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ESSAY

Andrew Marvell and Constantijn Huygens: Common Grounds and Mutual Contacts

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This paper compares the somewhat parallel lives of Constantijn Huygens and Andrew Marvell, but it also examines their differences and asks whether there may actually have been encounters between the two of them. One of their mutual contacts was the English priest Richard Flecknoe, who was an agent in the service of Béatrix de Cusance, Duchess of Lorraine, in which capacity he came into contact with both Huygens and Marvell. This essay also explains the context around Flecknoe's poverty, which Marvell writes about in his satirical poem 'Flecknoe an English Priest at Rome'.

Keywords: Andrew Marvell; Constantijn Huygens; Richard Flecknoe; Béatrix de Cusance; cultural contacts

From early on, the Dutchman Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687) was well acquainted with envoys, high officials and court members. As a youth he participated in embassies to Italy and England. In 1625, at the age of 28 when he became secretary to Stadtholder Frederic Henry, Huygens found himself at the center of political and cultural developments in the Dutch Republic, where he remained until his death in 1687. One secret of his success was his ability to play different roles as the occasion demanded – secretary, diplomat, courtier, poet, art connoisseur, collector, scholar, and musician.¹

The careers of Constantijn Huygens and Andrew Marvell display some significant analogies. Both men were of relatively humble origins, climbed high on the social ladder, and reached the positions respectively of secretary and diplomat. They were both key figures in the news- and social networks of their time. Both were proficient in many languages – they were used for their expertise in Latin – and employed as poets. Marvell visited the Dutch Republic in the 1640s and 1660s, and Huygens visited England seven times. Also, since some of their poems show similarities, one may assume that they had direct contact.

Certainly there are many differences between them. Huygens, for instance, remained faithful to his employers, the Stadtholders' family of Orange-Nassau, his entire life whereas Marvell is generally described as having shown ambiguous political sympathies. In addition, Huygens was a faithful Calvinist and a devoted family man, who constantly strove to place his sons in better positions. Huygens's career was also more successful than Marvell's. In his powerful position as secretary to the Orange family, Huygens was part of an influential patronage network. He was knighted in France and in England; he invested a great part of his earnings in land and estates. At the time of his death he was one of the richest men in the Dutch Republic.

In search of connections between Huygens and Marvell, I looked for traces of Marvell in the Dutch Republic, as it is known that he visited the Netherlands at least

¹ Constantijn Huygens, *Mijn leven verteld aan mijn kinderen in twee boeken*, ed. F. R. E. Blom (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2003).

twice; in the early 1640s and the early 1660s.² I tried to find mentions of him in various Dutch sources, like those of the National Archives, the Royal Archives, the Dutch Royal Library, and the student registry of the University of Leiden in 1642 and 1643. I used search items like: 'Marvell, Marvel, Marvelle, Marvil, Marvill, Marvaile, Mervel, Mervell, Mervil, Mervill, Merveil, Merveill, Merveille, Marvin, Marvynn, Mervin and Mervile'.³ Curiously, he was nowhere to be found.

Another fact that I checked was whether Huygens might have owned some of Marvell's work in his immense library, which contained publications on theology, law, literature, and science.⁴ Again, the catalogue of Huygens's library that was auctioned in 1688 does not mention Marvell. However, one entry that refers to a folio manuscript entitled 'English poems of divers Autors' included in Huygens's library list (no. 115) deserves our notice. Strangely enough, this manuscript is also mentioned in the catalogue of the library of Johan de Witt junior (a son of the Grandpensionary Johan de Witt) with the description 'ex Bibliotheca Constantini Huygenii'. Who these 'divers' authors might have been and what their poems were may be worth looking further into, as Marvell could have been amongst them.⁵

Constantijn Huygens

In his position as secretary to the Raad van State, Constantijn's father Christiaan Huygens (1551–1624) introduced his son, at an early age, into his personal and official international network. Besides, Constantijn became a prominent poet in Dutch, French and Latin, with many publications already printed during his lifetime. At the beginning of the twentieth century his poems were collected and printed in

² Nicholas von Maltzahn, *An Andrew Marvell Chronology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 30, 72–3.

³ Many thanks to Cees Schoneveld for this suggestion.

⁴ Ad Davidse, Constantijn Huygens (Catalogus Librorum: 2000–2017) <https://adcs.home.xs4all.nl/Huygens/varia/catal2.html> [last accessed 7 January 2017]; original document: *Catalogus variorum & insignium in omni facultate & lingua librorum, bibliothecæ [...] Constantini Hugenii [...]. Quorum auctio habebitur Hagæ-Comitis in officina Abrahami Troyel [...] ad diem lunæ 15 martius 1688* (Hagæ-Comitis, apud A. Troyel bibl., 1688).

⁵ For more information on English books in Huygens's collection see Antonin Van Elslander and Willem Schrickx, 'De Engelse werken in den catalogus van C. Huygens', *Tijdschrift voor Levende Talen* 18: 2 (1952): 136–43 and 180–201.

nine volumes.⁶ Constantijn was a passionate amateur musician; he composed music and played several instruments himself, and he was also well acquainted with the most prominent musicians of his time.⁷ Thus, when Constantijn Huygens became secretary to the Prince of Orange, Stadtholder Frederic Henry, and subsequently to his son William II, he had positioned himself at the center of political and cultural developments in the Dutch Republic. In short, Constantijn Huygens was constantly engaged in strengthening and enhancing his social position and that of his four sons. In other words, he was a true *homo universalis*. Purposefully, he utilized his correspondence as a way to present himself as such and to expand his network to higher social circles. Mainly by means of his correspondence, he maintained a vast network of international contacts –reaching ‘everybody who mattered’ at some point in the Dutch Golden Age. It is estimated that Huygens wrote and received more than 100,000 letters.⁸ Of these 10,000 have survived. They can be consulted in an online edition, with facsimiles and transcriptions, which facilitates research on Huygens’s varied use of language.⁹

Possible encounters between Huygens and Marvell

Huygens paid seven visits to England: in 1618, 1621, 1621–3, 1624, 1663, 1664 and in 1671.¹⁰ Concerning any potential relationships with Marvell, Huygens’s visits in 1663 and 1671 might be worth a closer look for future research. Apart from the possible encounters in England, two meeting opportunities in the Dutch Republic can be considered, one in 1642 and one in 1663.

The first possible encounter between Huygens and Marvell could have taken place in May 1642, when Huygens may have shown Marvell his country manor

⁶ They can now also be consulted on the Internet: *De gedichten van Constantijn Huygens naar zijn handschrift*, ed. J. A. Worp (Groningen: Wolters, 1892–1899). Also available at <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/Dutch/Huygens> [last accessed 7 January 2017].

⁷ Constantijn Huygens, *Driehonderd brieven over muziek van, aan en rond Constantijn Huygens*, ed. Rudolf Rasch (Hilversum: Verloren 2007).

⁸ Ineke Huysman and Ad Leerintveld, ‘New Perspectives of the Digitized Correspondence of Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687)’, *Dutch Crossing* 38: 3 (2014): 244–58.

⁹ *Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens*, 2005–2017. Available at: <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/briefwisselingconstantijnhuygens/en> [last accessed 7 January 2017].

¹⁰ J. H. W. Unger, ‘Dagboek van Constantijn Huygens’, *Oud Holland* 3 (1885): 1–87.

Hofwijck, which could have inspired Marvell to write his 1651 poem *Upon Appleton House*. Huygens also created a poem about his own estate, called *Hofwijck*, in 1651. In this long poem, Huygens describes his manorial estate, which he had designed himself in cooperation with architects Jacob van Campen and Pieter Post. Huygens's poem belongs to the tradition of 'country house poems', and also to that of pastoral literature in which country life is idealized. According to Peter Davidson and Adriaan van der Weel, both poems display 'parallel runs of imagery ... and ... undeniable similarities of structure and perspective'.¹¹ As this paper is written from an historical, rather than literary, perspective, it will not provide a detailed comparison of the two poems.

Helmer Helmers, however, argues that similarities between Huygens's poem *Hofwijck* and Marvell's poem *Upon Appleton House* are not based on literary influence, but should be seen in terms of Anglo-Dutch political discourse.¹² In Helmers's opinion, the texts should be considered in the context of the debate over the new political configuration in the Anglo-Dutch sphere after the execution of Charles I and the death of Stadtholder William II. It was impossible for Marvell to have actually seen Huygens's text when he wrote *Upon Appleton House* in July 1651, for Huygens's first manuscript version was not completed until 8 December 1651.

Davidson and Van der Weel have suggested that Huygens and Marvell must have met in the mid-1640s and that both authors remembered their conversation when writing their poems in 1651.¹³ This view is challenged by Helmers.¹⁴ But Davidson and Van der Weel might have a point, because there could have been an encounter, although slightly earlier, in 1642. It is known that Marvell was on the Continent in 1642 and that he probably stayed in the Dutch Republic for a while. He could have been in the train of Queen Henrietta Maria, when she visited the Dutch Republic in 1642, raising money for the Royalist cause. The lists (in the handwriting of

¹¹ Peter Davidson and Adriaan van der Weel, *A Selection of the Poems of Sir Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687)*, rev. ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 271.

¹² Helmer Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 168–9.

¹³ Davidson and van der Weel, *A Selection of the Poems of Sir Constantijn Huygens*, 268.

¹⁴ Helmers, *The Royalist Republic*, 169.

Constantijn Huygens) in the Dutch Royal Archive (KV, inv.nr. 2647) of people who were in the Queen's entourage, and also the lists of young Mary Stuart whom the Queen had brought along to deliver her to her new husband William II of Orange-Nassau, did not include the name of Marvell. However, following Henrietta Maria's arrival in March, later on more people followed, so that eventually she had 380 people in her train. That could be the reason why Marvell's name does not occur on the lists of the first group. It is possible that Richard Flecknoe, the English priest, whose connections with Huygens and Marvell will be discussed further on, also participated in the Queen's traveling company.

For that matter, in his capacity as secretary to Stadtholder Frederic Henry, Constantijn Huygens was escorting Henrietta Maria's company when, on 23 May, according to his diary, he took a day off to visit and show his newly built country manor Hofwijck to a small company of friends.¹⁵ If it could be verified that Marvell actually traveled along in the company of the English Queen, then he and Huygens almost certainly met. On this occasion Huygens could have invited Marvell to see Hofwijck, which was conveniently situated along the route that Henrietta Maria was following, and perhaps there he told Marvell that he intended to write a poem on Hofwijck. This would then have been the inspiration for Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*, even though it was only written nine years later.

The other possible meeting between Huygens and Marvell could have taken place in 1663, the early Restoration period when Marvell was rehabilitated from his position as secretary under Cromwell. Cees Schoneveld suggests that Marvell, who sojourned in the Dutch Republic from May 1662 to March 1663, might secretly have been appointed by Frederik van Nassau-Zuylenstein as tutor for the young Dutch future Stadtholder-King William III (1650–1702), in order to improve his use of the English language.¹⁶ At the time, Zuylenstein was William's governor and oversaw his education. Earlier, in 1659, Constantijn Huygens had made a carefully devised plan for the education of the young Prince. In order to verify Schoneveld's

¹⁵ Unger, 'Dagboek van Constantijn Huygens', 88.

¹⁶ C. W. Schoneveld, *Andrew Marvell. Gedichten* (Amsterdam: De Wilde Tomaat, 2015), 11–12.

hypothesis, it is necessary to find out where exactly William III stayed in the period when Marvell lived in the Dutch Republic (May 1662–March 1663). This is not quite clear. It is known that William attended some courses at Leiden University, and that his grandmother, Amalia von Solms, ordered him to return to The Hague in July 1662. In the same period William was sent to visit his family in Germany a few times. Schoneveld argues that William might have stayed in Vianen, in the Dutch province of Utrecht, where his aunt Louise Christine van Solms, the widow of Johan Wolfert van Brederode – first nobleman of Holland – and sister of Amalia von Solms, lived at Batestein Castle. Marvell, for his part, wrote two letters from Vianen in January and March 1663, and therefore, Schoneveld argues, there he could secretly have tutored the boy. However, if this had been the case, then certainly rumors about this extraordinary event would have spread, and most importantly, Huygens and Marvell would have been in touch about this subject, as Huygens was the person responsible for the instruction of the young Prince on behalf of the Orange family. Huygens, however, never made any mention of Marvell in the context of the education of the Prince, either in his personal documents like his journals, his autobiography or his letters, or in his official documents concerning the Prince's education. No document concerning the education of William III in the Dutch Royal Archives, nor in the voluminous archive of the correspondence of grandpensionary Johan de Witt in the Dutch National Archive, gives any indication that points in the direction of Marvell.¹⁷ Therefore, at least for now, the conclusion must be that it is rather unlikely that Marvell was William III's tutor and, as a result, that Marvell and Huygens met, at least to discuss the topic of William's education.

Mutual acquaintances: Richard Flecknoe

Huygens and Marvell may never have met, but at least they had mutual acquaintances; one of them was the English poet, playwright and priest Richard Flecknoe (*b. c.* 1605, *d.* in or after 1677). Not much is known about him, and there are no images of the man. He appears to have attended the English College at St. Omer, where he became

¹⁷ Royal Collections The Hague; GahetNa, Archief Johan de Witt, 3.01.17.

a priest and where his first book was published in 1626.¹⁸ Worried by the tumultuous political climate, Richard Flecknoe left England in the autumn of 1640 and fled to Ghent, in Flanders. There he found himself well-received by the local elite: 'there is no feast or party without me', he wrote.¹⁹ Two years later Flecknoe's growing irritation with the increasing number of English exiles seeking refuge in Ghent forced him to move to Brussels.

Constantijn Huygens knew Richard Flecknoe through Béatrix de Cusance (1614–1663), Duchess of Lorraine, on whose behalf Flecknoe went to Rome in 1643 to represent her as her agent.²⁰ Huygens himself became acquainted with Béatrix de Cusance in the 1650s at the house of the merchant family Duarte in Antwerp, which she and her daughter Anne often attended to perform music in the company of friends. Their engagements evolved into a close friendship and resulted in a correspondence that numbered over eighty letters, and which also brought about an extensive exchange of gifts and favors. Constantijn even dedicated ten poems to Béatrix, most of which were daring and erotic pieces. First and foremost, Constantijn and Béatrix were both interested in music.²¹ Richard Flecknoe sometimes worked as an agent for Béatrix and her circle. He frequently visited the Dutch Republic to deliver messages from the Duchess, for instance to Elizabeth of Bohemia, but also to Constantijn Huygens. Besides, Flecknoe was employed as majordomo at Béatrix's salon in her castle at Beersel, where he used his position to launch his play *Love's Kingdom*. Béatrix often organized music and dance parties at her castle, where she entertained honored guests such as the future Duke and Duchess of Newcastle,

¹⁸ Paul Hammond, 'Flecknoe, Richard (b. c. 1605, d. in or after 1677), poet and playwright', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9682> [last accessed 9 January 2017].

¹⁹ Richard Flecknoe, *A Relation of Ten Years Travell in Europe, Asia, Affrique, and America. All by Way of Letters Occasionally Written to Divers Noble Personages, from Place to Place, and Continued to This Present Year* (London, 1656), 3.

²⁰ Ineke Huysman, *Scènes uit een huwelijk. Het leven van Béatrix de Cusance*. Unpublished thesis (PhD), Amsterdam University, 2015.

²¹ Ineke Huysman, 'The Friendship of Béatrix de Cusance and Constantijn Huygens', in M. Bruijn-Lacy & C. P. Sellin, eds., *Crossing Boundaries and Transforming Identities. New Perspectives in Netherlandic Studies 4* (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 2012).

Charles II Stuart, the Duke of Buckingham and other English royalists who lived in exile on the Continent.²²

How did Richard Flecknoe become acquainted with Béatrix de Cusance and Andrew Marvell? The first time Richard Flecknoe met Béatrix de Cusance was in Brussels in 1642, when he was appointed by the Countess of Berlaymont as tutor and musician for her two nieces and nephew. Marie-Henriette, Béatrix's sister, whom Flecknoe addresses in his works as 'Mademoiselle de Beauvais', was also part of this company and from that moment on she was the main subject and addressee in his *Relations of Ten Years of Travel*.²³ This publication contains essays and letters to several well-known and established people regarding the author's travels around Europe and South America. Flecknoe had probably rewritten these letters for publication, and while reading them, one should be aware that the author intended to present himself as a member of the world of fashion and a man of consequence, taste and style. From his letters to Marie-Henriette we learn that, in 1644, to escape the war which was devastating the Southern Netherlands, Flecknoe travelled to Rome through Paris, Marseille and Genoa. There he arrived in January 1645 to negotiate on Béatrix's behalf about her controversial marriage.

The mission to Rome which Flecknoe undertook for his patroness, the Duchess of Lorraine, needs to be described in detail. Béatrix de Cusance, born of noble blood in Franche-Comté, a region in Eastern France, was educated at the court of the Infanta Isabella of Austria in Brussels. In 1635 she married Eugène-Leopold, prince of Cantecroy. Before this marriage though, Béatrix had fallen in love with Charles IV de Vaudémont (1604–1674), Duke of Lorraine. Charles was an army commander serving Spain, and he and his troops were feared because they indulged in pillaging and plundering. When he met Béatrix, he had been married to his first cousin Nicole

²² Ineke Huysman, 'Béatrix de Cusance, duchesse de Lorraine (1615–1663): une duchesse par sa propre entremise', in Nella Arambasin, ed., *Les Affranchies: Franc-Comtoises sans frontières* (Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2014), 73–89.

²³ Marie-Henriette de Cusance (1624–1701) first married Ferdinand Just de Rye La Palud, Marquis of Varambon, and after his death Charles-Eugène de Ligne, Duke of Arenberg. She is the ancestor of many present-day sovereigns.

of Lorraine for ten years. In order to prevent things getting out of control, Béatrix's mother quickly married her off to the Prince of Cantecroy. However, Charles and Béatrix kept meeting each other. And then, after only two years of marriage, Béatrix's husband suddenly died of the plague; only nine days later, she signed the papers for a marriage with the Duke of Lorraine.

With the support of Duke Charles's brother, Nicolas François, Nicole appealed for help to the Pope to declare the marriage of Béatrix and Charles null and void. This set the cumbersome Roman Rota (the Vatican court) in motion. In 1642 Pope Urban VIII signed a bull, describing the affair as a scandal and a detestable offense known to the whole Christian Commonwealth. Charles and Béatrix were excommunicated and were to be avoided by all Christians. Predictably, their initial response was defiance: the bull was founded on erroneous facts, they argued; it should therefore be declared null. Subsequently, in 1645, the new Pope, Innocent X, revoked the excommunication, and in front of twelve Jesuits and some noblemen they had to plead guilty and promise to live separately.

A year earlier, in 1644, Richard Flecknoe had departed on Béatrix's behalf to plead her case in Rome. But Flecknoe failed and had to give up. He wrote to Béatrix: 'This Madam, I could not but represent to your Highnesses consideration, that you might perceive how all the World (not only there but here) is govern'd by Interest and Reason of State, in spite of Justice and Innocence'.²⁴ Consequently the financial support from his patroness ceased and he became so desperate and impoverished that he was forced to look around for other patrons. He compared his miserable life to that of 'Adam out of Paradise among Beasts, having lost the blessed conversation of Angels'.²⁵ It was probably at this stage that he met Andrew Marvell, which explains why in his poem 'Flecknoe, an English Priest at Rome' Marvell refers to Flecknoe's poor lodgings and emaciated appearance. When he was supported by the Duchess of Lorraine, Flecknoe probably led a much more luxurious life.

²⁴ Flecknoe, *A Relation of Ten Years Travell*, 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 40. (1673, 65–6).

Flecknoe, an English Priest at Rome

Obliged by frequent visits of this man,
 Whom as priest, poet and musician,
 I for some branch of Melchizedek took,
 (Though he derives himself from my Lord Brooke)
 I sought his lodging, which is at the sign
 Of the sad Pelican; subject divine
 For poetry: there three staircases high,
 Which signifies his triple property,
 I found at last a chamber, as 'twas said,
 But seemed a coffin set on the stairs' head.
 (ll. 1–10)

These are the first lines of the poem 'Flecknoe, an English priest at Rome' that Andrew Marvell wrote after his encounters with the poet, playwright and priest Richard Flecknoe in Rome. In his poem Marvell makes no mention of the fact that Flecknoe traveled to Rome as an agent on behalf of his patroness Béatrix de Cusance, the Duchess of Lorraine. Marvell's description of his meeting with Flecknoe in Rome in this poem suggests that he was impoverished and in search of benefactors. However, as we know now, this was only part of the story.

At the age of 21, between the summer of 1642 and autumn of 1643, Andrew Marvell left England for the continent and spent four years abroad. Marvell may well have served as a tutor for an aristocrat on the Grand Tour, but the facts are not clear on this point. During meals at the English College in Rome in 1645 and 1646, he probably became acquainted with the two Villiers brothers: George Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687) and his brother Francis (1628–48). After their estates had been seized by Parliament, the brothers were placed under the care of the Earl of Northumberland who sent them on a tour of Europe. In Rome they presided over a 'Poetical Academy' of exiles. Flecknoe referred to it in one of his poems as 'a free Mart or Fair, I now perceive of all Poetick Ware'.²⁶

²⁶ Richard Flecknoe, *A collection of the choicest epigrams and characters* (London, 1673), 65–66.

The meals at the English College in Rome seem to have been the social occasion of Marvell's poem on Flecknoe. The poem is a satire in which Marvell mercilessly ridicules both the poverty of Flecknoe's wit and his real poverty and consequent leanness. The scene in the undated poem can be placed between the end of January 1645 when Flecknoe arrived and July 1646.²⁷ This was the time when Flecknoe stayed in Rome. Flecknoe's name is mentioned eight times in the Pilgrims book of the English College during this period.²⁸ Flecknoe and Marvell must probably have enjoyed a meal a few times in each other's company at the English College. There are no mentions of Andrew Marvell in the registry of the Pilgrims book. However, on 7 December 1645, according to the College's registry, Flecknoe enjoyed a meal in the company of Sir Kenelm Digby, the two Buckingham brothers and their tutor, whose name is not mentioned but may very well have been Marvell (**Figure 1**).²⁹

Marvell probably wrote his satirical poem to entertain his companions in Rome, but he could also have used it in order to amuse members of the literary circles he frequented on his return to England. At the same time, it is possible that Marvell intended to attract Buckingham's patronage, but at the time he could already have obtained that patronage, and then only tried to entertain him with the poem.

Flecknoe's very name would now be long forgotten but for John Dryden's contempt for him as a poet in his satire *Mac Flecknoe* (1682). Dryden used Flecknoe's name to indirectly ridicule the playwright Thomas Shadwell, whom he described as 'the last great prophet of tautology'. Dryden presents Flecknoe as 'the emperor of Dullness', and nominates Shadwell as his successor. And then there was also Gerard Langbaine who stated: 'Flecknoe's acquaintance with the nobility was more than with the muses; and he had a greater propensity to riming than a genius to poetry'.³⁰ This is perhaps true, but poetic greatness was never Flecknoe's intention in the

²⁷ Nigel Smith, ed., *The poems of Andrew Marvell* (London: Longman, 2003), 166–74; Nigel Smith, *Andrew Marvell: The Chameleon*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 56–9.

²⁸ Venerable English College (VEC), Rome, 1621–1658, 135–142.

²⁹ VEC, 1621–1658, 138.

³⁰ Gerard, Langbaine, *Account of the English dramattick poets* (Oxford, 1691), 199–203.

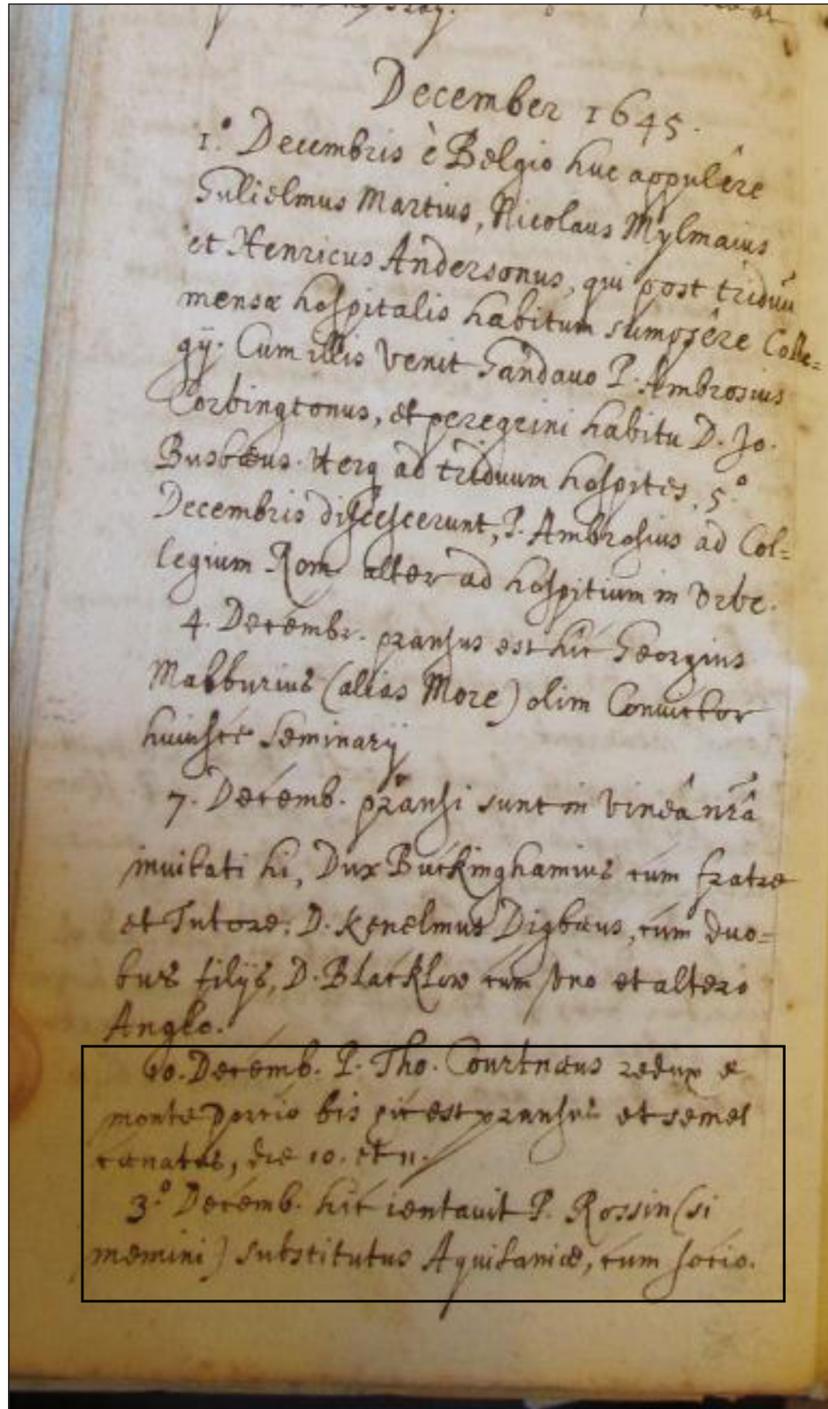


Figure 1: Venerable English College (VEC) Rome, *Pilgrims book 1621–1658*, 138.

first place. Social intercourse and conversations, which Flecknoe called his 'second religion', were his greatest interests.³¹

Flecknoe's bad reputation may very well come from the time he was associated with Marvell and the poetic circle around the Villiers brothers in Rome. Whether the Duke of Buckingham ever acted as Flecknoe's patron is unclear, but Flecknoe must certainly have attracted his attention. In the years afterwards, Buckingham was a visitor of the Duchess of Lorraine's salon in Beersel where Flecknoe was employed as her majordomo.

Although Marvell does not make any mention of Flecknoe's mission for the Duchess of Lorraine, he must have known about his earlier special assignment. Perhaps he did not refer to Flecknoe's mission in the poem as this would have undermined its satirical quality. It would also have been out of place, for it would have embarrassed the Duke of Buckingham who was on friendly terms with Béatrix de Cusance.

Conclusion

Another link in the mutual networks of Huygens, Marvell, Flecknoe and Béatrix de Cusance was Charles II. Huygens met the exiled king several times informally in Hôtel De Berghes, the city palace of Béatrix de Cusance in Brussels, and also in The Hague and Breda when Charles visited his sister Mary Stuart. After the Restoration Huygens dealt with King Charles officially as a representative for the Orange family, for instance regarding the education of William III and the restitution of Mary Stuart's jewels after her death. This could have been the occasion when Huygens may, indirectly, have had to deal with Andrew Marvell, who at the time had shifted his services from the Protectorate to the restored Stuart government. Flecknoe had undergone a similar change of direction. In the early 1650s, after his banishment from the court of Béatrix de Cusance because of improper behavior towards her sister Marie-Henriette, he returned to England and praised Oliver Cromwell in *The idea of His Highness Oliver, late Lord Protector, with certain brief reflexions on his life* (1659). However, in 1658, he was reinstated in Béatrix's entourage and had clearly

³¹ Fred Mayer, *The Prose Characters of Richard Flecknoe* (New York: Garland, 1987), XVII.

switched again to the other side, as shown by his publication *Heroic portraits with other miscellany pieces made and dedicated to his Majesty* (1660), in which he glorifies some de Cusance and Stuart family members.

These remarkable cultural contacts between the local elite in the Spanish Netherlands and the English royalists, in which Richard Flecknoe played a significant part as a go-between, and in which, at some point, Marvell and Huygens may have played a role as well, have not yet been fully investigated.³² The possibility of Richard Flecknoe acting as an intermediary between Huygens and Marvell needs to be further explored. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that research until now has not revealed any traces of Andrew Marvell in any Dutch sources; they must definitely be there, yet still to be discovered. It is just as surprising that Constantijn Huygens never mentioned Marvell in his writings, because even though both men may not have actually met physically, they must have been aware of each other's existence. In their time there were no other comparable men in their positions, originating from such similar humble backgrounds, having as many similar interests and living such parallel lives as secretaries, diplomats and poets, as did Constantijn Huygens and Andrew Marvell.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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³² This topic has recently been researched by K. A. L. Daemen-De Gelder and J. P. Vander Motten, "Whom Should I Rely upon but the Best Able to Support Me?" *New Light on Richard Flecknoe (c.1605– c.1677) and his Patrons'*, *Lias* 39 (2009): 1–16; Ben van Beneden and Nora de Poorter (eds.), *Vorstelijke vluchtelingen: William en Margaret Cavendish in het Rubenshuis, 1648–1660* (Antwerpen: Rubenshuis/Rubensianum, 2006).

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