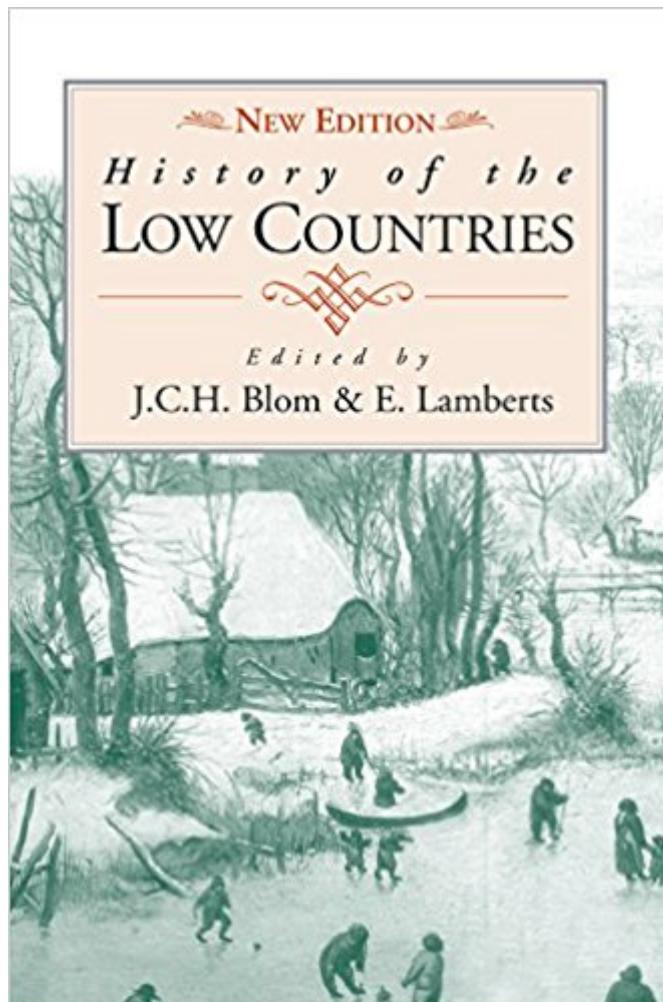


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# History Of The Low Countries



## Synopsis

The history of the smaller European countries is rather neglected in the teaching of European history at university level. We are therefore pleased to announce the publication of the first comprehensive history of the Low Countries - in English - from Roman Times to the present. Remaining politically and culturally fragmented, with its inhabitants speaking Dutch, French, Frisian, and German, the Low Countries offer a fascinating picture of European history en miniature. For historical reasons, parts of northern France and western Germany also have to be included in the "Low Countries," a term that must remain both broad and fluid, a convenient label for a region which has seldom, if ever, composed a unified whole. In earlier ages it was even more difficult to the region set parameters, again reflecting Europe as a whole, when tribes and kingdoms stretched across expanses not limited to the present states of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, its parts did demonstrate many common traits and similar developments that differentiated them from surrounding countries and lent them a distinct character. Internationally, the region often served both as a mediator for and a buffer to the surrounding great powers, France, Britain, and Germany; an important role still played today as Belgium and the Netherlands have increasingly become involved in the broader process of European integration, in which they often share the same interest and follow parallel policies. This highly illustrated volume serves as an ideal introduction to the rich history of the Low Countries for students and the generally interested reader alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

NEW EDITION AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK "This remarkable book is the first single-volume history available in English of the region from the Roman times to the present ... It successfully integrates recent scholarship [and] is well written throughout ... generously supplied with well-chosen maps, and illustrations ... it will appeal to general readers as well as scholars interested in this important region." *A History: Review of New Books* "... a welcome addition to the historical literature on Belgium and the Netherlands, for ... there is no good one-volume history of the Low Countries available ... The chapters are written by some of the foremost specialists in their fields, and provide excellent summaries of our present views of the periods in question." *A Dutch Crossing* "The editors ... should be congratulated for maintaining a very high degree of stylistic consistency ... I very much welcome an English-language translation of this important book." *A Dietrich Orlow, Boston University* "... eminently readable and ... solidly based in contemporary scholarship." *A James D. Tracy, University of Minnesota*

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Dutch --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Originating from the Northern part of the country, I recently bought this after seeing a currently popular movie about the 17th century Republic and its most famous admiral, and realizing I needed to read up on this. Translated from Dutch, the English is not perfect, in the way that it seems like a straight Dutch to English translation by the Dutch, who use a different order in their sentences, and hence give themselves away, apart from obvious grammatical mistakes. Anyway, aside from that an interesting read that is used at the University of Leiden as part of the obligatory curriculum study material for History students. The book covers approx 2,000 years of history, divided up in chapters by different authors resulting in different styles and emphases, so it's not like you read from the beginning to end, at least in my case, but dig in to the period that has your interest, in this case the start of the Republic towards the end of the 16th century. I've read thru and keep going actually, because there is so much that I either never really learned (or simply forgot). One thing that surprised me was the fact that after reading the chapter on the beginning of the Republic (the Northern 7 provinces) well into the 17th century, the next chapter would start all over with the same period, covering the Southern provinces that were left out to fend for their own. I found it hard to get thru, in part because the author seem to heavily focus on administration and taxes, and all the changes related to that, apart from the obvious religious differences with the North. All in all, I had to skip some parts to make it to the next chapter that picked up where both chapters left off. The

Southern provinces seemed to have a much more troubled existence than the North, and looking from the 21st century it is hard to really understand how these provinces could have been walked over so many times, by so many countries around it. In short, to understand the flux, when all you ever knew was stability. All in all, it keeps a good pace, regularly summarizes, and has good data and images of prominent characters, a good read and nice to have as a reference for those moments where you need to read up on periods. 4 out of 5, for the translation and the at times 'too many details that make you loose the thread' a in the above-mentioned 17th century history of the South. Would recommend it, however.

My interest in this book is based on a area of learning that I choose, even so, the book is chock full of information, easy to follow, especially for a translate, and incredibly thorough. For someone interested in this topic, find a copy and be ready for your information.

I know that the marriage of Mary of Burgundy to Maximillian of Habsburg saved the region from French confiscation after 1477. But how did her father come to be the ruler of the area that would later become Belgium and the Netherlands? And how did the Netherlands free themselves from the Spanish (the most powerful country in Europe)? All the details are in this book. The early settlements, the influence of religion, trade opportunities, tapestry manufacture, water management innovation, and international banking, and the expansionist rivalries of Spain, France, and England all combine to catapult a tiny population into a world power. I have toured Bruges, Brussels, Antwerp, and the Netherlands. The differences between Belgium and Holland are obvious and it was interesting to read why so many talented and upperclass people fled Belgium to live in the north. The Netherlands is loaded with canals and rivers and these became significant in trade, defense of the country, and caused the creation of a political structure that the U.S. copied in part. The book is excellent at showing all the simultaneous factors that influenced the outturn of events. Many history books focus on dates, battles, and rulers. Instead this book reads like a story. Winning a battle does not win the war anymore than winning the war means you get your own way. I liked the simple explanations of why the Low Countries kept realigning themselves with France, England, and even Spain when these countries wanted to defeat them. When I visited the docks at Hoorn and saw the sailing ships, I was impressed with the complexity of navigation, logistics, and financial transactions that made world trade possible. How these evolved is part of the story. I found the difference in the appearance of churches that went from Catholic to Calvinist or Anabaptist striking. The book provides easy to understand explanations of the differences between religions

and why this caused so many wars over centuries. I hope I've given you a glimpse into how fascinating the book is. You are bound to find eye-opening things for yourself.

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