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### For the Sake of the Republic: The Dutch Translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce*

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## For the Sake of the Republic: The Dutch Translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce*

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### Summary

This article addresses how and why the Dutch translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens de commerce* came about and the reasons for its lack of success. It explores the context in which the Utrecht printers and booksellers Spruit and Haanebrink in 1771 published a Dutch version of the first edition of the *Elémens*. In the preceding decades the deteriorating wealth and power of the Dutch Republic had become a major theme in the transnational debates on political economy. Recent research has established that Dutch authors contributed to this debate as well, initially by propagating neutrality of trade in combination with an attempt reform the staple market system, but increasingly by arguing the necessity of another type of economy. Inspired by foreign examples, a movement of reformative patriotism emerged, advocating a more balanced economy in which international commerce stimulated mature agricultural and industrial sectors. This type of political economy could be found in Forbonnais's *Elémens* and may have triggered its rendering into Dutch. It was the first in a series of translations instigated by Hendrik van den Heuvel, the organiser of economic patriotism in the Dutch Republic. Spruit and Haanebrink dedicated the Dutch version of the *Elémens* to him and mentioned Van den Heuvel's recommendation of the French original. The fact that the intended buyers, economic patriots, were able to read the *Elémens* in French, may have precluded a big sale of the title, but the poor quality of the translation did not help either. However, one should not conclude that the Dutch reading public was not interested in the *Elémens*. In 1780 Van den Heuvel still recommended another edition in a better translation. Other sources, such as Dirk Hoola van Nooten's Dutch version of Condillac's *Le commerce et le gouvernement considérés relativement l'un à l'autre*, suggest that Forbonnais's ideas were acknowledged.

**Keywords:** Dutch Republic; commercial decline; economic patriotism; Hendrik van den Heuvel; translations; Dirk Hoola van Nooten.

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## 1. Introduction

In 1771, the year in which the distinguished Holland Society of Sciences held an essay competition on the subject of the evolution of Dutch trade, two Utrecht printers and booksellers, Hendrik Spruit and Pieter Haanebrink, published a nice edition in octavo of the Dutch translation of François Véron de Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce*, though without mentioning the author's name. Translator Jacobus Isaac van Velthuysen, clearly with a view to topical matters, converted Forbonnais's concise title into the lengthy *Beginning, Rise, and Progress of Commerce*. His source was the first French edition of 1754. Eight years later a reissue of this translation was released in Amsterdam by Gerrit Bom, at that time a well-known publisher of Dutch literary and commercial writings.<sup>1</sup> In this article I will explain why the Forbonnais translation was published as well as the context in which it appeared. My springboard is the 'Opdragt' or 'Dedication', six pages written by Spruit and Haanebrink to the man who was to win the abovementioned essay competition, Hendrik Herman van den Heuvel (1732–1785).<sup>2</sup> The Dutch Forbonnais-moment may be intrinsically linked with his emergence as the organiser of Dutch economic patriotism and with his attempts to propagate a new political economy for the declining Dutch Republic.

## 2. Politics and Economy, 1751–1771

In order to comprehend why Spruit and Haanebrink decided to market a translation of the *Elémens du commerce*, we need to know in what way the Dutch participated in the transnational debates on political economy after 1750. Around that time the Dutch Republic's decline in international trade and politics had practically become a cliché, often used in treatises that discussed the existing and increasing political and economic rivalry between England and France. These stated that in the past the Dutch had successfully overcome the shortcomings of their territory by being, as Forbonnais asserted, 'plus jalouse qu'aucun autre état de la concurrence des étrangers' in international trade, thus exceeding the Italian city-states. However, halfway through the eighteenth century their impressive commercial empire had fallen victim to the same spirit of emulation that had created it.<sup>3</sup> Much-travelled writers like Arthur Young and Carlo Antonio Pilati observed that the apparent origins of the Dutch miracle, liberty and commerce, guaranteed neither political hegemony nor permanent economic growth. On the contrary, the Republic's success had engendered the very elements that in the end

<sup>1</sup> [François Véron de Forbonnais], *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel. Uit het fransch vertaald door Jacobus Isaac van Velthuysen*, translated by Jacobus Isaac van Velthuysen, 2 vols (Utrecht, 1771). Until now I have only found two copies of the translation in Dutch libraries; the 1771 edition is available in the Utrecht University Library, the 1779 reissue in the Royal Library in The Hague. On Gerrit Bom, see the entry in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*, edited by Philipp Christian Molhuysen and Petrus Johannes Blok, 10 vols (Leiden, 1911–1937), II, 202–03. All translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup> The Holland Society of Sciences was founded in 1752 in Haarlem and passes for the oldest Dutch learned society that until 1771 had concentrated on *inter alia* natural history, science, geometry and philosophy. For both Van den Heuvel and the context of the prize essay, see Koen Stapelbroek, 'The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay on the Restoration of Dutch Trade and the Economic Branch of the Holland Society of Sciences', in *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Koen Stapelbroek and Jani Marjanen (Basingstoke, 2012), 257–84 (261–70). The winning essay was published as Hendrik Herman Van den Heuvel, 'Antwoord op de Vraag Welk is de grond van Hollandsch Koophandel', *Verhandelingen uitgegeeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappye der Weetenschappen te Haarlem*, 16 (1775), 3–160.

<sup>3</sup> François Véron de Forbonnais, *Elémens du commerce*, 2 vols (Paris, 1754), I, 43; Sophus A. Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 39. For the function of trade rivalry in political theory, see Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 1–156.

caused its decline: conquest, dominion, luxury and corruption. In addition, increased international competition suggested that the Dutch dependency on trade was a mixed blessing and that purely commercial states were vulnerable because they were unable to control food supply.<sup>4</sup>

Facing this new political and economic reality, the Dutch opted for neutrality of trade in the international arena, initially by combining this stance with an attempt to restore the profitability of the staple market system. This latter objective formed the core of the so-called *Propositie tot een gelimiteerd porto-franco* [*Proposition for a limited free port*] of 1751, drafted by several members of Holland's commercial elite. The *Propositie* had been submitted to both the States-General and the States of Holland by William IV, prince of Orange. Backed by supporters of the Orangist party and with the English government pulling strings, William had assumed the stadholderate in all seven provinces of the Republic in the spring of 1747. At that moment the French army stood at the Dutch frontier, no longer stopped by the Republic's neutrality because the Dutch a year earlier had decided to lend 6000 auxiliary forces to George II in the War of the Austrian Succession. During his short reign (he died suddenly in 1751), William IV was expected to reverse both the miserable state of the Republic's defence and its economic decline.<sup>5</sup> Also, after the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748) he, along with the States-General, had to figure out what their best chances of surviving the new European balance of power would be. Clearly the 1748 Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had given England the upper hand over France, which France emphatically tried to turn around. For example, they tried to lure the Dutch government to their side by offering the United Provinces a renewal of the lucrative commercial treaty arranged by Cardinal Fleury in 1739. Using it as leverage in the struggle for the Austrian Netherlands, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marquis d'Argenson, had revoked the 1739 treaty at the end of December 1745. Due to the growing tension between France and England, the offer of reinstating the Dutch Republic as a favoured nation in trade became a favourite French stratagem in negotiations with the Dutch during the 1750s.

Its reappearance in the debates on Dutch political economy around the time the Forbonnais translation was published calls for a short discussion of the *Propositie*, the overall aim of which was to re-establish a flourishing commerce by reducing tariffs in several classes, thus creating a 'limited free port'. The actual plan was embedded in a *Verhandeling over den Koophandel* (*Treatise on Commerce*) that examined the origins of the Republic's commercial decline.<sup>6</sup> This text stated that natural, moral, and accidental or

<sup>4</sup> Iain McDaniel, 'Enlightened History and the Decline of Nations: Ferguson, Raynal, and the Contested Legacies of the Dutch Republic', *History of European Ideas*, 36 (2010), 203–16; Ida Nijenhuis, 'Republican Risks: Commerce and Agriculture in the Dutch Republic', in *The Republican Alternative: The Netherlands and Switzerland Compared*, edited by André Holenstein, Thomas Maissen, and Maarten Prak (Amsterdam, 2008), 259–77 (268–69). Dutch decline has been a persistent theme in historiography for the past decades. For a recent and unorthodox perspective see Koen Stapelbroek, 'Dutch Decline as a European Phenomenon', *History of European Ideas*, 36 (2010), 139–53.

<sup>5</sup> On William IV, see Herbert H. Rowen, *The Princes of Orange: The Stadholders in the Dutch Republic* (Cambridge, 1988), 163–85. On the Dutch Republic as a military power at the time of the War of the Austrian Succession, see Olaf van Nimwegen, *De Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden als grote mogendheid 1740–1748* (Amsterdam, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> *Propositie van syne hoogheid ter vergaderingen van haar hoog mogende [...] gedaan, tot redres en verbetering van den koophandel in de Republicq* (The Hague, 1751); Johannes Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751 tot instelling van een beperkt vrijhavenstelsel in de Republiek. (Propositie tot een gelimiteerd porto-franco)* (Groningen, 1966) is an exhaustive discussion of the proposition and its Dutch background; see also Stapelbroek, 'The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen. A more European perspective can be found in Koen Stapelbroek, 'Dutch Commercial Decline Revisited: The Future of

external conditions had created Dutch commercial prosperity. Their territory and location had forced the Dutch to become industrious, frugal and inventive. They had joined a polity which secured civil—and religious—liberty, property and peace. In combination with the lack of commercial activity in other countries these elements had laid the foundations for a flourishing commercial state. Prudent statecraft through what was called a mild, republican government had sustained it for a long time, but prosperity and power were no longer self-evident. To the drafters of the *Propositie*, the natural origins of Holland's wealth as well as the moral constituents of success (religious tolerance, civil liberty, security of property, equality before the law and loyalty with respect to alliances) were still operative, but at this time could not by themselves overturn the fundamental transformation of external circumstances. In the past, the Dutch had benefited from the domestic troubles of other nations and from their aloofness regarding trade. These countries now wanted to surpass them. However, by implementing the new tariff policy the Dutch would be able to successfully continue what had been their field for ages: buying, transporting and selling other nations' goods. They possessed the ships and they still had money galore, not a negligible factor, as John Law had already established. This money enabled them to buy goods at a low price and sell them either immediately, put them in bond or store them in warehouses. The *Propositie* precluded any countermeasures by jealous nations because, as it alleged, most countries were interested in the conservation of Dutch commerce, especially those nations that needed Dutch merchants and ships to retail their products.<sup>7</sup>

The focus on recovering the Republic's *entrepôt* function in Europe reflected the proposition's bias: it was a document fuelled by provincial interests, especially those of Amsterdam and Rotterdam merchants. Therefore it comes as no surprise that provinces other than Holland were less convinced of the proposed measures. Especially in Zeeland, where the agricultural sector had gained strength, the *Propositie* provoked a vehement opposition. The plan would impose a system of free ports in order to prevent further loss of trade to the commercial ambitions of other nations. As a consequence, duties on agricultural imports would be reduced and, in that way, Zeeland's grain would be pushed out of the internal market by cheaper corn from abroad. But apart from this specific provincial interest, the representatives from Zeeland also put forward that they thought the proposal had been superseded by reality, because it mistakenly supposed that the former brilliant *entrepôt* role could be recovered while European trade was dominated by other nations.<sup>8</sup> In this regard the comments from Zeeland were more compelling than those of an unknown pamphleteer who attacked the commercial bias of the *Propositie* and argued the case for domestic manufacturing, probably on behalf of the Leiden cloth producers, in his *Consideratien over het Stuk van de Manufacturen en Fabrycquen*.<sup>9</sup> According to him the Republic's commercial success had sprung from its flourishing textile industry. By

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International Trade and the 1750s Debate about a Limited Free Port', *Annali della Fondazione Feltrinelli*, 43 (2009) 193–221. See also Nijenhuis, 'Physiocracy Going Dutch', to be published in the forthcoming monograph edited by Steven Kaplan and Sophus Reinert on anti-physiocracy in eighteenth-century Europe.

<sup>7</sup> *Propositie*, 11–17, 59–61. The reference (the only one in the whole document) to John Law concerned his *Money and Trade Considered* (1705) in the 1720 French translation.

<sup>8</sup> Arno Neele, 'Between Mainstay and Internal Colony: Zeeland and the Decline of the Dutch Republic, 1750–1800', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 285–312 (290–94); Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 541–47.

<sup>9</sup> *Consideratien over het Stuk van de Manufacturen en Fabrycquen. Gemaakt ter Occasie van het Examen van de Verhandeling over den Koophandel der Vereenigde Nederlanden [...] Met eenige Remarques op dezelve* (1752). This pamphlet on manufacturing was reprinted with remarks to take the edge off its argument by Thomas

continuing to give undue preference to the import of foreign goods, domestic manufacturing would collapse. The cloth industry was already in dire straits, causing poverty in a number of towns. A manufacturer, he continued, would have suggested measures to advance industry, like the ones that had enhanced commerce in France, England and especially Prussia. The Prussian example proved without doubt that a flourishing commerce was the effect of a well-established domestic industry.<sup>10</sup>

In the end the original plan for a limited free port was not implemented, most likely because of the need to accommodate the rising opposition from manufacturers and the firm resistance from agricultural Zeeland. Too many exceptions were made regarding import duties and, in addition, stadholder William IV tried to support domestic industry by starting a campaign to wear home-produced garments, thus sending mixed messages.<sup>11</sup> His untimely death in 1751 also did not help to promote economic recovery and neither did the development of international events. The importance of the *Propositie* for the present story is that it encapsulated the vision of Holland's commercial elite on economic recovery, as it also engendered strong reactions from those defending agricultural and manufacturing interests, reactions that would reappear in a more elaborate way during the 1770s. It is important to establish that although both the *Propositie* and the responses to it showed a clear awareness of the changes in the European state of affairs, they did not reveal or interact with new or alternative thoughts on trade, industry and agriculture as materialised elsewhere, especially in France. Even though the *Propositie* was translated into English,<sup>12</sup> and despite the reference to John Law, the document did not reflect a fascination with English political economy, as was the case in France at that time. There the existing Anglo-French rivalry had encouraged a network of French administrators to introduce the 'science of commerce' into their government's policies, feeding it with alternative approaches to international relations and to the Dutch Republic in particular.

Guided and inspired by the acting *intendant* of trade, Vincent de Gournay, these officeholders were convinced that a new political economy, with a central role for trade, would be instrumental in regaining France's primacy in Europe. To spread the novel economic gospel, Gournay and his circle, with Forbonnais as one of his closest collaborators, started translating the writings of English authors on commerce.<sup>13</sup> This strategy would find its way to the Dutch Republic as well, but, as we shall see, later and outside the centres of power. Ironically it was Forbonnais, whose work on commerce was one of the first to be rendered in Dutch during the 1770s translation wave, who formulated an anti-Dutch trade policy at the time the *Propositie* was discussed. While until 1755 the French Foreign Ministry pursued the course of renewing the 1739 trade agreement in exchange for Dutch neutrality, Forbonnais argued against making both

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Isaac de Larrey, geheimraad of William IV, who was involved in the drafting of the *Propositie*; see Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 449, 493–94.

<sup>10</sup> *Consideratien over het Stuk van de Manufacturen en Fabrycquen*, edited by Thomas Isaac de Larrey, 8–10, 15. In his remarks, De Larrey ridiculed the idea that domestic industry produced commerce, since a variety of nations would not import Dutch products; *Consideratien over het Stuk van de Manufacturen en Fabrycquen*, edited by De Larrey, 25–26, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Stapelbroek, 'The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 258.

<sup>12</sup> *Proposals made by the Prince of Oranje, to [...] the States-General, and to the States of Holland [...] for Redressing and Amending the Trade of the Republick* (London, 1751).

<sup>13</sup> Loic Charles, 'French "New Politics" and the Dissemination of David Hume's *Political Discourses* on the Continent', in *David Hume's Political Economy*, edited by Margaret Schabas and Carl Wennerlind (London, 2008), 181–202 (182–84).



commercial treaties and navigation acts. According to him true patriotism meant that the Dutch (and other nations) had to be counteracted by liberty and competition, by opening up (colonial) trade to neutral countries (especially the Nordic ones), and by encouraging the French nobility to embrace commerce.<sup>14</sup>

The Dutch could access Forbonnais's views directly by reading his various writings, including the *Elémens* and also *Le négociant anglais* (1753), Forbonnais's edition of *The British Merchant* (1721) by Charles King. But his arguments were also used by others, as in 1755 when French foreign policy and translated political economy fused in the propagandist endeavours of Jacob-Nicolas Moreau (1717–1803). While working for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moreau anonymously published the *Lettres d'un François a un Hollandois*.<sup>15</sup> He tried to explain to his Dutch readers that their true interests lay in siding with the French and that the British crown was acting in violation of the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. Many Dutch merchants had complained to him about the way their so-called British friends treated their commerce. In order to prove the treacherous and harmful policies of the English government, Moreau used texts by authors from Gournay's circle: Plumard de Dangeul's *Remarques sur les avantages et les désavantages de la France et de la Grande Bretagne* (1754) and Forbonnais's *Elémens* and *Le négociant anglais*. The references to Forbonnais focused on his praise for Colbert, the wrongdoing of Cromwell's Act of Navigation, the colonial status of Ireland, and the profits Dutch trade earned from the tariff of 1699 and the Treaty of Utrecht. Forbonnais's comment that these trade agreements were not in France's interest was of course left out.<sup>16</sup>

Ultimately neither Moreau's *Lettres* nor Forbonnais's publications affected the Dutch attitude towards England and neutrality. The actual outbreak of the Seven Years War created what has been called a 'neutral rights revolution' from which the Republic's economy surely profited.<sup>17</sup> In this way the war also postponed further plans for economic recovery. Nonetheless, not long after 1766, when William V came of age and assumed the stadholderate, the debate generated by the *Propositie* which his late father had put his name to was resumed.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. Economic Patriotism and Translations

From 1771 onwards the *Propositie* functioned as a persistent frame of reference in writings regarding the state and prospects of Dutch commerce. In that year the document

<sup>14</sup> See Antonella Alimento, 'Competition, True Patriotism and Colonial Interest: Forbonnais's Vision of Neutrality and Trade', in *Trade and War: The Neutrality of Commerce in the Inter-State System*, edited by Koen Stapelbroek (Helsinki, 2011), 61–94.

<sup>15</sup> [Jacob-Nicolas Moreau], *Lettres d'un François à un Hollandois au sujet des différends survenus entre la France et la Grande Bretagne, touchant leurs possessions respectives dans l'Amerique Septentrionale* (Paris, 1755). A year later, this was reissued as [Jacob-Nicolas Moreau], *Considerations sur les différends des couronnes de la Grande-Bretagne et de France touchant l'Acadie et autres parts de l'Amerique Septentrionale. Le tout fondé sur les memoires des commissaires des deux puissances et publiés tout nouvellement et redigé en quatre lettres écrites par un François à un Hollandois* (Francfort et La Haye, 1756). On Moreau and his 'ideological arsenal' and economic ideas, see Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1990), 59–85; Dieter Gembicki, *Histoire et politique à la fin de l'Ancien Régime: Jacob-Nicolas Moreau (1717–1803)* (Paris, 1979), 195–209.

<sup>16</sup> [Moreau], *Lettres d'un François à un Hollandois*, 15, 18, 26–27, 42–43, 48–49, 52, 65–66, 75.

<sup>17</sup> Koen Stapelbroek, 'The Dutch Debate on Commercial Neutrality (1713–1830)', in *Trade and War*, edited by Stapelbroek, 114–42 (123); Alice C. Carter, *The Dutch Republic in Europe in the Seven Years War* (London, 1971), 129–52.

<sup>18</sup> Stapelbroek, 'The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 270, suggests that the new stadholder triggered the memory of the reform plans associated with his father.



was reprinted with some critical annotations in *De Koopman*, a periodical devoted to trade and finance.<sup>19</sup> Also in 1771, the proposition's analytical scope regarding the conditions that had determined the evolution of Holland's trade was copied into the aforementioned essay competition of the Holland Society of Sciences, which was won by Hendrik van den Heuvel. These events, and the publication of the Dutch *Elémens* by Spruit and Haanebrink in that same year, were all linked by economic patriotism. Though this movement showed specific Dutch features, economic patriotism was a transnational phenomenon with several shared characteristics. In many European countries economic patriots organised themselves in societies and discussed reform plans that aimed at creating constant national wealth in a balanced national economy, with a pivotal role for agriculture and industry. Making political economic texts from abroad available by translation, thereby allowing the absorption and emulation of the achievements of other nations, was essential to the reformist movement.<sup>20</sup> Economic patriotism could also operate outside learned societies and even within the corridors of power, as the example of Gournay and his collaborators showed. As a consequence Forbonnais's *Elémens du commerce* may be seen as the expression of this reformative patriotism, propagating an economy in which mature agricultural and industrial sectors were activated by international commerce. These particular aspects of the book may have triggered its translation into Dutch.

Van den Heuvel, instrumental in bringing about this translation, was also central to the emerging movement of Dutch economic patriots in the 1770s. In his winning treatise on the evolution of the Republic's commerce and the means to combat its decline, he had argued the case for national recovery by integrating trade, industry and agriculture in a more balanced economy, a course of action reminiscent of Forbonnais. In addition, following the English example, he recommended the establishment of a countrywide society that should focus on the economy's improvement. This institution materialised in 1777 as the 'Oeconomische Tak' or Economic Branch of the Holland Society of Sciences, followed by the quick establishment of local departments throughout the country.<sup>21</sup> The participating economic patriots wanted to bring back past brilliance but, contrary to the drafters of the 1751 *Propositie*, they were convinced that this should be realised by ending the long-term protection of the *entrepôt* character of Dutch commerce. To Van den Heuvel *cum sociis* it was beyond doubt that the Dutch had lost their temporary supremacy in commerce as a result of stiff international competition, and holding on to the staple market system would certainly not turn the tide. More was expected from entering into

<sup>19</sup> *De Koopman, of Weekelyksche By-dragen ten Opbouw van Neerlands Koophandel en Zeevaard* appeared between 1768 and 1776 and was published by Gerrit Bom, who would reissue the Dutch version of Forbonnais *Elémens* in 1779. The *Propositie* was reprinted with annotations in *De Koopman*, 3 (1771), 257–80. For more examples of the after-effects of the *Propositie*, see Hovy, *Het voorstel van 1751*, 633–40; Ida Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse filosoof: Isaac de Pinto (1717–1787) en de ontwikkeling van de politieke economie in de Europese Verlichting* (Amsterdam, 1992), 104, 112–116. Though often cited in Dutch historiography, *De Koopman* still deserves a profound analysis from the perspective of political economy. However, content and authorship are discussed in Hajo Brugmans, 'De Koopman. Mercurius als spectator', *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum*, 10 (1912), 61–135; Ton Jongenelen, 'Mordechai. Illusie en werkelijkheid in het spectatoriale blad *De Koopman*', *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman*, 26 (2003), 94–108.

<sup>20</sup> Koen Stapelbroek and Jani Marjanen, 'Political Economy, Patriotism and the Rise of Societies', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 1–25; Reinert, *Translating Empire*, 22, 36.

<sup>21</sup> In almost every province local divisions were established (in total 57) and by 1779 more than 3000 citizens had joined one of them; see Johan Bierens de Haan, *Van Oeconomische Tak tot Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel 1777–1952* (Haarlem, 1952) 10, 195; Neele, 'Between Mainstay and Internal Colony', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 296.

trade alliances with other nations and therefore, contrary to Forbonnais's 'true patriotism', Dutch economic patriots like Van den Heuvel and Cornelis Zillesen argued the necessity of a renewal of the 1739 commercial treaty with France. According to Van den Heuvel the trade benefits for the Dutch would also help France (and Spain and Portugal as well) to hold the rising powers in the north at bay. Furthermore, he agreed with those French writers who rejected the idea of becoming more independent from the Dutch by constructing their own merchant fleet.<sup>22</sup>

But besides the firm encouragement of agriculture and protection for home industry, as well as entering into profitable commercial treaties, a revolution in ethics was called for as well. The authors of the 1751 *Propositie* still had been satisfied with moral standards in trade, but two decades later economic patriots and other concerned citizens loudly voiced their doubts about this. According to them, the prudent merchants of the past had degenerated into a bunch of idle, opulent *rentiers* who were too busy financing foreign goods with money invested in foreign funds to care about the harmful effects this had on the commonwealth. Apart from this unpatriotic behaviour they and many others spent too much on luxury goods. Luxury was a vice that caused depopulation (because people tended to postpone marriage), trade deficits and bankruptcy. It could only be lucrative in a commercial republic if those luxury goods were actually produced in the country in which they were consumed. All in all, economic patriots recommended a double-edged policy of economic and moral improvement: wasteland had to be transformed into farmland, husbandry had to be improved and domestic industries had to be better protected, not only by restricting imports, but also by patriotic consumption. Wearing home-manufactured clothes thus was encouraged and heartening 'economic songs' were composed.<sup>23</sup> In order to gain momentum, Van den Heuvel and his followers even copied the tactic followed by the drafters of the *Propositie* by winning stadholder William V for the Economic Branch and their homespun clothes-project. Also, they often dedicated their publications to him.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Van den Heuvel, 'Antwoord op de Vraag Welk is de grond van Hollandsch Koophandel', 117–20. Van den Heuvel did not mention Gournay and Silhouette, the promoters of a French merchant navy, or Forbonnais, who was against this strategy; see Alimento, 'Competition, True Patriotism and Colonial Interest', in *Trade and War*, edited by Stapelbroek, 69; Stapelbroek, 'The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 276. Cornelis Zillesen won the silver medal in the 1771 essay competition and referred several times to the negative effects of the retraction of the 1739 commercial treaty; see Cornelis Zillesen, 'Antwoord op de Vraag Welk is de grond van Hollandsch Koophandel', *Verhandelingen uitgegeeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappye der Weetenschappen te Haarlem* 16 (1775), 307–548 (477–79, 488). Zillesen also won a silver medal in an essay competition held by the Zeeland Society of Sciences in 1778. In this essay he referred to chapters 8 and 9 (on exchange and circulation) of the Dutch translation of Forbonnais's *Elémens* as a work dealing judiciously with the matters of currency and exchange; see Cornelis Zillesen, 'Antwoord op de Vraag betreffende het Munt-Wezen', in *Verhandelingen uitgegeeven door het Zeeuwisch Genootschap der Wetenschappen te Vlissingen* (Middelburg, 1782), 3–22 (13). This reference by Zillesen to the Spruit and Haanebrink volume led the nineteenth-century German economist Etienne Laspeyres to record the Dutch title of the *Elémens* in his bibliography (502) with the telling remark 'mir unbekannt [unknown to me]'; see Etienne Laspeyres, *Geschichte der Volkswirtschaftlichen Anschauungen der Niederländer und ihrer Litteratur zur Zeit der Republik* (Leipzig, 1863), 320.

<sup>23</sup> See for example *De Koopman*, 3 (1771), 263, where the editor laments the loss of the mercantile morals in a note to the reprinted *Propositie*. See also the remarks made by Van den Heuvel, Zillesen and Adriaan Rogge, the third medal winner in the Haarlem essay competition, in their 'Antwoord op de Vraag Welk is de Grond van Hollandsch Koophandel', 35–37, 78, 92, 106–09 (Van den Heuvel); 203, 212–20 (Rogge); 416–19 (Zillesen). Compare Nijenhuis, *Een Joodse filosofe*, 104–12. *De Staatsman*, 1 (1779), 80 fulminates against foreign investments. The *Economische Liedjes*, edited by Elisabeth Bekker-Wolff and Aagje Deken (first published in 1781), became very popular, going through several reprints. These simple 'economic songs' were meant to hearten the working class by telling them that they were real patriots when they worked hard.

<sup>24</sup> Just to mention one example: Van den Heuvel dedicated the Dutch edition of Campomanes's *Discurso sobre el fomento de la industria popular* to William V.

The patriotic efforts by Van den Heuvel and the Economic Branch were permeated with international examples and ideas. Apart from the well-known works of Montesquieu and Hume, the icons of the paradigms of *doux commerce* and ‘jealousy of trade’, now the Dutch explored a whole range of studies on political economy from abroad. Van den Heuvel more than once stressed the importance for future office-holders to be well read in political economy and, in his winning essay on the conditions of Dutch trade, he had also propagated the appointment of professors who should lecture on this subject in Dutch and in the public forum.<sup>25</sup> Making foreign political economy available by translation fits into this picture of patriotic endeavour to amass information in order to reform the economy.<sup>26</sup>

In 1780 Van den Heuvel published a treatise on the necessity to support Dutch industry, which was published alongside the Dutch edition of a book on the same theme, Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes’s *Discurso sobre el fomento de la industria popular* (1774). In one of the footnotes to his own essay, he commended—apart from Campomanes, of course—a number of useful works by foreign authors. Van den Heuvel mentioned the following titles (his sequence): Forbonnais’s *Elémens* (1754), Baron de Bielfeld’s *Institutions politiques* (1760–1772), Isaac Iselin’s *Traüme eines Menschenfreundes* (1776), Accarias de Serionne’s *Richesse de la Hollande* (1778), Melon’s *Essay on commerce* (1734), Verri’s *Meditazioni sulla economia politica* (1771), ‘the political works’ by Hume, Bolingbroke and Adam Anderson, and ‘above all’ Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* (1776).<sup>27</sup> Now the educated eighteenth-century Dutch in general were accustomed to reading French and German, so except for Campomanes’s *Discurso*, all these titles were accessible to them in either a French or German edition. Even so, between 1735 and 1801, Forbonnais, Iselin, Accarias de Serionne, Melon, Verri, Hume, Bolingbroke, Montesquieu and Smith appeared (in some cases partly) in Dutch editions.

On the whole the Dutch were not prolific translators. On the basis of the Kress Catalogue, Sophus Reinert discovered that between 1500 and 1849 less than 200 works on political economy were translated by the Dutch, and no more than 45 titles were translated from the Dutch—an odd balance for a nation that once dominated the European economy.<sup>28</sup> Reinert’s data show a positive peak of translations into Dutch around the time Van den Heuvel’s Economic Branch and economic patriotism became hot. Therefore it seems justified to interpret these translations as belonging to the patriotic attempts to regenerate the Dutch Republic and especially its economy. As Van den Heuvel’s reading list from 1780 shows, French political economists writing on commerce and connected to Gournay, like his influential precursor Melon and his collaborator Forbonnais, were still considered to be most instructive. The works of the more contemporary and renowned *Economistes*, though, were not mentioned at all, Iselin’s *Traüme* being the only physiocratic text on the reading list to be translated into Dutch. This seems indicative of the lack of interest in physiocracy, notwithstanding the growing importance of the agricultural sector in the Dutch quest for recovery.<sup>29</sup> The engagement of Dutch economic patriots with international political economy expressed itself in the translation of books

<sup>25</sup> Van den Heuvel, ‘Antwoord op de Vraag Welk is de grond van Hollandsch Koophandel’, 73–74. See also Nijenhuis, *Een joodse filosofie*, 112–14.

<sup>26</sup> Reinert, *Translating Empire*, 22, 36.

<sup>27</sup> Hendrik Herman van den Heuvel, *Verhandeling over de noodzakelijkheid van het ondersteunen der gemeene industrie met betrekking tot ons vaderland* (Utrecht, 1780), 10. These authors he qualified as belonging to the ‘newer’ crop of political economists; the also commendable Huet, Child and De la Court were characterised as ‘older’.

<sup>28</sup> Reinert, *Translating Empire*, 56–57.

<sup>29</sup> But see Nijenhuis, ‘Physiocracy Going Dutch’.

that had been recommended by Van den Heuvel. The *Elémens du commerce* was the first result of this commitment.

#### 4. Forbonnais in Dutch

Already in his prizewinning essay of 1771 Van den Heuvel had demonstrated his affinity with Forbonnais's ideas, especially those concerned with the import of inexpensive corn and the need for the money that thus entered the Netherlands to circulate.<sup>30</sup> Forbonnais's *Elémens* in its original version was well known by then, as may be deduced from the manner in which the book was cited.<sup>31</sup> We are ignorant of the reasons why Spruit and Haanebrink went into business with Van Velthuysen for a Dutch version of the *Elémens*. The translator still remains a rather mysterious figure. He was raised in Leiden and enrolled as a student there at the age of 18. Perhaps he had already died before the 1779 reissue appeared.<sup>32</sup> Little is known as well about the two Utrecht printers and booksellers. Between 1739 and 1785 Spruit was associated with 242 publications, for the most part in Dutch, of which a substantial number dealt with current affairs.<sup>33</sup> From a French catalogue of books Spruit published in 1757 we know that he also sold a lot of titles from France, most of them in the field of fiction and religion. Still, a few of them suggest Spruit was acquainted with what went on in French political economy. He listed for example *Le Reformateur* (1756) by Simon Clicquot de Blervache and *La noblesse militaire et commerçante; en réponse aux objections faites par l'auteur de la noblesse militaire* (1756). Both titles can be associated with the debates on the reform of French commerce and agriculture opened in the early 1750s by Gournay and his circle.<sup>34</sup> Spruit's associate Haanebrink printed and/or sold only 22 titles between 1759 and 1774, all in Dutch and quite a few of them dealing with contemporary political scandals. He was one of the few Utrecht Roman Catholics who became active in the revolutionary patriot militia during the 1780s.<sup>35</sup> Though far from explaining precisely why they decided on marketing translation of the *Elémens*, these few and disparate facts suggest that Spruit and Haanebrink sensed what occupied the minds of many Dutchmen in the second half of the eighteenth century. The reading public's concern with the deteriorating political and

<sup>30</sup> Stapelbroek, 'The Haarlem 1771 Prize Essay', in *Rise of Economic Societies*, edited by Stapelbroek and Marjanen, 275.

<sup>31</sup> For instance in *De Koopman*, 2 (1770), 43, where in a footnote the *Elémens* is cited as generally known, with beautiful parts on the policies of Louis XIV, Colbert and Law. There is also an implicit acknowledgement of the *Elémens* in the introduction to the Dutch edition of Condillac's *Le commerce et le gouvernement considérés relativement l'un à l'autre* (see below).

<sup>32</sup> *Album studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV–MDCCCLXXV* (Den Haag, 1875), 917. No further facts about his life have come to light to date. However, there is a poem he contributed to the album amicorum of Egbert Philip van Visvliet, a Middelburg physician who studied in Leiden as well, but at a later time; see Wim van Drimmelen, Lysbeth Croiset van Uchelen-Brouwer, Paulus van den Brink, and Johannes van Mourik, *Honderd hoogtepunten uit de Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (The Hague, 1995).

<sup>33</sup> However, he was not the only printer-bookseller in the Dutch Republic offering these titles; see the online *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands* (STCN), <http://www.kb.nl/en/expertise/for-libraries/short-title-catalogue-netherlands> (accessed 10 October 2014).

<sup>34</sup> *Catalogue des livres nouveaux qui se trouvent à Utrecht chez H. Spruyt* (Utrecht, 1757). Though Spruit attributed *La noblesse militaire et commerçante* to Gabriel François (l'abbé) Coyer, the book was actually written by one of Coyer's followers, the abbé De Pezerols, and more usually published as *Le Conciliateur, ou La noblesse militaire et commerçante; en réponse aux objections faites par l'auteur de la noblesse militaire*. On Clicquot de Blervache, Gournay and Coyer, see for instance John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY, 2007), 49–65.

<sup>35</sup> For the titles, see the STCN. Haanebrink is mentioned as a Roman Catholic bookseller and patriot in Peet Theeuwen, *Pieter 't Hoen en de Post van den Neder-Rhijn* (Hilversum, 2002), 409–11.

economic significance of their country must have played an important role in building up their lists—but, compared to the rest of their titles, Forbonnais's book was of an exceptionally high intellectual level. Its systematic and conceptual treatment of commerce made it stand out. Perhaps the Utrecht printers were motivated by the *Elémens*' similarities in subject matter and composition with Hume's *Political Discourses*. Already well known in the Dutch Republic in the French edition by Eleazar Mauvillon, Hume's book had been published in a Dutch version in 1764.<sup>36</sup>

More information on why a Dutch version of the *Elémens* was published can be gathered from the 'Opdragt', the dedication of the translation to Van den Heuvel. Spruit and Haanebrink allude to Van den Heuvel's work as a registrar of the Provincial Court of Justice in Utrecht and praise the lawyer's attempts to cut down bureaucracy in legal proceedings. They go on to observe that Van den Heuvel served the public not only in this official capacity, but also by studying and contemplating books in his spare time. In his 'boek oefeningen' or studies, they observe, Van den Heuvel aimed for 'true politics, the art of rendering a people content'.<sup>37</sup> The publishers (or at least one of them) seem to have been in regular contact with Van den Heuvel, because they cite from conversations in which he more than once had deplored the lack of comprehensive books on commerce in the Dutch language.<sup>38</sup> In every country, he complained to Spruit or Haanebrink, commerce had been the subject of books written in the vernacular language. In these works its principles had been dealt with in a systematic way, thus discerning between harmful trade that only enriched the individual merchant, and the profitable form that actually made a nation and all its citizens affluent. Of all countries, one would have expected the Dutch Republic, dependent on trade and industry to earn the money with which to buy the necessities of life for its inhabitants, to have generated a number of Dutch publications on commerce. This not being the case, Van den Heuvel recommended providing a Dutch version of what he called 'het Meesterstuk' or the masterpiece in this genre, the *Elémens du commerce*, because of its concise, clear, and true way of reasoning. It was Forbonnais's combination of productive trade with industry that was essential to economic patriots, the presumed buyers of this translation. According to Spruit and Haanebrink, the knowledge that Van den Heuvel had selected this specific book among so many other available works on commerce would work as an important commendation to their fellow citizens.<sup>39</sup> The publishers then apologised for the imperfections of the

<sup>36</sup> For the parallel structure of the *Elémens* and Hume's *Political Discourses*, see Charles, 'French "New Politics"', in *Hume's Political Economy*, edited by Schabas and Wennerlind, 187, 199 (note 24); Alimento, 'Competition, True Patriotism and Colonial Interest', in *Trade and War*, edited by Stapelbroek, 84. Hume's discourses appeared in 1764 (Amsterdam, bookseller Van Tongerlo) and 1766 (Rotterdam, booksellers A. Bothall, D. Vis and P. Holsteyn) as *Wysgeerige en staatkundige verhandelingen*, translated from the English original.

<sup>37</sup> Van den Heuvel, 'Antwoord op de Vraag Welk is de grond van Hollandsch Koophandel', 72; Van den Heuvel, *Verhandeling over de noodzakelijkheid van het ondersteunen der gemeene industrie*, 3. This phrase was used by Van den Heuvel in his winning essay on commerce as well as in his treatise on industry and is perhaps derived from the definition of 'Staatkunde [politics]' in the influential Jakob Friedrich von Bielfeld, *Institutions politiques*, 3 vols (The Hague, 1760–1772), a title on Van den Heuvel's reading list. Bielfeld's book is reviewed in *Boekzaal der Geleerde Wereld*, 89 (1759), 769–86, and his definition of 'Staatkunde' is quoted there on page 778.

<sup>38</sup> See Hendrik Spruit and Pieter Haanebrink, 'Opdragt', in [Forbonnais], *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel*, I, [i–ii; my pagination], where it also says that Van den Heuvel had uttered his regrets 'more than once to one of us'. The 1771 and 1779 copies have the same pagination; however, the dedication is not paginated.

<sup>39</sup> Spruit and Haanebrink, 'Opdragt', in [Forbonnais], *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel*, I, [iii–v]. Again the author of the *Elémens* is not mentioned. It is interesting to note that Van den Heuvel did not think



translation; according to them, many of the words and expressions the author had used in order to convey his meaning in the most apposite way could not be adequately rendered into Dutch. In addition, the fact that there were few examples of books on commerce in Dutch did not help to make the process of translation easy.<sup>40</sup> It is a pity the publishers did not provide a few examples, but—as we shall see—it is clear that Van Velthuysen's fight with Forbonnais's text was not an easy one.

Apart from the 'Opdragt', the Dutch version of the *Elémens* appeared without a paratextual apparatus. The book was translated in full, but lacked an extra introduction, substantive annotation and appendices from which we might be able to deduce the publishers' position on, for instance, Forbonnais's thoughts on competition or his support of regulation and storehouses regarding corn trade and grain supply. But perhaps the translation was just meant to sell to a new audience, like the Mauvillon edition of Hume's *Political Discourses*.<sup>41</sup> This might suggest that the book was put on the market mainly for commercial purposes, with the dedication to Van den Heuvel intended as a selling point.<sup>42</sup> Though hard evidence in the form of print numbers and sales figures is absent, we may infer from the lack of copies of the translation in the major Dutch libraries that the first edition, notwithstanding Van den Heuvel's recommendation and despite the well-chosen title, had difficulties selling.<sup>43</sup> Additional evidence for a lack of purchasers is provided when we cast a glance at the 1779 reissue by Gerrit Bom. In an announcement in the *Boekzaal der Geleerde Wereld*, a well-known learned Dutch journal at the time, the Amsterdam publisher stated that he had become the owner of the manuscript and of the remaining copies of the first print run of the Forbonnais translation.<sup>44</sup> Mentioning the dedication to Van den Heuvel, Bom sold his edition in the identical typesetting and pagination of the original two volumes, with a title page from which only the names of the translator and the original printers had been removed. Instead of its 1771 price of 2 guilders, the title now sold at 1 guilder and 4 pennies.<sup>45</sup>

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the Dutch translation of Hume's *Political Discourses* would fill the gap, though it is of course tricky to take the word of Spruit and Haanebrink on this as evidence.

<sup>40</sup> Spruit and Haanebrink, 'Opdragt', in [Forbonnais], *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel*, 'Opdragt', I, [v–vi].

<sup>41</sup> Compare Reinert, *Translating Empire*, 37. Unfortunately there is not much evidence available on the commercial side of the production of translations in the Dutch Republic. For the lack of para-textual information in the Mauvillon edition of Hume's *Political Discourses*, see Charles, 'French "New Politics"', in *Hume's Political Economy*, edited by Schabas and Wennerlind, 194. Van Velthuysen entered only two short footnotes of his own. One deals with the incorrect translation by Forbonnais of the English chalky lands with clay lands, another with the proportion between a *gros* and a *grain*; see [Forbonnais], *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel*, I, 155; II, 38.

<sup>42</sup> The dedication to Van den Heuvel was copied in 1780 in the Dutch translation of Isaak Iselin's *Traume eines Menschenfreundes* (1776) by Hendrik Riemsnijder, calling him a 'true patriot' and 'friend of the people'. Another parallel is the translator's remark that Van den Heuvel's approval of the contents of Iselin's book had induced him to take on the translation; see the non-paginated preface in Isaak Iselin, *Droomen van eenen menschen-vriend. Uit het Hoogduitsche van den heere Isaak Iselin [...] Met aanmerkingen voorzien*, translated by Hendrik Riemsnijder (The Hague, 1780). See also Nijenhuis, 'Physiocracy Going Dutch'.

<sup>43</sup> The French original, though, is also badly represented in library collections. One copy of the second edition of 1754, two of the 1755 corrected edition and again one of the new 1766 edition. A study of auction catalogues of private libraries might provide more information on the reception of both the original and translated versions of the *Elémens*.

<sup>44</sup> The announcement by Bom in the August instalment of *Boekzaal der Geleerde Wereld*, 129 (1779), 217. The *Boekzaal* frequently reviewed or summarised new translated books, also a few on economic subjects, but not the Forbonnais translation.

<sup>45</sup> For Bom and other Dutch printers this was not an unusual practice; compare Charles, 'French "New Politics"', in *Hume's Political Economy*, edited by Schabas and Wennerlind, 194, for an analogous procedure with Mauvillon's edition of David Hume's *Political Discourses*.

From this course of events we may conclude that the publishers' target group, Spruit and Haanebrink's 'fellow-citizens', were not enticed by the translation. In this respect they were backed up by the very man to whom the Utrecht printers had dedicated their publication. When Van den Heuvel referred to Forbonnais's *Elémens* in his 1780 treatise on the necessity to support Dutch industry, he remarked that the quality of the Dutch version was rather poor and dearly needed to be improved on, were it to be republished.<sup>46</sup> The fact that the translation was wooden in style suggests indeed that Van Velthuysen did not fully grasp the content or had trouble finding a correct equivalent. Forbonnais's 'industrie', for instance, is rendered into the Dutch 'schrandeheid' or 'vernunft' or 'naarstigheid', of which the first two are more related to 'cleverness' than to a form of manufacturing activity. However, Van Velthuysen was not the only one who had trouble in translating 'industry'. Both the translator of Hume's *Political Discourses* and the one who produced a Dutch version of Isaac de Pinto's *Essai sur le Luxe* (1762) discussed the problems they had with finding a corresponding term in Dutch.<sup>47</sup>

The linguistic barrier may explain why *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel* did not sell, but it would be wrong to conclude that the Dutch reading public was not interested in Forbonnais's *Elémens*. Besides Van den Heuvel there were other writers associated with economic patriotism who used Forbonnais's ideas, although not his name. This is demonstrated by a short discussion of another, yet definitely more sophisticated translation, the Dutch edition in 1782 of *Le commerce et le gouvernement considérés relativement l'un à l'autre* (1776), the last work by Etienne Bonnot, abbé de Condillac. Though not on Van den Heuvel's list of 'must reads', the connection of this title with economic patriotism is obvious. Furthermore, there are similarities between the founder of the Economic Branch and the editor of the Dutch Condillac, Dirk Hoola van Nooten (1747–1808). He made a political career for himself in the town of Schoonhoven, which he combined with preparing his translations and with an active participation in learned societies. Both the Provincial Utrecht Society for the Arts and Sciences, to which he was elected in 1776, and the local department of the Economic Branch, which he helped found in 1778, took advantage of his membership. By 1782, when Van Nooten published his version of Condillac's book, he was an experienced translator from the French. He later published Dutch annotated versions of Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des loix* (1783–1786) and Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (book I, 1; 1796).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Van den Heuvel, *Verhandeling over de noodzakelijkheid van het ondersteunen der gemeene industrie*, 10. Note that he made this remark after the reissue of the 1771 edition was published in 1779.

<sup>47</sup> For some examples of Van Velthuysen's translation of 'industrie' in the first chapter on commerce, see [Forbonnais], *Begin, opkomst, en voortgang van den koophandel*, I, 2, 10 ('vernunft'); 8, 14, 38 ('schrandeheid'); 9 ('naarstigheid', meaning 'diligence', which is closer to the point). The translator of Hume used 'kloekheid' and commented in a footnote that he could not find a better word to express the meaning of 'industry' because this seemed to comprise diligence, discretion and profit seeking all in one; see David Hume, *Wysgeerige en staatkundige verhandelingen* (1766), 16 (note). The translator of De Pinto's *Essay*, however, used the word 'nijverheid', which nowadays expresses 'industry'; see Lina Weber, *Die Niederlande und die schottische Aufklärung. Die Übersetzung von David Hume's Political Discourses für die Republik* (Heidelberg University, MA thesis, 2011), 41.

<sup>48</sup> Etienne Bonnot, abbé de Condillac, *De koophandel en het staatsbestuur beschouwd in hunnen onderlinge betrekkingen*, translated by Hoola van Nooten (Utrecht, 1782). Before this translation of Condillac, Hoola van Nooten had already published a Dutch edition of Charles Bonnet's *Recherches philosophiques sur les preuves du Christianisme* in 1771. Like Van den Heuvel, Hoola van Nooten deserves to be studied; a first attempt is Karel Davids, 'Tussen Smith en Schoonhoven. De verloren wereld van Dirk Hoola van Nooten (1747–1808)', in *Levenslopen in transformatie: liber amicorum bij het afscheid van prof. dr. Paul M.M. Klep*, edited by Theo Engelen, Onno Boonstra, and Angélique Janssens (Nijmegen, 2011), 222–32.



In his lengthy introduction, Hoola van Nooten explained his urge to translate Condillac in an idiom that is imbued with economic patriotism. The predicament in which Dutch commerce found itself, as well as the need for more and adequate academic training in economic matters, had made him take on the translation, which, one might say, thereby became an act of patriotism itself. Van den Heuvel received due praise, though the translation was not dedicated to him but to the ‘vaderland [fatherland]’. He was referred to as the inspiring author of the prizewinning treatise on Dutch commerce and as a writer whose understanding of commercial interests was equal to that of Colbert and Campomanes, both in their different ways champions of industry.<sup>49</sup> To Hoola van Nooten it was clear that industry and commerce both needed encouragement and protection from the ‘regeering [government]’ now that international competition dominated Europe’s economy. In order to contextualise both the present condition of Dutch commerce and Condillac’s analysis, he continued his preface with a concise history of commerce, especially, as he stated, for those readers who lacked the time to go into the historical sources of commerce themselves. To this end he used parts of Forbonnais’s text on commerce, either from the *Encyclopédie* or from the first chapter of the *Elémens*, ‘Du commerce en général’. In this recycling of Forbonnais he concentrated on the section that told the story of Dutch commerce, pinpointing its highlights and the effects of French and English competition. Van den Heuvel reworked the well-known passage from the first chapter of *Elémens* in which Forbonnais outlined how France, England and Holland competed in general commerce, and ended with the abovementioned prospect of the restoration of the Republic’s former dominance in manufacturing and commerce.<sup>50</sup>

With this background the students of commerce were expected to grasp Condillac’s theoretical exposition of value based on needs.<sup>51</sup> These were completely acceptable, but Condillac’s remarks in chapter 21 on the negative effects of protection, leading to monopoly, provoked a lengthy note from Hoola van Nooten.<sup>52</sup> Of course, he observed, the learned Frenchman might be right when talking about the harmful consequences of protective measures taken by the governments of France and England, because the wealth of these nations resulted from the produce of their territory. However, at this point Condillac should have made an exception for atypical nations like the Dutch (as he had done in chapter 28) that were unable to produce sufficient wealth from their own, poor territory. Certainly, by using their fortunate location and their ingenuity, the Dutch had become rich through commerce. But in an economy lacking immediate connections between agriculture and industry, enduring commerce-based wealth could only be realised by transforming imported raw materials into export goods. In upholding this type of commerce the Dutch had to protect their manufacturing and tax foreign imports, because

<sup>49</sup> Van Nooten, ‘Voorreeden van den Vertaaler’, in Condillac, *De koophandel en het staatsbestuur*, iii–lxii (v, lx). See also Van Nooten, in Condillac, *De koophandel en het staatsbestuur*, 189 (note).

<sup>50</sup> Compare Forbonnais, *Elémens du commerce*, I, 42–43; Van Nooten, ‘Voorreeden van den Vertaaler’, in Condillac, *De koophandel en het staatsbestuur*, v–vii, lviii–lix. The ‘short history of commerce’ starts on viii and ends on lx; Van Nooten did not mention his source. The famous passage on France, England and Holland disputing general commerce, this time with a reference to Forbonnais, was also quoted in the literary journal *Nieuwe Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*, 2 (1769), 118–19, when reviewing *Koopmans Verlostiging, of Volledige Beschryving van den Koophandel en Zeevaart* (Amsterdam, 1768), the Dutch translation of the first part of Johann Karl May’s *Versuch einer allgemeinen Einleitung in die Handlungs-Wissenschaft theoretisch und praktisch abgehandelt* (Altona, 1764).

<sup>51</sup> On Condillac’s position, see Terence Hutchison, *Before Adam Smith: The Emergence of Political Economy 1662–1776* (Oxford, 1988), 327; Keith Tribe, *Governing Economy: The Reformation of German Economic Discourse 1750–1840* (Cambridge, 1988), 119.

<sup>52</sup> Condillac, *De koophandel en het staatsbestuur*, 187–89.

otherwise they were unable to compete. Indeed, by doing so, they compensated the Dutch manufacturers for having extra costs for the raw materials, and in this way created a balance between foreign and home-made products.

The example of the Condillac translation shows that the plea for an integrated, balanced economy, found in Forbonnais's *Elémens* and his other writings, in 1782 was still firmly established in Dutch economic patriotism. Other instances of the rejection of complete economic freedom are available, mostly based on the premise that the Dutch dependence on imports of necessities and raw materials argued against such total freedom. According to the economic patriots the right to acquire one's provisions at the lowest price did not surpass the right to favour fellow citizens by buying from them. Indeed, it was their duty to do so, as the translator of *Traüme eines Menschenfreundes* remonstrated against Iselin's condemnation of both the forced processing of domestic raw materials and the compulsory consumption of home-made products. This interventionist moral economy was a far cry from Forbonnais's more subtle maxim 'liberté et concurrence', which implied freedom from monopolies and competition, as a national strategy that would render it independent from Dutch shipping.<sup>53</sup> However, the fact that the economic patriotic translations started with the *Elémens* shows that Van den Heuvel *cum sociis* appreciated its purpose and did not hold the anti-Dutch component in Forbonnais's views against him.

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<sup>53</sup> Hendrik Riemsnijder, in Iselin, *Droomen van eenen menschen-vriend*, 107 (note), 337, 380–83. Compare Alimento, 'Competition, True Patriotism and Colonial Interest', in *Trade and War*, edited by Stapelbroek, 66.