



# *Memories of Defending the Nation*

*Commemorating the Battle of Waterloo in the Netherlands, in 1865*

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**MA Thesis History of Society  
Erasmus University of Rotterdam**

Cover page image:

Edited photograph of *Danklied op den vijftigsten gedenkdag van den Slag bij Waterloo* (H. De Hoogh, Amsterdam 1865) (photograph: Kees van den Berg, May 8, 2012).

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Pieter van den Berg, August 9, 2012.

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## List of abbreviations

AFEW	-	Association Franco-Européenne de Waterloo
GAR	-	Gemeentearchief Rotterdam
MWO	-	Militaire Willemsorde
NIMH	-	Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie
NRC	-	Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant
VJC	-	Vereeniging der Jongelieden-Corpsen

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

What do a very successful Swedish song from 1973, a railway station in the centre of London, a novel by Bernard Cornwell, a city in Canada, a LEGO creation from 2009, a street festival in Rotterdam and a proposed attraction in a French theme park that has yet to be built have in common?<sup>1</sup> They are all in their own way referring to the same historical event that happened almost two centuries ago. The historical event meant here is the Battle of Waterloo.

On the eighteenth of June 1815, on the muddy fields just south of the village of Waterloo in what is now Belgium, Napoleon Bonaparte's Armée du Nord engaged an army consisting of regiments from Brunswick, Great Britain, Hannover, Nassau and the newly formed United Kingdom of the Netherlands, led by the Duke of Wellington. In the afternoon, elements of the Prussian army led by field marshal Blücher reached the battlefield and engaged Napoleon's flank.<sup>2</sup> More than 200.000 soldiers fought on a battlefield less than four kilometers wide.<sup>3</sup> By the end of the day an estimated 47.000 soldiers had died, were wounded or went missing.<sup>4</sup> The battle ended with Napoleon's defeat and four days later he surrendered and abdicated the French imperial throne for the second and last time.

I am not particularly interested in the actual events of the battle. What I am interested in is the way people dealt with and gave meaning to the past of the Battle of Waterloo in later times. Immediately after its closure, the battle became famous throughout the world. The history of the battle inspired the creation of paintings, poetry, novels, models, movies and computer-games. Since the battle, monuments have been erected, (military) ceremonies have been held to commemorate its fallen and heroes, and artifacts and models of the battlefield have been displayed in museums. Currently, while thousands of re-enactors from different countries gather to engage in battle on the fields of Waterloo every year around the eighteenth of June, historians still engage in a battle on paper, quarrelling over what actually happened during the event almost two hundred years ago. These products and activities are all examples of the Battle of Waterloo in historical culture. With

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FsVeMz1F5c> (27-02-2012); Bernard Cornwell, *Sharpe's Waterloo* (London 1990); <http://www.mocpages.com/moc.php/128259> (27-02-2012); <http://www.slagbijwaterloo.nl/> (18-02-2012); <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2668/Buitenland/article/detail/3131181/2012/01/20/Frankrijk-wil-attractiepark-over-staatsman-Napoleon.dhtml> (27-02-2012).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Hofschroer, *1815 The Waterloo Campaign. Wellington, his German allies and the battles of Ligny and Quatre-Bras* (London 1998) 59-83.

<sup>3</sup> Idem 352-358.

<sup>4</sup> David Chandler, *Waterloo, the hundred days* (London 1997) 172.



historical culture I refer to the way people deal with the past as well as the means by which and the ways in which that relationship with the past is articulated.<sup>5</sup> The concept of historical culture will be further discussed in chapter 2.

Essentially what I am interested in is the significance of the Battle of Waterloo in historical culture. More specifically this thesis focuses on the significance of the battle in a community's collective memory. With the two-hundredth anniversary of the event coming up, questions arise as to how the Battle of Waterloo was commemorated and what meaning was given to it in the past. In the light of the increased attention to collective memory in historical research in the second half of the twentieth century, it is remarkable how little research has been done on the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo, especially in the Netherlands. Therefore this thesis will focus on the commemoration of Waterloo in the Netherlands. A major aim of my research is to contribute empirical information and thereby help in narrowing the hiatus in knowledge of the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo in the Netherlands.

The studies that have been done on the Napoleonic Wars, or more specifically on the Battle of Waterloo in collective memory, vary in focus. These studies will be discussed here before moving on to the focus of my research in more detail.

### **1.1 Historiography: Waterloo in collective memory studies**

In the volume *Waterloo: Lieu de mémoire Européenne*, edited by Marcel Watelet and Pierre Couvreur, in cooperation with the Association Franco-Européenne de Waterloo (AFEW), the Waterloo battlefield was described as a European site of memory.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the largest part of the book emphasis was laid on the connections of several European states to the battle.<sup>7</sup> The remainder of the book describes the realization of several monuments in the Waterloo area. In the Dutch version of the aforementioned realms of memory project, Guido Fonteyn also focused on the Waterloo area as a site or realm of memory, emphasizing that the second Battle of Waterloo, as he called it, was fought with monuments.<sup>8</sup> He showed how the meanings given to the area of Waterloo

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<sup>5</sup> Maria Grever, 'Fear of plurality: historical culture and historiographical canonization in Western Europe', in A. Epple and A. Schaser (eds.), *Gendering historiography: beyond national canons* (Chicago 2009) 45-62, 54.

<sup>6</sup> The concept 'site of memory' (in French 'Lieu de mémoire') has been introduced by Pierre Nora and will be further explained in chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Couvreur, Marcel Watelet (eds.), *Waterloo: Lieu de mémoire Européenne (1815-2000)* (Brussels 1999) 9-138.

<sup>8</sup> Guido Fonteyn, 'Waterloo: de leeuw. Over de Slag bij Waterloo die nog altijd aan de gang is', in Jan Bank, Marita Mathijssen (eds.), *Plaatsen van herinnering. Nederland in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 2006) 72-81.

and to the monuments in that area, especially the Lion of Waterloo<sup>9</sup>, as well as interpretations of the Battle changed in the context of the formation of Belgium. As Fonteyn did, Philippe Raxhon described the controversy around the meaning of the Lion of Waterloo monument over time. Focusing on Belgian perspectives, he also mentioned the political discussions in Belgium about the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the battle in 1865.<sup>10</sup>

Besides this focus on the Waterloo area itself, some research has been done on other expressions of collective memories of the Napoleonic Wars, and more specifically the Battle of Waterloo, in other areas. Using a variety of sources, Christopher Clark researched the way the Napoleonic Wars were commemorated in Prussia in the decades after Waterloo. Clark's study showed the incongruity between the Prussian official narrative of the wars of liberation, as the wars against Napoleon were called, and local narratives of the wars, based on the memories of veteran volunteers and expressed in local commemorations.<sup>11</sup> In the 'official narrative' Prussian men took up arms out of duty to the king, who called upon them to fight the foe in his name. However, this narrative did not match the memories of many volunteers who served in the free corps and landwehr (militia) units that made up about 40% of the Prussian armies. Many of these volunteers did not sign up out of duty to the king but to voluntarily fight for freedom and against the tyrant Napoleon. After the wars the interpretations alternative to the official 'national' narrative were excluded from the, often state-funded, official commemorations and monuments. Clark's study showed that, by studying non-narrative articulations of collective memories of the Wars of Liberation, like local festivals, organizations, alternative monuments and cemeteries, the articulations of alternative interpretations come to light. Doing so, he emphasized the politics of memory, the use of representations of the past to express contemporary political ideologies.<sup>12</sup>

Ute Planert, studying local commemorations in south German states, emphasized the controversial war experiences and memories of the Napoleonic wars in those areas. Due to the collaboration with France of several south German states, the memories of the wars seem even more complex than those in Prussia. Planert argued that, in the light of a growing liberal-national movement in later decades after the wars, the commemorations were integrated in a tale of a national war of liberation, denying the controversies in previous commemorations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Dutch monument built on what is presumed to be the place where the Prince of Orange was wounded in the Battle of Waterloo.

<sup>10</sup> Philippe Raxhon, 'De Leeuw van Waterloo. Een trefpunt van verleden, heden en toekomst', in Jo Tollebeek et al., *België: een parcours van herinnering I. Plaasten van geschiedenis en expansie* (Amsterdam 2008) 178-189.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Clark, 'The wars of liberation in Prussian memory: reflections on the memorialization of war in early nineteenth-century Germany', *The Journal of Modern History* 68 (1996) 550-576, 550-551.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, 551-554.

<sup>13</sup> Ute Planert, 'From collaboration to resistance: Politics, Experience, and memory of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars in southern Germany', *Central European History* 39 (2006) 676-705.

As for the Battle of Waterloo in British collective memory, ample research has been done on the recollection of the battle in novels during the romantic period. Philip Shaw analyzed nineteenth century British novels based on Waterloo, linking the portrayed images of the Battle to the development of a new sense of Britishness.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, John Richard Watson described how the Napoleonic Wars influenced famous British Novelists and how their novels changed the perception of those wars in Great Britain in the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

Instead of focusing on the representations in novels, Elisa Renee Milkes studied military families, institutions, and local communities and marketplaces to find out how the past of Waterloo was dealt with and used in nineteenth century British society.<sup>16</sup> Resorting to an economic analysis, Milkes' study showed how memories of Waterloo were channelled by economic structures. How and what was remembered influenced economic benefits of individuals and families, such as pensions and promotions. Milkes argued that, by cooperating with charity institutions like the Waterloo Subscription Fund, the British government had extensive influence on the cultivation of Waterloo as a national icon, a watershed in British national history.<sup>17</sup>

Most of the above mentioned studies focus on the commemoration of the Napoleonic wars, or more specifically the Battle of Waterloo, within the borders of nations. However, the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, lasting over twenty years, were a period of almost continuous warfare affecting either directly or indirectly most of Europe. This makes the period, and the Battle of Waterloo as its last and decisive battle, an excellent research topic for international comparative research. This was one of the main ideas behind the research project *Nations, Borders and Identities; The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in European experiences and Memories*.<sup>18</sup> Starting in 2004, the interdisciplinary project was carried out by two research groups, one based in Germany and one in the United Kingdom. The project, consisting of various studies, focused on the experience and memory of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Austria, Germany, Britain, Ireland, France, Russia and Poland between the start of the Revolutionary wars in 1792 and the end of the Second World War in 1945.<sup>19</sup> Over the course of four years a network of over 190 scholars of various backgrounds and disciplines from seventeen countries was set up.<sup>20</sup> The project resulted in several publications in journals and one co-authored comparative volume in which the research of the

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<sup>14</sup> Philip Shaw, *Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination* (Hampshire 2002), 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> John Richard Watson, *Romanticism and War: A Study of British Romantic Period Writers and the Napoleonic Wars* (Basingstoke 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Elisa Renee Milkes, *A Battle's Legacy. Waterloo in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> *Idem*, 85-87.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.unc.edu/nbi/project.htm#abstract> (14-02-2012).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

working group is presented. This volume, titled *War Memories. The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in Modern European Culture*, was published in March 2012.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly the Netherlands were not taken into account in this project.

Concerning the Battle of Waterloo in collective memory in the Netherlands, the only research - as far as I have been able to explore - on this specific case was done as Master Thesis research by Martin Steegmans in 2011. He analyzed the appearance of the Battle of Waterloo in Dutch newspapers and schoolbooks to map out developments between 1815 and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1965. Steegmans focused on the influence of the separation of Belgium from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1830, which also separated the Netherlands from the battlefield itself, the influence of the pillarization of Dutch society and the influence of the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> He mentioned that by 1965 the appearance of the Battle of Waterloo in Dutch collective memory had diminished due the distance in time and influences of the Second World War.<sup>23</sup>

Despite Steegmans' efforts, there is still a considerable hiatus in knowledge on the Battle of Waterloo in Dutch historical culture. As was mentioned before, this thesis aims at narrowing that hiatus.

## 1.2 Research questions

Instead of a diachronic approach, the approach taken by Steegmans who researched developments of collective memories of the Battle of Waterloo in the Netherlands over a long stretch of time, I took a synchronic approach and researched in depth the articulations of collective memories of the battle around one point in time. This point in time is the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in 1865. Besides the ample attention for the golden jubilee providing a large corpus of sources, it is the context of the eighteen-sixties that makes 1865 an interesting case to study. As Reinhart Koselleck explained, perceptions of past and future had, due to the enlightenment and dramatic social and economic changes caused by the French revolution and industrial revolutions, fundamentally changed from a view in which experiences of the past and expectations for the future more or less coincided, to a growing gap between the space of experiences and the horizon of expectations.<sup>24</sup> This resulted in changes in people's relationships with the past. Due to the rapid political and social

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=414038> (14-02-2012).

<sup>22</sup> Martin Steegmans, *Vergeten glorie? De slag bij Waterloo in het collectieve geheugen van Nederland, 1815-1965* (MA thesis History of Society, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2011) 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Idem*, 87.

<sup>24</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures past. On the semantics of historical time* (Massachusetts 1985) 276-282.

changes of the nineteenth century the past seemed a strange and foreign place, causing a need for a past that anchored one's position in the present.<sup>25</sup>

These changes in dealing with the past were seen in the Netherlands of the nineteenth century as well. The Netherlands had become a small country after the independence of Belgium in 1830. This also severed the battlefields of Waterloo from the Netherlands. The small kingdom of the Netherlands was surrounded by giants like Prussia and France. In this context the past Golden age of the seventeenth century seemed very far away and unlikely to return and the Kingdom of the Netherlands had to reconsolidate its position in Europe.<sup>26</sup> These developments influence the way people deal with their past. What I intended to find out in this study is how in this context of the Netherlands in 1865 the story of Waterloo was told and whether that was a national narrative or something different. To do this the following research questions were formulated:

**Research question:**

*What was the significance of the Battle of Waterloo for constructing a Dutch national narrative within the context of transforming historical culture in the Netherlands around 1865?*

**Sub-questions:**

1. What narrative transformations did occur in dealing with the past in Europe around 1865?
2. What various forms and genres articulated the memory of the Battle of Waterloo in the Netherlands around 1865?
3. Who were involved in the Dutch production and consumption of memories related to the Battle of Waterloo?
4. What kind of sub-national or national collective identities were expressed in commemorating the Battle of Waterloo?
5. To what extent was a transnational perspective in commemorating Waterloo acknowledged?

By researching a broad range of articulations of collective memory, like commemoration rituals, texts and material culture, I aimed to discover what mnemonic communities<sup>27</sup> or memory cultures

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<sup>25</sup> Leen Dorsman, Ed Jonker, Kees Ribbens, *Het zoet en het zuur. Geschiedenis in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2000) 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> Piet B. M. Blaas, *Geschiedenis en nostalgie. De historiografie van een kleine natie met een groot verleden. Verspreide historiografische opstellen* (Hilversum 2000) 15-21.

<sup>27</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time maps. Collective memory and the social shape of the past* (Chicago 2003) 4.

articulated memories of Waterloo around the fiftieth anniversary of the battle in the Netherlands. I intended to find out how and by whom collective memories were articulated and how they were received, what sub-national, national or possibly even transnational collective identities were expressed in commemorations and how the articulations of the Battle of Waterloo, being a transnational historical event, can be explained in a local, national and European context. Since the Battle of Waterloo was fought by armies from all over Europe and can be seen as an event in a conflict that stretched over a main part of Europe for decades, it can be defined as a conflict that crossed the borders of state and nation, as a transnational event. It would be very interesting to discover whether such transnational perspectives could be found in the Dutch commemoration of the battle fifty years later.

Some preliminary research immediately showed that the fiftieth anniversary of The Battle of Waterloo was elaborately commemorated in various ways throughout the Netherlands in 1865. Due to the limited time allocated to this Master thesis, a focus on the whole of the Netherlands would result in a relatively shallow research and hamper the possibility to study the articulations, producers, consumers and identities expressed in narratives in depth. Therefore I chose to use the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo in Rotterdam as a case-study. In 1865 Rotterdam was already an important port city with a population of over 100.000 people. Rotterdam had been profiting of its position between industrialized Great Britain and industrializing Prussia. Over half of its population was employed in occupations related to its harbour. By 1865 plans to expand its harbour and to improve its connection to the sea were in the making.<sup>28</sup> Indeed international trade was of major importance to Rotterdam. In this context it would be interesting to see what perspectives on the past of the Battle of Waterloo were taken and expressed in the commemorations in 1865. Given the importance of international relations for international trade, a transnational perspective or at least consideration for the other participants of the battle, like Prussia and Great Britain, would be expected.

The aim of using Rotterdam as a case-study is thus to explain the commemorations in Rotterdam in the local context and to place the commemorations in Rotterdam in a wider national and European context.

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<sup>28</sup> Thimo de Nijs, *Rotterdamse ondernemers in de negentiende eeuw. De sociale positie van een economische elite* (MA thesis History of society, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, 1990) 17-21.

### 1.3 Sources, methods and design

To provide a European and national context for my research secondary sources were used. However, since little information on commemorations of Waterloo in 1865 in the Netherlands, and particularly for the case of Rotterdam, could be found in secondary sources, primary sources were used to build the context as well. Newspapers formed a starting point in this research. Reports on commemoration ceremonies and advertisements for celebrations as well as a variety of textual and visual articulations of memories provided data on what various genres and forms articulated memories of Waterloo in 1865, both in the whole of the Netherlands and specifically in Rotterdam. The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (NRC), a liberal newspaper from Rotterdam which had in 1865 a nation-wide spread, formed the main source to discover the commemorations in Rotterdam as well as in the rest of the Netherlands.<sup>29</sup> Besides the NRC the *Rotterdamsche Courant* was used for the case of Rotterdam and the *Algemeen Handelsblad*, a widespread liberal paper from Amsterdam, and the *Dagblad van Zuid/Holland en 's Gravenhage*, a regional conservative paper from The Hague, were used to provide a context of commemorations all over the Netherlands.

To provide additional information on the various articulations of memories of Waterloo, especially the articulations in the case of Rotterdam, various sources from libraries and archives were used. In the *Gemeente Archief Rotterdam* (GAR), the Rotterdam municipal archives, various primary sources, like reports on certain festivities, published speeches, or letters sent to the city council, were found that provided information on the articulations of memories of Waterloo and on their producers and consumers. Additionally, a number of poems and songs produced for the commemoration of Waterloo in Rotterdam that were not advertised or mentioned in the newspapers were found in the archives. Besides in the GAR, primary sources were found in various places like the University Library in Rotterdam, the library of the Army Museum in Delft, and the Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie (NIMH, Dutch Institute for Military History) and the Royal Library in The Hague.

Newspapers and archives were thus used to inventory the various forms in which memories of Waterloo were articulated in both the Netherlands and specifically in Rotterdam in 1865, as well as to provide information on the producers and consumers of those articulated memories. After the various articulations had been inventoried, a qualitative analysis was made of them. Of the textual and visual articulations, like pamphlets, songs, poems, paintings and lithographs, a narrative analysis was made focusing on the narratives of the Battle of Waterloo presented in them, and the way the event of Waterloo was emplotted in a larger narrative. By paying attention to the plots, heroes and

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<sup>29</sup> Paul van de Laar, *Stad van formaat. Geschiedenis van Rotterdam in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (Zwolle 2000) 16.

villains, 'othering', which is essentially the way groups are presented and opposed in narratives, rhetoric and discourse, and focalization, the narratives of Waterloo were analyzed to find out what identities were expressed in them.<sup>30</sup> Some newspaper articles concerning the meaning of the past of Waterloo were analyzed in a similar way since they also provided narratives of Waterloo and had quite a wide spread to boot. Ritual memories, like commemoration ceremonies, were subjected to a similar analysis. Material culture, like monuments, statues and symbols used in the rituals, as well as songs sung and speeches held during the rituals were analyzed to find out what narratives of Waterloo were presented and what identities were expressed. The analyses of all articulations were made keeping the European, national and local contexts in mind, and using the information on producers and possible audiences to get a better understanding of their meaning. All this was done to ultimately find out what the significance of Waterloo was for constructing a Dutch national narrative.

This research led to the thesis before you. The second chapter will provide a theoretical context. In the third chapter the larger European and national contexts of the case of Rotterdam will be discussed. European and national political developments that might be of influence as well as national and local socio-economic relations will be taken into account. Chapter four will discuss the various forms and genres by which memories of Waterloo were articulated in Rotterdam and who were involved in their production and consumption. In chapter five the various narratives of Waterloo and identities expressed in these Rotterdam sources will be discussed. First of all, however, some attention needs to be given to the theoretical concepts used. By now concepts like historical culture, collective memory and their link to collective identity have been named yet not thoroughly explained. This will be done in the next chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> See for an elaborate explanation of 'othering' and focalization: Maaïke Meijer, 'Countering textual violence. On the critique of representation and the importance of teaching its methods', *Woman's Studies Int. Forum* 16 (1993) 367-378, 369-376.



## Chapter 2

### Commemorating Waterloo in theory

As mentioned above, the theoretical concepts around which this study is based have been named but not yet explained. Those concepts need to be explained to function as oars in the upcoming vortex of empirical information. In this chapter a theoretical context, based on the concepts historical culture, collective memory, and their link to identity, will be provided.

#### 2.1 Historical culture

The term historical culture is partly based on the German concept *Geschichtskultur*<sup>31</sup>, defined by didacticists in the late 1970s. They used the term to refer to the dealing with the past of people outside educational institutes. They placed history education outside *Geschichtskultur*.<sup>32</sup>

In the 1990s Jorn Rüsen provided a broader definition of *Geschichtskultur*. He defined *Geschichtskultur* as the expression of historical consciousness in society. Historical consciousness was defined as the way society deals with the past. According to Rüsen all organisations and institutions involved in dealing with the past were part of *Geschichtskultur*, including schools and universities but also alternative institutions and organisations that were involved, like museums, commemorations and mass media. In his conceptualization of *Geschichtskultur*, Rüsen distinguished an aesthetic, a political and a cognitive dimension. The first involved the artistic representations of history like paintings, plays and novels. In the political dimension, expressions of the past function as legitimacy for power. In this dimension traditions like commemoration ceremonies are invented, which, by referring to historical events and symbols, found and sustain people's belief in a political system. With his cognitive dimension, Rüsen referred to professional historiography, the history by academicians.<sup>33</sup>

In another definition, by Bernd Schönemann, *Geschichtskultur* was seen as part of the broader category of 'historical consciousness in society'. Within this category Schönemann described the individual construction of the past as historical consciousness and the collective construction of

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<sup>31</sup> *Geschichtskultur* can be translated as history culture or historical culture. In the discussion of the German interpretations of historical culture I will refer to it as *Geschichtskultur*.

<sup>32</sup> Pieter de Bruijn, *Verzamelingen voor verbondenheid. Nationaal historische musea in Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk, ca. 1800–2008* (MA Thesis History of Society, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, 2009) 7-9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

the past, as expressed in memorials, museums and commemorations, as Geschichtskultur. In his conceptualization of Geschichtskultur as a social system through which the past is mediated and given meaning, Schönemann distinguished the institutes involved, the professionals and semi-professionals working in and with them, the various media through which the past is mediated to the public and the public itself.<sup>34</sup>

As is apparent in the above mentioned theorizing of people's dealings with the past, numerous concepts, differing majorly or more subtly, have been developed over time. Marko Demantowsky used Schönemann's concept of Geschichtskultur and Christoph Cornelißen's Erinnerungskultur<sup>35</sup> to show that these concepts, although derived from different approaches, are actually more alike than is often admitted. According to Cornelißen, Erinnerungskultur embodies all forms of memories of the past.<sup>36</sup> Because Cornelißen distinguished aesthetic, political and cognitive forms, based on Rüsen, Demantowsky argued that due to the similar theoretical basis the concepts of Geschichtskultur and Erinnerungskultur are actually very much alike. Cornelißen, however, emphasized that Geschichtskultur limits itself too much to the cognitive dimension of academic history and history education.<sup>37</sup>

In the late 1990s, the concept of historical culture gained ground in the Netherlands and was used and worked out in various ways. In his dissertation, Kees Ribbens focused on the developments of everyday historical culture in the Netherlands between 1945 and 2000. In his definition, everyday or popular historical culture encompasses the various popular articulations of relationships with the past, revealing the dynamic processes in which the past is given different meanings influenced by the variety of actors in those processes.<sup>38</sup> Due to his focus on everyday historical culture, the role of professional historiography is left out.

Maria Grever defined the concept of historical culture in greater detail. According to Grever the umbrella-concept of historical culture embodies the way people, both in an academic and in a popular context, deal with the past and the various ways these relationships with the past are articulated.<sup>39</sup> Historical culture refers both to a meta-historical perspective, providing a holistic view

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<sup>34</sup> Marko Demantowsky, 'Geschichtskultur und Erinnerungskultur - zwei Konzeptionen des einen Gegenstandes. Historischer Hintergrund und exemplarischer Vergleich', *Geschichte, Politik und ihre Didaktik* 33 (2005) 11-20, 16-18.

<sup>35</sup> Erinnerungskultur can be translated as memory culture. In the discussion of Cornelißen's interpretation, based on De Bruijn's thesis, I will refer to it as Erinnerungskultur.

<sup>36</sup> Demantowsky, 'Geschichtskultur und Erinnerungskultur', 17-20.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> Kees Ribbens, *Een eigentijds verleden. Alledaagse historische cultuur in Nederland, 1945-2000* (Hilversum 2002) 10-12, 286.

<sup>39</sup> Grever, 'Fear of plurality', 54. See also the website of the Center for Historical Culture (EUR) [www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/chc/research/](http://www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/chc/research/) (20-08-2012).

on the dynamics of the historical praxis as a whole, and to a field of study.<sup>40</sup> As a field of study, historical culture refers to the narratives and infrastructures that give meaning to the past. It encompasses the (re-)production of historical knowledge and understanding, and the social infrastructures through which knowledge and meanings are mediated. These elements constitute the conditions necessary for people to deal with the past. Historical culture encompasses studying different articulations of historical consciousness, used to express identities by building and maintaining collective memory, as well as sub-disciplines like the history of historiography, history and heritage education and the role of the media. This umbrella concept thus reveals the interaction between immaterial and material culture as well as the interaction between professional historiography and popular dealings with the past.<sup>41</sup>

Grever's broad and dynamic approach to historical culture is very useful as an umbrella-concept for researching both narratives of the Battle of Waterloo and the ways they were mediated around the fiftieth anniversary of the battle in Rotterdam in relation to the wider context of changes in dealing with the past around 1865. As a last note it is important that, unlike Demantowsky, Grever differentiated between memory culture and historical culture. She defined memory culture as the way a community deals with a certain past, as articulated in various ways in which ideas, norms and values of the community are expressed.<sup>42</sup> The community dealing with a certain past can be described as a memory community or, as Eviatar Zerubavel formulated it, a mnemonic community.<sup>43</sup> In Grevers conceptualization, memory culture might thus be part of historical culture as defined above, yet is not the same. For this research I used a similar but somewhat more elaborate conceptualization of memory culture which will be explained in the following paragraph.

## 2.2 Collective memory

As was mentioned in the introduction, my research focuses on the significance of the Battle of Waterloo in a community's collective memory. Maurice Halbwachs introduced the term collective memory in the 1920s, emphasizing that memory is socially mediated and thus group-related. According to Halbwachs, individual memory exists and develops in communication with others, being the social groups the individual is part of. He emphasized that those groups, forming a frame of reference for individual memory, conceive their unity and identity through the image of a shared

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<sup>40</sup> Grever, 'Fear of plurality', 55.

<sup>41</sup> Idem, 54.

<sup>42</sup> Maria Grever, Kees Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden* (WRR Verkenning nr. 17) (Amsterdam University Press 2007) 27.

<sup>43</sup> Zerubavel, *Time maps*, 1-5.

past.<sup>44</sup> Halbwachs made a sharp distinction between collective memory and history. Collective memory changes as the group changes and only extends as far as the group extends. It has dynamic and irregular boundaries that change for instance due to perishing generations. History, on the other hand, sets clear boundaries and markers for periods that are only possible because the historian views history in retrospect, as a whole, and, due to the acknowledgement of fundamental differences between periods, is not part of the studied group.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1980s, Pierre Nora used Halbwach's theories as foundation for the French project *Lieux de Memoires*. The focus of this long-term project was the collective memory of France, the way the French dealt with their past. According to Nora, people's dealing with the past used to be based on the continuity of that past into the present. This natural form of memory was disturbed by an emerging notion of discontinuity of past and present, turning the past into a strange and foreign place. Nora emphasized that, because of this development, lieux de memoires, realms of memory, are necessary for forming memories of the past. Lieux de memoires can be palpable geographical sites or objects, but also events and rituals like commemoration ceremonies or festivities that invoke memories of the past and create a sense of continuity. Paradoxically, for a lieu de memoire to function in creating a sense of continuity it needs to be able to change in meaning over time as its audience changes over time.<sup>46</sup> The end-products of *Les Lieux de Memoires* were seven published volumes. They became very popular and other countries followed suit and set up projects to tell the history of their country by the realms of memory in it. As was mentioned in paragraph 1.1, in the Belgian and Dutch lieux de memoires projects the battlefield of Waterloo, and especially the monument 'the Lion of Waterloo' was discussed.

Jan Assmann, also using the theoretical foundations laid by Halbwachs' conceptualization of collective memory, made a distinction between communicative memory and cultural memory. According to Assmann communicative memory consists of the forms of collective memory that are based on everyday communications about the meaning of the past. Through communication every individual composes a memory that is socially mediated and related to groups the individual belongs to or opposes itself to. Due to the nature of everyday communications, communicative memory is quite instable, disorganized and characterized by non-specialization. Also, as oral history studies pointed out, communicative memory has a limited temporal horizon, extending to a maximum of about a hundred years into the past.<sup>47</sup>

Instead of stopping there, as Halbwachs did, Assmann continued with cultural memory. Cultural memory is the memory of past events maintained through cultural formation, in the form of

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<sup>44</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The collective memory* (New York 1980) 68-87.

<sup>45</sup> Idem, 80-83.

<sup>46</sup> Ribbens, *Een eigentijds verleden*, 37-38.

<sup>47</sup> Jan Assmann, 'Collective memory and cultural identity', *New German critique* 65 (1995) 125-133, 126-127.

ritual, text or monuments, and institutional communication. It consists in a mode of potentiality, meaning the potential of the body of texts and images maintained in archives, and in a mode of actuality, meaning the contemporary context providing the perspective on the events from the past. Cultural memory is characterized by its more stable form of communicated meaning of the past. According to Assmann, manifestations of the cultural memory, by means of positive and negative identificatory determination, found and sustain group identities.<sup>48</sup> Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memory is an interesting one to keep in mind when researching the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo for it falls within the given temporal horizon of the communicative memory.

Although he gave Assmann some acknowledgement, Wulf Kansteiner criticized memory studies based on Halbwachs' concept of memory. Kansteiner argued that collective memory should be conceptualized as different from individual memory and should pay more attention to the problem of reception to integrate more the social aspects of collective memory. He proposed that collective memory is the outcome of the interaction between the cultural traditions by which the representation of the past is framed, memory makers who selectively use and manipulate those traditions, and memory consumers who either use or ignore representations of the past and, if used, give them meaning based on their own perspectives.<sup>49</sup> Using psychoanalytical methods in collective memory studies ignores the roles of social, political and cultural factors.<sup>50</sup> Instead, Kansteiner proposed the use of media and communication theories to study the mediation and reception of collective memories. He argued that researching the means of representation of history and the discourses and narratives used in them provide the best information about the construction and developments of collective memories.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the reception of mediated representations of the past should be studied to provide information of the success of those representations in constructing or sustaining collective memory. To this end he proposed the research of audiences, of memory consumers.<sup>52</sup> Important is Kansteiner's emphasis on the bias collective memory has to its present. The success of the formation of collective memories is majorly influenced by available means of mediation, compatibility with social and political objectives of powerful social groups like political elites and the interest of the audiences.<sup>53</sup>

Susan Hogervorst used Kansteiner's model of analysis of collective memory in a critical way. She argued that Kansteiner's distinction of memory producers and consumers is tricky because of its

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<sup>48</sup> Assmann, 'Collective memory and cultural identity', 130.

<sup>49</sup> Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies', *History and Theory* (2002) 179-197, 180.

<sup>50</sup> Idem, 186.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, 190-191.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, 194.

<sup>53</sup> Idem, 187-188.

terminology and because the distinction between producer and consumer is not always as clear as it seems in the model. The term consumer proposes a sense of passivity whereas she saw the role of the memory consumer as an active role in the construction of collective memories. Also she emphasized that memory consumers can take the role of memory producers and vice versa.<sup>54</sup> Despite her critiques, Hogervorst embraced the model provided by Kansteiner and commended how, due to the integration of the social and cultural dimensions of collective memory in the model, the political aspects of the relation between memory producer and consumer were taken into account.<sup>55</sup> By appropriating and expressing collective memories, memory producers express and defend their interests, for instance the construction of a group identity, emancipation of a group in society, or legitimizing a power position in society.

Using the term memory cultures, as conceptualized by Günther Lottes and Marcus Sandl, Hogervorst formed her own analysis model. In Lottes and Sandl's model of memory culture a social dimension, a material dimension and a mental dimension were distinguished.<sup>56</sup> Combining Kansteiner's model with the memory cultures of Lottes and Sandl, Hogervorst constructed a model in which collective memories are the provisional outcome of the interplay of several factors that are together considered to be the memory culture. In a memory culture she distinguished a social dimension, consisting of producers and consumers of memories like people and institutions that produce, store and consume collective memories, a material dimension of the media and artifacts that mediate the collective memories to mnemonic communities, and a mental dimension of cultural symbols, schemata and codes necessary to understand and adopt collective memories.<sup>57</sup>

Hogervorst used a wide variety of articulations of collective memories, like texts, commemoration rituals and monuments, as was the intention in my research, to research the memory cultures of concentration camp Ravensbrück.<sup>58</sup> What she considered the memory culture, or memory cultures, of Ravensbrück consisted of producers and consumers of collective memories and the articulated and mediated collective memories themselves.<sup>59</sup> She emphasized that memory cultures are dynamic, that they are ever changing. By studying the producers, consumers and the media used to mediate memories, she tried to understand the content, form and meaning of collective memories and their development over time. Using the concept memory cultures in my research brings with it the assumption that there was a memory culture of Waterloo in 1865. I believe there was, and still is a memory culture, or memory cultures of Waterloo, since memories of

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<sup>54</sup> Hogervorst, *Onwrikbare herinnering*, 25-26.

<sup>55</sup> *Idem*, 25-26.

<sup>56</sup> *Idem*, 27.

<sup>57</sup> *Idem*, 27-29.

<sup>58</sup> *Idem*, 46-48.

<sup>59</sup> *Idem*, 29.

the battle were and still are produced and consumed. What has to be kept in mind is the dynamic aspect of memory culture, the notion that memory cultures are constantly developing and changing shape. Given the vast amount of attention given to the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo in 1865, it is evident that in that year memory culture of Waterloo was booming in the Netherlands. The shape of the Waterloo memory cultures, as in the producers, consumers and the articulated collective memories mediated, in the Netherlands, and specifically in Rotterdam, remains to be explored in this thesis.

Hogervorst's research on the development of memory cultures of Ravensbrück showed that memory consumers who consumed the memories of the survivors of Ravensbrück took the role of memory producers in later times. This new generation of memory producers, that had no direct memories of the camp, appropriated collective memories of Ravensbrück to express their own identities and interests. The role of producer and consumer of memories could thus overlap.<sup>60</sup>

Although Hogervorst more or less embraced Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memory, she did criticize the way he theorized their succession in a one-way transition from communicative to cultural memory. Hogervorst argued that cultural memory does not just replace communicative memory but that the two overlap and that individuals use both communication in mnemonic communities and fixed forms of memories in cultural memory to form and give meaning to their own memories.<sup>61</sup> She also emphasized the influence of the social context on this process. As was mentioned before, the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in 1865 falls well within the temporal horizon of communicative memory as described by Assmann. Given the fact that people with direct memories of Waterloo, of which the veterans that actually fought the battle are the prime examples, were still alive, it will be hugely interesting to see what role they played in the memory cultures of Waterloo. The Waterloo commemorations in 1865 thus provide an excellent case to glimpse at the relationship between communicative and cultural memory.

Using Hogervorst's model of memory cultures for the case of Waterloo commemorations in 1865, I intended to get an idea of the way memories of Waterloo were articulated, who their producers and consumers were, and what group identities were expressed in them. The relationship between collective memory and identity will be the topic of the next paragraph.

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<sup>60</sup> Hogervorst, *Onwrikbare herinnering*, 224-225.

<sup>61</sup> Idem, 21.

### 2.3 National identities and dealing with the past

In most of the above mentioned theories and studies, dealing with the past is somehow linked to identity. Halbwachs, for instance, explained that groups conceive their unity and identity through the image of a shared past.<sup>62</sup> Since collective identities and especially possible national identities expressed in the commemorations of the Battle of Waterloo form a major interest of my research, the link between dealing with the past and group identities will be the focus of this paragraph.

In his book *Imagined Communities*, which was first published in 1983 yet is still considered a work of major importance and consequently still in print, Benedict Anderson discussed the origins and spread of nationalism. According to Anderson, nation and nationalism are constructed cultural artifacts.<sup>63</sup> He defined the nation as an imagined political community, imagined because a member will never meet all the other members of the nation yet every member has in their mind an image of their communion. In fact he argued that by this definition most other communities, except for very small ones, are imagined too.<sup>64</sup> In a revised version of the original of 1983, Anderson worked out the role of history for sustaining the imagined community of the nation. He emphasized that the origins of a nation are emplotted in historical narratives and often traced back far before the actual origin of the nation. In these historical narratives forgetting is as important as remembering. Civil war might be left out whilst heroes embodying the unity of the community are emphasized.<sup>65</sup> As such the community, in this case the nation, is imagined by means of a narrative of a shared past.

French philosopher Paul Ricoeur emphasized the link between narrative and identity. He explained that looking back at our lives is a constructive activity in which narrative plays the major role in configuring the life-story. In the narrative or plot of our life-story, events, as heterogeneous elements, are configured into a temporal whole. Some events are highlighted while others are left out. Ricoeur concluded that this configuration of the story of the self, or narrative identity as he calls it, constitutes self-understanding.<sup>66</sup> In Ricoeur's line of reasoning group identity can be constructed by emplotting historical events in a narrative, just like the individual life story constitutes the personal identity.

Eviatar Zerubavel also emphasized the way a shared past is constructed and emplotted to construct and sustain group identities. Like Kansteiner, Zerubavel emphasized the social dimension of collective memory, yet he did not marginalize individual memory as strictly as Kansteiner did.

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<sup>62</sup> Halbwachs, *The collective memory*, 68-87.

<sup>63</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York and London 2006) 4.

<sup>64</sup> Idem, 6.

<sup>65</sup> Idem, 192-203.

<sup>66</sup> Paul Ricoeur, 'Life in quest of narrative', in David Wood (ed.), *On Paul Ricoeur. Narrative and identity* (London 1991) 20-33, 32-33.



Zerubavel argued that, as social beings, we are part of groups that have a shared past and remember collectively. The collective memory of these mnemonic communities we belong to greatly influences what we individually deem worthy to remember.<sup>67</sup> He explained collective memory as a foundation of acquiring a social identity. By acquiring a group's collective memories and by being conscious of a shared past, and even more by commemorating that shared past collectively, group identities are constructed, adopted and sustained. Zerubavel emphasized the role of cultural mental schemata in the way we remember, especially the way events of the past are emplotted in narratives.<sup>68</sup> By placing historical events in a plotline and drawing parallels between groups in past and present historical continuity of the group is imagined.<sup>69</sup> Besides imagining the continuity of the group over time, a common historical starting point or 'birth' of the group can be imagined as well. Zerubavel gives examples of national commemoration days on which the start of the nation or nation-state are commemorated, like Independence Day in the United States, or Australia Day in Australia. Essentially the symbolic starting points of the nation, the start of the historical narrative of the nation, are commemorated on these days.<sup>70</sup>

Like Zerubavel, Peter Seixas pointed out that the preservation of a common past, through institutions, traditions and symbols, is crucial to the construction of collective identity in the present. He explains that narratives of the past define boundaries between members of the group in the present that share that past and others that do not. A shared past might even provide a justificatory context for collective action of a group in the present and a basis for a collectively shared vision on the future.<sup>71</sup> This means that expressing a shared past has a possible mobilizing effect. Seixas described how from the nineteenth century the emerging discipline of history produced national narratives of a shared past, thereby helping to produce a notion of national identity.<sup>72</sup> In the same volume that was edited by Seixas, James Wertsch made a distinction between two levels of narrative organization based on his research on national narratives in Eastern Europe. He argued that although specific narratives of a historical event might be very different, they are often based the same more abstract national narrative template.<sup>73</sup>

Like Zerubavel and Seixas, Stefan Berger also described the relationship between the constructions of nations and national narratives of the past. He described how, with the rise of the nation-state in the late nineteenth century, ethnic, religious and class narratives merged to varying

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<sup>67</sup> Zerubavel, *Time maps*, 2-4.

<sup>68</sup> Idem 4-5.

<sup>69</sup> Idem, 52-54.

<sup>70</sup> Idem, 89-95.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto 2004) 5-7.

<sup>72</sup> Idem, 4-5.

<sup>73</sup> James V. Wertsch, 'Specific narratives and schematic narrative templates', in Peter Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (Toronto 2004) 49-62, 57-60.

degrees with definitions of the nation. National narratives were constructed in relation to those ethnic, religious and class narratives.<sup>74</sup> Although aiming for a homogenizing effect, national narratives were often contested by sub-national groups and Berger argued that in a way national narratives inspired their own counter narratives.<sup>75</sup> Nations as well as national narratives are related to territorial entities, not just the national territory but also sub-national areas with regional identities that might contest or adopt a national identity and narrative. The link to territory becomes especially strong in narratives of war in which the contested boundaries of territory can act as metaphors for the boundaries between the national identity and other identities. Sometimes national narratives can even proclaim a transnational function of the nation. Berger gave as an example that in national narratives of small nations, like Belgium or the Netherlands, their use as cultural bridges between the bigger neighbours is often emphasized in national narratives.<sup>76</sup>

Similar to Berger's notion of conflicting national and sub-national historical narratives, Maria Grever and Kees Ribbens described how sub-national, national or even transnational memory cultures, expressing collective identities by articulating collective memories of a shared past, often contest each other.<sup>77</sup> In their study on national identity they described that identity, whether on a personal or collective level, is always linked to the perception of the past. From the moment they are born, people have a socially mediated past that is constantly changing and expanding. This allows them to be part of several groups because of shared fields of reference.<sup>78</sup> Identity is formed in social contexts, like the family, village or country, each of which has a past that is interwoven with the pasts of the other social contexts one lives in.<sup>79</sup> This means that people have multiple identities derived from different social contexts that get meaning in interaction and change over time.<sup>80</sup> The nation is but one of those contexts and national identity does not exclude other identities.<sup>81</sup>

Grever and Ribbens explain that the nation-state, as influential memory culture, produces collective memories. National governments produce official narratives of the past to found and sustain the nation-states they rule and to legitimize their power position in those nation-states. In those official narratives national heroes are often emphasized and 'black pages' from their history

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<sup>74</sup> Stefan Berger, 'Writing National Histories in Europe: Reflections on the pasts, presents and futures of a tradition', in Konrad Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger (eds.), *Conflicted memories: Europeanizing contemporary histories* (New York 2007) 55-68, 57-59.

<sup>75</sup> Idem, 56.

<sup>76</sup> Idem, 59-60.

<sup>77</sup> Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, 27-28.

<sup>78</sup> Idem, 20.

<sup>79</sup> Idem, 18.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, 21.

<sup>81</sup> Idem, 18, 25.

are left out. Other sub-national or transnational memory cultures often conflict with dominant national memory culture.<sup>82</sup>

Besides the theoretical basis of the link between dealing with the past and identity, the notion of people being part of several social contexts, several memory cultures and therefore having multiple pasts and multiple identities, is important to keep in mind when focusing on expressed identities during the commemorations of Waterloo. For instance, a local veteran doing a speech during a commemoration ceremony in Rotterdam is, at the same time, veteran, inhabitant of the city and citizen of the Netherlands, providing three contexts that might be of influence on the memory he produces during the commemorations. On top of that it is important to keep in mind that the past narrated by the veteran in the above hypothetical example might not be shared by other members of society at large, by all other citizens of Rotterdam, or even by other veterans of the same battle. In other words, keeping the notions by Berger, Grever and Ribbens in mind, the veteran's narrative of the past might be contested by others providing their own narrative of the same event.

## 2.4 Concluding remarks

As for the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865 it will be very interesting to discover what narratives of that past were mediated, what identities were expressed in them and whether Waterloo was used in a national narrative of the past or, to speak in Anderson's terms, to imagine the nation. Also, keeping the above theoretical context in mind, it will be interesting to find out whether narratives of Waterloo and identities and expressed in them, were in conflict with each other. To study the collective memories of Waterloo expressed in 1865 the people that constructed and expressed them, the memory makers, and the people that acted as their audiences as well as the ways and forms in which they were mediated have to be studied. To speak in Hogervorst's terms the memory culture of which the collective memories were the provisional outcome have to be studied, for which Rotterdam will provide the case. Before closing in on the case of Rotterdam, however, a historical context is needed in which this case can be viewed. This historical context, focusing on possible influences on the way people, groups and nations dealt with the past of Waterloo, in other words the way Waterloo appeared in historical culture, will be the topic of the next chapter.

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<sup>82</sup> Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, 27-28.

## Chapter 3

### Commemorating in context:

#### Europe, the Netherlands and Rotterdam around 1865

Now that the design of this study as well as the theoretical context have been discussed, a historical context is needed in which the commemorations of the Battle of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865 can be explained. This chapter is dedicated to that context and will discuss developments on a European and national level that have been of influence on historical culture and thus on the way the Battle of Waterloo was commemorated in 1865. The aim of this chapter is not only to describe these developments but also to paint a picture of the way memories of Waterloo were articulated nationwide before moving on to Rotterdam. This chapter will end with a brief historical context of Rotterdam in 1865 needed for the discussion of the commemorations in Rotterdam in chapter four and five.

#### 3.1 Between Waterloo and golden jubilee

On the eighteenth of June, 1865, a few hundred people gathered on the edge of the plateau of Mont-Saint-Jean, just a few kilometres south of Waterloo, to commemorate the battle that had taken place on that very spot fifty years earlier. In 1865 the Belgian government had refrained from commemorating the battle officially. The initiative to assemble at the battlefield was taken by the Nederduitschen Bond, a Flemish movement that promoted the Flemish language in Belgium. A pamphlet translated in four languages had been published as invitation to this event, and a few hundred people, amongst whom several Dutchmen, answered the call.<sup>83</sup>

To understand why the Belgian government refrained from commemorating the event of which the ultimate physical lieu de memoire, the battlefield itself, was situated on their soil, some political developments from the first half of the nineteenth century have to be taken into account. These developments, which are just as important for the commemoration of the golden jubilee of the battle in Belgium as they are for the case of the Netherlands, will be explained in this paragraph.

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<sup>83</sup> 'Belgische post. Brussel 13 Mei', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 15-05-1865. 'Belgische post. Brussel 19 Junij', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865. Raxhon, 'De Leeuw van Waterloo', 183.

### *Waterloo and European politics*

As was mentioned before the Battle of Waterloo was often considered a turning point in the history of Europe. It was the last battle in almost a quarter century of warfare. The French revolution in 1789 had brought France in chaos, resulting in civil war and famine. On top of that from 1792 onwards France was at war with several coalitions of European states.<sup>84</sup> Several consecutive revolutionary governments had not been able to bring the country at order. In 1799 a coup was staged lead by general Napoleon Bonaparte. By installing an efficient centralized government Napoleon managed to restore order. After he had been crowned emperor in 1804, Napoleon's armies conquered a large part of Central and Western Europe. A disastrous campaign against Russia turned the tide, however, and only a fraction of his Grande Armée, an enormous army numbering over 600.000 soldiers, managed to escape Russian winter and return west. Subsequent defeats in Central Europe and the Iberian Peninsula drove Napoleon's armies back. In 1814 coalition forces entered France and Napoleon was forced to abdicate and exiled to the Isle of Elba.<sup>85</sup>

Before Napoleon's abdication negotiations between the great powers of Europe about the future of Europe had already started. The different ambitions of the negotiators often clashed leading to tensions. For Russia and Austria, for example, peace with France was sufficient to bring an end to the conflicts, whereas for Prussia the total defeat of the Bonapartes was the main aim. These three powers were all looking to expand their territories in central Europe. While these powers negotiated power and territory, Britain's main aim was a balance of power on the continent guarantying the peace necessary to concentrate on trade and colonial expansion. In September 1814 the negotiations continued on the Congress of Vienna where ambassadors of the great powers negotiated the redrawing of the map of Europe. Due to conflicting territory claims tensions rose between the great powers.<sup>86</sup>

In exile on the island of Elba, Napoleon was informed about the tensions between his former enemies.<sup>87</sup> At the end of February 1815 he sailed with just over 1000 soldiers to the French mainland and marched towards Paris. In a few weeks Napoleon regained power in France, reorganized the army and marched towards the northern border of France. This campaign resulted in his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. Napoleon's unexpected return made it necessary for the coalition powers to cooperate once again. In a way Napoleon's return prevented the tensions between the coalition powers from developing into military conflict between them and brought about the realization that a

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<sup>84</sup> Albert A. Nofi, *De Slag van Waterloo. De campagne van juni 1815* (Erpe 2002) 7.

<sup>85</sup> Hofschröer, *The Waterloo Campaign*, 27.

<sup>86</sup> Idem, 27-30.

<sup>87</sup> Chandler, *Waterloo, the hundred days*, 13-15.

solution had to be found.<sup>88</sup> The negotiations and treaties of the congress of Vienna after the Battle of Waterloo did bring about peace and a balance of power that lasted for almost four decades.

One of the agreements of the Congress of Vienna was the union of the Northern and Southern Netherlands in a constitutional monarchy under the rule of the House of Orange. In 1806 the Netherlands had come under the Rule of Louis Bonaparte, Brother of Napoleon, and in 1810 the country became part of the French Empire. When the Empire's power was declining in 1813 and the retreat of the French government in the Netherlands caused a power Vacuum, sovereignty of the former Dutch Republic was offered to Prince William of Orange who was living in London. William was the son of Stadtholder William V who had fled the country in 1795. On November 30, 1813 William set foot on Dutch soil and accepted sovereignty. William was also represented on the Congress of Vienna where he tried to gain recognition of his sovereignty and territorial expansion. He was supported by Britain with the aim of creating a buffer zone on the continent should France or even Prussia get any ideas of expanding. His sovereignty was accepted and in March 1815 he was internationally recognized as King William I of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, consisting of the Northern and Southern Netherlands, and as grand Duke of Luxembourg.<sup>89</sup>

With the unexpected return of Napoleon the new United Kingdom of the Netherlands came under immediate threat. While Napoleon reorganized his army and marched north, a Prussian army and an Anglo-Dutch army, consisting of soldiers from Britain, the Netherlands, Hannover, Brunswick and Nassau, were mobilized and stationed in the southern Netherlands.<sup>90</sup> Amongst them were the two sons of William I, crown prince William and prince Frederik. The campaign culminated in the Battle of Waterloo where soldiers from all over Europe fought, bled and died. At the end of the battle Napoleon was defeated and the independence of the kingdom saved.

Thus the Battle of Waterloo can be seen as a turning point in history from several perspectives. In the case of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands the battle confirmed its regained independence. From a broader, European perspective the battle marked the point between war and peace. The question now is what developments occurred between Waterloo and its golden jubilee in 1865 and how they influenced the way people in the Netherlands dealt with the past of Waterloo.

### *Towards a golden jubilee*

The system of power balance between the great states of Europe that was devised at the Congress of Vienna lasted for several decades but was not everlasting. In 1853 a war broke out over control in the Crimean area between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, supported by Britain and France. At the

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<sup>88</sup> Hofschroer, *The Waterloo Campaign*, 37.

<sup>89</sup> Remieg Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren. Een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990* (Amsterdam 1999) 35-64.

<sup>90</sup> Hofschroer, *The Waterloo Campaign*, 45-46.

time France was ruled by Napoleon III, the nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon III had returned to France when a revolution had broken out in 1848. During this revolution the French monarchy was overthrown and a republic installed in which Napoleon III had been voted President in 1849. In 1852 he staged a coup that made France an empire and Napoleon III emperor with the aim of making France once again a strong nation. Besides the Crimean War (1853-1856) Napoleon III got involved in wars between Austria and several Italian states striving for unification in 1859.

Meanwhile striving for unification was seen in Central Europe as well with Prussia taking the lead. In 1848 Revolutions had also broken out in German states with the aim of unifying the northern states of the German confederation and installing a liberal constitution. The attempt was met with conservative resistance and failed. In 1862, however, Otto von Bismarck was appointed Minister President of Prussia by king Wilhelm I of Prussia. Using his Realpolitik, Bismarck started expanding Prussian power in the German confederation. In 1863 Denmark annexed the Duchy of Sleswig and the German Confederation, lead by Prussia and Austria, intervened and annexed both the Duchy of Sleswig and Holstein for themselves.<sup>91</sup>

The balance of powers had thus substantially changed by 1865, as had the situation of the Netherlands. King William I had tried, after unifying the Northern and Southern Netherlands in a state, to unify the people of his kingdom. His top-down nation formation projects, for instance through language, education and church politics, did not succeed in unifying, though, but actually pointed out differences in society and were often experienced as oppressive.<sup>92</sup> Criticism and opposition rose against William's autocratic governing style, expressed in cries for more liberties, transparency of government and more political influence of a broader part of society. At the end of the 1820's the criticism lead to a crisis of authority.<sup>93</sup> When an uprising broke out in the Southern Netherlands in September 1830, William's kingdom fell apart. Independence was declared in the south and a year later the Kingdom of Belgium was born. Thus two small states, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Belgium, surrounded by giants like Prussia and France, remained.

The above mentioned political developments were of great influence on the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo. The battle had provided William I with a unifying collective memory, a story of the combined efforts of the Northern and Southern Netherlands to defeat Napoleon.<sup>94</sup> Until Belgian independence severed the battlefields from the Netherlands, yearly official commemorations were held at Waterloo. After 1830 the Belgian government did not continue the official

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<sup>91</sup> Bert Altena and Dick van Lente, *Vrijheid en rede, geschiedenis van westerse samenlevingen 1750-1989* (Hilversum 2006) 226-229.

<sup>92</sup> N. C. F. van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland. Van oude orde naar moderniteit, 1750-1900* (Amsterdam 2004) 407; Piet de Rooij, *Republiek van rivaliteiten* (Amsterdam 2002) 22.

<sup>93</sup> Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 429-432.

<sup>94</sup> Idem, 404-405.

commemorations yet private initiatives to commemorate were allowed.<sup>95</sup> Philippe Raxhon described how from 1860, the threat of the Second French Empire under Napoleon III led to political discussions in Belgium on the meaning of the battlefield of Waterloo. On the one hand the battlefield should be a reminder of a French defeat which should inhibit any new French intention of annexation. In 1865, however, the Belgian government refrained from commemorating the fiftieth jubilee of Waterloo to retain the fragile political relationships with France.<sup>96</sup> Despite that decision commemorations were held at the battlefield though. As was mentioned before, the initiative was taken by the Nederduitschen Bond, a Flemish political movement that promoted the Flemish language and disputed French influences in Belgium in general.<sup>97</sup>

Besides showing the influence of European power relations on the way governments and people deal with the past, this Belgian example also shows the influence of internal relations in Belgium. The discussions about the meaning of the battlefield of Waterloo and the Flemish political movement defying the policy of the national government are clear examples of this. Since the focus of this thesis is on the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo in Rotterdam, located in the Netherlands, the Dutch context should be explained. Due to the social and political changes of the French revolution and the subsequent wars, the regained independence and the instalment of a constitutional monarchy, the link with the past of the Golden age of the Dutch republic had been broken.<sup>98</sup> The independence of Belgium shattered the ambition to play a role as a full-sized player in European politics and what remained was a small country.<sup>99</sup>

### 3.2 The golden jubilee in the Netherlands

Early in 1865 the Dutch government decided that every municipality or private organisation had the freedom to, should they have an urge to do so, publicly commemorate the golden jubilee of the Battle of Waterloo whatever way they liked.<sup>100</sup> Indeed the urge to commemorate was abundant throughout the Netherlands. During the months before the eighteenth of June newspapers bulked with advertisement for books, songs and lithographs related to Waterloo and with messages on the preparations for celebrations in cities, towns and villages all over the Netherlands. The Rotterdam newspaper *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (NRC) apologized for the fact that reports of the

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<sup>95</sup> Raxhon, 'De Leeuw van Waterloo', 182-183.

<sup>96</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>97</sup> 'Belgische post. Brussel 19 Junij', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865; Raxhon, 'De Leeuw van Waterloo', 183.

<sup>98</sup> Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 403.

<sup>99</sup> Idem, 557.

<sup>100</sup> 'Gemeenteraad van Rotterdam, zitting van donderdag 1 Junij', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 02-06-1865.



preparations were so numerous that due to lack of space they were not able to publish them all.<sup>101</sup> As was seen in the Belgian example the government's decision not to officially commemorate was partly based on fragile international relationships. Although international relationships might have been of influence in the Dutch government's decision as well, other explanations for it can be found within the borders of the Netherlands.

### *Waterloo in Dutch politics*

The criticism that had led to William I's crisis of authority at the end of the 1820's was also present in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>102</sup> After the independence of Belgium opposition to William's autocratic government from liberal sentiments in society grew even more. In 1840 William abdicated and his son took his place as King William II. Although liberal opposition to the autocratic power of the King rose, and although he wanted to be a different king than his father had been, William II largely followed his father's conservative style of governing.<sup>103</sup> In 1848 and 1849, however, a wave of revolutions, aiming for liberal constitutions, raged through Europe and toppled several authoritarian governments. Motivated by fear of revolution and disorder in his kingdom, William II approved a major revision of the constitution.<sup>104</sup> A commission of liberals, led by Johan Rudolf Thorbecke who had pleaded for revision of the constitution in earlier years, composed the new constitution that guaranteed freedom of press, association and assembly.<sup>105</sup> Voting system and rights were revised as well and from then on members of parliament were directly chosen by anyone in the higher classes of society that paid a certain amount of tax. The political power of the King was strongly reduced by the new constitution in which politics were to be based on rational and free debate instead of on tradition and authority.<sup>106</sup> In 1849 a largely liberal government led by Thorbecke was formed which further implemented the new constitution.

Soon after the new constitution William II died and his son took over as King William III. William III was reluctant to accept the new constitution, which led to several clashes between King and government in the following decades. Also conservative and anti-revolutionary opposition arose criticizing the liberals' interpretation of the constitution and opposing their dominance in politics. In 1862, after successive conservative and anti-revolutionary governments, the liberals had majority in parliament and a second government led by Thorbecke was formed. Dutch historian Henk te Velde stated that liberal governments after 1848 were never very active in spreading national

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<sup>101</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 17-06-1865.

<sup>102</sup> Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 429-432.

<sup>103</sup> J. A. Bornewasser, 'Koning Willem II' in Coen Tamse (ed.), *Nassau en Oranje in de Nederlandse geschiedenis* (Alphen aan den Rijn 1996) 278-314, 304-305.

<sup>104</sup> *Idem*, 308-309.

<sup>105</sup> Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren*, 100-103.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*.

consciousness.<sup>107</sup> This stood in contrast with the top-down promotion of national unity and consciousness of William I and William II.<sup>108</sup> Liberals in Thorbecke's wake thought this not the business of the government, however, and often maintained a laissez-faire attitude towards the promotion of national consciousness.<sup>109</sup> This attitude offers an explanation for the reluctance of the government to have an official national commemoration the Battle of Waterloo and the decision to permit anyone to organize commemorations should they want to.

When placing the government's decision in the context of the 1860's there seems to be more factors underlying the reluctance to commemorate Waterloo, however. As was mentioned before, the tension between liberals and William III, supported by conservatives, had been growing. William III was reluctant to accept the fact that the constitution of 1848 reduced the power of the king and tried to retain power where he could. Around 1860 this led to several clashes with the liberal government around 1860. An example was the role the king played in the Dutch defence. After 1815 the king was the formal commander of army and fleet.<sup>110</sup> The constitution of 1848 had made the army and navy the responsibility of the government, of the Minister of War. This meant the king's position of commander became problematic for that would place the king under the Minister of War. Since the king was inviolable the Minister of War would bear the responsibility of the king's decision as commander without being able to hold the commander responsible. This loophole in the constitution left space for multiple interpretations and William III, supported by a conservative elite, defended his traditional position against the liberal government's wishes for reorganisation.<sup>111</sup> In this atmosphere of tension between the William III and the liberal government, the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo got a more complicated meaning. William's father, nicknamed the hero of Waterloo, had played a major role as commander under Wellington during the battle. Also his uncle, Prince Frederik of Orange, had served in a commanding position during the battle. Celebrating the victory at Waterloo would mean honouring the Prince of Orange as commander of the army.

It is evident that the commemoration of Waterloo in the Netherlands in 1865 has to be researched keeping the above political tensions, between king and government, and between liberals and conservatives, in mind to understand the way the story of the battle was told and the meanings that were given to that bit of history. Despite the reluctance of the government one official

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<sup>107</sup> Henk te Velde, 'Nederlands nationaal besef vanaf 1800', in Ton Zwaan et al., *Het Europees labyrint. Nationalisme en natievorming in Europa* (Amsterdam 1991) 173-188, 174-177.

<sup>108</sup> De Rooij, *Republiek van rivaliteiten*, 75.

<sup>109</sup> Te Velde, 'Nederlands nationaal besef vanaf 1800', 174-177.

<sup>110</sup> Willem Bedevaart, 'Een leger zonder hoofd, een koning zonder leger. Koning leger en grondwet na 1848', in H. te Velde, N. C. F. van Sas (eds.), *De eeuw van de grondwet. Grondwet en politiek in Nederland, 1798-1917* (Deventer 1998) 218-245, 219.

<sup>111</sup> *Idem*, 220-225.

commemoration was held which provides a good example of the tensions between king and government. This will be discussed in the following paragraph.

### *Leiden 1865: the national exception*

The lack of initiative from the national government led to strong reactions from the public as becomes apparent in letters in the newspapers. Quite a few of these letters were sent in by veterans of the Waterloo campaign. In quite an emotional letter by a veteran named A. Ruysch, for instance, the formal recognition of Dutch veterans was compared with those from other nations that participated in the battles of Quatre-Bras and Waterloo. He claimed that those veterans had all been decorated with medals, whereas Dutch veterans only have their wounds to show. His letter shows a major disappointment in the government for ignoring the Dutch veterans and their deeds even now, on the fiftieth jubilee of those deeds.<sup>112</sup> On the eleventh of June, in an anonymous letter taking up almost half a page of the four page newspaper, a veteran called upon the government to declare a national commemoration day to honour the brave veterans of Waterloo and celebrate their victory.<sup>113</sup>

The veterans' calls were answered by the king who requested the government to devise a medal for the veterans of 1813-1815 and to organize a celebration to which all these veterans were to be invited. This request was granted by the government and the decree was signed by William III, Thorbecke and Minister of War J. W. Blanken on the tenth of May.<sup>114</sup> Besides commemorating the deeds of the veterans of 1813-1815 and celebrating the victory at Waterloo, the celebration was meant to celebrate the fiftieth jubilee of the Military William Order (MWO). The MWO was the oldest and highest honour of the kingdom of the Netherlands and had been established in 1815. The medals and the celebration were arranged under supervision of the Minister of War and largely paid out of government funds. All the bearers of the MWO and all veterans of 1813-1815, regardless of rank or social class, were invited.<sup>115</sup>

The celebration was to be held in Leiden on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June.<sup>116</sup> Leiden housed a centre for disabled veterans owned by the national foundation for disabled veterans which had been founded a

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<sup>112</sup> 'Ingezonden stukken. Waterloo 18 Junij 1815', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 09-04-1865.

<sup>113</sup> 'Ingezonden stukken. De dag van Waterloo', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 09-04-1865.

<sup>114</sup> H. Hardenberg, *Het nationaal feest te Leiden, ter eere van oud-strijders van de jaren 1813 en 1815, en ter viering van het halve eeuwfeest der militaire Willemsoorde, op den 27 juny 1865* (1865) 13.

<sup>115</sup> An interesting note is that the celebration was a male affair. A widow from Delft who had been serving as sutler on the battlefield in 1815 and whose late husband had served as a sergeant doubted whether she was considered a veteran and was invited as well. Indeed, no mention of her presence was made in the published reports on the celebration. 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 03-06-1865.

<sup>116</sup> Hardenberg, *Het nationaal feest te Leiden*, 13-16.

few months after the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>117</sup> This foundation had been asked for help in accommodating veterans coming from afar. Also school buildings were made available and even inhabitants of Leiden offered beds in their houses to provide enough beds for the veteran guests.<sup>118</sup> The veterans' foundation published adverts in newspapers to ask the public for gifts to provide for the veterans who had once provided for the public by risking their lives in battle.<sup>119</sup> Although the celebration, including several meals, was free for the guests, their travel was on their own expense. For a lot of poor veterans coming from far from Leiden the costs would be too great. All over the country, however, help was offered to get the veterans to Leiden. In some cases municipal governments decided to pay for their veteran inhabitants, in other cases wealthier veterans helped out their poorer comrades.<sup>120</sup> Some railroad and ferry organizations offered free travel for veterans.<sup>121</sup> A barber in Rotterdam even offered free shaving of veterans going to Leiden, showing charitable behaviour as well as a clever way of advertising and gaining new customers.<sup>122</sup> This abundance of charitable behaviour shows the status the veterans had in society, at least around the golden jubilee of their deeds.

As was noticed in a published report on the commemoration by H. Hardenberg, one of the organizers, a total of 2705 veterans attended.<sup>123</sup> Thousands of spectators had gathered in Leiden to cheer them on as they marched between locations during the day.<sup>124</sup> The main event of the day was a commemoration ceremony in the St. Pieter's church. There all bearers of the MWO and as many veterans as could be fitted gathered to be addressed by Dr. A. Rutgers van der Loeff, vicar and bearer of the MWO, in the presence of Prince Frederik and King William III with his wife and youngest son.<sup>125</sup> Rutgers's speech was followed by an address by the king. In his speech William expressed his happiness to be among fellow-countrymen, respectable by age and service to their fatherland. Also he commemorated his father's deeds in service of the country on the battlefield of Waterloo. He expressed to expect, in weary times, the same support for king and country that had been given in

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<sup>117</sup> Fonds ter aanmoediging en ondersteuning van de gewapende dienst in de Nederlanden: Ph. M. Bosscher, *Honderdvijfenzeventig jaar fonds 1815* (Amsterdam 1990) 10-15.

<sup>118</sup> Hardenberg, *Het nationaal feest te Leiden*, 24-25.

<sup>119</sup> See for instance: 'Landgenooten', *Algemeen Handelsblad* 15-05-1865; 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 16-05-1865.

<sup>120</sup> See for instance: 'Binnenland (vervolg)', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 18-05-1865; 'Gemeenteraad van Rotterdam, zitting van donderdag 18 mei', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 19-05-1865.

<sup>121</sup> 'Vervolg der nieuwstijdingen', *Algemeen Handelsblad* 18-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 24-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche* 31-05-1865.

<sup>122</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 10-06-1865.

<sup>123</sup> 2105 veterans of 1813-1815 and about 600 bearers of the MWO attended the celebrations. The bearers of the MWO were not just veterans of the Waterloo campaign but also veterans of later campaigns. Hardenberg, *Het nationaal feest te Leiden*, 29, 39-40.

<sup>124</sup> *Idem*, 48, 78.

<sup>125</sup> A. Rutgers van der Loeff, *Feestrede bij de plegtige viering van het halve-eeuwfeest der militaire Willemsorde* (Leiden 1865) 1.

earlier times by the veterans before him. He concluded his speech by assuring his uncle prince Frederik of the love the nation felt for him after which William decorated Frederik, being a veteran of Waterloo, with the first medal.<sup>126</sup> According to Hardenberg, after the cheering of the audience had died down a veteran stood up and shouted that they, the veterans, might be too old to pick up arms but that their sons and grandsons would fight if needed. The king then pointed at his son and said that his son would then be there to lead them, which was answered by cheers.<sup>127</sup>

What was happening here provides an interesting example of the way collective memories can be appropriated by people and used to their advantage. In his speech the king emphasized the service and duty to king and fatherland shown by his father and the Dutch soldiers at Waterloo. He appropriated collective memories of the deeds of his father and the veterans before him to legitimise and emphasize his view on what his power position should be. Also he expresses his view on the future, expecting the same support for king and country shown at Waterloo in future weary times. Interestingly the king, being born in 1817, had obviously no direct memories of Waterloo which made him a minority in this situation for the vast majority of his audience consisted of veterans who had been at the battlefield the king was speaking of in his speech. According to the cheers described by Hardenberg the king's views on past and present were embraced by the audience. Moreover, by the veteran getting up and shouting that their sons will fight for the king and the king's reaction that his son would lead them a view of the future is offered in which the power position of the king is emphasized yet again.

In the context of the disputes between government and king over the king's position as commander of the army, the national commemoration in Leiden is thus an interesting example. It was a government funded commemoration that allowed the king not only to emphasize his father's deeds as commander and his own position as commander but also his son's possible future position as commander. Leiden also provides an example of top-down promotion of national consciousness, albeit in front of an audience of veterans who had fought for king and country before. Expressions like 'fellow-countrymen', 'the love of the nation' and 'service for king and country' paint a clear picture of the nation as a unity in which the king has a prominent place. What has to be kept in mind though is that the commemoration in Leiden was the exception. To the best of my knowledge, the festivities in Leiden around the 27<sup>th</sup> of June were in 1865 the only commemoration ceremony initiated and funded by the national government. The question now is what happened in the rest of the Netherlands.

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<sup>126</sup> Hardenberg, *Het nationaal feest te Leiden*, 72-75.

<sup>127</sup> *Idem*, 76.

### 3.3 Waterloo throughout the nation

The free reign given by the government to publicly commemorate the golden jubilee of the Battle of Waterloo should anyone have the urge to do so was answered by a legion of voices.<sup>128</sup> The abundance of interest and initiative to elaborately commemorate the Battle of Waterloo throughout the Netherlands easily leads to the conclusion that the memory of the past of Waterloo was very much alive amongst the Dutch population in 1865. Be that as it may, the exceptionality of the year 1865 as the golden jubilee of the battle has to be kept in mind before forming more generalized conclusions. A quick glance at the year before, for instance, shows that the attention given to the commemoration of the battle in 1864 was next to nothing compared to 1865. The few commemoration ceremonies in 1864, like the yearly wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of William II, the hero of Waterloo, in The Hague, were overshadowed by celebrations of the Queen's birthday on the seventeenth and the silver anniversary of the King and Queen on the eighteenth of June.<sup>129</sup> In 1865, however, enthusiasm to commemorate was abundant.

#### *How to commemorate?*

As was described before, the government had given free rein in commemorating Waterloo. No national holiday or national day of commemoration for the Battle of Waterloo was ever declared, however. Although the name 'Waterloo-day' was used occasionally, it was merely used to name a date and had not the meaning of national commemoration day that it had in later years.<sup>130</sup> Since there was no official date to commemorate, the date of the commemorations varied throughout the country. The eighteenth of June, the date of the battle, was of course the obvious choice were it not for the fact that in 1865 the eighteenth fell on a Sunday. This being the Christian day for rest and religious observance, the choice was often made to celebrate Waterloo on Monday the nineteenth or Tuesday the twentieth of June.<sup>131</sup>

Next to veterans claiming recognition for their deeds, as was mentioned above, others reacted to the lack of interest of the national government, as was shown for instance in a published letter of a mister Mock, resident of the city of The Hague and member of the provincial government.

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<sup>128</sup> 'Gemeenteraad van Rotterdam, zitting van donderdag 1 Junij', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 02-06-1865.

<sup>129</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 18-06-1864; 'Binnenland', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 19-06-1864; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 19-06-1864.

<sup>130</sup> Steegmans, *Vergeten glorie?*, 58. Steegmans stated that the name 'Waterlooday' was used for the first time in 1915. Earlier examples of the name do exist, however. See for example: 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 15-06-1865.

<sup>131</sup> See for example: 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 03-06-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 04-06-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 07-06-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12-06-1865.

In his letter, Mock condemned the decisions of the national government and the municipal government of The Hague to ignore the fiftieth commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo. He called upon the residents of the city to honour the memory of those brave ones that, lead by the heroic Prince of Orange, sacrificed to defend the independence of the Netherlands, by decorating their houses.<sup>132</sup>

Besides reactions to the government's lack of interest, the way to commemorate was debated in the papers as well. The writer Jacob van Lennep had argued in a letter published in an Amsterdam newspaper that there was a substantial difference between the fiftieth jubilee of the regained independence of the Netherlands in 1813 and the battles in which that independence was defended in 1815. He argued that if the Battle of Waterloo was excessively celebrated, then battles fought by the Batavians<sup>133</sup> against the Roman Empire might just as well be celebrated. On top of that the Battle of Waterloo was not won by the Dutch alone but by the combined efforts of many nations. Also France, the enemy in 1815, was in 1865 a befriended nation whose hairs would only be rubbed the wrong way by celebrating the victory of Waterloo. Therefore the battle should not be celebrated excessively and money spent on celebrations should instead be donated to needy veterans.<sup>134</sup> A mass of quite angry reactions to Van Lennep's letter can be found in which the right to celebrate Waterloo as a national victory was defended.<sup>135</sup>

The above mentioned examples show that, due to the lack of precedents of commemorating the Battle of Waterloo, different ideas of when, how and why to commemorate existed in the Netherlands in 1865. Newspaper articles contain some evidence of the idea-generation processes that lead to the commemoration ceremonies. Since there were few precedents of celebrations of the Battle of Waterloo the organizers had to result to their own and each other's creativity and to other precedents. The 1863 celebrations of fifty years of independence served as a useful precedent like in Hellevoetsluis, where the same musical society that organized the 1863 celebrations organized the Waterloo celebrations in a similar way.<sup>136</sup> Sometimes ideas of other cities were copied, like in Delft where a parade was organized after the example given by Rotterdam.<sup>137</sup> A most striking example of creativity was Arnhem, where people re-enacted the Dutch army in several moments in history starting with the Batavians who fought the Romans in the first century B. C..

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<sup>132</sup> 'Ingezonden stukken. Aan de ingezetenen van 's Gravenhage', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 11-06-1865.

<sup>133</sup> A people inhabiting areas of what is now the Netherlands and rose up to Roman oppression in the first century B. C..

<sup>134</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 07-06-1865.

<sup>135</sup> See for example: 'Ingezonden stukken. De dag van Waterloo', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 09-04-1865; 'Open brief', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 09-06-1865; 'Ingezonden stukken. Waterloo en mr. J. Van Lennep', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12-06-1865.

<sup>136</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 11-05-1865.

<sup>137</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 15-05-1865.

An important notion is that, as is apparent in the newspaper articles, the government takes little effort to initiate commemorations or celebrations of Waterloo whereas members of the public show the urge to commemorate nationally and officially by demanding a national holiday or commemoration day to honour the sacrifices made for the nation and to celebrate a national victory. This strongly resembles Benedict Anderson's notion of popular nationalism. Anderson argued that popular nationalism preceded official nationalism promoted by state governments.<sup>138</sup> The question is how widespread this popular national consciousness was in the case of the Waterloo commemorations in the Netherlands in 1865. To answer this question a closer look at the production of the commemorations is necessary.

### *Producing festivities*

Although the enthusiasm to commemorate was abundant all over the Netherlands and the commemorations mainly took the form of festive celebrations, the organisation and execution of these celebrations were a local affair. In some places initiative was taken by the municipal government. In Amsterdam, for instance, the municipal government, in cooperation with several corporations, organized a parade and fireworks.<sup>139</sup> In Schiedam the municipal council approved a credit of 2.800 guilders to fund the celebrations of Waterloo.<sup>140</sup> In most places, however, private initiative was taken to organize celebrations and funding was often provided by donations of the public.<sup>141</sup> Often commissions were formed by existing institutions or unions, like schools, crafts-unions or musical societies. In Hellevoetsluis, for instance, a local musical society organized a large part of the celebrations whereas in Vlaardingen a commission was formed to organize celebrations to which several local unions contributed.<sup>142</sup> Local military garrisons or militia units<sup>143</sup> were also involved in celebrations, like in The Hague, where the non commissioned officers of two local regiments organized a ball.<sup>144</sup> In Alkmaar the militia held a parade and in Groningen the militia organized celebrations as a tribute to the Veterans of Waterloo.<sup>145</sup> This brief summary of examples shows that the organizers of commemorations, here considered the producers of the articulations of the memories of the battle, varied widely. All over the Netherlands groups with various social

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<sup>138</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86-87.

<sup>139</sup> 'Advertentien', *Algemeen Handelsblad* 18-05-1865; 'Binnenland (vervolg)', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 15-06-1865.

<sup>140</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 27-04-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 03-06-1865.

<sup>141</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12-06-1865.

<sup>142</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 05-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 11-05-1865.

<sup>143</sup> In Dutch: Schutterijen.

<sup>144</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 14-06-1865.

<sup>145</sup> 'Binnenland (vervolg)', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 05-02-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 01-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 01-06-1865.



backgrounds took initiative to organize celebrations. Interestingly most producers of articulations had no direct memories of the battle and had appropriated memories of Waterloo and produced articulations of those memories in 1865, meaning they can be considered both consumers and producers of memories of Waterloo.

A specific group of producers that needs to be mentioned are the veterans of Waterloo for they were the carriers of direct memories of the battle. In some cases the veterans of the Waterloo campaign also played a role in the organisational part of public commemorations. In Waddinxveen for instance, about thirty veterans organized festivities to which the public was invited.<sup>146</sup> The local union of Waterloo veterans in 's Hertogenbosch was asked to organize the celebrations in their city involving a parade of the local military garrison.<sup>147</sup> Involvement of veterans in the commemorations is a strong indicator of memories of Waterloo in communicative memory. As was mentioned before, Jan Assmann made a distinction between cultural memory and communicative memory. He described communicative memory as images of the past being handed down to next generations through direct and everyday communications.<sup>148</sup> The fact that veterans were still alive means, since they were the only group of people with direct memories of the event, that those direct memories were also still alive. The involvement of veterans in the organization of commemorations, thereby mediating their memories of Waterloo to next generations, shows memories of Waterloo being kept alive in communicative memory.

The above shows that the organizers of commemorations varied widely from place to place. Although all examples found had the character of festive celebrations, the forms of their commemorations varied as well. In some places public concerts were held, in others games were organized or historical scenes were re-enacted. Holding a parade was quite common and in cities and villages all over the Netherlands decorations of flags, garlands and light decorations were seen.

It is apparent that the producers of commemoration rituals, taking the general form of celebrations, varied widely throughout the Netherlands. This shows that the enthusiasm and initiative to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo was felt throughout the Netherlands in different layers of society. Based on these producers and keeping the lack of initiative from the national government in mind, the commemorations of the battle of Waterloo in 1865 can be described as nationwide celebrations, though not as an official national commemoration. The conclusion that, based on the variety of producers, initiative to commemorate was taken by people from all layers of society would go too far, however. The producers mentioned in the examples above, municipal governments, schools, unions, military and militia units, do not represent, or at least their leaders do

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<sup>146</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12-06-1865.

<sup>147</sup> 'Binnenland, 'S Bosch 1 Mei', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 03-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Algemeen Handelsblad* 11-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 11-05-1865.

<sup>148</sup> Assmann, 'Collective memory and cultural identity', 126-127.

not represent, the lower classes of society. Based on these sources it were thus the middle and upper classes that took the initiative to commemorate. As was mentioned before, Te Velde described how after 1848 liberal governments were not very active in spreading national consciousness. He described that it was the upper middle class of society<sup>149</sup> that organized national celebrations and commemorations.<sup>150</sup> Indeed the Waterloo commemorations of 1865 seem to support this description. The question is, however, how national the stories of Waterloo in these commemorations actually were.

### *Nationalizing the history of Waterloo*

The keyword so far has been variety since we have seen that producers varied as well as their products, being the celebrative commemorations they locally organized. These celebrations also varied in monuments around which they were organized, in songs sung and in images, full of symbols and icons, used to dress it all up in. These monuments, songs, symbols and icons give insights to what was specifically commemorated and what meaning was given to the past of Waterloo. Because of the great variety of forms the celebrations took and the enormous amount of symbols used, the forms and symbols discussed here will be a selection of the most common ones used in the celebrations throughout the Netherlands as well as some extremes.

First of all, as was mentioned before, an apparent element in most commemorative festivities were the veterans. Besides being the producers of commemorations in some places, veterans of the Battle of Waterloo were also the centre point of many of the celebrations. The celebrations in Groningen, for instance, were held to give tribute to the veterans.<sup>151</sup> In The Hague the students of the musical school gave a concert to honour the veterans of Waterloo, to which said veterans had free entry.<sup>152</sup> The role of veterans was earlier linked to communicative memory, especially as producers of commemorations. Here, however, another aspect of the presence of participating veterans can be seen. The veterans that fought in the battle form a direct link to the past of Waterloo. In a way they were, with all respect, the living and conveniently mobile monuments of that past. They were the ancestors that sacrificed to defend the independence of the nation, or so it was told in many letters published in newspapers.<sup>153</sup> Explained in such a way, the

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<sup>149</sup> In Dutch: de burgerij.

<sup>150</sup> Te Velde, 'Nederlands nationaal besef vanaf 1800', 174-177.

<sup>151</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 01-06-1865.

<sup>152</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 14-06-1865.

<sup>153</sup> See for instance: 'Ingezonden stukken. De dag van Waterloo', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 09-04-1865; 'Open brief', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 09-06-1865; 'Ingezonden stukken. Aan de ingezetenen van 's Gravenhage', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 11-06-1865; 'Ingezonden stukken. Waterloo en mr. J. Van Lennep', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 12-06-1865.

veterans formed an important symbol of duty to and sacrifice for the nation, thus indicating sense of national identity.

One or maybe even *the* Dutch veteran of Waterloo was present in many of the celebrations. He was displayed on posters and canvas, his likeness was struck in coins and medals. His bust was present on balls, concerts and carried around in parades. The veteran meant here was King William II who, then still the Prince of Orange served as a major-general under Wellington during the Waterloo campaign. After his horse Wexy had been shot from under him, he was wounded in the shoulder whilst leading a bayonet attack on foot. He literally sacrificed, shed blood, for the independence of the nation. Being a member of the family of Orange he was compared in some of the above mentioned letters to his ancestors who also fought for the independence of the Netherlands when the provinces of the Netherlands were just unified in a republic in the sixteenth century.<sup>154</sup> By portraying the deeds of the Prince of Orange at Waterloo as in line with his family tradition, a sense of continuity over time was created. As such the Orange family functioned as a canon of events in which the independence of the Dutch was defended, consequently emphasizing the Dutch as a unity over time. The Prince of Orange thus symbolized the unity of the nation over time, the ultimate veteran sacrificing for the independence of the nation and the brave and victorious commander, all at the same time.

Besides the above example other narratives of Waterloo provided a sense of continuity of the nation over time as well. In some cases narratives traced the nation back to Roman times. In Gorichem, for instance, a parade headed by a person playing Julius Civilis, was held to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>155</sup> Julius Civilis had been a leader of the Batavians, a tribe that inhabited the Rhine delta in Roman times, and lead an uprising against the Romans in that area in the first century. References to the Batavians in these commemorations are beautiful examples of what is nowadays called the 'Batavian myth'. This myth was invoked by humanists who, in the sixteenth century, rediscovered texts written by Tacitus in which the Batavians were described not as barbarians but as a civilized people. For centuries, historical narratives were constructed in which the Batavians were imagined as the ancestors of the people of the Netherlands.<sup>156</sup>

To understand the link between Julius Civilis and the Battle of Waterloo, the commemorations in Arnhem provide a clarifying example. In Arnhem a civic association organized festivities during which the Dutch army leaving for and returning from Waterloo to fight the foreign oppressor Napoleon in 1815 would be re-enacted.<sup>157</sup> On top of that, scenes of the Dutch army fighting foreign oppressors in earlier times would be re-enacted, starting with a depiction of the

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<sup>154</sup> 'Ingezonden stukken', *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's Gravenhage* 13-04-1865.

<sup>155</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 27-05-1865.

<sup>156</sup> Auke van der Woud, *De Bataafse hut* (Amsterdam 1998) 11-12.

<sup>157</sup> 'Binnenland (vervolg)', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 14-05-1865.

Batavians who fought the Roman oppressor.<sup>158</sup> As such the Battle of Waterloo was placed in a larger narrative of events in which the Dutch fought foreign oppressors dating back to the Batavians who were considered the brave ancestors of the Dutch. This effectively paints a picture of the nation's continuity from Roman times till 1865 in which Waterloo was the last event.

The above examples show that the history of Waterloo could be and was indeed told from a national perspective in national narratives during the fiftieth commemoration of Waterloo in 1865. The questions who produced these narratives, for what audience they were told, what identities were expressed in these narratives and, if a national identity was expressed, what nation was imagined in those narratives remain. The case of Rotterdam will be used to answer these questions. Before moving on to the commemorations in Rotterdam, however, knowledge of Rotterdam around 1865 is required. In the above it became evident that political relations were of influence on the articulations of memories of Waterloo. To understand the articulations in Rotterdam in 1865 and to be able to place their producers and consumers in context a brief political and socio-economical context of Rotterdam will be presented in the next paragraph.

### 3.4 The case of Rotterdam

As was the case in most of the Netherlands, the political elite in Rotterdam strived for unity, especially of the previously opposed Orangists and Patriots, after the Netherlands regained independence in 1813.<sup>159</sup> Rotterdam politics in the nineteenth century were largely dominated by a group of elite families that were part of the merchant elite. They did not just dominate the municipal government but also held commercial key-positions, like the highest positions in the chamber of commerce. After 1813 this merchant elite of the city of Rotterdam tried to conserve Rotterdam as a merchant city based on trade. They opposed changes that influenced the traditional trade in which Rotterdam had been a market centre where goods were stocked and sold on and tried to prevent changes like liberalisation of trade and the building of trans-shipment harbours on the south side of the river.<sup>160</sup>

In the course of the nineteenth century, however, a greater demand, especially from industrialized Britain and rapidly industrializing Germany, arose for trans-shipment ports to efficiently reach wide markets. Paul van de Laar described how in the second half of the nineteenth century a new class of entrepreneurs gave answer to the international demand and brought about

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<sup>158</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 04-06-1865.

<sup>159</sup> Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 14.

<sup>160</sup> *Idem*, 8-15.

the transition from merchant city to trans-shipment port city in a period roughly between 1850 and 1880.<sup>161</sup>

Besides a shift in economical perspectives of the elite a shift in political views was seen in the same period. After the revision of the constitution in 1848, political views in Rotterdam diverged. Thorbecke had never been popular in Rotterdam and after 1850 liberals that supported the new constitutions were opposed by anti-revolutionaries, conservative liberals and plain out conservatives who weren't against a reorganisation of the constitution and state-order but thought the liberal constitution devised by Thorbecke's liberals to go too far.<sup>162</sup> Members of the elite that had the right to vote, in 1851 four to seven percent of the population, united themselves in voting associations based on political views.<sup>163</sup> For instance, the conservative-liberals united in voting association 'Eendragt maakt macht' (unity makes strength) and the conservatives formed voting association 'Vaderland en Koning' (fatherland and king), later changed to 'Nederland en Oranje' (Netherlands and Orange).<sup>164</sup> Although conservatives and conservative-liberals held most positions of power in the municipal government, liberals steadily gained ground in the second half of the nineteenth century. Between 1853 and 1867 about three quarters of the municipal council were members of the liberal voting association 'Orde', for instance.<sup>165</sup>

The political relations between these groups were influenced by national debates on, for instance, colonial policy, education and religion. In 1853 the Roman Catholic Church was restored in the Netherlands in five dioceses. This Catholic emancipation led to harsh opposition of Protestants which was called the April-movement. The April-movement also opposed the liberal government of Thorbecke that had made Catholic emancipation possible.<sup>166</sup> In Rotterdam the April-movement got a lot of support. The Dutch Reformed community in Rotterdam, about 57 percent of the population<sup>167</sup>, had been falling apart due to internal disputes and the reformed churches welcomed the idea of a common enemy outside their denomination to close their ranks. On top of that the conservative elite, seeing liberals gradually gaining power, used the April-movement to express anti-liberal ideas.<sup>168</sup>

The above mentioned developments in economical and political views of the elite are, indeed, about the political elite of Rotterdam. Important though these developments are to take into

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<sup>161</sup> Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 8-11.

<sup>162</sup> Idem, 15-16.

<sup>163</sup> According to Van de Laar 4% of the population of Rotterdam had voting rights for parliament elections and 7% for municipal council elections in 1851. Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 17.

<sup>164</sup> Idem, 17-20.

<sup>165</sup> Idem, 20.

<sup>166</sup> Idem, 17.

<sup>167</sup> Ibidem. About 30% of the population of Rotterdam was Catholic in 1853.

<sup>168</sup> Idem, 17-20.

account, they say little about the rest of the population of Rotterdam. To place the commemorations of Waterloo in 1865 in context a broader image of the population of Rotterdam in that period is needed. Henk van Dijk categorised the population of Rotterdam in five categories based on profession and apparent features of wealth like taxes paid or having house personnel. He estimated that in the 1860's between 85 and 90 percent of the population of Rotterdam formed the lowest two categories.<sup>169</sup> The lowest category, about 75 percent of the population, consisted of day-labourers, small street vendors and other unskilled labourers. The second category consisted of skilled labourers, artisans and artisan assistants who, although not wealthy, at least had a steady income.<sup>170</sup> Interestingly Van Dijk pointed out that for people in the second lowest category, especially for skilled labourers in the artisanal sector, status played a major role and was often linked to the profession of a person.<sup>171</sup>

It is clear that the population of Rotterdam in the 1860's, around 100.000 people<sup>172</sup>, consisted of a large lower class and a relatively small middle and even smaller upper class. The upper class formed the political elite discussed before. Although after 1850 political views of this political elite diverged, they were kept together by their stakes in commerce and therefore had stakes in keeping Rotterdam the traditional merchant city it was.<sup>173</sup> Merchant traditions also determined the cultural climate of the city. Competitive tension between Amsterdam and Rotterdam caused a sense of civic pride and the elite of Rotterdam wanted to be as culturally important as Amsterdam.<sup>174</sup>

Amidst the above mentioned political changes, transitions in economical perspectives and socio-economical division of the population the Battle of Waterloo was commemorated in June 1865. The question how and by whom this was done will be answered in the next chapter.

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<sup>169</sup> Henk van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880. Aspecten van een stedelijke samenleving* (Schiedam 1976) 132-135. Van Dijk categorised the population of Rotterdam in five categories based on profession and apparent features of wealth like taxes paid or having house personnel. The first was the lower class of for instance unskilled labourers, day labourers and street vendors. The second was an intermediary group between the lower and middle classes consisting of for instance skilled labourers, artisans and artisan assistants and small-scale shopkeepers. The third was the middle class of independent artisans, teachers, artists, clerks, shopkeepers and innkeepers, and also some doctors, lawyers, merchants and clergymen. The fourth was an intermediary group between the middle and upper classes consisting of pretty much the same professions of the middle class that paid more taxes. The fifth was the upper class of bankers, rich merchants, high civil servants and academics.

<sup>170</sup> Van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, 132-134.

<sup>171</sup> Idem, 134.

<sup>172</sup> Idem, 25-28. Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 173-174.

<sup>173</sup> Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 14-15.

<sup>174</sup> Idem, 9-13.

### 3.5 Concluding remarks

As became apparent in the above, changing political relationships, both on an international and national level, influenced the way people dealt with the past. In the cases of Belgium and the Netherlands, the national governments decided not to commemorate officially, albeit for different reasons.

In the case of the Netherlands, the commemorations in Leiden held in honour of the veterans were an exception, for they were organized and partly funded by the government. Leiden showed an interesting example of the influence of tensions between King and government, between conservatives and liberals, on the perspectives on Waterloo taken and the narratives of the past constructed during the commemorations.

Besides the Leiden exception, Waterloo was indeed commemorated throughout the nation. These commemorations took various forms, although all were described as festivities and celebrations, and were locally organized by various groups and institutions. An important observation was that in several cases veterans of Waterloo were actively contributing to the commemorations. As the few examples of narratives from the commemorations show, nationalized versions of the history of the Battle of Waterloo were indeed presented and the event of Waterloo was emplotted in larger national narratives in various ways.

The variety of producers and articulations of memories and the fact that most commemorations were locally organized could lead to refer to the whole of producers, consumers of memories and the articulated memories mediated as memory cultures of Waterloo instead of a memory culture of Waterloo. However, the facts that the producers of commemorations in local areas looked at commemorations in other areas for ideas, and that the commemorations of Waterloo lead to debates in newspapers with a nationwide spread, indicated that there was indeed a broader memory culture of Waterloo.

This chapter offered but a brief look at commemorations in several places throughout the Netherlands to provide the context necessary to study in depth the memories of Waterloo articulated in the commemorations in one place. That place is the city of Rotterdam, of which the context has been described above. The next chapter will zoom in on Rotterdam and will focus on the various articulations of memories as well as their producers and audiences.

## Chapter 4

### The various articulations of Waterloo in Rotterdam

Reading the Rotterdam newspaper *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (NRC) in the months before the eighteenth of June in 1865, it would have been hard not to notice the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo coming up. So abundant were the announcements and advertisements aimed at or referring to the commemoration of the golden jubilee of the battle. In this chapter the various ways in which memories of the Battle of Waterloo were articulated in Rotterdam will be explored. Besides focusing on the various forms and genres that articulated the memory of the Battle of Waterloo, this chapter will discuss who were involved in the production and consumption of those memories. Before starting off it is important to note, as Hogervorst indicated, that the role of producer and consumer of memories can be played by the same person.<sup>175</sup> The producer of an articulation of memory, for instance the writer of a poem about the Battle of Waterloo, can be considered a producer of memory of Waterloo, as a writer, but also as a consumer of memory if he or she does not have direct memories of the battle. Keeping that in mind we now move on to the Waterloo commemorations in Rotterdam in 1865.

#### 4.1 Selling the past

The abundance of references to Waterloo in articles in the NRC show that the Battle of Waterloo was indeed on people's minds. Often the battle was referred to in situations that had little to do with the history of Waterloo. In a speech made at a gymnast's festival in Rotterdam in May 1865, at which a German gymnast association was also represented, for instance, the cooperation of Dutch and German soldiers at Waterloo was emphasized at great length.<sup>176</sup>

The popularity of the Battle of Waterloo was especially apparent in advertisements for products in the NRC in the months before the jubilee. A variety of goods was advertised by local business-savvy merchants and shopkeepers in Rotterdam. Waterloo lemonade glasses were offered, Waterloo ice-cream was sold.<sup>177</sup> One could enjoy a fine Waterloo cigar, whilst enjoying some

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<sup>175</sup> See paragraph 2.2.

<sup>176</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 29-05-1865.

<sup>177</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 15-06-1865; 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 18-06-1865.



Waterloo liquor or liqueur.<sup>178</sup> These examples, in which Waterloo is linked to products that have nothing to do with the battle, indicate two things. First of all Waterloo must have been quite popular because else why bother to print Waterloo in thick font above a liquor or ice-cream advertisement (see figures 1 and 2). Secondly this leads to the notion that the memory of Waterloo had a commercial value. There was money to be made by commodifying memories of Waterloo.



Figure 1: Advertisement for Waterloo liquor and liqueur. 'Advertenties', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 17-05-1865.



Figure 2: Advertisements for ice-cream and flags. Note that the flags could be rented for the day as well as bought. 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 18-06-1865.

Of the goods offered, a large part consisted of accessories for the upcoming commemorations of the Battle of Waterloo in June, like Venetian paper lanterns, balloons and national and orange flags (see figure 2).<sup>179</sup> Accessories were offered to decorate one's person with, like a Waterloo medallion with orange cockade,<sup>180</sup> and costumes were for sale or rent to dress up people in parades.<sup>181</sup> It is evident that people in Rotterdam had a wide choice of accessories and

<sup>178</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 17-05-1865; 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 11-06-1865.

<sup>179</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 10-05-1865; 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 14-06-1865; 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 15-06-1865.

<sup>180</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 08-06-1865.

<sup>181</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* 05-05-1865.

decorations to prepare for the upcoming celebrations of Waterloo, provided they had the money to pay for them.

The above mentioned examples show that local merchants aimed to profit off the popularity of the memory of the Battle of Waterloo. However, most of the goods mentioned are mere accessories and cannot be considered to be articulations of memories of Waterloo in essence. They get meaning when used in commemorations, like ceremonies or celebrations, of that battle. The types of products offered, essentially goods to accessorise festivities, do indicate, however, that the commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo was going to take the form of celebrations. Before moving on to the celebrations of the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in June, another category of goods offered needs to be discussed, however. This category of goods offered in relation to the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo does consist of actual articulations of memories of Waterloo. This category consists of textual and visual articulations of memories on paper, like books, pamphlets, poems, songs and lithographs, and will be discussed in the next paragraph.

#### 4.2 Waterloo on paper

Quite a few advertisements in the NRC in 1865 were put in by printers and booksellers. In these books, pamphlets, poems, songs and lithographs related to the Battle of Waterloo were advertised. Among them were works by relatively well-known writers, like *De zegen Gods door Waterloo*, by Multatuli.<sup>182</sup> This seven page pamphlet was actually a satirical reaction to the vast amount of literature produced for the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in which the past of Waterloo was presented as a glorified national past, to which I will come back in chapter 5.<sup>183</sup> It is interesting to note here that Multatuli's remarkable bit of satire does indicate that there was a vast amount of literature on Waterloo produced around the fiftieth anniversary of the battle.

Some of the literature offered were not new publications but republished works like *Quatre-Bras en Waterloo*, by military historian and major-general Willem Jan Knoop.<sup>184</sup> This book had first been published in 1855 and emphasized the role played by the Dutch soldiers in the Battle of Waterloo, a role often downplayed or neglected in English literature on the battle from the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1865 the book was republished by a publisher from Schiedam. In the advertisement it was emphasized that this was a relatively cheap version of the original to create for

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<sup>182</sup> Multatuli, *De zegen Gods door Waterloo* (R. C. Meijer, Amsterdam 1865). See for the advertisement for instance: 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>183</sup> Dik van der Meulen, *Multatuli. Leven en werk van Eduard Douwes Dekker* (Nijmegen 2002) 506-508.

<sup>184</sup> W. J. Knoop, *Quatre-Bras en Waterloo : krijgskundige beschouwingen* ('s-Hertogenbosch 1855).

all Dutchmen the opportunity to read about the events of the Battles in 1815.<sup>185</sup> It was sold for the price of 90 cents, which would have the estimated purchasing power of about nine Euros in 2011.<sup>186</sup> This seems rather low but considering that around three quarters of the population of Rotterdam was low-class and was living on low and insecure wages, as was mentioned in paragraph 3.4, the price of 90 cents, according to estimates about the same price one could buy 10 kilograms of rye bread for in 1865, might have been a bit too steep for the lower classes in society.<sup>187</sup> Keeping that in mind the expected readers of this book would thus have come from the wealthier middle and upper classes of society.

Cheaper articulations of memories of Waterloo were available as well though, mainly in the form of songs and poetry. An example is *het woord van Waterloo* by J. P. Heije, who had a medical profession but was well known as poet and songwriter. An interesting notion is that Heije was also a high board member of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen*, a national association for the socio-cultural education of the Dutch people, meaning the lower classes in society.<sup>188</sup> Heije's *het woord van Waterloo* was published and sold in The Hague for 5 cents, a price that indeed made it available to a larger part of society.<sup>189</sup>

The above examples show that textual articulations of memories of Waterloo were produced or reproduced and made available for a public that varied in size when prices and economic circumstances are considered. They were all examples of textual articulations published outside of Rotterdam. Advertisements from 1865 show a production of textual articulations in Rotterdam as well. Publisher and bookseller H. T. Hendriksen, for instance, advertised the song *Waterloo en Oranje*, of which, according to the advertisement, he had already printed 10.000 copies. This song, consisting of one newspaper-size sheet of cheap paper<sup>190</sup>, was sold for one cent and a special offer was made for schools to buy hundred copies for 80 cents.<sup>191</sup> The low price made this song available to the lower classes of society and the special offer for schools indicated an envisioned public of young readers. If the information in the advertisement is correct and not mere boasting, an amount of 10.000 copies would have reached a large audience indeed considering a population of around 100.000 people.

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<sup>185</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 09-05-1865.

<sup>186</sup> Calculated on: <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/data.php#netherlands> (17-07-2012).

<sup>187</sup> Prices calculated from: Arthur van Riel, *Prices of consumer and producer goods, 1800-1913*, <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/data.php#netherlands> (06-06-2012). According to a report of the Rotterdam department of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't Algemeen* from 1872 a labourer could in those days hardly provide for a family of four: J. E. van der Pot, *Het department Rotterdam der Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen 1785-1960* (Rotterdam 1960) 57.

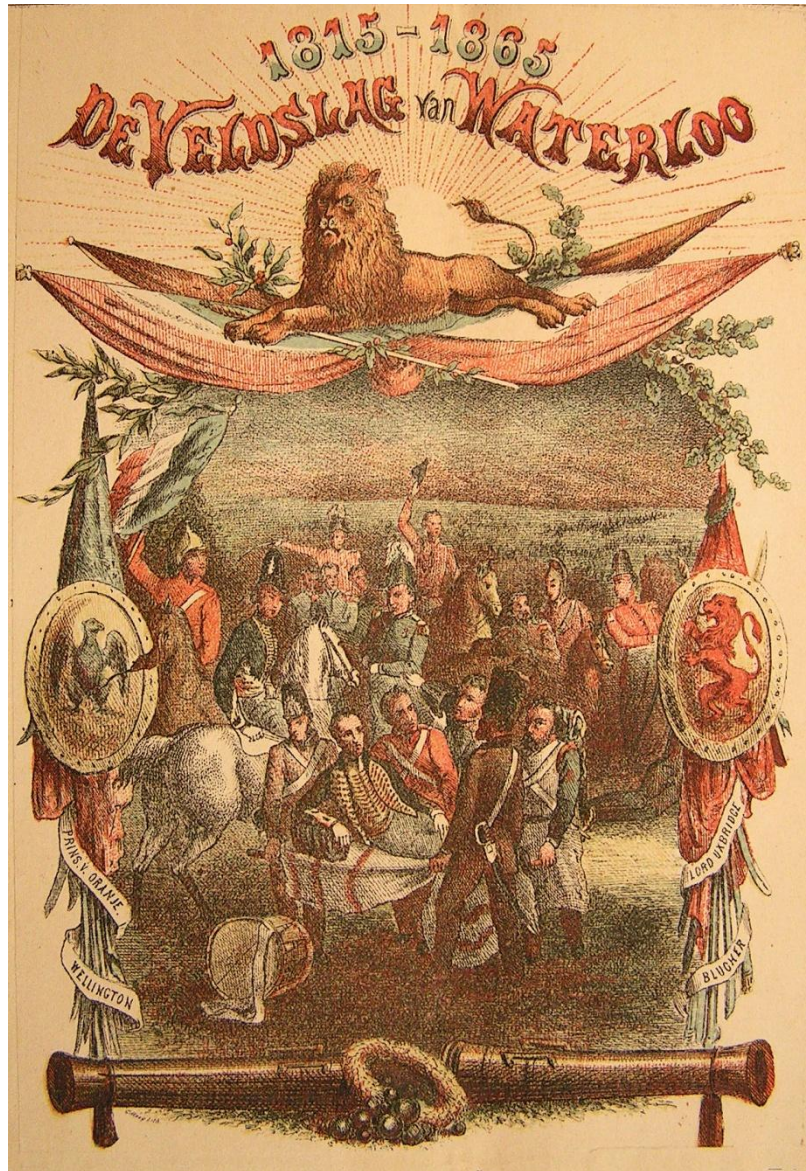
<sup>188</sup> Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren*, 111.

<sup>189</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 15-06-1865.

<sup>190</sup> Mari, *Waterloo en Oranje. Feestliedje bij de 50 jarige gedachtenisviering van den Slag bij Waterloo* (H. T. Hendriksen, Rotterdam 1865).

<sup>191</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 04-03-1865.

Quite a large amount of songs and poems like the previous example were printed and sold by local printers and booksellers. They varied in size, form and price. A song published and sold by publisher and bookseller De Koning, for instance, consisted of two poems accompanied by a colour picture printed on a newspaper-size paper.<sup>192</sup> The picture showed the wounded Prince of Orange at Waterloo (see figure 3).<sup>193</sup> This song was sold for two cents.<sup>194</sup>



**Figure 3: Prince William of Orange wounded at the battlefield of Waterloo.**  
Cut-out from Photograph of A. van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest* (D. de Koning, Rotterdam, 1865). (Photograph: Kees van den Berg, 08-05-2012).

<sup>192</sup> A. van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest* (D. de Koning, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>193</sup> The picture was actually a cut-out of a painting by Dutch painter Jan Willem Pieneman from 1824: [http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/aria/aria\\_assets/SK-A-1115?lang=nl&context\\_space=&context\\_id=\(10-06-2012\)](http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/aria/aria_assets/SK-A-1115?lang=nl&context_space=&context_id=(10-06-2012)).

<sup>194</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 25-02-1865.

In contrast with the somewhat larger and quite elaborate colour publication by De Koning, a large number of smaller and simpler poems and songs were published as well. Publisher W. P. J. Schollaardt, for instance, produced at least eight different poems and songs by various writers, which were printed on A4 or A5-sized cheap paper. Although no prices were mentioned the quality of the paper and format indicates that these publications were probably cheaper than the previous examples, indicating the availability to a large public.

In the titles of Schollaardt's publications the songs were depicted as songs for the people<sup>195</sup> and the low prices and simple language of the songs indicate that those people included the lower classes of society. The format of simple songs and poems also means they could be easily recited and taught to people who could not read. In most songs the writers were not mentioned. The writers that were mentioned provide an interesting insight, however. In one song the writer was described as a Dutch woman.<sup>196</sup> Another was written, according to the publication, by a local twelve years old boy.<sup>197</sup> Since the writers were kept anonymous, it is impossible to find out whether these were actually written by women and children. If that was the case, however, it shows that the female part of the population and the younger generation of Rotterdam also appropriated memories of Waterloo and functioned as producers in the Waterloo memory culture in Rotterdam in 1865. It is likely, however, that the emphasis on the age and gender of the writers, whoever they may be, says more about the readers the publisher was trying to reach than about the writers. If songs were written by women and children as well as by men, they should be bought, taught and sung by women and children as well as men. In that case Schollaardt was thus producing songs for the people including the lower classes and all ages and genders.

The above shows that printers, publishers and booksellers were very active in producing memories of Waterloo in Rotterdam. As small business owners, these producers can be described as at least middle-class. Although little evidence has been found to indicate the actual consumers of textual articulations of memories of Waterloo, the above mentioned aspects, like prices and language, indicate that the textual articulations, mainly in the form of songs and poems, were available to and aimed at people from all classes of society. Having established this, the songs remain to be sung which was most likely done at the commemoration ceremonies in June, 1865. These ceremonies, in all their forms, as well as their producers and consumers will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

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<sup>195</sup> For example: Author unknown, *Oranje-lied voor het volk. Waterloo. 18 Junij 1865* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865); Author unknown, *Volkslied. Waterloo herdacht; 18 Junij 1865* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>196</sup> Author unknown, *Herdenking aan den Slag bij Waterloo. Door eene Nederlandsche vrouw* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>197</sup> M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg, op het 50jarig feest van den slag bij Waterloo, 18 Junij 1865* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865).

### 4.3 Parties and public celebrations

At a municipal council meeting on the eighteenth of May, 1865, the council was asked to contribute to the payments of travel fares for Rotterdam veterans who were invited to the commemoration in Leiden mentioned in chapter three. It was decided that a special train would be arranged for the veterans and that for their return on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June a party would be organized in Rotterdam for which the mayor and municipal executive received unlimited credit.<sup>198</sup> Besides this, like the national government, the municipal government of Rotterdam decided not to contribute funds to commemorations of the Battle of Waterloo in Rotterdam. According to newspaper reports the reason given by the municipal council was quite clear. It was stated that since private initiative to commemorate the battle was so abundant, the municipal treasury could be spared.<sup>199</sup> A petition, sent in on behalf of the citizens of Rotterdam, in which the decision of the municipal council was argued against by stating that the city of Rotterdam had always been loyal to the house of Orange and that the public felt offended by the shown lack of interest in commemorating the battle feats of the hero of Waterloo, shows that the urge to commemorate the battle was felt in Rotterdam as well, at least by the people that signed it.<sup>200</sup>

Indeed enthusiasm to commemorate the battle was abundant and initiative was taken. Again one only needs to take a glance at the newspaper to find evidence of this. First of all local venues like ballrooms and teagardens, advertised their programs specially organized for the commemorations. In *Pax Intranibus*, a teagarden at the Schiekade, for instance, a concert was organized on the afternoon of Sunday the eighteenth and an open air ball on the nineteenth.<sup>201</sup> *Pax intrantibus* was a venue for the higher classes of society.<sup>202</sup> In the *Salon des Variétés* in the Lombardstraat a special evening program, including concerts and a ball, was organized for the evenings of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth of June. Every guest would receive as a souvenir a panorama in which the Battle of Waterloo, the wounded Prince of Orange and Wellington meeting the Prussians were depicted. An evening filled with entertainment at the price of 49 cents per 'gentleman with or without a lady.'<sup>203</sup> Interestingly veterans of Waterloo got free entry on the evening of the twentieth, showing once again the respect the veterans had in society. Again a price of 49 cents, which would be the

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<sup>198</sup> 'Gemeenteraad van rotterdam, zitting van donderdag 18 mei', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 19-05-1865.

<sup>199</sup> 'Gemeenteraad van rotterdam, zitting van donderdag 1 Junij', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 02-06-1865.

<sup>200</sup> GAR, Gemeentesecretarie Rotterdam afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, inventarisnummer 5828, letter, 'Weledelachtbare Heere'.

<sup>201</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 18-06-1865.

<sup>202</sup> GAR, Prenten en tekeningen, catalogusnummer RI 1165, 'Pax-Intranibus (Bergweg)'.

<sup>203</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 18-06-1865.

equivalent in purchasing power of about five Euros in 2011, seems rather low.<sup>204</sup> Still it would be unlikely that the lower classes of society could afford these prices.

Besides such parties other options were available for free. On Sunday the eighteenth, after commemorative services had been held in the various houses of prayer, groups of people roamed the city to see the flags, garlands and flowers people had decorated their houses with.<sup>205</sup> Houses, buildings of several enterprises and even entire streets were decorated with a variety of decorations.<sup>206</sup> Traders, barbers, shopkeepers and other entrepreneurs had decorated the fronts of their shops in various ways.<sup>207</sup> Amongst these decorations were often small poems. A Jewish trader, for instance, used a poem in the elaborately decorated front of his shop in which he thanked Jehova for helping the Prince of Orange achieve victory at Waterloo, whereas a Christian wallpaperer had decorated his shop with a poem in which he emphasized that God should be praised on this jubilee.<sup>208</sup> A grocer had cleverly worked a poem into his decorated shop front in which he urged people to drink wine and break bread on this jubilee, and asked people to buy the flour to bake said bread in his shop.<sup>209</sup> Besides shops people had decorated their houses. In a lot of places in the city entire streets had been decorated by the cooperation of the inhabitants. In Den Opper and Westnieuwland, for instance, the locals had cooperated to decorate their streets with illuminations of various colours providing an impressive spectacle after dark.<sup>210</sup>

A lot can be said about these people decorating their businesses and houses as producers of articulations of memories of Waterloo, but the most important notion is that this tendency to decorate collectively was seen all over the city, in both rich and poorer parts. The map of Rotterdam in 1865 formed more or less a triangle of which the base was formed by the river Maas. The southern riverside of the city, with its spacious streets next to canals and with the canal system providing a more hygienic system for waste disposal, was inhabited by wealthier people of Rotterdam. In the area north of the Hoogstraat, where streets were small and crammed with cheaper houses, lived the poorer population of Rotterdam.<sup>211</sup> In both parts streets were decorated, albeit some more elaborately than others. Special mention was made in the NRC, for instance, of the efforts the

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<sup>204</sup> Calculated on: <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate.php> (15-07-2012).

<sup>205</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865; J. Th. Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen ter gelegenheid van het vijftigjarige jubilé der overwinning bij Waterloo, gevolgd door: Een fragment uit Neêrlands Geschiedenis, (van het laatste der vorige eeuw tot op onze dagen) ten dienste der jeugd* (Rotterdam 1866) 21.

<sup>206</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>207</sup> 'Binnenland, Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>208</sup> 'Binnenland, Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>209</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>210</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 07-05-1865; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 10-05-1865.

<sup>211</sup> Van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, 4-8; De Nijs, *Rotterdamse ondernemers in de negentiende eeuw*, 20-21.

inhabitants of the Lange Lijnstraat, situated in the poorer part of the city, had made to decorate their street. It was mentioned that these inhabitants had put in this effort to outshine the neighbouring streets, showing competition between streets.<sup>212</sup> The people of Rotterdam, both wealthier and poorer, thus showed initiative to actively participate in the commemoration of Waterloo by decorating their houses.

Enjoying these decorations was free for any audiences and enjoyed they were. Newspapers reported a general business in the city on the eighteenth, describing the crowd as 'numerous'. On Monday the nineteenth, however, the city was so busy that the newspaper resulted to the word 'uncountable'.<sup>213</sup> That day the festivities in the city attracted audiences described as 'thousands upon thousands' of people celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the battle.<sup>214</sup> All day people roamed the city whilst dancing and singing, many wearing decorations and costumes. Although few details of that audience were mentioned, it was described as a mixed crowd. In the example of the Lange Lijnstaat, for instance, it was mentioned that all day a mass of people moved through the narrow street in a one-way motion, amongst who were the most eminent of the city.<sup>215</sup> To say it bluntly this example shows that the rich also visited the decorated streets of the poor and that rich and poor enjoyed decorations and celebrated together. Besides the decorations the main attractions of these audiences were the numerous parades marching through the city.

#### 4.4 Parades galore

Parades were definitely the main feat of the celebrations on the nineteenth of June in Rotterdam. Indeed so many parades of various sizes were organized that the NRC mentioned they were not able to describe them all due to lack of space.<sup>216</sup> Some were quite small, like a parade of railway workers consisting of twenty men on horses holding the national and city colours.<sup>217</sup> Others counted hundreds of participants, like the parade of the city's council workers.

The council workers' unions had requested permission to organize a parade to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo and were allowed to do so on the nineteenth of June. From 10.30 till 15.00 about 300 workers paraded through the city. A stop was made at the house of mayor of Rotterdam, J. F. Hoffmann, on the way. The parade was divided in sections of workmen

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<sup>212</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>213</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>214</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>215</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>216</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>217</sup> Ibidem.



with a certain trade. Thus the column started with a section of foremen, behind which were sections of carpenters, bricklayers, painters, blacksmiths, plumbers, landscapers and dredgers. Some workmen even carried the tools of their trade to emphasize their profession.<sup>218</sup> Right behind the foremen rode three wagon drivers on horses carrying banners. The middle bore an orange banner, while on the other two banners the lines 'Werklieden der gemeente', council workers, and 'Waterloo-feest 1865', Waterloo celebration 1865, were written. All participants wore orange sashes and along the column other orange banners as well as national colours were carried. The column was headed by two men of whom one carried a banner with the national crest and the other a banner with the city crest. On top of that every participant wore a hat in white and green, the city colours, and white and green flags were carried. Along the column one big Prussian flag and one big British flag were carried as well.<sup>219</sup>

Most participants of this parade were labourers who, skilled though they might be, were from the lower or lower-middle classes of society. It is unclear, however, who took the initial initiative and how the ideas for this parade were generated. The hierarchical setup of the parade, starting with the foremen, might indicate that a same hierarchy existed in the organization of the parade. Also at the start and the end of the parade C. B. van der Tak, the director of the council works, addressed the participants of the parade. At the start he reminded the workmen of the importance of the Battle of Waterloo. He ended his speech with a salute to the house of Orange, the Prussian and British nations and to the municipality of Rotterdam. At the end of the parade he commended the participants for the order they had shown whilst parading, showing gratitude for this but also initial uncertainty about whether these labourers would be able to keep in order in such a parade.<sup>220</sup> Although being the audience of these speeches, the labourers and foremen performing in the parade took the role of producers of the parade whilst marching through the city.

As for the consumers of this parade, the audiences enjoying the colourful spectacle passing by, a look at the parade route proved revealing. Starting and ending at the council workers depot, the parade marched through the whole of the city, meaning not every street but pretty much every neighbourhood including the poorer neighbourhoods north of the Hoogstraat and the parts where the wealthier citizens resided.<sup>221</sup> Should the inhabitants of the city not have been roaming the city they, both rich and poor, would have been able to watch the parade in their own neighbourhood.

As was mentioned, a stop was made at the mayor's house. There the mayor was thanked for granting permission to hold a parade in a speech by the chief foreman. The chief foreman expressed their wishes for a prosperous future for Rotterdam under Mayor Hoffmann and stated that they, the

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<sup>218</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>219</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>220</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>221</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 17-06-1865.

council workmen, trusted the mayor to protect them and their interests.<sup>222</sup> It is clear that the mayor was an important member of the audience of the parade, being both the main representative of the municipal government and, technically, the employer of the council workmen. Interestingly, the last remark made by the chief foreman, in which he put the council workers' interests under the protection of the mayor, reveals how the jubilee of Waterloo was used to articulate feelings and ideas in the present of 1865. Basically the producers of the parade, the council workmen and foremen, were here making an appeal to the mayor to protect their interests. The Waterloo jubilee was thus being used by lower and lower-middle classes to express themselves to higher classes.

The group that functioned as producers of the council workmen parade was formed based on shared professions. All participants were council workmen or foremen. This was not a lone example of groups based on an occupational niche organizing commemoration activities like parades. Two typographer unions from Rotterdam also combined their efforts and resources to hold a parade to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Waterloo the nineteenth of June, to which all typographers were invited.<sup>223</sup> Typographers were pretty much all people who were involved in the printing business, from the ardent typesetter to the zealous ink applier, if you will. The two typographer unions had tried to get financial support from the municipal government for the parade.<sup>224</sup> As far as I have been able to find out no financial support was given, which was in line with the aforementioned policy the municipal council had decided on. The typographers managed, by attracting other enterprises involved in the printing business willing to take part and pay contribution, to finance the parade themselves.<sup>225</sup> Besides the members of the two local typographer unions, other local typographers and some members of a typographer union from The Hague joined the parade as well.<sup>226</sup> Typographers from The Hague joining is an interesting detail for it indicates that, if typographers are seen here as the main producers of this parade, that group was indeed based on profession of its members and not primarily on their place of residence.

Some people that were not typographers joined this parade as well. The parade was headed by the members of the second section of the local union of the metal cross and a music corps of a

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<sup>222</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>223</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 16-05-1865. The two local typographers unions: *Door Koster's fakkel voorgelicht is deze vriendenkring gesticht* and *Hoe schoon is het broeders vereenigd te zien*.

<sup>224</sup> GAR, Gemeentesecretarie Rotterdam afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, inventarisnummer 5828, letter, 'Aen den weldedelachtbaren heer J. F. Hoffmann, burgemeester van Rotterdam. Rotterdam 16 maart 1865'.

<sup>225</sup> Ibidem; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>226</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865. The name of the typographers' union from The Hague was *Door eendracht zaam verbonden*.

local military unit.<sup>227</sup> The bearers of the metal cross were veterans of the Ten Days Campaign of 1831, in which they had fought against Belgium. Some of their eldest members had also served in the Waterloo campaign.<sup>228</sup> Thus, although this parade was primarily produced by typographers, direct involvement of veterans was apparent as well. Interestingly these were not just veterans of Waterloo but veterans of later campaigns as well.

At about 10:00 in the morning on the nineteenth of June, the parade started at the same starting point as the council workers parade. The parade was headed by the bearers of the metal cross and the musical corps. After them marched the typographers divided in several sections. All typographers were dressed in black suits with black hats and white gloves.<sup>229</sup> This rather dark apparel was compensated by the colourful flags, banners and shields carried by the typographers. Among them were the Dutch national colours, orange banners, the city colours of Rotterdam and the banners of the typographers' unions that had organized the parade. Various shields and banners with phrases or slogans were carried as well. These had in them messages related to Waterloo, like 'All honour to the veterans of Waterloo'.<sup>230</sup> Some slogans were related to Rotterdam and had little to do with Waterloo in essence.<sup>231</sup> The majority of the slogans, however, were related to the profession of the typographers like 'freedom of press, the foundation of civilization' or 'the art of printing, queen of the world'.<sup>232</sup> Although the analysis of the narratives and identities expressed in this parade will be discussed in the next chapter, it already becomes clear that the typographers were expressing their own occupation during these commemoration ceremonies of Waterloo, just like the council workmen did in their parade.

Like the Workmen, the typographers carried the actual tool of their trade in the parade. The main feat was the victory wagon situated in the middle of the parade. On top of a horse-drawn cart, decorated with both the national and the Rotterdam city crest, was placed a printing press. Most remarkable was that the printing press did not just symbolize the tool of the typographer's trade but was actually operational. A team of printers were working the press as it moved along in the parade and printed various songs and poems on cheap A5 sized paper which were dealt out to the cheering public (see figure 4). Like the cheap poems and songs mentioned in paragraph 4.2, the texts were relatively short and in simple verse. If the link between Waterloo and the printing profession had not

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<sup>227</sup> GAR, Gemeentesecretarie Rotterdam afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, inventarisnummer 5828, pamphlet, 'Programma van den optocht, te houden door de beide alhier gevestigde typographische vereenigingen Door Koster's fakkel, enz., en Hoe schoon is het broeders vereenigd te zien'.

<sup>228</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 22, 33-35.

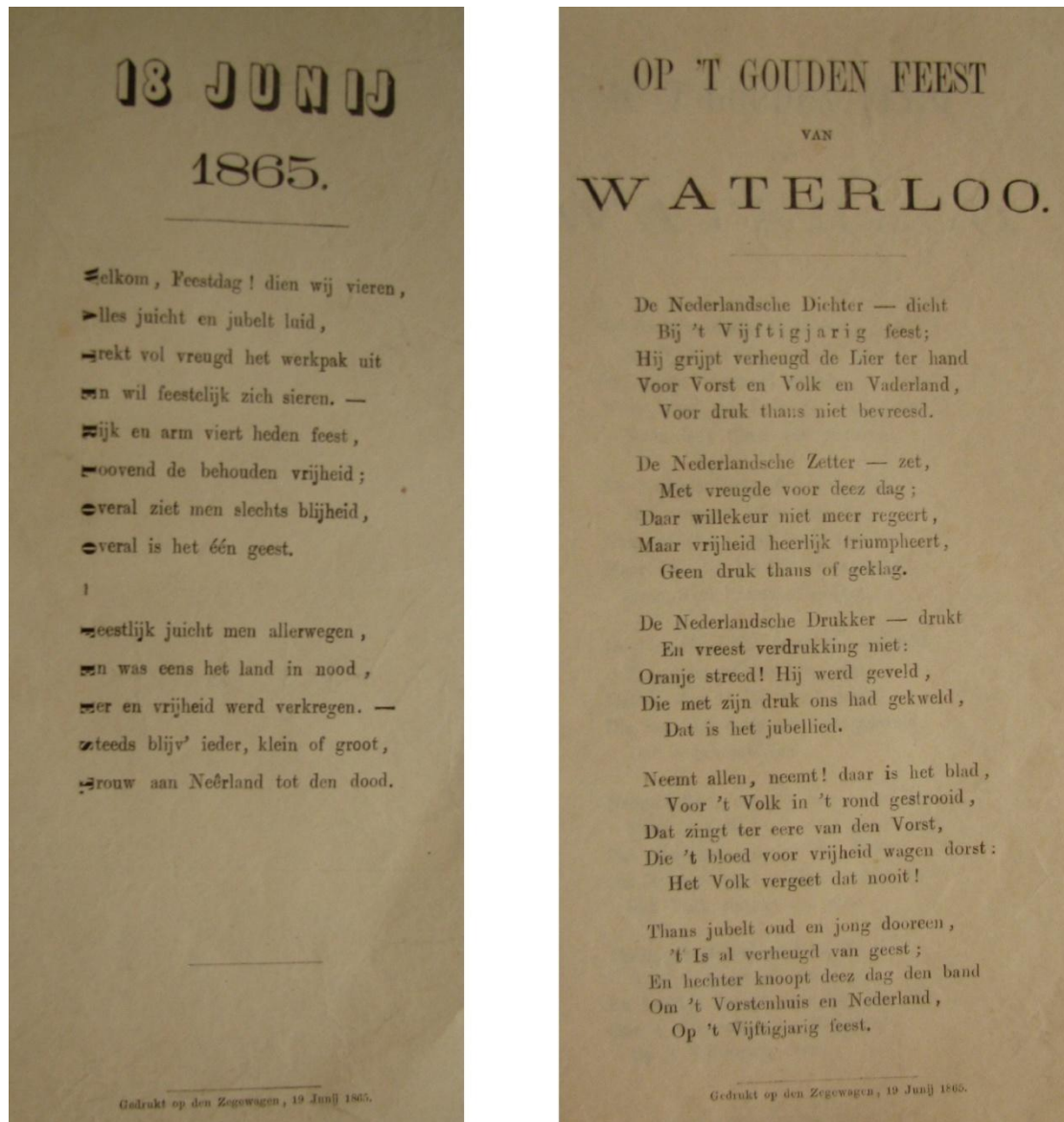
<sup>229</sup> GAR, Gemeentesecretarie Rotterdam afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, inventarisnummer 5828, pamphlet, 'Reglement van orde'.

<sup>230</sup> 'Hulde aan de veteranen van Waterloo'.

<sup>231</sup> For example: 'Dat handel en scheepvaart groeije en Rottes welvaart bloeije'.

<sup>232</sup> GAR, afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, 5828, pamphlet, 'Programma van den optocht'.

yet become clear in the slogans on the shields and banners carried by the typographers, these poems made that link crystal. The main message was that thanks to the victory at Waterloo, the freedom of press was guaranteed which meant that the typographers could execute their profession in freedom in 1865.<sup>233</sup> It is clear that the typographers, as producers of this parade, constructed their own narrative of Waterloo in which they linked it to their profession and interests, to which I will get back in the next chapter.



**Figure 4: Two examples of poems printed on the typographer's victory wagon.**

Note that the left poem is an acrostic. Photographs of: Author unknown, *Op 't gouden feest van Waterloo* (Geprint op den zegenpraalwagen, Rotterdam, 1865); Author unknown, *18 Junij 1865* (Geprint op den zegenpraalwagen, Rotterdam, 1865). (Photographs: Pieter van den Berg, 02-05-2012).

<sup>233</sup> See for example: Author unknown, *Op 't gouden feest van Waterloo* (Geprint op den zegenpraalwagen, Rotterdam, 1865); H. van N., lid der typ. ver. Hoe Schoon enz., *Lied van Costers zonen* (Geprint op den zegenpraalwagen, Rotterdam 1865).

Just like the council workmen parade the typographers' parade marched a route that went through both wealthier and poorer parts of the city. In fact the routes were quite similar and had the same starting point which is why the typographers started half an hour before the workmen. The similar route means that the general audience of the parade, as far as they were not moving through the city, consisted of both the wealthy and poor of Rotterdam.<sup>234</sup> Just like the workmen did, stops were made by the typographers along the way. They stopped at the house of the mayor, where the mayor was presented with a collection of poems and songs on Waterloo bound in a silk cover.<sup>235</sup> Here the mayor also served as audience and representative of the municipal government.

The parade ended at about 17.00 in den Opper, a street at which the Rotterdam office of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen* was located. As was mentioned in paragraph 4.2, the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen* was a national association for the socio-cultural education of the Dutch people.<sup>236</sup> There the parade was welcomed by several patrons who had made donations to make the parade possible and by Otto Petri, a well established publisher, printer and bookseller that had German roots.<sup>237</sup> According to the NRC a 'German anthem' was played there in his honour.<sup>238</sup> Singing a German song in a commemorative parade might be interpreted as taking the efforts of German allies in the Battle of Waterloo into account and thus pointing out consideration for the transnationality of the battle. I would like to argue this was not the case here, however, and think this German song was just sung to honour a well established fellow typographer with German roots. The main reason for this line of thinking is that the typographers' parade, including the songs and poems printed on the victory wagon, seemed to be completely devoid of references to the British and Prussian allies of Waterloo.

In the building of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen* all participants were received with beverages and were addressed by Otto Petri. In his speech Petri honoured 'the only monarch in the world under whose rule the true freedom of printing, the freedom of the people thrived'.<sup>239</sup> Also, according to the NRC, Petri acknowledged that the Dutchman Laurens Koster was the true inventor of book printing. Petri stated that the Germans, who generally considered Johannes Gutenberg the inventor of book printing, would also acknowledge Koster to be the true inventor if they did not consider the Dutch history to be a myth altogether.<sup>240</sup> Whether the typographers nationalized the

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<sup>234</sup> GAR, afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, 5828, pamphlet, 'Programma van den optocht'.

<sup>235</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>236</sup> Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren*, 111.

<sup>237</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 28-05-1853; 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 09-02-1857.

<sup>238</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>239</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>240</sup> Ibidem.

history of Waterloo will be discussed in the next chapter but Petri's speech does show that they at least nationalized the history of their profession on this occasion.

As has become apparent, the groups that were the main producers of these two large parades were formed based on their profession. In the case of the workmen the participants of the parade, mainly from the lower and lower-middle classes of society, shared an employer. In the case of the typographers the participants shared a professional niche. The typographers that performed in the parade can be seen as lower to middle class but the involvement of people like Otto Petri show that the upper-middle class was involved as well. It is important to note that veterans of the Belgian war of independence also participated in the typographers' parade to which I will come back later. There seems to have been an involvement of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen* as well which is also an interesting notion for they aimed at a wide public and especially at the lower classes of society. Their involvement might indicate that the organizers of the parade aimed at a wide audience including the lower classes. Considering the routes of these parades their audiences indeed consisted of a wide part of Rotterdam society, since both poorer and wealthier parts of the city were paraded through. However broad the audience were, some members of the audience were of special importance as the example of the workmen parade's stop at the mayor's house indicated.

Next to these two large parades there was one more parade of over 300 participants. This parade provides a good example of how such a large parade was organized and funded. This third large parade differed from the two above in several ways and will be discussed in the next paragraph.

#### **4.5 Waterloo for the next generation**

The third large parade held in Rotterdam on June 19, 1865, differed from the others in many ways. The most remarkable difference was the average age of the participants. In April 1865, a newspaper announced that a youth association had been formed especially for the Waterloo celebrations due to be held in June. The association, consisting of about 300 schoolchildren and working youth, aimed to hold a parade during the celebrations and had been spotted practicing military manoeuvres in the city.<sup>241</sup> In a little book published in 1866, one of the initiators of this youth association, J. Th. Bos, reflected on the commemorations of 1865 and described how the association developed from idea to parade.<sup>242</sup> Bos described how at the celebrations in November 1863, both poor and rich celebrated the regained liberty and independence of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands

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<sup>241</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 25-04-1865.

<sup>242</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*.

together and were united in their joy. It had been not just the elderly but also their children and children's children who were joyfully roaming the streets singing songs of the fatherland. Bos stated that this image of celebrating youth sparked ideas of letting the younger generation play a role in the Waterloo celebrations as well. A few weeks later, a group of children from Vlaardingen, dressed in orange and carrying orange flags paraded through Rotterdam on their way to the zoo to which they had been invited, which inspired the idea of holding a parade.<sup>243</sup> Thus, like in the various celebrations discussed in chapter 3, this is yet another example of using precedents of other commemorations and ideas of other groups for the Waterloo commemorations.

In February 1865 some likeminded people combined their ideas and founded the *Vereeniging der Jongelieden-Corpsen* (VJC), a youth association to which children could sign up to take part in the parade. Within a few weeks 175 schoolchildren and working children between the ages of twelve and fifteen had joined. In this period the VJC was joined by another youth association that had been formed in November 1864 with the idea to hold a parade in which the children would be dressed in military uniforms.<sup>244</sup> Using their ideas the VJC placed an advert asking for quotes on prices of uniforms.<sup>245</sup> To pay for all these the VJC relied on public donations of which some were collected from audiences of the weekly rehearsals of military manoeuvres by the children of the VJC in the months before the celebrations.<sup>246</sup> These rehearsals were also held in public to show benefactors how the money they had donated was spent.<sup>247</sup> Some benefactors did not contribute in cash but in services like providing space to practice or arranging food and drinks for the children during the day of celebration.<sup>248</sup> On top of these donations the VJC charged their members, the children, a contribution of fifteen cents per week. According to Bos this was not only to pay for the uniforms but also to act as a barrier since the numbers of children wanting to be part of the parade was too great to handle.<sup>249</sup>

Thus far it is apparent that the funding for the youth parade depended on the benevolence of the public. This public were not only the donators but also the parents of participating kids willing to pay the weekly contribution. This public financial support shows that many thought this parade to be a good idea. If this parade is considered an articulation of the memory of the Battle of Waterloo, the organizers would be the memory producers. The children, though performing the articulation, were actually memory consumers, as is apparent in a speech by W. Coenraad held for the children at

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<sup>243</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 9-10.

<sup>244</sup> Idem, 10.

<sup>245</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 03-03-1865.

<sup>246</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 11, 19.

<sup>247</sup> Idem, 12.

<sup>248</sup> Idem, 12, 42-45.

<sup>249</sup> Idem, 10.

one of the rehearsals.<sup>250</sup> In this speech, Coenraad, the vice-president of the VJC, explained the meanings of the crests and mottos on the banners the children carried as he and the other people that lived through the ordeals in 1815 experienced it. He explained that the motto on the national crest of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, *Je Maintiendrai*,<sup>251</sup> was the motto of William of Orange who fought for the freedom of the Netherlands against the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Coenraad emphasized that this motto was experienced as a godsend by the Dutch people when their liberty was threatened in 1815. Also the motto *Dieu et mon droit*,<sup>252</sup> the motto of the British monarchy, was experienced as a godsend. The British, who were powerful allies in the struggle, should be thanked for their deeds. Coenraad continued by saying that the Prussians, their banner devoid of a motto, should be thanked equally, for under Blücher they also helped securing the fatherland. He concluded by emphasizing the role of the Prince of Orange and the Dutch soldiers in the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>253</sup> Coenraad was painting for the children a very clear picture of the meaning of Waterloo and how it should be remembered. This provides an interesting example of the roles of producers and consumers of memories. Coenraad, who has a living memory of 1815, acted here as a producer of memories giving the memories of 1815 a certain meaning and mediating those memories to the children of the VJC. The children were memory consumers, and how could they be anything else since they had no direct memory of 1815, and performed those memories in a parade.

Some consideration for the transnationality of the battle was shown by the division of the children of the VJC in three battalions. One was a Dutch battalion consisting of boys wearing dark blue uniforms with orange sashes. The second was a British battalion wearing redcoats. The third was a Prussian battalion wearing blue uniforms. All 'soldiers' wore shakos and belts in their battalion's colours. To complete the 'armies', each battalion had a squad of drummers. Also a group of marketentsters, played by girls, were attached to each battalion.<sup>254</sup> Marketentster is a Dutch term for the female sutlers and washerwomen that followed the armies offering their services. The presence of girls in the parade is an interesting fact for this seems to be the only parade that included females.

Each battalion was headed by the battalion standard, the Dutch by an orange banner with the national crest, the Prussian by a banner featuring the Prussian eagle and the British by a banner with the crest of the British monarchy. The battalions were divided in platoons of about ten soldiers

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<sup>250</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 17-19; 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 14-06-1865.

<sup>251</sup> I will maintain.

<sup>252</sup> God and my right.

<sup>253</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 17-19.

<sup>254</sup> *Idem*, 13-17.



carrying a flag of the nationality of the battalion.<sup>255</sup> Of course the armies wouldn't be complete without their generals. Therefore three boys played the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Wellington and field marshal Blücher who were sided by two aide-de-camps each. Their uniforms were the most exquisite with golden epaulettes and braiding, black bicorn hat with white feathers and a sabre on a leather belt as can be seen in figure 5.<sup>256</sup>



**Figure 5: Children re-enacting the Prince of Orange, Wellington and Blücher, their staff, some drummers and marketentsters.** Photograph of a picture found in J. Th. Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*. (Photograph: Kees van den Berg, May 8, 2012).

The children did not just re-enact the armies of Waterloo by being dressed like them, they re-enacted their actions as well. At 10.30 AM on the nineteenth of June the three battalions marched via three separate routes to the Oosterkade, being cheered by the massive crowds that lined the streets on each route.<sup>257</sup> At the Oosterkade, the VJC was joined by yet another youth association, consisting of about 100 children portraying a Dutch army. In contrast with the Dutch battalion of the VJC dressed in dark blue, these 'soldiers' were dressed in green coats and white trousers.<sup>258</sup> Although the uniforms of some of the Dutch light infantry companies during the Battle of Waterloo had been green and white, in this case the uniforms were also chosen to work the city colours into the parade.<sup>259</sup> The Oosterkade was a broad quayside providing ample space to perform for the waiting

<sup>255</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 13-17.

<sup>256</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>257</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865.

<sup>258</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>259</sup> Ibidem.

crowd the military manoeuvres for which they had been trained the previous weeks. On the Oosterkade a military style tent had been erected bearing the name *La Belle Alliance*, the name of the inn at the battlefield of Waterloo where Napoleon had a forward headquarter and where the Prussian and Anglo-Dutch armies met after having defeated the French armies.<sup>260</sup> Thus, by marching and manoeuvring and eventually meeting up at *La Belle Alliance*, the story of the battle was told by re-enacting it without a shot being fired or the actual presence of an enemy.

Besides by the three different armies and their manoeuvres to meet at *La Belle Alliance*, the transnational perspective on the past of Waterloo was displayed in yet another way by the VJC. On their way to the Oosterkade one of the Battalions stopped at the house of R. F. Turing, consul to the British crown. There the consul was presented with a volume of commemorative poems and songs bound in silk. The volume also contained a song about the British, lead by the Duke of Wellington, beating the Eagle.<sup>261</sup> The Eagle symbolized the French army under Napoleon who carried bronze eagles as battle standards. A volume was also presented to J. W. Bunge, consul to the Prussian crown, though this was done privately on the twentieth of June since Bunge had asked not to stop at his house with an entire parade.<sup>262</sup>

After the manoeuvres at the Oosterkade, the entire VJC formed up in twenty platoons and marched en masse through the city taking a route similar to the other two large parades.<sup>263</sup> Just like with the other parades this means both wealthier and poorer parts of Rotterdam were paraded through leading to believe that the audience of the parade consisted of both wealthier and poorer parts of the Rotterdam population. As was emphasized by Bos, this had been the intention, for both rich and poor, young and old, to celebrate the victory of Waterloo together.<sup>264</sup>

The parade stopped at the Bath Hotel where the veterans of the first section of the union of the metal cross were meeting. There the president of the veterans association, himself a veteran of Waterloo, held a speech. He explained that the fate of the Netherlands was decided on the battlefield of Waterloo. He praised the Prince of Orange and his Dutch soldiers for having stopped the enemy at Quatre-Bras which enabled the allied armies to defeat the enemy at Waterloo. The president expressed his happiness to see before him the allied army like that he had seen in 1815, consisting of soldiers from England, Prussia, the Netherlands, Brunswick and Nassau, and thanked the youth for taking part in the commemorations. Also he thanked the organizers of the parade for teaching the youth that their primary task in society was to be able to be soldier at a young age. He emphasized that thanks to the young men ready to fight for their king and country in 1815, they now

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<sup>260</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 22.

<sup>261</sup> Idem, 41.

<sup>262</sup> Idem, 27-28.

<sup>263</sup> 'Advertentien', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 17-06-1865.

<sup>264</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 9-10.

lived in freedom and prosperity. The president pointed out that in 1830, when king and country were under threat again, people rose again to fight in unity for king and country.<sup>265</sup>

Like the aforementioned speech by Coenraad, the veteran president's speech provided the children with an interesting image of the Battle of Waterloo. Again a transnational view on the event is presented yet the role of the Dutch army, especially at Quatre-Bras, was emphasized to a greater extent. An interesting element is added though. In the speech by the veteran's president a set of values is being taught to the children, namely that they have the duty to stand up and fight to defend the freedom of the Dutch nation out of loyalty to their country and to their king. He is basically teaching them to be good citizens of the nation.

Although the children performed the parade here and can therefore be seen as producers of that parade, that articulation of memory, they are not so much producers of memories of Waterloo themselves. They are the memory consumers that form an audience to the memories expressed by the organizers of the parade, like Coenraad, and even by some members of the audience of the parade, like the president of the veteran's association. These men, who had direct memories of the Battle of Waterloo or at least of the time in which the battle took place, are the true memory producers here that pass their memories on to the next generation. They are the true memory makers initiating, teaching and applauding the youth to re-enact the past, while it is their past, their youth that is being re-enacted. The apparent involvement of veterans and other people that lived through the days of the Waterloo campaign in 1815 as memory producers is a good indicator of Waterloo being alive in what Assmann called communicative memory.<sup>266</sup> In this parade of youth organizations direct memories of Waterloo were communicated directly from one generation to the next.

The organizers of this parade produced memories and mediated them directly to the children participating in the parade and to a wider audience through the parade itself. In the report by Bos little mention was made of who these organizers actually were. It is apparent that some teachers were involved leading to the conclusion that amongst the organizers were people from the middle class of society.<sup>267</sup> Figure 5 provides yet another indication as to who were involved in organizing this parade. The children in the picture are carrying three banners with texts on them. The banner on the right carries the slogan 'eendragt maakt magt', unity makes strength. This had been the motto of William of Orange who fought the Spanish in the sixteenth century and could thus be an attempt to creating historical continuity by putting Waterloo in a line of events in which members in the House of Orange fought foreign oppressors. However, eendragt maakt magt was also the name of the

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<sup>265</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 33-40.

<sup>266</sup> Assmann, 'Collective memory and cultural identity', 126-127.

<sup>267</sup> Van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, 132-135.

voting union of the conservative-liberals in Rotterdam, as was mentioned in paragraph 3.4.<sup>268</sup> It could very well be that members of this union, also meaning members of the upper-middle or even upper classes of society, were involved in the organization and were trying to get political messages and ideas across. These possible messages, as well as the narratives of Waterloo and identities expressed in these parades will be the topic of the next chapter, however.

#### 4.6 Concluding remarks

As for the question what genres and forms articulated the memories of the Battle of Waterloo, the case of Rotterdam indeed showed a wide variety. The past of Waterloo was linked to commodities and was referred to in novel, song and poetry, providing a variety of stories of Waterloo. Local publishers produced a vast amount of relatively cheap and simple songs and poetry meant for the upcoming celebrations. Around the date of the fiftieth jubilee of the battle, public celebrations were held throughout the city taking the form of parades in decorated streets.

The producers of the various articulations of memories of Waterloo varied as much as the articulations themselves. Residents of Rotterdam both from lower and higher classes acted as consumers and producers. Business-savvy shopkeepers and traders linked Waterloo to their wares. Indeed it seemed that everyone in Rotterdam was involved in the commemorations of Waterloo. Specific groups stood out as producers though, like the council workmen or the typographers combining their efforts to organise parades. The examples of the parades show that associations like the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen* and possibly a local conservative-liberal voting association were also involved in the organisation of parades. These examples show that people from different classes and stations in society appropriated memories of Waterloo and reproduced them in the various articulations. As was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the producers of articulations of memories can often be considered consumers of memories as well since most had no direct memories of Waterloo. Veterans of Waterloo might be an exception, for they could draw on their direct memories of the battle. Involvement of veterans in the commemorations was seen as well. There they mediated the meaning they gave to their (experienced) past to younger generations as was seen in the youth association parade.

Although some celebrations took the form of more exclusive parties, most celebrations were free to enjoy by a large audience. They were funded by generosity of the public, donations from wealthy patrons and benefactors and by corporate sponsorship. Of the textual articulations the vast

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<sup>268</sup> Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 17-20.

amount of locally produced poems and songs were available and affordable to a wide public. Examples like budget-priced poetry for schools and the youth association's parade point at a focus on the younger generation as audience, as consumers. Also prices of songs and the parade routes, as well as the involvement of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen* show a focus on lower classes. Thus the picture painted here shows the (upper) middle class mediating collective memories of Waterloo to the lower classes and younger generations of Rotterdam. The example of the workmen parade, however, shows lower and lower-middle classes using the commemorations of Waterloo to express their interests to higher classes. Indeed it seems that the people that can be seen as the memory producers and consumers making up the social dimension of the memory culture of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865 were people from all strata of society.

As a last note on the producers of articulations of memories, it is interesting to note that most of the producers discussed above were not specialized in dealing with the past, in storing historical information and conveying historical information to a wider public. As was mentioned in chapter 2, Jan Assmann described that communicative memory was characterized by instability, disorganization and non-specialization.<sup>269</sup> The producers discussed in this chapter seem to have the characteristic of non-specialization. Few indications of institutions that were specialized in maintaining and producing collective memories seemed to be involved. One exception might be the involvement of the *Maatschappij tot nut van 't algemeen*, an institution that also the aim to teach the lower classes their national history.

What messages these producers conveyed, what identities were expressed, what narratives of Waterloo were presented and whether and how Waterloo was placed in a larger narrative by this variety of people involved will be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>269</sup> Assmann, 'Collective memory and cultural identity', 126-127.

## Chapter 5

### Waterloo narratives and identities:

#### An in-depth analysis of the articulations in Rotterdam

Now that the various ways in which memories of Waterloo were articulated and the people involved in the production and consumption of those articulations have been discussed, it is time to move on to a narrative analysis of the articulations. This analysis focuses on the articulations of memories of Waterloo that were produced in Rotterdam. By analysing the narratives constructed and the symbols used, the questions what sub-national or national identities were expressed in commemorating Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865, and whether a transnational perspective on the battle was taken, will be answered. This will lead to answers to the ultimate question of what the significance of Waterloo was for the construction of a Dutch national narrative. To answer these questions the narratives of Waterloo have to be explored, not just the way the history of the battle itself was plotted and what heroes and villains played the main part in those stories, but also the way Waterloo was put as an event in larger narratives.

Before moving on to an in depth analysis of narratives, however, a word of caution is in order. As was explained in paragraph 1.1, Clark's study of local Prussian commemorations of the Napoleonic Wars showed that non-narrative elements of articulations of memories should be taken into account as well.<sup>270</sup> Doing so enables us to see and understand what possible alternative interpretations of the past or what contemporary ideals and identities were being expressed. The articulations and their narratives should thus be studied and understood in their context which was provided in the previous chapters. Also articulations without an obvious narrative, like some of the parades, should not be overlooked when looking for identities expressed in the commemorations of Waterloo as will become clear in the next paragraph.

#### 5.1 Identities absent narrative

As was mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, a broad range of articulations of memories of Waterloo, of ways the battle was commemorated in 1865, have been taken into account. These included textual articulations like songs and poetry but also ritual articulations like ceremonies. The

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<sup>270</sup> Clark, 'The wars of liberation in Prussian memory', 550-551.

parades discussed in the previous chapter are examples of such ceremonies. In these parades, by the means of carrying various symbols, identities were expressed of which the link with the Battle of Waterloo was not always clear.

A striking example was the parade of the council workmen discussed in paragraph 4.4. All participants of that parade were employed as workmen of the city council, as was emphasized by one of the banners they marched under. They were divided in platoons based on shared trades. A lot of workmen carried the tools of their trade, the carpenter his hammer or the bricklayer his trowel.<sup>271</sup> Why would a labourer carry his tools but to show to the public the trade he is skilled in, to emphasize his being part of a group of skilled labourers with steady employment. Keeping in mind the context provided in chapter 3, possible explanations for this behaviour present themselves. As Van Dijk argued in his study of the population of Rotterdam, status was of considerable importance for people, especially skilled artisans, who formed the top of the lower class of society.<sup>272</sup> If that was the case then emphasizing your artisanal skill and steady employment by carrying your tools in a parade with a great audience seems quite reasonable. Whatever the reason, the point here is that no link between a carpenter and the Battle of Waterloo was expressed in the parade, meaning that the parade was a mere excuse for the carpenter to show off his skill and trade, his status in society. No narrative of Waterloo was presented by which the past was retold and linked to the group of labourers in the present of 1865. This means that looking solely at narratives of Waterloo and looking at articulations of memories absent their contexts leads to overlooking identities expressed in those articulations.

As was described in chapter 4 the workmen marched under banners with the national and the city crest and wore hats decorated with the city colours.<sup>273</sup> This colourful display provides an example of the different social contexts people derive multiple identities from, as was emphasized by Grever and Ribbens.<sup>274</sup> The flags, banners and tools carried in the parade show that a carpenter marching in the parade is at the same time part of various social contexts, be it skilled carpenters, council workmen, inhabitants of Rotterdam and citizens of the Netherlands. Thus some of the social contexts that form the basis of the identities of the participants were emphasized in this parade.

The city colours and crest were not exclusive to this parade. Indeed in all parades discussed in chapter 4 the city colours were shown, for instance by carrying banners and flags like in the typographers' parade, or by wearing green and white uniforms, like one of the battalions of the

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<sup>271</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>272</sup> Van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880*, 134.

<sup>273</sup> 'Binnenland. Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>274</sup> Grever and Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden*, 18-25.

youth associations.<sup>275</sup> The entity of the city of Rotterdam, one of the social contexts people derive an identity from, was thus emphasized. Again little explanation of a link between the Battle of Waterloo and Rotterdam was offered. Surely the presence of veterans of Waterloo showed that indeed some elderly inhabitants of Rotterdam had fought at Waterloo and in one poem it was emphasized that an orphan from Rotterdam at Waterloo had asked the time before the battle started and when answered exclaimed: 'Thank god the people back home are praying for us.'<sup>276</sup> Although it was apparent here that people from Rotterdam also fought at Waterloo, it was made clear in Veterans' speeches and in the poem that these people were fighting at Waterloo for king and country, for the freedom of the nation.<sup>277</sup> The abundant display of colours and flags symbolizing the city of Rotterdam says possibly more about the people that commemorated than about the past they were commemorating. Carrying the city colours emphasized that it was the people of Rotterdam commemorating Waterloo.

The above examples show that in the commemorations of the Battle of Waterloo, local or sub-national identities were expressed absent a link provided in a narrative of the commemorated past. It is important to keep the context of Rotterdam in mind to make sense of identities expressed in the articulations of memories of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865. Keeping the context in mind the next paragraph will discuss the narratives of the Battle of Waterloo articulated in Rotterdam in 1865.

## 5.2 Battle narratives

The narratives of the Battle of Waterloo offered in its commemoration in Rotterdam in 1865 varied in size and content. Some offered brief and simplified versions of the battle whereas others painted an elaborate and detailed picture of the battle itself and the people that fought it.

A remarkable example of a detailed depiction of the battle was seen in the parade of the youth associations described in paragraph 4.5. The children performing in that parade were divided in a Prussian, a British and a Dutch battalion, thus re-enacting the allied armies that defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. The leaders of said armies, Blücher, Wellington and the Prince of Orange, were re-enacted as well.<sup>278</sup> The story of Waterloo in this depiction was thus that several European powers fought Napoleon together and that the victory was shared. One can only speculate about the motivation to invest great effort and funds to display a memory of the battle with such a

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<sup>275</sup> 'Binnenland', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 21-06-1865; GAR, afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, 5828, pamphlet, 'Programma van den optocht'.

<sup>276</sup> Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*.

<sup>277</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 33-40; Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*.

<sup>278</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 13-17.



transnational perspective. The context of this parade offers a possible explanation though. As was mentioned, the consuls of England and Prussia were presented with a volume of poems and songs.<sup>279</sup> The motivation for displaying consideration for the parts played by the Prussian and British allies at Waterloo might be to gain favour from the consuls. Keeping in mind that there was also indication that the conservative-liberal voting association was involved in organizing this parade and that the members of that voting association were part of the elite of Rotterdam of which many had stakes international trade, gaining favour from the consuls of Prussia and Britain might well have been a motivation for emphasizing a transnational perspective on the battle in this case. Be that as it may, the point here is that an elaborate narrative of the battle with a transnational perspective was offered.

This was not a lone example of a transnational perspective on the battle. In several poems and songs the efforts of the British and Prussian allies at Waterloo were celebrated as well. In a pamphlet published by local printer De Koning that was already mentioned in paragraph 4.2, the brave fighting of the men at Waterloo headed by the Prince of Orange, Blücher and Wellington was honoured. It was told that despite this bravery, much shown by the Prince of Orange who was wounded whilst fighting in the vanguard, the battle was undecided until Blücher's Prussians attacked Napoleon in the back.<sup>280</sup> In a song published by Schollaardt, the reader was asked to honour the heroes Wellington and Blücher who stood victorious with the Prince of Orange. It was emphasized that the Dutch, British and Prussians fought the cruel murderous foe Napoleon for three days. At Waterloo, together with the Prussians and British, the Prince of Orange attacked and showed great courage at the head of the attack.<sup>281</sup> In these narratives the Prussians, British and Dutch, lead by Blücher, Wellington and the Prince of Orange, stood as equals facing a common foe. Interestingly, no mention was made of the fact that the Prince of Orange was a subordinate to Wellington. Indeed in most narratives in which the Prussians and British were also mentioned the Prince of Orange played the leading part and saved the battle.<sup>282</sup> In yet another poem published by De Koning explanation was given. It was stated that the Prussians honoured Blücher, the British Wellington, but 'we' honour the Prince of Orange, the hero God provided the Netherlands with.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 27-28, 41.

<sup>280</sup> Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*.

<sup>281</sup> Author unknown, *Gedenk-lied, gezongen in den jare 1815, op de roemrijke overwinning in de velden van Waterloo* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>282</sup> See for example: Author unknown, *Vreugdelied op het vijftigjarig feest van den Slag bij Waterloo* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865); Author unknown, *Voorheen en thans* (Geprint op den zegenpraalwagen, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>283</sup> Author unknown, *Oranje, Blücher, Wellington. Ter gelegenheid van het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest van Waterloo. 1815-1865* (D. de Koning, Rotterdam, 1865).

In most other poems and songs, as well as in the other two parades, the Prince of Orange was honoured indeed and little or no mention was made of his Prussian and British allies. In the council workmen parade one British and one Prussian flag were carried amidst dozens of national and orange colours. In the typographers' parade not a single symbol of the foreign allies was carried. In many a poem and song, it was as if the Prince of Orange had fought and won the battle alone.<sup>284</sup> In most of these the prince was honoured for saving the day by his courage and for shedding blood for the fatherland. Some poems even made it seem to those without any knowledge of the battle that the Prince of Orange fought and defeated Napoleon in single combat.<sup>285</sup> In other poems and songs Waterloo was portrayed as a battle between the Dutch and Napoleon. In those narratives the sons of the fatherland, including the Prince of Orange who was ever their leader, fought with courage and shed blood for king and country.<sup>286</sup> It was even emphasized in one poem that at Waterloo Orange's blood mixed with that of the common people, strengthening the bond between monarchy and nation.<sup>287</sup> As the above examples show, in many a narrative of the battle the foreign allies were cut out of the story. Doing so nationalized versions of the story of the battle, in which the Dutch led by the Prince of Orange stood alone against a foreign oppressor, were forged.

One ally that was apparent in most songs, poems, parades and decorations has not yet been mentioned. No matter how hard the Dutch fought, with or without allies, the victory was ultimately given by God and for that he was praised in the commemorations of the battle. As was mentioned in paragraph 4.3 a Jewish trader thanked Jehova, and a Christian wallpaperer God in the decorations of their shops.<sup>288</sup> In many a poem and song mentioned above, it was mentioned that it was ultimately the hand of God that had granted victory and consequently freedom to the Netherlands. In poems and songs God's hand in victory was further explained, for instance by giving the Netherlands a Gideon, the Prince of Orange, who won the battle, or even by influencing the weather and making it rain the night before the battle started.<sup>289</sup> These religious influences on the narratives of Waterloo I will come back to in the next paragraph.

The main players in all narratives of Waterloo discussed above all fought the same foe. Whether symbolized by an eagle, or named 'the Corsican' or Bonaparte, Napoleon was the

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<sup>284</sup> See for example: Author unknown, *Op 't gouden feest van Waterloo*; M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg*; Author unknown, *Uitboezeming, op den 50sten gedenkdag van de overwinning in de velden van Waterloo* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865); Author unknown, *Oranje-lied voor het volk*.

<sup>285</sup> M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg*; Author unknown, *Op 't gouden feest van Waterloo*.

<sup>286</sup> H. van N., *Lied van Costers zonen*; Author unknown, *Herdenking aan den Slag bij Waterloo*; Author unknown, *Volklied. Waterloo herdacht*.

<sup>287</sup> Author unknown, *Volklied. Waterloo herdacht*.

<sup>288</sup> 'Binnenland, Rotterdam 19 Junij. Viering van het Waterloo-feest', *Rotterdamsche Courant* 20-06-1865.

<sup>289</sup> Author unknown, *Oranje, Blücher, Wellington*; Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*.

personification of the enemy in most narratives.<sup>290</sup> In some he was given almost no attributes and described merely as a force that threatened the Dutch nation, whereas in others he was the cruel and murderous villain, or the oppressor that cowardly fled at the end of the Battle.<sup>291</sup> Interestingly in none of the commemorative ceremonies and decorations discussed in chapter 4 and in none but three of the sixteen locally produced poems and songs analyzed for this study, the enemy was referred to as being French. Of the three exceptions one song referred to the enemy as the 'French eagle', symbolizing Napoleon's empire.<sup>292</sup> In the other two songs, both published by Schollaardt, the enemies were flat-out named 'the French' or 'France'.<sup>293</sup> In the rest of the narratives the foe seemed to be Napoleon.

Besides against a common foe, the battle was fought for common purpose according to these narratives. The most apparent purpose to fight Napoleon was to secure and defend the freedom and independence of the Netherlands and secure it from falling prey to tyranny again. In the typographers' parade fighting for freedom was emphasized, in the youth association's parade securing the fatherland.<sup>294</sup> In most poems and songs the purpose was the defence of the nation as well. There were but few exceptions. In one song printed in the typographer's parade it was stated that God gave freedom to the world at Waterloo but a few lines later defence against foreign oppression became the reason Dutch boys fought bravely once again.<sup>295</sup> Making defending the freedom of the Netherlands against Napoleons threat the main purpose of the battle was yet another way in which the story of the Battle of Waterloo was nationalized. This is even more apparent when the discourses used are taken into account as well. In many a poem and song the Netherlands was named 'fatherland', for instance, and in one the Netherlands threatened by Napoleon was described as the 'Dutch virgin'<sup>296</sup> being in trouble and needing to be saved by brave Dutch boys.<sup>297</sup>

When looking solely at the narratives of the Battle of Waterloo itself, offered in the various articulations of memories of Waterloo, it thus becomes clear that those in quite a few the story of the battle was nationalized. Making the purpose of the battle the defence of the fatherland transformed a European battle into a national battle. Cutting out the foreign allies, thus transforming

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<sup>290</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 41; Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*; Author unknown, *Gedenk-lied, gezongen in den jare 1815*.

<sup>291</sup> C. Groeneveld Cz., *Vrede door god met Oranje, ter gelegenheid van den vijftig-jarige feestdag der overwinning bij Waterloo, 18 Junij 1865* (W. P. J. Schollaardt, Rotterdam, 1865); Author unknown, *Gedenk-lied, gezongen in den jare 1815*.

<sup>292</sup> Mari, *Waterloo en Oranje*.

<sup>293</sup> Author unknown, *Vreugdelied op het vijftigjarig feest*; M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg*.

<sup>294</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 17-19.

<sup>295</sup> H. van N., *Lied van Costers zonen*.

<sup>296</sup> The Dutch virgin symbolized the Netherlands or the Dutch nation.

<sup>297</sup> Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*.

Waterloo into a battle between the Dutch, lead by the Prince of Orange, against the foreign oppressor Napoleon, did this even more. To explore how these narratives contributed to a national narrative, the ways the Battle of Waterloo was placed in a larger narrative need to be studied as well. The next paragraphs will discuss these ways as well as the identities expressed by them.

### 5.3 God, King and fatherland

In quite a few poems and songs the event of Waterloo was placed in a larger narrative that started centuries before the battle against Napoleon. In one the reader was urged to honour God and Orange for with them 'we' won the Eighty Years' War against Spain and it was them that brought an end to tyranny again and brought peace at Waterloo.<sup>298</sup> In another poem a slightly more elaborate narrative starting with the Eighty Year's War (1568-1648) was provided. There the narrative started with William of Orange (1533-1584) fighting Spanish oppression followed by Maurits of Orange (1567-1625) defeating the Spanish at Nieuwpoort. Then the story jumped to 1813 when God saved the fatherland from oppression again and provided the Prince of Orange who, when the country was threatened again in 1815, won the Battle of Waterloo. In this poem it was emphasized that, like the Watergeuzen<sup>299</sup> honoured their Orange, 'we Batavian sons' should now honour our Orange.<sup>300</sup>

These narratives are excellent examples of historical events being emplotted in a narrative by which the historical continuity of a group is imagined, as was emphasized by Zerubavel and explained in paragraph 2.3.<sup>301</sup> In the first narrative it is the same 'we' that won the Eighty Years War as the 'we' that were saved from tyranny at Waterloo. In the second it was the same fatherland that was saved from Spanish oppression by William and Maurits of Orange, as the fatherland that was saved again by the God-given Prince of Orange at Waterloo. What is imagined in these narratives is a 'we', a fatherland, indeed a nation that had existed and had fought against foreign oppression for centuries. Describing the people of that nation as Batavian sons yet again refers to the Batavians who rose up against Roman oppression in the first century B. C., thus tracing the origin of the people of the nation imagined here millennia back in time.

The question rises who the above mentioned 'we' are, what narrative identity is constructed, or in Anderson's words what nation is actually imagined?<sup>302</sup> The people included in that nation and

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<sup>298</sup> Groeneveld, *Vrede door god met Oranje*.

<sup>299</sup> Watergeuzen was the name of the Dutch Calvinist nobles and others that confederated themselves and fought against the Spanish in the Eighty Years War.

<sup>300</sup> Author unknown, *Oranje, Blücher, Wellington*.

<sup>301</sup> Zerubavel, *Time maps*, 52-54.

<sup>302</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 4; Ricoeur, 'Life in quest of narrative', 32-33.

their characteristics varied from narrative to narrative as the next example will show. As was mentioned in the previous paragraph and is apparent in the examples of narratives above, God was a common denominator in a lot of stories of Waterloo, whether told in parades, decorations or on paper. In one poem the Battle of Waterloo was placed in a larger narrative like the above examples but an interesting element was added. The narrative started with William and Maurits of Orange not only defeating Spain but also 'kicking' the Catholic Church. It continued with Stadtholder William III (1650-1702) who ascended to the British throne and brought 'justice to that country'.<sup>303</sup> It was emphasized that an Orange won at Waterloo fifty years ago and that a William of Orange celebrates with us today. The poem concluded stating that the people and Orange were bound by their history.<sup>304</sup> The difference of this poem lies in the choice of Oranges and the mention of the Catholic Church. William and Maurits not only fought Spain but also the Catholic Church. Stadtholder William III, who indeed ruled as King of Great Britain, was as such involved in many a conflict in which the Catholic Church was his enemy. The 'we' imagined here, the people bound with Orange celebrating their common past, are imagined as predominantly Protestant and the historical events commemorated are not just fights against foreign oppression but fights against the Catholic Church as well. Catholics are thus depicted as enemy in this poem and excluded from and opposed to the 'we'. Also, what Oranges did for 'us', and Orange also did for the people of Britain, shows that next to 'us', the Protestant people of the Netherlands, there is a Protestant 'us' that crosses borders imagined here, a transnational 'us'. This poem is an interesting example in the context of Rotterdam where anti-Catholic sentiments were strong as was seen in the substantial support given to the April Movement in 1853.<sup>305</sup> This poem shows that such sentiments were still felt in 1865 and that Protestants appropriated memories of Waterloo and other historical events to express them. Interestingly in a song published by a printer known to be Catholic, God was merely referred to as God and no mention of a specific Christian denomination was made.<sup>306</sup>

Another common denominator in the above mentioned narratives was Orange. The 'we' imagined in these historical narratives was a 'we' saved by, fought for and bound with Orange in historical events like the Battle of Waterloo and many before them. In one poem it was literally stated that 'Orange is what binds us', us being the Dutch people, the nation.<sup>307</sup> It was not just in narratives in which Waterloo was placed in a longer line of events that this bond between Orange and the people of the Netherlands was emphasized. As was mentioned in paragraph 5.2, in many narratives of the battle itself the Prince of Orange fought and shed blood for the Dutch people. The

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<sup>303</sup> Author unknown, *Oranje-lied voor het volk*.

<sup>304</sup> Author unknown, *Oranje-lied voor het volk*.

<sup>305</sup> See paragraph 3.4.

<sup>306</sup> Mari, *Waterloo en Oranje*.

<sup>307</sup> Groeneveld, *Vrede door god met Oranje*.

bond between monarchy and nation strengthened through the event of Waterloo was clearly emphasized in one poem in which it was stated that at Waterloo the blood of Orange and the common people mixed, strengthening the bond between monarchy and nation.<sup>308</sup>

These narratives become even more interesting in the context of the Netherlands around 1865. As was explained in chapter three, this was a period in which considerable tension arose between the liberal government lead by Thorbecke, that tried to implement the 1848 constitution in a way that decreased the power of the king substantially, and King William III who, supported by conservatives and anti-revolutionaries, tried to retain power wherever he could. On top of that there is the context of Rotterdam around 1865, a period in which the conservative elite felt the threat of liberals gradually gaining power in the municipal government.<sup>309</sup> In quite a few narratives of Waterloo conservative and anti-revolutionary political ideals were seen to influence the imagining of the fatherland or nation. In many an articulation of memory of Waterloo it was made quite clear that the nation was a nation of people loyal to Orange, a nation under God and an Orange King. In one song, for instance, it was stated that in 1815 the young Prince of Orange shed blood for the people of the Netherlands at Waterloo after which the writer urged his public to honour in unity the current King William III, 'in who we see our saviour'.<sup>310</sup> In another poem the narrative started in 1813 with the foundation of the free nation under God and King Orange, and the Battle of Waterloo, as the first feat of arms when the new kingdom was threatened, was made part of the origin of that nation.<sup>311</sup> As Zerubavel pointed out a historical starting point of a group is often seen in narratives of that group's past.<sup>312</sup> In this poem Waterloo is depicted as part of the birth of a rather conservative vision of the nation, a nation under God and King. The conservative and anti-revolutionary political ideals seen in these articulations of memories of Waterloo are examples of what Rüsen called the political dimension of *Geschichtskultur*, the way of dealing with the past in which, by referring to historical events and symbols, people's belief in a political system are founded and sustained.<sup>313</sup> In this case, however, the political beliefs promoted were not exactly those of the liberal government that was in power in 1865.

Besides conservative and anti-revolutionary political ideals, flat out criticism aimed at the liberal government was seen in these articulations of collective memories of Waterloo as well. In one song it was stated that, 'although meat is expensive and wages small, we sing at the fiftieth

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<sup>308</sup> Author unknown, *Volklied. Waterloo herdacht*.

<sup>309</sup> Van de Laar, *Stad van formaat*, 20.

<sup>310</sup> M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg*.

<sup>311</sup> Van Vliet, *Ontboezeming op het vijftigjarig gedenkfeest*.

<sup>312</sup> Zerubavel, *Time maps*, 89-95. See paragraph 2.3.

<sup>313</sup> De Bruijn, *Verzamelingen voor verbondenheid*, 7-9.

anniversary of Waterloo where our blood mixed with that of Orange.<sup>314</sup> Later it was stated that ‘the people are sick of the talking that just leaves our stomachs empty’ and it ended with the statement that we, the people, can build our future and ‘under Orange the people look at a better future.’<sup>315</sup> With the talking leaving stomachs empty the futility of national parliament and liberal national government was emphasized. The wish for a future under Orange in a commemoration of Waterloo, a success booked under Orange in the past, brings a notion of Peter Seixas to memory. As was explained in paragraph 2.3, Seixas emphasized a shared past can provide a basis for a collectively shared vision on the future, and might provide a justificatory context for action in the present.<sup>316</sup> Although it is hard to say how many people shared the view of the writer of this poem, in other words how collectively shared his view on present and future was, he is indeed using the memory of Waterloo as a basis for his view on the future and the emphasized notion that ‘we can build our own future is almost a call to action in the present of 1865.

Keeping Seixas’ notion of a shared past as justification for collective action in present and future in mind, yet another aspect of these narratives of Waterloo becomes apparent. In most narratives the memory of Waterloo is indeed used as foundation for a possible call to action in the future. As was mentioned in the previous paragraph, in most narratives of the battle itself the purpose of the battle was a fight to save the fatherland. This meant that the fatherland was worth fighting for. In most of the poems and songs discussed here the willingness to pick up arms for the fatherland, or in the narratives of this paragraph for God, king and fatherland, was emphasized as a value of the ‘we’ imagined. It was stated, albeit in different forms, that in case the fatherland is threatened again, ‘we’ will fight again for king and country.<sup>317</sup> An interesting notion is that one of these poems, in which it was stated that ‘if necessary we’ll fight again for the fatherland’, was written by a woman in a time in which picking up arms to fight for the fatherland was a predominantly male affair.<sup>318</sup> In these articulations of memories the willingness to sacrifice for the fatherland is being promoted as a good value that the people of said fatherland should act upon when necessary. Waterloo serves as a historical example that this notion is based upon. Besides the veterans who sacrificed at Waterloo the Prince of Orange serves as an example too, for he too fought and shed blood for his king and country in 1815.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Author unknown, *Volkslied. Waterloo herdacht*.

<sup>315</sup> Ibidem

<sup>316</sup> Seixas, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 5-7.

<sup>317</sup> M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg*; Author unknown, *Herdenking aan den Slag bij Waterloo. Mari, Waterloo en Oranje*.

<sup>318</sup> Author unknown, *Herdenking aan den Slag bij Waterloo*.

<sup>319</sup> Author unknown, *Uitboezeming, op den 50sten*; Author unknown, *Gedenk-lied, gezongen in den jare 1815*; M. B. C. (oud 12 Jare), *Feestlied uit de Walesteeg*; Groeneveld, *Vrede door god met Oranje*; Author unknown, *Vreugdelied op het vijftigjarig feest*.

It was not just in poem and song that the willingness to sacrifice for the fatherland was emphasized and promoted by the example of the Dutch that fought at Waterloo. It also told by the actual veterans of that battle, as was seen in the speech for the children marching in the youth association's parade by the president of the Veteran's association. He also emphasized the necessity to teach people of the Netherlands at a young age to pick up arms and march for king and country if necessary.<sup>320</sup> These children were not just re-enacting the past, in a way they were also 're-enacting' a possible future in which they could be called upon to sacrifice for the nation.

The banner the children marched under with the text 'with god for king and fatherland', as can be seen in figure 5, pretty much summarizes the narratives discussed in this paragraph. The question what alternative narratives to these were offered will be the topic of the next paragraph.

#### 5.4 Alternative narratives

It was the 'God, king and country' narratives, the glorified national versions of the past of Waterloo in which Orange played the main part, that Multatuli based his satire on in *De zegen Gods door Waterloo*.<sup>321</sup> The question is whether alternative narratives were offered and what those alternatives were?

As was described in paragraph 4.4, the typographers carried many a banner with slogans related to their profession like 'freedom of press, the foundation of civilization.'<sup>322</sup> In the poems and songs printed on the victory wagon of the parade, the link between the typographer's profession and Waterloo was further explained. The basic narrative was that the result of the victory at Waterloo was freedom for the fatherland, the freedom necessary for the writer and printer to perform their profession without fear.<sup>323</sup> Freedom and liberty were the keywords in these poems. In the offered narratives Waterloo marked a turning point between the oppression, restriction and confinement before, and the freedom and liberty of the nation after Waterloo.<sup>324</sup> In one song Waterloo was the defence of the freedom gained in 1813, but the essence was the same.<sup>325</sup> These articulations of memories of Waterloo thus also offered a national narrative in which the nation after Waterloo was imagined as free, and the subgroup of typographers in that free nation emphasized. As such both a national identity and a sub-national identity were constructed in the same narratives.

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<sup>320</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 33-40.

<sup>321</sup> See paragraph 4.2. Multatuli, *De zegen Gods door Waterloo*.

<sup>322</sup> GAR, afd. Alg. Zaken: Raad; B&W (NSA), 444.01, 5828, 'Programma van den optocht'.

<sup>323</sup> Author unknown, *Op 't gouden feest van Waterloo*.

<sup>324</sup> H. van N., *Lied van Costers zonen*; Author unknown, *18 Junij 1865* (Geprint op den zegenpraalwagen, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>325</sup> Author unknown, *Voorheen en thans*.



To get back to Multatuli's grudge though, the Prince of Orange was by no means cut out of these narratives, although one song was devoid of any Orange colour and just emphasized the freedom gained in 1815 and still enjoyed in 1865.<sup>326</sup> In the rest the role of Orange was still mentioned but freedom was the subject of the narratives. The prince of Orange merely helped gaining that freedom, as did the veterans.<sup>327</sup> The main difference with the narratives in paragraph 5.3 was thus that the motto 'loyalty to Orange and Fatherland'<sup>328</sup> was replaced with 'freedom was their motto', meaning the motto of the Dutch who had fought at Waterloo.<sup>329</sup>

Emphasizing liberty and freedom of the people might indicate a liberal perspective, although caution is needed when drawing such conclusions. Indeed, not all poems and songs from the parade showed a strong liberal perspective and it is unlikely that all the typographers in the parade were liberals. One source trusted to be liberal in perspective was the NRC, however, and indeed a beautiful example of a liberal perspective on Waterloo that included both King William I and II was published. In that article Waterloo was emplotted in the following narrative. 'We' remember how in 1813 William I returned to the Netherlands and stated that 'your freedom and civil liberties will be guaranteed by a constitution'.<sup>330</sup> In 1815 said liberties and freedom were threatened by the return of Napoleon but the threat was averted by victory at Waterloo. The same hand that fought for freedom at Waterloo (the Prince of Orange) gave 'us' a new constitution in 1848 that guaranteed even more civil liberties and freedom that 'we' enjoy today (in 1865).<sup>331</sup> This short summary of the article shows that Waterloo was as an event emplotted in a larger, liberal narrative focusing on freedom and liberties and on Thorbecke's constitution. The nation was imagined as all people of the Netherlands, living in freedom under the same constitution that guaranteed civil liberties to all. The people of the Netherlands included the people that might disagree with said constitution. It was even emphasized, as if to rub it in, that on the day of commemoration all political dissension should be forgotten for a moment and Waterloo should be commemorated by all in freedom.<sup>332</sup>

The most interesting parts of the article in the NRC were the roles given to the Kings in the narrative of the past. It looked like William I demanded a constitution and William II gave a new constitution in 1848. As was explained in chapter 3, King William I had a very autocratic style of governing and William II was pretty much forced by circumstances to accept a new constitution in

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<sup>326</sup> Author unknown, *18 Junij 1865*.

<sup>327</sup> H. van N., *Lied van Costers zonen*.

<sup>328</sup> This was indeed described as 'our motto' in: Author unknown, *Herinnering aan het Waterloo-Feest. 19 Junij 1865* (M. J. Messing, Rotterdam, 1865).

<sup>329</sup> H. van N., *Lied van Costers zonen*.

<sup>330</sup> 'Waterloo', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* 18-06-1865.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibidem*.

1848.<sup>333</sup> In the narrative in the NRC, historical facts are thus bent almost beyond recognition. Doing so, the emphasis was laid on the constitution, however, and praising the Oranges in this narrative thus served to found a liberal perspective and ideology.

Interestingly, in these alternative and more liberal narratives of Waterloo, the people fighting the battle were still fighting for the nation, albeit less for King and more for the defence of the freedom of the fatherland.

## 5.5 The silence of Belgium

Before rounding off this chapter one last aspect of the narratives in articulations of collective memories of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865 has to be discussed. As was emphasized by Berger, national narratives of the past are linked to territorial entities and the boundaries of those territories are often emphasized in narratives of wars in the past, since it was said boundaries that were contested in those wars.<sup>334</sup> In the various national narratives of Waterloo discussed in this chapter there was a thunderous silence regarding the territorial boundaries of the imagined nations. What remained silent was the fact that the borders of the fatherland defended in 1815 were different from the national borders in 1865. In none but one of the numerous articulations of memories of Waterloo produced in Rotterdam that were studied for this thesis, the fact that Belgium had claimed and gained independence in 1830, resulting in several years of war between the Netherlands and Belgium, was mentioned. As was mentioned in paragraph 2.3, for the construction of national narratives of the past, forgetting or deliberately ignoring past events that emphasize division of the nation is as important as commemorating past events that emphasize national unity.<sup>335</sup> Forgetting civil war seems to be the case here.

There was, however, one exception. In the speech of the president of the association of veterans bearing the metal cross, the speech that was for the children in the youth association's parade, the wars with Belgium were mentioned. In his speech he emphasized the value of willingness to pick up arms when the fatherland was threatened. He told the children that it had been the willingness of young boys to fight for the fatherland that had made victory possible. He then continued by saying that when king and fatherland were threatened again in 1830, people rose again to fight for their fatherland.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Bornewasser, 'Koning Willem II', 304-309; Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 429-432.

<sup>334</sup> Berger, 'Writing National Histories in Europe', 59-60.

<sup>335</sup> Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 192-203.

<sup>336</sup> Bos, *De feestviering der jongelieden-corpsen*, 33-40.

This being an exception to what seems to be the rule leads to the question why the veterans' association president mentioned 1830. The reason is quite interesting. The president was a veteran of Waterloo but also a veteran of the war that followed the independence of Belgium in 1830. The veterans association he presided over was the first section of the local union of the metal cross, the metal cross being the award granted to those who fought against Belgium in the Ten Days Campaign in 1831. All members were thus veterans of the wars against Belgium that followed its independence in 1830 and only some were also veterans of Waterloo. Given the choice between forgetting 1830 in the narrative and as a result cutting out the feat of arms for which he and his brethren had been awarded or mentioning an embarrassing bit of the national history, he chose the latter, although he did forget to mention the fact that his team had eventually lost that conflict. Doing so, the president both emphasized the nation worth fighting for, thus imagining a nation, and expressed the sub-national identity of veterans that had fought for king and country in the conflict following 1830.

## **5.6 Concluding remarks**

As became apparent in this chapter, a variety of sub-national identities, related to for instance political ideals, religious convictions, place of residence or social status, were expressed in the articulations of memories of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865. Keeping the various backgrounds of the producers discussed in chapter 4 in mind, the expressed identities reflected the social contexts the producers of said articulations were part of. These identities were expressed whilst performing in the commemorations of Waterloo, for instance by carrying the flag of Rotterdam or the tools of a trade in a parade, and in the narratives of the past that was commemorated. Identities were thus expressed in the act of articulating memories of Waterloo and in the articulations themselves.

The ways the story of the battle was told and the way the event of Waterloo was emplotted in larger narratives resulted in a variety of narratives of a national past in which the nation was imagined. The imagined nation differed from articulation to articulation, however. In some, the past of Waterloo was emplotted in larger national narratives based on religious or political perspectives. In those the nation was imagined based on the backgrounds of the imaginers, like a Protestant Dutch nation or a nation under God and Orange, and national and sub-national identities were made to correspond in narratives of the past. In other narratives sub-national identities were imagined as part of the national identity by linking the two in narratives of the past, like the typographers enjoying the freedom of the nation that was defended at Waterloo or the veterans of 1830 having fought for the fatherland like their predecessors did at Waterloo. Thus by articulating memories of Waterloo in

national narratives the nation was imagined and a place in that nation was claimed by the groups that articulated the memories.

As a last note, before moving on to the general discussion of the findings of this research in the conclusion, some transnational perspectives on the past of Waterloo were seen but were mostly limited to acknowledging the roles played by the Prussian and British armies, who fought next to the sons of the Netherlands to defend the Dutch nation.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion:

What remains is to discuss the answers the above presented findings offer to the main question of what the significance of the Battle of Waterloo was for constructing a Dutch national narrative within the context of transforming historical culture in the Netherlands around 1865.

As became evident in the third chapter and in the subsequent discussion of the case of Rotterdam, the way people dealt with the past, on an international, national and local level, was indeed influenced by political and social changes in the context, meaning that these changes were of influence on the ever dynamic historical culture. In this context Waterloo was commemorated throughout the nation in locally organized commemorations that took various forms and were organized by people of various backgrounds. Also, the case of Rotterdam showed that people of various social, religious and political backgrounds were involved in the production and consumption of collective memories of Waterloo, resulting in a variety of articulations of said memories. In these articulations sub-national as well as national identities were expressed reflecting the social contexts and ideals of the producers.

When considering the simple question whether or not a national narrative was constructed in the articulations of memories of the past studied here the answer would be negative. This answer is based on mere semantics, however, for it was not 'a' national narrative but multiple and various national narratives of the past that were constructed around the event of Waterloo in the commemorations. Just like in the research done by Clark on the commemorations of the Napoleonic Wars in Prussia, which was discussed in paragraph 1.1, some narratives of the past studied here were seen to conflict with each other. In the Prussian case, however, local commemorations showed alternative perspectives of veterans on the past that conflicted with the 'official' Prussian national narrative. In the Dutch case the government did not offer such an official narrative. The exception was the commemoration by the King and government for the veterans of Waterloo in Leiden. There a narrative of Dutchmen, led by Orange, fighting at Waterloo for king and fatherland was presented and was actually shared by veterans. In the commemorations in Rotterdam the 'God, king and country' narrative was seen as well and reflected political ideals of what the nation should be like. Alternative narratives were seen as well though, by which other groups appropriated and produced the past of Waterloo based on their own ideals, for instance by emphasizing the freedom of the

nation defended and thus providing a liberal alternative. The bottom line is that by commemorating Waterloo a multitude of national narratives was constructed in 1865.

The main question in this thesis was not the dichotomous question of whether or not a national narrative was constructed, however, but the more nominal question of what the significance of Waterloo was for constructing a Dutch national narrative in 1865. Based on the above findings I would like to argue that Waterloo was indeed of major significance for the construction of a Dutch national narrative in 1865. Firstly, and quite paradoxically, this argument is supported by the fact that such a wide variety of producers and consumers were involved in the commemorations of Waterloo in which collective memories of Waterloo were articulated in various ways and in which the past of Waterloo was nationalized and emplotted in various national narratives. This involvement was seen both in the brief glimpse at commemorations all over the Netherlands, and in the case of Rotterdam that was studied in depth. The fact that people of all ages, from all social classes, with different religious convictions and political preferences, were taking part in these commemorations means that all these people were, in that act, involved in thinking about, in imagining the nation. By acting as producers or consumers (or both) of collective memories of Waterloo, people from the entire spectrum of society were imagining the nation and claiming their place within that nation by commemorating the great deeds of said nation and including their own groups in the constructed national narratives of the past. Waterloo was thus indeed quite significant for stimulating the thinking about the nation, for invoking a national consciousness, and for different groups to emphasize their being part of the nation.

Secondly the variety of narratives of the past in the various articulations of collective memory of Waterloo did have an underlying common denominator that supports the major significance of Waterloo for creating a Dutch national narrative of the past. The articulations of collective memories of Waterloo from Rotterdam showed a variety of narratives in which Waterloo was emplotted. Some were narratives in which Waterloo was another example of similar events of fighting foreign oppression in earlier times, dating back to the sixteenth century or even Roman times. In others Waterloo was the first feat of arms of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands or the event in which the newly gained, constitutionally warranted freedom of the Dutch people was defended. In some narratives the Dutch defeated Napoleon with the help of other European armies, whereas in others they stood victorious alone. All these various narratives in the articulations of memories of Waterloo in Rotterdam in 1865 had one underlying abstract narrative construction or, to use Wertsch's term, one underlying national narrative template. Although the nation imagined varied, and the reasons for the sacrifices made in fighting the battle differed, all memories of Waterloo articulated in Rotterdam in 1865 that were studied for this thesis ultimately came down to defending the nation.

That concluded my Master thesis on Waterloo in collective memory in the Netherlands in 1865. It is important to emphasize here, however, that the above was mainly based on an in-depth study of memories of Waterloo articulated in Rotterdam. An overview of the commemorations throughout the Netherlands was needed to put the case study of Rotterdam in context. Examples of other commemorations of Waterloo were described in chapter three, yet they remain to be researched in depth for proper comparison with the Rotterdam case. An obvious suggestion for further research would thus be similar research focusing on other cities. This would especially be interesting when the city to be compared would differ from Rotterdam in for instance religious convictions of the population. Maybe in a predominantly Catholic city different stories of Waterloo were told.

Besides focusing on territory, an in depth study of some of the sub-national identities expressed, or on certain groups of producers might be interesting as well. I was for instance intrigued by the notion that the commemorations seemed very much a male affair. In only a few occasions women seemed to be involved in taking part, or wanting to take part, in commemorating Waterloo. Research on involvement of women and their perspectives on the past of Waterloo would be interesting too, given that all men who fought and died at Waterloo had mothers and some had wives or even daughters.

A combination of cases based on territory and a focus on specific groups of producers might be interesting as well. In this Master thesis the involvement of veterans in commemorating Waterloo in 1865 was emphasized. It could very well be, however, that Waterloo veterans from Rotterdam told entirely different stories of their past feats of arms than for instance veterans from cities in the provinces of Friesland or Brabant. Maybe there were different narratives based on the different units veterans had served in, which would be likely when considering that military units were often formed from recruits from a certain region. Maybe differences in interpretations of the past of Waterloo can be found in stories told by veterans from the regular army and veterans from militia units, as was seen in Clark's Prussian case-study.

Besides comparing territories or groups of people in the same year, a diachronic comparison between commemorations would be interesting as well. Steegmans has done this focusing on the Netherlands at large. A narrower focus, for instance on Rotterdam, might prove useful to shed light on the development of producers and consumers involved in, and identities expressed in commemorating the past in an ever changing context.

The bottom line is that, although answers have been provided to some questions by this Master thesis research, many questions still stand and many new questions arise concerning the way people deal with their past and the way identities are constructed, and nations imagined, in commemorating a shared past.

## Epilogue

When I started the Master History of Society at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, nothing could have been further from my thoughts than the Battle of Waterloo. At that time I had high hopes for studying the Australian memory culture of the Gallipoli campaign of 1915. This campaign is yearly commemorated in Australia on ANZAC-day, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. Since the necessary sources for such research were indeed a world away, and since I did not have the financial means to fly to Australia to visit archives, I chose the topic of Waterloo in collective memory instead.

Setting mind to purpose, I started exploring the possibilities of this topic. During that adventure my interest was indeed captivated, both by the history of the Battle of Waterloo itself, and by the way people dealt, and deal, with its past. Instead of comparing several years in which the battle was commemorated, like Martin Steegmans had done, I wanted to compare different areas. Initially, I wanted to compare Waterloo in collective memory in the United Kingdom and in the Netherlands, but soon I realized that a project like that would be too much to do in one year. My focus thus narrowed to the Netherlands with the intention to compare the fiftieth commemoration of the battle in three cities. After I started researching the sources from Rotterdam, however, it became apparent that the battle was commemorated there so elaborately, that the decision was made to focus solely on Rotterdam, albeit in a national context of commemorations in 1865. Soon I fell in love with all the details of the commemorations in Rotterdam and the narrow focus served to bring those details to light and present them in a story I thoroughly enjoyed writing.

A narrow focus might mean that the contribution to narrowing the hiatus in knowledge on Waterloo in Dutch collective memory, a major aim of my research, would be limited. I think the contribution made here is of value, however, for the ways Waterloo was commemorated in Rotterdam and the identities expressed that were revealed by this research might provide some guidance and suggestions for possible further research on the topic. Some suggestions for further research have already been given in the conclusion of this thesis.

Whoever chooses to pick up the topic of Waterloo in collective memory, I wish you all the best and hope you will enjoy writing about it as much as I have.

Pieter van den Berg, August 13, 2012.



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