Willem Goeree and the production of knowledge (The Hague, 27 Mar 20)

National Library of the Netherlands (Nationale Bibliotheek, KB), The Hague, Mar 27, 2020
Deadline: Sep 22, 2019

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Willem Goeree and the production of knowledge in the early modern Netherlands – A one-day interdisciplinary workshop

In recent years, the move towards a "history of knowledge" for a more inclusive approach to the intertwined nature of art and science has been advocated by Peter Burke, Lorraine Daston, and Philipp Sarasin, among others. Although a precise definition of "history of knowledge" continues to be debated, this discourse is allowing for the reassessment of topics and subjects that did not fit well in existing disciplinary frameworks. In the context of this evolving discussion we seek to foster an interdisciplinary conversation around knowledge production and dissemination in the early modern Netherlands through a focus on the works and writings of Willem Goeree (1635-1711).

As a prolific author, publisher and bookseller operating between Middelburg and Amsterdam, Goeree represents a remarkable case study through which to investigate the processes of producing, printing and publishing knowledge in the Dutch Republic. As his early biographer David van Hoogstraten remarked, Goeree demonstrated "eene grote genegenheit voor allerhande kunsten en wetenschappen" – an affection for knowledge in the widest sense, as understood at a time when disciplinary boundaries were still in flux. Goeree's diverse interests and vast erudition are reflected in his own books, in which he discusses topics ranging from the art of painting to the history of the Jews, from cosmological theories to the ideas of Descartes. Similarly, his library suggests a learned owner conversant with natural history and ancient civilisations, curious about the latest philosophical debates and recent developments in the field of medicine.

Despite his devotion to learning, Willem Goeree remains a marginal figure in the intellectual landscape of the seventeenth-century Netherlands. The aim of this workshop is therefore twofold: to shed further light on Goeree's life and work, and to situate the activities of this Dutch polyhistor in the broader context of the history of knowledge. Research into such a multifaceted figure at once demands expertise in different fields and offers an opportunity for scholarly exchange across current disciplinary boundaries on the shared ground of the history of knowledge.

We welcome papers that can take Willem Goeree as a starting point to address broader questions relevant to the history of knowledge. For instance, what does Goeree's library reveal about the habits of an early modern reader and book collector? What are the purposes of illustration in the

books he published, and what can we learn from these prints about the role he ascribed to visual knowledge? On several occasions, Goeree published books as editor rather than author. How does this compilation and revision of other people's work reflect or respond to the early modern practice of knowledge production? What do the early English and German editions of some of Goeree's books tell us about the process of knowledge translation and the circulation of ideas beyond the geographical boundaries imposed by the choice of writing in the vernacular? Topics of particular interest include – but are not limited to – Goeree's social network; his involvement in the book trade and his contact with other publishers; and the production process of the volumes he wrote and published.

We look forward to contributions from both early career and established scholars in the fields of art history, history of the book, history of medicine, science, education, religion and literature. Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words for a 20-minute paper, along with a brief biographical note to Willem.Goeree.Workshop@gmail.com by 22 September 2019.

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Reference:

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