corresponds to them'.⁵⁷ While the survey was understood as epitomising an international standard of scholarship, monographs grappled with a general perception of Dutch architecture as failing to meet the universal standard of architectural beauty. Like most scholars from European countries that were regarded as 'peripheral' in the contemporary landscape of knowledge production, Dutch authors convey the sense that they needed to catch up with the surveys, a finding not uncommon in postcolonial studies of subaltern architectures, as Kristina Jõekalda and I have argued elsewhere.⁵⁸

When Adriaan Willem Weissman (1858–1923) published the long-awaited national history of architecture in 1912, *History of Dutch Architecture*, which the Society for the Improvement of Architecture had already anticipated in 1843, he described the value of Dutch architecture in a self-deprecating tone:

A small country like ours necessarily had to depend on other countries for its architecture. Neither the Romanesque, nor the Gothic style, nor the Renaissance originated in the Netherlands. But when these styles, in their various shades, came into vogue with us, our master builders managed to give them a peculiarly Dutch character.⁵⁹

The same self-inferiorising analysis of Dutch culture as always being a 'receiving' and never a 'giving' culture also applied to the regional and local building styles in the Netherlands. The architect Herman van der Kloot Meijburg calls the churches in *Our Old Village Churches* 'sympathetic'. He describes them using diminutive forms that in Dutch convey a sense of depreciation, including 'tor-entjes' (little towers), 'poortjes' (little porches), 'rondboog friesjes' (little round-arch friezes). According to Van der Kloot Meijburg, the many 'mistakes' one could detect in the styles of the village churches did not diminish their value, because it was precisely through their 'searching and groping' that these churches stood close to the public. 'We don't look up to them, like we do to a proud cathedral.'⁶⁰

Anyone who was not satisfied with a position on the margins that was accorded to virtually all national and local architectural styles apart from a few 'centres', had to evade the methodological regime of art and architectural historiography. And that was what Georg Galland seems to be doing with his publications on the Dutch Renaissance. In *Die Renaissance in ihrer geschichtlichen Hauptentwicklung* (1882), he criticises the lack of knowledge and consequently appreciation of the Dutch Renaissance in the surveys by Fergusson and Lübke.⁶¹ To appreciate the Dutch specificities of the style, one had to look not for the classicist examples, such as Van Campen's town hall, as Fergusson did, but rather for local architecture in the unknown, smaller towns. That is where the Dutch Renaissance developed 'fuller *Eigenart*, full *bewussten Stolzes*'.⁶² In his next book, *Holländische Baukunst und Bildnerie im Zeitalter der Renaissance* (1890), Galland sets himself even more firmly against the classicist beauty criteria of the Renaissance in art-historical literature. He dismisses Schoy's study, *Histoire de l'influence Italienne sur l'Architecture dans les Pays-Bas* (1879), as too superficial, because it described the Dutch Renaissance in terms of influence and imitation, whereas the style was a '*bewussten Gegensatz*', a deliberate contrast. Galland opens his book with a quotation from 1631 by Salomon de Bray, to illustrate that because of its own building traditions and the northern climate, the Dutch Renaissance had deliberately taken a different form from the southern Renaissance.⁶³ Galland was probably the first author to express that the value of the Dutch Renaissance lay not in its similarity to the Italian role model (in form and composition, or in the study of classical tracts), but in its difference, in the fact that with its vertically oriented, picturesque brick construction it deliberately deviated from the classical norm.

Nevertheless, Galland did not fundamentally question the method of architectural historiography either. He demonstrated the special beauty of the Dutch Renaissance in exactly the same way as the surveys that he criticised. For Galland, too, the value of individual buildings was determined by the degree of their representativeness for a Dutch Renaissance, and for the successive phases of growth, blossoming, and decline that he distinguished therein.⁶⁴ Moreover, by presenting the Dutch Renaissance as a conscious antithesis of the Italian Renaissance, he confirmed the latter as the norm, in the same way that postmodernism both attacked and perpetuated the authority of modernism in the twentieth century.

Epilogue: the representativeness of Dutch architecture

To this day, the architecture of the Dutch Middle Ages and Renaissance remains on the margins of the main styles. Even in the retrospective works of Spiro Kostof, Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, and David Watkin, the architectural historiography as it came about in the nineteenth century has largely been maintained, with the same canonical examples and the same (marginalised) architectural styles.⁶⁵ An exception is the more recent *Architecture since 1400* by Kathleen James-Chakraborty, in which, in line with Georg Galland, the 'slowness' of the northern Europeans, including the Netherlands, to adopt Renaissance forms are not interpreted as 'ignorance' or 'provincialism', but as a form of 'resistance'.⁶⁶

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the appreciation of Dutch architecture changed radically. Because of the personal, international relationships and friendships of, among others, Theo van Doesburg, Gerrit Rietveld, J. J. P. Oud, and Cornelis van Eesteren in the avant-garde circles, Dutch architecture suddenly found itself at the 'centre of power' in architectural developments whose influence was worldwide. Dutch architects were active in De Stijl and the Bauhaus, took part in CIAM congresses, and participated in international exhibitions (Weissenhofsiedlung Stuttgart, 1927 and Modern Architecture in MoMA, 1932). Under the rubrics of Team X and structuralism, the resistance to functionalism of Aldo van Eyck, Jaap Bakema, and Herman Hertzberger gained international recognition. In the last decades of the twentieth century, Rem Koolhaas reinforced the position of the Netherlands on the architectural world map, first as a representative of deconstructivism, then as one of the few global 'starchitects'. The prominent presence of the Netherlands in the international architectural historiography of the twentieth century is based on the same criterion that caused its marginal position in the survey works of Kugler, Fergusson, and Lübke: the degree of its representativeness of and active involvement in a particular movement, tendency, or style.⁶⁷

As pioneers of a new genre, Kugler, Fergusson, and Lübke all reflected on the relationship between the surveys and the specialist studies of works of art, buildings, places, and regions on which they based their grand narratives. For all three authors, it was clear that the survey was at the top of the scientific hierarchy because of its systematic framework for ordering, comparing, and interpreting buildings. From that moment on, specialist monographs were only 'correcting errors or of supplying deficiencies'.⁶⁸

Kugler and Fergusson demonstrated an awareness that much of the specific information about individual buildings and local building methods was lost in their overviews. In the introduction to his *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, Kugler referred to the indexes at the back of the book, which ensured that buildings, places, architects, and artists could be traced, and also made the survey suitable as a travel guide. With the survey in hand, readers could relate their observations on the spot to the larger time and space of art history. Where the comparative method is the unique asset of the survey,

monographs are superior in their density of information and their specific knowledge, according to Fergusson.

But it was never that simple. This article has shown that the authors of specialist studies appropriated the methodology of general historiography and indeed perceived themselves as ‘correspondents’, as mere providers of ‘additional knowledge’. The general arena of global comparison had settled into the minds of local authors and national historians. As such, it had penetrated into the smallest villages in the Netherlands, where each village church had to compete with the great cathedrals of a universal history of art.

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2. James Fergusson, *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture: Being a Concise and Popular Account of the Different Styles of Architecture Prevailing in All Ages and Countries*, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1855); Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Graul, 1855); Franz Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst*, 5 vols (Stuttgart: Ebner and Seubert, 1856–78). Volumes 4 and 5 of *Geschichte der neueren Baukunst* were edited by Jacob Burckhardt and Wilhelm Lübke after Kugler’s death in 1858.
3. Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Ebner and Seubert, 1842), p. x. For the importance of Kugler’s survey in art historiography, see Dan Karlholm, *Art of Illusion: The Representation of Art History in Nineteenth Century Germany and Beyond* (Bern: Lang, 2004) and Hubert Locher, *Kunstgeschichte als historische Theorie der Kunst 1750–1950* (Munich: Fink, 2000).
4. Fergusson, *Illustrated Handbook*, pp. vi–vii.
5. *Ibid.*, p. x.
6. Karlholm, *Art of Illusion*, p. 144.
7. Lübke, *Geschichte*, p. 2. According to Lübke, it was only at the time when architecture was shaping all of society’s needs that there really was a ‘full reflection of the overall character of a time’.
8. Kugler, *Handbuch*, p. 19.
9. Isaak Warnsinck, ‘Voorrede’, *Bouwkundige Bijdragen*, 1 (1843), i–viii (p. v); [Anon.], ‘Een Goed Plan’, *De Opmerker. Bouwkundig Weekblad*, 29 (15 December 1894), 393–95.
10. Auke van der Woud, *The Art of Building. From Classicism to Modernity: The Dutch Architectural Debate 1840–1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 12.

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21. James Fergusson, *A History of Architecture in All Countries: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 2nd edn, 4 vols (London: Murray, 1873–76), I (1873), p. 609.
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23. August G.B. Schayes, *Histoire de l'architecture en Belgique*, 3 vols (Brussels: Jamar, 1849–50). Schayes does not refer to Alexander Oltmans, *Description de la Chapelle Carolingienne et de la Chapelle Romane: Restes du château de Nimègue. Recherche Archéologique* (Amsterdam: Meijer, 1847). But Schayes's illustration of the Valkhof chapel is so similar to the one in Oltmans that Schayes must have known it. See [Figs 2 and 4](#).
24. Carl Friedrich von Wiebeking, *Theoretisch-practische bürgerliche Baukunde*, 6 vols (München: Von Wiebeking, 1821–26).
25. Essenwein, 'Über einige mittelalterliche Kirchen in den Niederlanden (Holland und Belgien)', *Organ für christliche Kunst*, 6.1 (1856), 1–20.
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27. See Lionel von Donop, 'Rudolf Redtenbacher', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, ed. by Historische Commission der Konigliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 56 vols (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875–1912), XXVIII (1889), pp. 778–80 <https://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:Redtenbacher,_Rudolf&oldid=-> [accessed 14 November 2020]
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 41. *Ibid.*, pp. 475–76.
 42. Kugler, *Geschichte*, III (1859), pp. 419–27. This short chapter on civil architecture in Belgium did not include anything on the Netherlands.
 43. *Ibid.*, pp. 427–35. Cf. Lübke, *Geschichte der Architektur*, 6th rev. edn, 2 vols (Leipzig: Seemann 1884–86), pp. 78–88. In the first edition of Lübke from 1855, there is still no mention of Romanesque or Gothic architecture in the Netherlands.
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61. Galland, *Renaissance in Holland*, p. viii.
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