

2002 ‘n Heel besondere jaar ...

2002 is, vanuit die historiese perspektief ‘n heel besondere jaar. Ons is nog nie eens by die halfpadmerk nie of Afrika se eerste ruimtevaarder, Mark Shuttleworth, sorg vir ‘n grootse historiese moment.

Op ‘n meer bedeesde noot neem ons kennis dat in Mei 2002 die stoflike oorskot van Saartjie Baartman (1789-1816) weer na Suid-Afrika uit die verre Europa terug gekeer het.¹ Ons is saam met ons Khoisan landgenote dankbaar daarvoor.

2002 is ook die 400e herdenking van die totstandkoming van die *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*. Saam daarmee moet ons die 350e herdenking van die vestiging van die Kaap as verversingspos deur die VOC in herinnering bring. Vir baie Suid-Afrikaners van Europese afkoms is dit ‘n betekenisvolle tyd.

Op 31 Mei word die eerste eeu ná die einde van die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) herdenk.

Dit is vanjaar ‘n dekade ná die referendum van 1992 waartydens stemgeregtigde blanke Suid-Afrikaners laat blyk het dat hulle voorkeur aan ‘n veelrassige demokratiese bestel gee. Twee jaar later het ‘n staatkundige wonderwerk aan die suidpunt van Afrika plaasgevind.

Suid-Afrikaners het meer as genoeg rede om trots te voel op hul onlangse en verwyderde verlede.

Historia 1956-2001 nou op kompakskyf

In die afgelope jaar het *Historia* nog ‘n mylpaal bereik op die weg van elektroniese vernuwing en innovasie op die kommunikasieterrein. Die volledige tydskrif is nou vanaf die eerste uitgawe van 1956 tot aan die einde van 2001 op kompakskyf

1. Anon., “Saartjie arrives home – 188 years later” in News24.com, 2002.05.03 by <http://www.news24.com/contentDisplay/level4Article/0,1113,21176814,00.html>; Kyk ook die spesiale uitgawe ‘El Negro and the Hottentot Venus: Issues of Repatriation’ van *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 16(1), 2002.

beskikbaar. Teen die einde van die jaar sal die volledige stel tot 2002 uitgebrei word.

Die bestuur van die Historiese Genootskap van Suid-Afrika het die projek, wat bykans 'n jaar geneem het om af te handel, met 'n stewige geldelike bydrae befonds.

Vir diegene wat daarin belang stel om die ontwikkelingsgang van die twintigste eeuse Suid-Afrikaanse historiografie, veral in die Afrikaanse spraakomgewing na te spoor, is die stel kompaktskywe 'n waardevolle navorsingsdatabasis.

Meer as net historiese diskontinuiteite

Dit is gebruikelik dat politieke bewindsveranderinge in demokratiese state met 'n gewysigde historiese bewussyn in die samelewing gepaard gaan. Dit is verstaanbaar. Ten einde 'n nuwe aksent te plaas op bepaalde beleidsdoelwitte is dit die goeie reg van 'n regering om sekere gegewens in verband met die verlede op die voorgrond te plaas.

Saam met die nuwe historiese indrukke kom nuwe kulturele en geestelike artefakte wat in die sorg van kultuurbewaringsinstansies, soos museums en verwante sentra toevertrou word. Dit is 'n belangrike en noodsaaklike kulturele tradisie. Daardeer word die historiese tafereel van 'n land en sy mense verryk met die teksture van 'n magdom waardes. Dit is die taak van die museumkundige om met die grootste verantwoordelikheid hierdie erfenis vir toekomstige geslagte te bewaar.

Die gewone mens op straat het ook 'n rol in die proses te speel.

Wanneer artefakte sonder meer uit hierdie die versamelings van erfenisinstanties verdwyn,² is mens vinnig om te verklaar dat dit gepaard gaan met 'n argelose onverantwoordelikheid. Daar kan ook maklik verklaar word dat die verlede nie meer gekoester word nie.

Ongelukkig dui omstandighedsgetuienis daarop dat diefstal nie net tot tye van omskakeling en die daarstelling van doelbewuste historiese diskontinuiteite beperk

2 . C. Smith, "Ou Presidensie loop weer deur in inbraak" in *Volksblad*, 2001.01.09, p. 2; C. Smith, "'Kieskeurige' dief steel kosbare porseleinware uit Ou Presidensie: Museum sal voortaan nie meer naweke oop wees nie" in *Volksblad*, 2001.01.03, p. 2; Anon., "Mbeki se goue teestel verdwyn uit Tuynhuys" in *Die Burger*, 2002.04.10, p. 2; Anon., "Twee gevang oor Tuynhuys se vermiste goue teestel" *Die Burger*, 2002.05.03, p. 2

word nie. In die geval van die ‘ou’ Suid-Afrika, het waardevolle bates ook verlore geraak.³

Feit van die saak is dat die verdwyning van waardevolle goedere in die huidige bestel net meer prominent onder die aandag gebring word. Die openheid waarmee die media inligting oor die diefstal van nasionale erfenisgoedere deurgee, spreek boekdele.

In die laaste plek onderstreep die verdwyning van waardevolle goedere uit bewaringsplekke een realiteit: menslike hebsug, selfsug en eiebelang veroorsaak dat brose kulturele goedere, net soos die natuurlike omgewing, voortdurend aan plundering uitgelewer word.

Indien meer Suid-Afrikaners ‘n gees van menswaardigheid, medemenslikheid, selfrespek en ‘n trots op die land se erfenis koester, sal ‘n groter mate van verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van bewaring in hierdie verband posvat.

Die land, die kultuur en veral die geskiedenis in alle fasette, behoort aan ons almal. Die huidige geslag is maar net die bewaarder vir toekomstige geslagte. Ons het ‘n besondere verantwoordelikheid. Indien ons dit versaak, sal toekomstige Suid-Afrikaners ons dit nooit vergewe nie.

Samewerking Suid-Afrikaanse en Nederlandse historici

Tussen 3 en 5 April vanjaar het meer as 200 mense op Stellenbosch byeen gekom om ‘n internasionale konferensie van die Stigting VOC, gereël in samewerking met die departement geskiedenis aan die universiteit, by te woon. Die konferensie was van buitengewone kulturele betekenis – veral vir historici. Die samewerking van die Suid-Afrikaanse en Nederlandse vakgenote wat reeds in die negentigerjare sy beslag gekry het,⁴ het daartoe bygedra om die konferensie met sukses te bekroon. Verskeie historici van die groep het daaraan deelgeneem.

In hierdie uitgawe van *Historia* word bydraes van prof. Gerrit Schutte en dr. Con de Wet gepubliseer. Die artikels is op hul konferensievoordragte gebaseer. Daar is ook ‘n konferensieverslag deur dr. Martin van Meurs. Deur kragte saam te span en samewerking te soek, het Suid-Afrikaanse historici en hul kollegas uit alle wêrelddele sommer kopstukke kon praat oor ‘n bykans vergete – dog interessante – era in die Suid-Afrikaanse en wêreldgeskiedenis.

3. Anon., “Kommer oor vlaag kunsdiefstalle” in *Die Burger*, 1990.05.11, p. 11.

4. Kyk Bilaterale kongres: historici van Nederland en Suid-Afrika, Wassenaar, 6-8 Julie 2000 en die verwante artikels in *Historia* 45(2), November 2000, pp. 311- 437.

Nou op kompakskyf!

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2002 a very special year ...

2002 is, from a historical perspective, a very special one. We have hardly reached the halfway mark and already Africa's first space traveller, Mark Shuttleworth, provides a memorable historical moment.

On a more solemn note we take note that in May 2002 the remains of Saartjie Baartman (1789-1816) was returned to South Africa from the distant Europe.¹ We are, along with our fellow citizens of Khoisan descent, thankful.

2002 also marks the 400th anniversary of the founding of the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*. Simultaneously we are made aware of the 350th anniversary of the founding of the company's refreshment station at the Cape. For many South Africans of European stock it marks a significant event.

On 31 May, the first century after the conclusion of the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902), is commemorated.

It is this year one decade after the referendum of 1992 during which eligible white voters of South Africa indicated that they were in favour of a multi-racial democratic dispensation. Two years later a constitutional miracle took place at the southern tip of Africa.

South Africans have more than enough reason to feel proud of their recent and distant past.

Historia 1956-2001 now on CD

In the past year *Historia* reached yet another milestone towards realising the ideal of electronic renewal and innovation on the communications front. The complete journal is now available from the first edition in 1956 up to the end of 2001. By the end of this year the complete set will be extended up to 2002.

The management of the Historical Association of South Africa made a generous monetary contribution towards realising the project, which took almost a year to complete.

1. Anon., "Saartjie arrives home –188 years later" in News24.com, 2002.05.03 by http://www.news24.com/contentDisplay/level4Article/0,1113,2_1176814_00.html; See the special edition, 'El Negro and the Hottentot Venus: Issues of Repatriation' of *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, 16(1), 2002.

For the researcher interested in finding out more about twentieth century South African historiography, especially in the Afrikaans cultural environment, the set of CD's can be a valuable research database.

More than mere historical discontinuities

It is customary for change in political rule in democratic societies to usually coincide with an altered historical consciousness. It makes sense. In an effort to accentuate specific policy objectives it is the good right of government to place on the foreground certain matters, considered to be of priority, in respect of the past.

Along with new historical impressions come new cultural and spiritual artefacts that are placed in the custody of cultural conservation institutions, such as museums and related centres. They form part of an important and essential cultural tradition. Through these measures the historical tapestry of a country and its people is enriched with textures of important values. The museumologist has the task of safeguarding and preserving, with the greatest sense of responsibility, this heritage for future generations.

Also the person on the street has an important role to play.

When artefacts, without much ado, disappear from the collections of heritage institutions,² one is quick to declare that it goes hand in hand with irresponsible attitudes. It is also easy to state that the past is no longer cherished.

Unfortunately circumstantial evidence suggests that theft is not confined to times of transition and the concerted introduction of historical discontinuities. In the case of the 'old' South Africa, valuable heritage assets were also lost.³

Fact of the matter is that the disappearances of valuable goods in the current dispensation are only brought more openly to the attention of all and sundry. The transparent style, in which the media treats information in this field, makes an important social statement.

In the final instance, however the disappearance of valuables from places of preservation underlines one reality: human greed, selfishness and self-interest are constantly instrumental in endangering fragile cultural goods – much the same as is the case with the natural environment.

2 . C. Smith, "Ou Presidensie loop weer deur in inbraak" in *Volksblad*, 2001.01.09, p. 2; C. Smith, "'Kieskeurige' dief steel kosbare porseleinware uit Ou Presidensie: Museum sal voortaan nie meer naweke oop wees nie" in *Volksblad*, 2001.01.03, p. 2; Anon., "Mbeki se goue teestel verdwyn uit Tuynhuys" in *Die Burger*, 2002.04.10, p. 2; Anon., "Twee gevang oor Tuynhuys se vermiste goue teestel" *Die Burger*, 2002.05.03, p. 2

3 . Anon., "Kommer oor vlaag kunsdiefstalle" in *Die Burger*, 1990.05.11, p. 11.

The country, the culture and especially history in all its facets, belong to all of us. The current generation is but the custodian for future generations. We have a special responsibility. If we neglect it, future South Africans will never pardon us.

Cooperation: South African and Dutch historians

Between 3 and 5 April more than 200 people met at Stellenbosch for an international congress, organised by the VOC Foundation and the history department of the local university. The conference was of particular cultural value. It also had a special significance for historians. It was partially also the result of cooperation between South African and Dutch historians that started in the 1990s.⁴ A number of historians of the group, contributed to the success of the conference.

In this edition of *Historia* contributions of Prof. Gerrit Schutte and Dr. Con de Wet are published. The articles are based on papers they presented at the conference. There is also a conference report by Dr. Martin van Meurs. By combining forces and seeking cooperation South African historians and their colleagues from all parts of the globe were able to talk on an almost forgotten – but interesting – era in South African and world history.

4 . See bilateral congress: historians of the Netherlands and South Africa, Wassenaar, 6-8 Julie 2000 and the related articles in *Historia* 45(2), November 2000, pp. 311- 437.

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