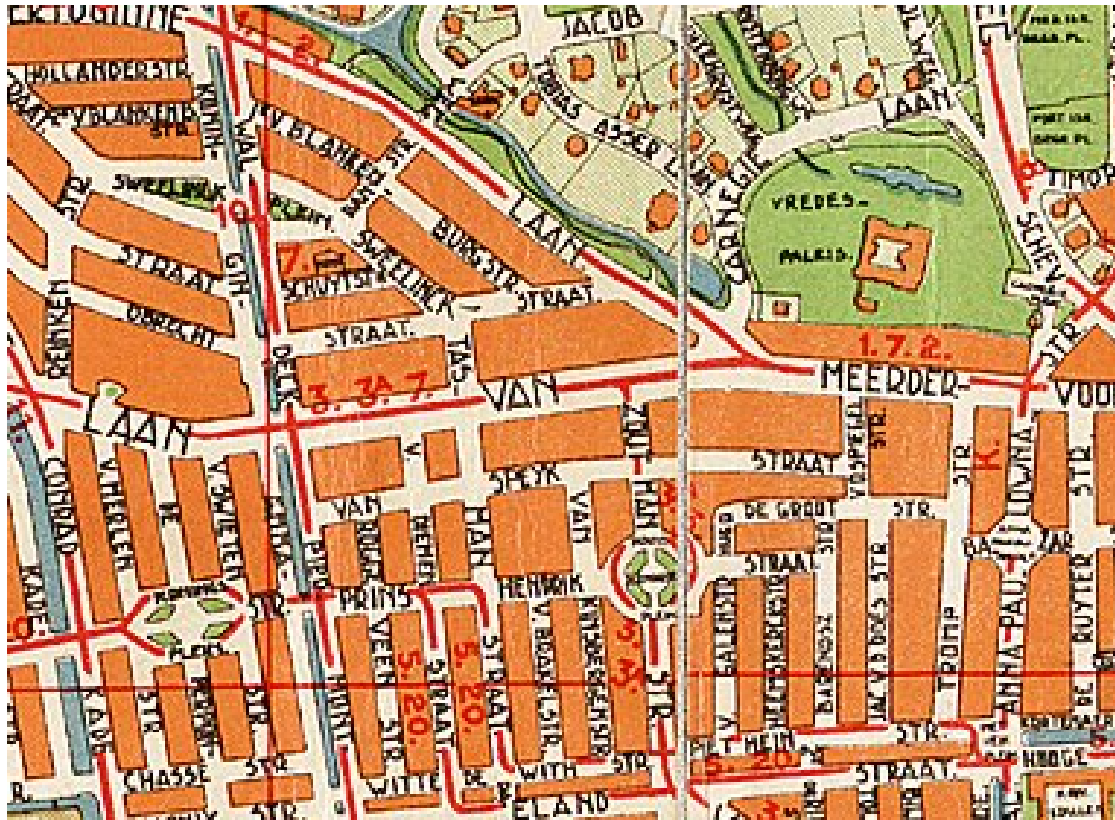


The story of street names in the Netherlands

A comparative analysis of themes used in street naming in Noord-Brabant
and Holland, 1859-1939



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Master thesis History of Society

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(...) *Prins, koning, keizer, vorsten, staten,*
zoo doopte men reeds vele straten.
Zelfs wordt in wanhoop reeds gegrepen
naar wie eens raadslid was of schepen.
Waarom ontleent men niet een naam
aan ambten van wat minder faam?
Bij voorbeeld Trambestuurdersingel
(Hij toont zijn dank met luid getjingel).
Of Witkielplein, Klabakkenwal...
Wie is 't die 't hen misgunnen zal?
En 'k eer de Vrouw als Ambtenaar
Met stovenszetstersboulevard.¹

Illustration on cover: detail of a map of The Hague of 1939 depicting streets named after naval heroes (center), Dutch generals (left down) and Dutch composers (left top). Source: Gemeentearchief Den Haag, kaartencollectie, identification number z.gr. 0114 (Den Haag 1939).

¹ [(literal translation) Prince, king, emperor, monarchs, countries, after those are already many streets named. In despair even those who where once a council member or Alderman are used. Why isn't a name derived from a less famous profession? For example Tram driver boulevard, (he will show his gratitude by ringing his bell). Or Witkielsquare, Klabakkenquay..., who is the one who will begrudge them? And I honor the wife as civil servant by the foot-warmerplacersboulevard.] Source: *Haagsche Post*, 27th of August 1927.

Index

Chapter 1: Could you show me the way to...?	7
- §1.1 The subject and the research	7
- §1.2 Historiography	9
- §1.3 Concepts	12
- §1.4 Sources and methods	15
- §1.5 Structure of the thesis	16
Chapter 2: The history and practice of naming streets	18
- §2.1 History of naming streets in the Netherlands	18
- §2.2 Practice of naming streets	21
- §2.3 Naming & general characteristics of the groups of names	24
- §2.4 Context of the Dutch nation-state coming together	27
- §2.5 Conclusion	29
Chapter 3: National themes: the appropriation and obscuring of history	31
- §3.1 National geography	31
- §3.2 The Dutch colonies	33
- §3.3 The Second Boer War	36
- §3.4 Kings and queens	39
- §3.5 Members of Parliament	42
- §3.6 The Golden Age	44
- §3.7 Artists	48
- §3.8 Conclusion	51
Chapter 4: City's identities: noblemen, clergymen and local geography	54
- §4.1 Local history	54
- §4.2 Dukes versus Counts	59
- §4.3 Religion and street names	63

- §4.4 Local geography	67
- §4.5 Conclusion	68
Chapter 5: The Dutch story of street names	70
List of sources	75
Bibliography	77

Chapter 1: Could you show me the way to...?

In the city of Tilburg quite some streets are named after naval heroes and explorers. Most of these men were born in the Dutch Republic and lived during the Golden Age. There is no connection between these naval men and Tilburg or Noord-Brabant, neither is Noord-Brabant very close to the sea. Therefore, these street names seem out of place. It is an example of the fact that, although street names appear as the most common things in our lives for most of the time, they need not to be taken for granted so easily. There is more to a street name than the eye can see. In fact, street names are sometimes part of world history! Unfortunately, because of the undervaluation and misrecognition, street names get less attention than they deserve. In this thesis, which analyses Dutch street names and looks for regional differences, I will fill this black spot in historiography.

This master thesis compares themes of street names (e.g. painters, generals, rivers) used in Holland (the historical county which today consists of two provinces of the Netherlands) and Noord-Brabant (another province with a very different history than Holland which could lead to different street names in both areas) in the period 1859-1939. The goal of this thesis is to look for, find and explain significant differences between the themes used for naming streets in these two regions. I will investigate the general themes of the groups of names, but individual names within a group are sometimes examined too. Not all themes will be discussed in this thesis. Themes that do not possess a strong memorial character (like trees, flowers and birds) and some themes which are very similar to other ones are left out. The subject is further limited by not investigating the perception of the street names by the broader public, although I will occasionally note how a theme was perceived in the specific context. This thesis thus focuses on the producer's side of collective memory.² After these limitations of the subject, it is possible to introduce *the main research question, which asks what the differences are in the use and composition of local, regional and national themes used to name streets in Holland and Noord-Brabant in the period 1859-1939 and how these differences can be explained from the historical and practical context.*

§1.1 The subject and the research

The subject of this thesis is limited both temporally and spatially. The period 1859-1939 is chosen on two grounds. First, before 1859 there are no groups of streets named after a specific theme. Second, the year 1939 is chosen to exclude the Second World War from the thesis. During the Second World war the Germans interfered (directly or indirectly) with the process of naming streets.³ During the

² For the term 'producers of collective memory' linked to consumers and traditions, see: W. Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies', *History and Theory* 41 (2002) 179-197.

³ R. Rentenaar, 'Straatnaamgeving, de geschiedenis van een oud probleem', in R. Rentenaar et al (ed.), *Straatnaamgeving, een congres over straatnamen* (Den Haag 1993) 9-10.

occupation old plans could finally be put into practice, so that Rotterdam annexed some of its neighbors which had consequences for street names too. After the Second World war the names of streets (as already many themes had been used) became more diverse, maybe also less identity-expressing. The period 1859-1939 is thus the perfect, manageable period for trying to find differences between the streets names of Noord-Brabant and Holland.

Spatially this thesis is limited to Noord-Brabant and Holland. The idea is that due to Noord-Brabant having been a Generality Land – which led to a (at least perceived) treatment as second rank civilians –, the differences between Holland and Noord-Brabant might be significant (while comparing Utrecht with Gelderland might not lead to significant differences).⁴ Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and Limburg were also Generality Lands, but they have fewer and smaller cities and thus needed fewer themes than Noord-Brabant, which make them less suitable for this research.

Before turning to the historiography, concepts, sources and methods, a short explanation of the basic structure of the research and a short introduction into the world of streets names are helpful. This thesis compares themes used in street naming, but it is of course impossible to compare all themes used in Noord-Brabant and Holland. Therefore, I limit myself to the big cities of Holland and Noord-Brabant. Big cities built many new streets in the investigated period, so choosing cities provides many themes as primary sources.⁵ For Holland I chose the cities Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague.⁶ Choosing the big cities of Noord-Brabant provided two problems. ‘s-Hertogenbosch was a big city, but had been a big city for centuries. That meant that they only built a handful of new quarters in the investigated period. Eindhoven caused problems as well. The core of Eindhoven was just a small community (about 4.000 inhabitants), when it grew in the 1920s to 40.000 inhabitants by annexing its neighbors. The situation of street names in Eindhoven is thus quite complicated and more importantly not equal to the situations in other cities.⁷ I focus instead on Bergen op Zoom, Breda and Tilburg. This choice might be surprising at first, but as ‘s-Hertogenbosch and Eindhoven are not suitable, it is the best available.

In the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, street names often had a practical function. In the *Beenhouwersstraat* one could find *beenhouwers* (butchers), the street *Achter het stadhuis* (behind the city hall) could be found behind the city hall and the *Amsterdamseweg* was the main road to

⁴ C. Slegers, *Mensen uit de kringen van Brabants Heem: heemkundebeoefening in Noord-Brabant* (Zaltbommel 2004) 24.

⁵ Investigating groups of street names in big cities (and not villages) seems obvious, but a small explanation is given nonetheless. Villages did not build many new quarters in the investigated period, so the number of themes would be quite low. Furthermore, the big cities had some basic names that could use, but those ran out at some point. After that they had to come up with their own ideas, which is more interesting than a bunch of small villages all having streets named after flowers and birds.

⁶ The Hague has no official city rights, but as it calls itself a city it is considered one nonetheless.

⁷ Another problem is that the Philips factory built new streets at their private terrain for the laborers, so the municipal government was not the sole producer of names. Eindhoven would therefore be more suitable for a case-study.

Amsterdam.⁸ It was in the second half of the nineteenth century, when cities began to expand rapidly, that the link between the name of the street and the street was abandoned. The Dutch government anticipated the possible administrative problems and gave the cities and villages the power to name streets. Firstly, the orally transmitted names were officially recorded (except for some unpleasant names), but later the cities had to come up with their own names for new streets.⁹ The most logical system was to name all the streets in a new quarter using the same theme (e.g. trees, painters, majors). These themes are precisely the subject of this thesis.

§1.2 Historiography

Although French scholars of the *École des Annales* already saw more in place than just a locality,¹⁰ and although local interest in street names dates from the nineteenth century, scientific studies of street names began to appear in the late eighties. Researching street names was along with research of monuments, statues, cemeteries and other *lieux* part of the rise of research on *lieux de mémoire* (see below).¹¹ Only a handful of scholars has studied street names as an independent subject in the twenty to thirty years it has been studied. These scholars come from very different fields, although the majority of them has some link with geography. Because of the variety of the scholars the articles rarely relate to each other. Furthermore, many of the articles are incidental case-studies of a city's street names. In sum, there is no unifying discourse on street names.

The most important text in the Dutch literature on the subject of street names is the text by Robert Rentenaar, a (resigned) scholar of language and literature. He has written a short history of the practice of street naming in the Netherlands.¹² This history is not an in-depth historical analysis, but a superficial story (mainly built of anecdotes) about street names in the Netherlands. As an introduction into the Dutch world of street naming it is nonetheless useful. This text was also copied into a manual for civil servants occupied with naming practices.¹³

The international field of literature on street names is fortunately somewhat richer than the Dutch field, though still extremely small. Although no explicit debate is held about street names, two

⁸ In this thesis many examples of Dutch street names are given. As many of them refer to a person, it is useful to give the translation of the suffixes here. The non-Dutch readers can then translate the names themselves. If a further translation is required this is given behind brackets or in a footnote, in other cases Dutch and English are the same. So, note that a *straat* = street, *weg* = road, *plein* = square and a *laan* = avenue and a *generaal* = a general.

⁹ Rentenaar, 'Straatnaamgeving', 4-7.

¹⁰ C. Withers, 'Place and the 'spatial turn' in geography and history', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70/4 (2009) 645.

¹¹ E. Palonen, 'The city-text in post-communist Budapest: street names, memorials and the politics of commemoration', *Geojournal* 73 (2008) 219-221.

¹² R. Rentenaar, 'Straatnaamgeving, de geschiedenis van een oud probleem', in R. Rentenaar et al (ed.), *Straatnaamgeving, een congres over straatnamen* (Den Haag 1993) 3-16.

¹³ R. ten Kroode & J. Brouwer, *Benoemen, nummeren en begrenzen. Handboek van gemeenteambtenaren die zijn belast met het benoemen van de openbare ruimte, het nummeren van vastgoedobjecten en het begrenzen van gebieden* (Den Haag 2002).

different methods of researching street names can be distinguished. Daniel Milo is one of the early contributors with an article in Pierre Nora's book placing street names within the field of *lieux de mémoire* (see §1.3). Milo studied street names of French cities over the course of time and found that sometimes street names themselves were changed after a political turnover, but if the street names remained the interpretation could change. Whereas the street names originated from a natural environment of memory prior to the French Revolution, from the French revolution onwards a certain version of history was expressed in street names.¹⁴ Jean-Claude Bouvier went a step further as he took a much larger sample of street names (both in space and time) of French cities to write an entire book about French street names.¹⁵ Bouvier, just as Milo, describes and tries to explain the changes in street names and their interpretations. This 'French approach', which searches for the ideas behind street names (what is remembered and why) and their changing interpretations by examining multiple cities over a longer period of time, is however a minority in the historiography of street names.

Maoz Azaryahu is the leading expert in the field of street names and he does not use the French approach. Azaryahu has written more than a handful of articles about street names in Israel, Palestine and Germany. He is also the one who has written a theoretical article on street names, proclaiming that the naming of streets is a powerful instrument in politics. Street names could according to Azaryahu contribute to the formation of a shared past.¹⁶ Azaryahu thus acknowledges the memorial aspect of street names, but this is not his main interest. He and other scholars who do not use the French approach are not so much interested in what is remembered and why, but what consequences street names had and how street names play a role in societal processes (of identity forming). Yeoh for example showed how the British lost power and respect in Singapore by changing the native (oral) street names by new ones.¹⁷

The other articles featuring street names as a main subject do have in common with Azaryahu that they use the concepts of nationalism and identity. The thesis in those articles is often that street names could be given by the government with the deliberate goal of creating a national identity. Strong governments (communist or dictatorial ones) could use street names politics for nationalist indoctrination. With this thesis, either communist (German Democratic Republic/Romania) or dictatorial states (Spain under Franco) are the subject, or states with a strong national ideology (Israel). Also France which had a tradition of a strong central government and witnessed several political turnover fits in this line of countries.

¹⁴ Milo, D., 'Les Noms des rues', in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de memoire II: la nation* (Paris 1997[1983]) 1913-1914.

¹⁵ Jean-Claude Bouvier, *Les noms des rues disent la ville* (Paris 2007).

¹⁶ M. Azaryahu, 'The commemorative power of street names', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (1996) 312-313.

¹⁷ B. Yeoh, 'Street names in colonial Singapore', *Geographical Review* 80/3 (1992) 313-322; B. Yeoh, 'Street-naming and nation-building: toponymic inscription of nationhood in Singapore', *Area* 28/3 (1996) 298-307.

It is clear that the stable country the Netherlands, which did not have a tradition of a strong central government until the nineteenth century, is something totally different from the common subject in street name research. This means also a difference with the French approach. Given the lack of great political turnover in the Netherlands between 1859-1939, in this thesis a search for more refined differences, between certain provinces, is conducted instead of a general analysis of how street names changed (which did not happen in the Netherlands).

From the articles about street names some useful insights can be gathered. In his theoretical article, Maoz Azaryahu notes that street names introduce a specific subject into the context of everyday life. Because the names are mostly seen as everyday objects, the recognition of the symbolic function is quite low. Nevertheless, by constantly seeing, writing and hearing certain names, the mind remembers such a name and the name begins to be naturalized.¹⁸ The downside from this not-recognized message is that it is ignored by most people. You cannot ignore a national ceremony that remembers the First or Second World, but ignoring to remember the same war when one lives in a street named after someone who fought in that war but is not known in such way is done every day. Besides not recognizing the name at all, the memory that is to be transmitted can be fully changed.¹⁹ The name can be wrongly pronounced or being made fun of (names that are easy to be made fun of are therefore not recommended!). Seriously putting the name of the person after which the street is named in the totally wrong context – Waterloo as a hit of ABBA, Vivaldi as some species of flowers and thinking of the wrong revolution at a Revolutionsquare – is another possible problem of naming streets. Even within the same socio-historical context, people can have different associations and ideas of names.²⁰ Although some problems can arise, street names are still a possible means of transmitting (or at least expressing) an officially authorized version of history. Such a policy would express itself also by the names that are not used for streets. As for a collective memory, forgetting is at least as important as remembering.²¹ The process of naming streets can according to Azaryahu be summarized as the transmission of symbols by which certain pieces of history can be commemorated.

In relation to differences in time and space, Pinchevsky and Torgovnik found that political changes over time in Israeli cities were reflected in the names of new streets. In addition, the city-text (the story one can derive from a map of the city) was different in the various parts of Israel.²² Also Azaryahu and Kook found regional differences between street names in Israel, but they stated that those

¹⁸ M. Azaryahu, 'The power of commemorative street names', *Environment and Planning D: Space and Society* (1996) 320-321.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ N. Nash, A. Lewis & C. Griffin, "'Not in our front garden': Land use conflict, spatial meaning and the politics of naming place', *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 20/1 (2010) 53.

²¹ B. Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin of the spread of nationalism* (revised edition, London & New York 2006 [1983]). 200-201.

²² A. Pinchevski & E. Torgovnik, 'Signifying passages: the signs of change in Israeli street names', *Media, culture and society* 24/3 (2002) 384.

differences were secondary to the national history discourse.²³ For the Netherlands this result could suggest two possible options. Firstly it could be the case that all the Dutch cities have a collection of streets named after the same national figures and try to express their own identity with other names. The second option however would be that the Dutch cities made their own choices in selecting names from the national history, so that within a seemingly overlapping collection of streets referring to national figures actual differences do exist. Either option assumes different stories told by street names per city, but then again that is based on a different type of country than the stable Netherlands.

In contrast to most other articles on street names, in this thesis the historical context will be important in the analysis. That means that the ideas of commemorative power, national identity and the role of street names in societal processes are combined with a more detailed version of the French approach to result in a refined analysis of themes of street names – most authors look at single street names – anchored in a historical setting.

§1.3 Concepts

Some concepts are frequently used in the study of street names. In this section I will briefly elaborate on the concepts *lieux de mémoire*, nationalism, identity, city-text and appropriation.

Pierre Nora, a French sociologist, came up with the concept of *lieux de mémoire* in the 1980s. Nora searched for the memory of the French nation. He found that the French nation was remembered by statues, paintings, the national flag etc., but also by non-material concepts as the anthem of France.²⁴ *Lieux de mémoire* were necessary according to Nora, because the natural memory was not strong enough to remember an abstract concept like the nation-state.²⁵ Following Milo and Nora, I will consider street names as a possible *lieux de mémoire*. The difference between pre- and early modern street names and modern street names is important if we look for *lieux de mémoire* and it requires a further explanation. Nora uses the concept of *milieu de mémoire*, an environment of memory. Centuries ago, communities were small and memories were transmitted orally from granddad to son and grandson. In this natural processes, certain memories (about for example origin myths) were passed on every time, but other memories disappeared over a number of generations. This environment of a small community (either a village, a church community or a big family) began to change in the nineteenth and twentieth century.²⁶ It is also in the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars that a modern sense of history develops.²⁷ Due to this new sense of history

²³ M. Azaryahu & R. Kook, 'Mapping the nation: street names and Arab-Palestinian identity: three case studies', *Nations and nationalism* 8/2 (2003) 211.

²⁴ A. Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen, Eine Einführung* (Weimar 2005) 23-24.

²⁵ K. Ribbens, *Een eigentijds verleden, alledaagse historische cultuur in Nederland 1945-2000* (Hilversum 2002) 38.

²⁶ P. Nora, 'Between memory and history: les lieux de mémoire', *Representations, special issue: Memory and counter-memory* 26 (1989) 7, 12.

²⁷ B. Anderson, *Imagined communities, the origin and spread of nationalism* (revised edition, Londen 2006 [1983]) 192-199; P. Fritsche, *Stranded in the present, modern time and the melancholy of history* (Cambridge 2004) 18.

people began to commemorate and actively remember events or persons that had happened or lived in the past. So, the new sense of history and the loss of the natural environments of memory meant that *milieux de mémoire* gave way to *lieux de mémoire*. The natural process of memory transmitting was thus replaced by a cultural process which helped to remember new abstract ideas of for example the nation-state. Some events or persons were deliberately remembered in this new process, even if they would not have been remembered in the natural process of memory transmitting. This is what makes modern street names *lieux de mémoire*, and thus also explains why I study street names from well after the Napoleonic wars.

Next to the theoretical foundation of a *lieu*, there is a practical meaning attached to it. A social group never lives in a vacuum. People get influenced by the time they live in. Furthermore, events and ideas influence Catholics different than Protestants. The *lieu* is a closed chapter (the remembered hero or king is often long dead), but the interpretation and meaning of the place of memory is still vivid and open for discussion.²⁸ So street names that were given in 1870 might not been that much appreciated in 1930. *Lieux de mémoire* are thus influenced by the historical context. In fact, an impulse is needed from the context to form a *lieux* in the first place. Nora says that there has to be a will to remember for a *lieux de mémoire* to exist.²⁹ It is important for this thesis, because the historical context might give clues to explain differences in street names.

One of the classical works on nationalism is *Imagined communities* by Benedict Anderson. The nation is considered as imagined in Anderson's book because most people in a nation-state will never meet each other in life. Nevertheless, they know that their fellow members of the nation exist and they feel in some way connected to them, which creates an imagined community.³⁰ This cultural construction of a nation-state has to be maintained. The interesting question is whether street names were used to maintain the nation-state, to create a national community. The names were thought of locally in the Netherlands, so they might support a local or regional identity. The authors that wrote about nationalism remind thus of the fact that street names can be a means in the struggle for identity. However, it has to be noted that different modules of nationalism exist. The government can emphasize the ideological program, the military can be very important as a binding tool, or history and culture can be used as the basis of the imagined community. Street names can be used in all of those strands of nationalism, because technically it does not matter whether you name the street after generals, politicians, naval heroes or artists. Only the message that is sent will be different.

In psychology and sociology an extensive literature exists on identity with one strand focusing on the internal and one on the external (self-verification versus social structures).³¹ However, this thesis

²⁸ Nora, 'Between memory and history', 24.

²⁹ *Idem*, 19.

³⁰ Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 6-7.

³¹ S. Stryker & P. Burke, 'The past, present and future of an identity theory', *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63/4 (2000) 284.

uses collective identity as a concept, not individual identity. Although using collective identity does not require an exploration of the working of the individual human mind, some remarks are necessary. Firstly and most importantly, a collective memory is transmitted through a series of cultural practices. Some of these practices result in material sites of memory, like monuments and street names. Maurice Halbwachs stressed the connection between collective memory and the urban surroundings already in the first half of the twentieth century.³² Being vehicles for transmitting collective memory, street names can thus influence people's identity. Also important to remember is that the collective memory is a cultural construction, so that what people remember is often not the same as, or not the whole story of, what has happened in the past.³³

Secondly, people have *complementary* social identities which change over time. Identity is not a static concept, but dynamic, which means that looking for changes in an identity can be a useful approach in this thesis. Furthermore, the situation in which a person finds him- or herself or the general context decides which identity is activated.³⁴ Europeans see themselves as Europeans for example when they travel to Japan or Australia. Next to those geographical identities, there are identities linked to religion, political preference, historical links etc.etc. This means that in a city themes used for street names that are linked to different identities – for example Dutch painters and local clergymen – can coexist. It also implies that the historical context can determine what identity is given priority and thus what theme is chosen for street names.

Another concept that I will use in my thesis and discuss in this section is appropriation (*toeëigening*). Appropriation is an old word, but has only recently been used by scholars in memory studies.³⁵ I will use the idea of appropriation in the sense of selecting a piece of someone's culture and giving it a meaning in the context of your own culture. The Catholics in Noord-Brabant did for example appropriate Joost van den Vondel, because he – writing too Catholic plays and unhappy with the Protestant church – eventually converted to Catholicism.³⁶ Appropriation often occurs when a culture is threatened or in a context of alienation. Moreover, often a certain power relation plays a role.³⁷ Because at least some Catholics believed that they were (still) treated as second rank civilians in the period of my thesis (1859-1939), I believe that the use of the concept appropriation could be a valuable contribution to the conceptual framework.³⁸

³² M. Hebbert, 'The street as locus of collective memory', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2005) 584-585.

³³ O. Dwyer & D. Alderman, 'Memorial landscapes: analytic questions and metaphors', *GeoJournal* 73/1 (2008) 167.

³⁴ T. Eriksen, *Small places, large issues, an introduction to social and cultural anthropology* (second edition, London 2001 [1995]) 272.

³⁵ W. Frijhoff, 'Toeëigening: van bezitsdrang naar betekenisgeving', *Trajecta* 6/2 (1997) 99.

³⁶ Zeijden, A. Van der, *Katholieke identiteit en historisch bewustzijn: W.J.F. Nuyens (1823-1894) en zijn 'nationale' geschiedschrijving* (Amsterdam 2002) 240-241.

³⁷ Frijhoff, 'Toeëigening', 104.

³⁸ Appropriation is normally used to analyze the reaction of the public (as against the elite). Seen against the politicians in the Hague, scientists at universities and so on, the humble members of the street name committee

The final concept which will be reviewed is city-text. The city-text is the story that can be derived from a map of a city (sometimes including statues and names of buildings). Emilia Palonen says about the city-text: 'The city-text functions as a system of representation and an object of political identification. (...) As a set of commemorations, it is a 'representation' that aims to establish a world view through the inclusion of certain elements for (an illusion of) internal coherence. Contingent and containing contradictions, it highlights certain aspects and excludes others.'³⁹ Although statues or other landmarks in the Dutch cities are not examined, the concept of city-text based solely on street names is in my opinion still useful in the analytical framework of this thesis.

§1.4 Sources & methods

The sources used in this thesis can be divided in three categories. Firstly, scientific literature is used, mostly on the subjects of street names and Dutch history. Secondly, archives are a source. In this thesis the archives have only an illustrative function. They can support the findings, but have rarely led to these findings. The (pre-war) archives of the street name committees are rarely complete. Often they consist only out of official correspondence from the committee to the major and counselors (of the kind 'We advise to name the streets as follows', without any explanation why) and where minutes of the street name committee are available (only in Amsterdam) they are – by their very nature – not very precise or explicit. The minutes of the local council or Major and Aldermen are not much more informative. As no silly plans made it to the meeting, almost all plans were approved without discussion. At most some technical remarks were made, see also §2.2. Thirdly, and this is the main source, books about street names will be used. Almost every city (and quite some villages) has a book explaining the names of the streets. Most books give a brief biography of the person whom a street is named after in a few sentences or a historical explanation in the case of older streets. The quality of these books differs. Sometimes they are written by amateur-historians, in other cases they have been written by municipal archivists. The books deal with the street names in alphabetical order and give the year of the origin of the street (often with the appropriate meeting of the local council or major and aldermen).⁴⁰

As mentioned before, I investigate themes used in street naming. Investigating themes and not single street names has some advantages, besides the fact that most single street names date from before 1859. Single street names often refer to an old mill or house (*Oude Molenweg*), function geographically (*Noordstraat*, North street) or are named after something which can be found in the

(although not belonging to the real public), can be considered to be some sort of public. Nevertheless, it is a precarious use of the word. See also: M. Grever, 'Visualisering en collective herinneringen, 'Voldendams meisje' als icoon van nationale identiteit', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 117/2 (2004) 213.

³⁹ E. Palonen, 'The city-text in post-communist Budapest: street names, memorials and the politics of commemoration', *Geojournal* 73 (2008) 220.

⁴⁰ For putting together the database of groups of street names in the cities, I will use the oldest version available of these books. The closer the book is to 1939, the smaller the chance that I will be confronted with changed or disappeared street names. Using older books, how strange it may seem, gives thus a purer database.

street itself – e.g. *Stationsstraat*, *Schoolstraat*. Such streets have a practical function and they can be found throughout the country without much mutual difference. Themes however are more likely (some themes are also practical ones) to differ from province to province. Through a new quarter full of names (which can be *lieux de mémoire*) one can try to transfer a message, a piece of history or certain (nostalgic) feelings. Using themes of street names (in this thesis a theme is derived from minimal four streets which interconnect to each other and all relate to the same specific subject) is also a way of keeping the subject manageable.

From the street name books, I made lists of themes per city.⁴¹ This process is not without its difficulties. Street names disappear through time and it is a matter of interpretation where one draws the line between two themes. The lists are thus not 100% accurate and not without doubts. Nevertheless, they are refined enough for the analysis that will follow.

Important in the analysis is the year of the first use of the theme. The quarter may be extended many more times with names from the same theme, but this is often more a logical continuation than a deliberate choice. As I mentioned in the previous section, *lieux de mémoire* stem from a certain historical context. From such a context an impulse comes that can lead to a *lieu*. In the smaller cities of Noord-Brabant with less themes than the cities in Holland, a direct reaction to an impulse from society was not always possible because in some years no new streets were built. In Holland's cities, from 1870 (Rotterdam 1890) onwards almost every year new streets and quarters were built, so reacting with street names to an impulse from society was not a problem.

In the analysis of the street names, I try to explain the differences between Holland and Noord-Brabant from the historical context. What impulses were present in the society that could have influenced the choice for certain themes? The question whether a choice did reinforce that impulse from society is however not answered. To be sure, the main goal of this thesis is comparing cities from Holland and Noord-Brabant to find provincial differences. However, some attention will also be paid to the individual cities' results and I may briefly compare cities within Holland or Noord-Brabant with each other too.

§1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis will continue in chapter two with a short historical and practical background on street names and a broad historical context of the Netherlands coming together as a nation-state. In later chapters more specific contexts will be introduced against this broad background. The question in this chapter will be: What is the historical and practical context of the practice of naming streets in the Netherlands in the period 1859-1939? The thesis is then built up following an important breach line in themes. Chapter 3 will be dedicated to themes that refer to national history or geography, while

⁴¹ An example of an item from the list of The Hague featuring Dutch nineteenth-century politicians: (1863: van Limburg Stirum) (1864: van der Duyn, van Hogendorp) (1865: Waterloo) (1870: Falck) (1884: Fannius Scholten) (1892: Kraijenhoff) (1915: Repelaer).

chapter 4 will discuss the themes that refer to local or regional history or geography. In both these chapters the question is what the differences between the themes used in Noord-Brabant and Holland are and how these can be explained from the historical context. Chapter 5 is the conclusion which will bring the results from chapter 3 and 4 together, also within the right perspective to not-investigated themes. After the conclusion a list of sources and the bibliography can be found.

Chapter 2: The history and practice of naming streets

Orally transmitted names for roads and streets may date thousands of years back. In all the years from then till now, but especially since the nineteenth century, the reasons for naming streets and roads, the naming processes, the purpose of naming streets and the context in which naming streets took place have changed considerably. Therefore, before turning to the actual analysis of the themes used in the cities in Holland and Noord-Brabant in chapters 3 and 4, a solid foundation from different angles will be laid in this chapter.

Using the question what the historical and practical context of the practice of naming streets in the Netherlands was in the period 1859-1939, I will review some key aspects of the naming process. Firstly, the history of naming streets in the Netherlands will be discussed. Secondly, a section will be dedicated to describe the actual practice of naming streets. It will turn out that this is a different process in every city. In the third section some characteristics of the researched themes are given. Before I come to a conclusion I will briefly sketch the context of the Netherlands coming together into a nation-state in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in the fourth part of this chapter. In this story some of the later explanations used in the analysis are already briefly touched upon.

§2.1 History of naming streets in the Netherlands

The oldest Dutch street name that is still used today dates from the thirteenth century and can be found in Dordrecht (*Visbrueghen* > *Visbrug*).⁴² Such historical street names can be divided in three groups. Firstly, there are streets named after a property of the street itself. Examples are *Langestraat*, *Nieuweweg* and *Donkere Steeg*. Secondly, there are streets named after the (often former) function of the street. One can think of the *Vismarkt*, *Blijde intredestraat* or *Galgenplein*. The largest and third group exists of streets referring to a specific relation between the name and street. That can be a geographical relation (*Dordtseweg*), a historical relation (the *Oude Molenstraat*, after an old mill that has burned down) or a more practical relation (the *Bakkerstraat*, where different bakers could be found).⁴³ Street were sometimes also named after a well-known house, inn, theater or other building located in the street.⁴⁴ This type of name is so practical that is still used nowadays (*Stationsstraat*, *Stadionweg*).

⁴² R. ten Kroode & J. Brouwer, *Benoemen, nummeren en begrenzen. Handboek van gemeenteambtenaren die zijn belast met het benoemen van de openbare ruimte, het nummeren van vastgoedobjecten en het begrenzen van gebieden* (Den Haag 2002) 50.

⁴³ Respectively: Fishbridge (2x), Long street, New street, Dark alley, Fishmarket, Joyous Entrystreet (from a Flemish phenomenon), Gallowsquare, Dordtse road, Old Millstreet, Bakerstreet.

⁴⁴ C. Sloomans, 'Bergse namen schrijven historie', in *Gids van Bergen op Zoom* (Bergen op Zoom 1959) 5.

A small but important change occurred in the sixteenth century. In Amsterdam, for the first time, the local government decided to name a street. So instead of getting accustomed to a name used and thought of by the local people, a name was given out of the blue (although possibly just named after a mister 'Jonker'). Examples of these names are *Jonkerstraat*, *Ridderstraat*, and *Keizersstraat*. Beginning in Amsterdam in the sixteenth century, more streets names which did not bear a direct relation with the street itself appeared, but their number remained very small.⁴⁵ Furthermore, unlike France, no persons are explicitly commemorated by these street names.⁴⁶ France is one of the countries with a more turbulent street names history than the Netherlands. When Napoleon put his brother on the Dutch throne of the newly-devised kingdom of Holland in the beginning of the nineteenth century, a bit of this turbulent history was however brought to the Netherlands. A few important streets were renamed. The Damsquare in Amsterdam was called *Place Napoléon* and the *IJgracht* (IJquay) was changed in *Quai Marie-Louise*. Nevertheless, after Napoleon's defeat the original names were quickly restored.⁴⁷

The increase in the postal traffic (with the introduction of the stamp in the 1850s), the new administrative information systems (e.g. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages [*bevolkingsregister*]) and the building of complete new quarters were reasons to formalize Dutch street names in the middle of the nineteenth century. With the *Gemeentewet* of 1851 the municipality gained the power to record existing street names and come up with new ones. As the local government of Amsterdam had already given some names to new streets in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century, and because the Netherlands were not familiar with a strong central government – the Republic was ruled in a particularistic system, which meant that the central government acted only in times of war or dire need –, placing this authority in the hands of the local governments was an act in line with the ruling traditions and practices. The first task of the local government was to make an inventory of existing street names. Figuring out new names for new streets was its second task. Most of the cities were not so strict in naming streets up to 1900. It was a well-known practice to let the building company of the streets come up with names. When the municipality took over these streets they almost always kept the names brought up by the builders and often used the same theme for new next-by streets.⁴⁸ In the beginning era (the 1860s and 1870s) it has also happened that a single street was given the name of a famous painter, writer or hero. The necessity of a systematic approach of street names overruled these events however quite quickly.

The modern street names (after 1851) differ from the earlier ones. While most earlier street names had a practical relation with their streets and had originated from the daily speech, the modern ones

⁴⁵ R. Rentenaar, 'Straatnaamgeving, de geschiedenis van een oud probleem', in idem et al, *Straatnaamgeving. Een congres over straatnamen* (Den Haag 1993) 4-5.

⁴⁶ J. Bouvier, *Les noms des rue disent la ville* (Paris 2007) 80, 82-83.

⁴⁷ Rentenaar, 'Straatnaamgeving', 7.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, 3.

had often no relation at all with their streets and were conjured out of thin air. So, for example, Bilderdijk was neither born, never visited, nor died in the *Bilderdijkstraat*. Where the Medieval cities were themselves *milieu de mémoire* (street names originated from natural memory), the growing city became more and more impersonal. Inhabitants did not know every street in town anymore. In this changing city that became a home for *lieux de mémoire* (archives, museums, statues et cetera) also new street names could become *lieux de mémoire*, cultural constructions that remembered a certain piece of the past. Another difference is that from around 1870 cities began to name the streets after persons. They realized that they could commemorate and honor persons by naming streets after them. According to Gillis, the national phase of commemoration – in which through commemorations certain groups tried to make a selection of history *the* national history – lasted from 1789 until 1960, so the Netherlands were quite late in picking up the idea of commemorating national heroes.⁴⁹

In this thesis the period 1859-1939 is examined, but to complete this small history of naming streets in the Netherlands, some remarks can be given that relate to the post-1939 period. During the Second World War, streets that were named after the Dutch Royal Family (in some cities an exception was made for prince Bernhard) and after Jews had to be renamed. After the war these streets were given back their original names. Streets that were too much associated with the Germans as the *Euterpestraat* in Amsterdam were changed.⁵⁰ Resistance fighters and allied generals or statesmen were a new favorite theme to name streets after. The process of naming streets was done by a committee composed of council members and outside experts (from the postal service, emergency department and local historians) in most cities after the war.⁵¹ This democratization lifted the process of naming streets out of the small, smoky chambers in the city hall. The only further, but essential, change is that the names became more and more original. The use of the suffix ‘street’ was often abandoned, which led to names that are sometimes hard to recognize as street names (*Regge, Regenboog, Hazelaar, Magenta*). The number of possible street names seemed endless, as even some streets were named after characters from the Lord of the Rings trilogy in Geldrop!⁵²

Finally, a note about women in street names. Except for the Royal Family (and the wives of William of Orange), before the Second World War, streets named after women were very, very scarce. Aagje Deken and Betje Wolff (two female writers) and Thérèse Schwartze (a female painter) were the only women that appeared in more than one of the researched cities. This situation was however ‘normal’ in

⁴⁹ J. Gillis, ‘Introduction’, in idem (ed.), *Commemoration, the politics of national identity* (Princeton 1994) 5 & 8.

⁵⁰ Rentenaar, ‘Straatnaamgeving’, 10.

⁵¹ Vereniging der Nederlandse Gemeenten, ‘Overzicht vragenlijsten’, in R. Rentenaar et al, *Straatnaamgeving. Een congres over straatnamen* (Den Haag 1993) 30-31.

⁵² <http://www.allesoverstraatnamen.nl/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=77&op=page&SubMenu=> (accessed 11-05-2010).

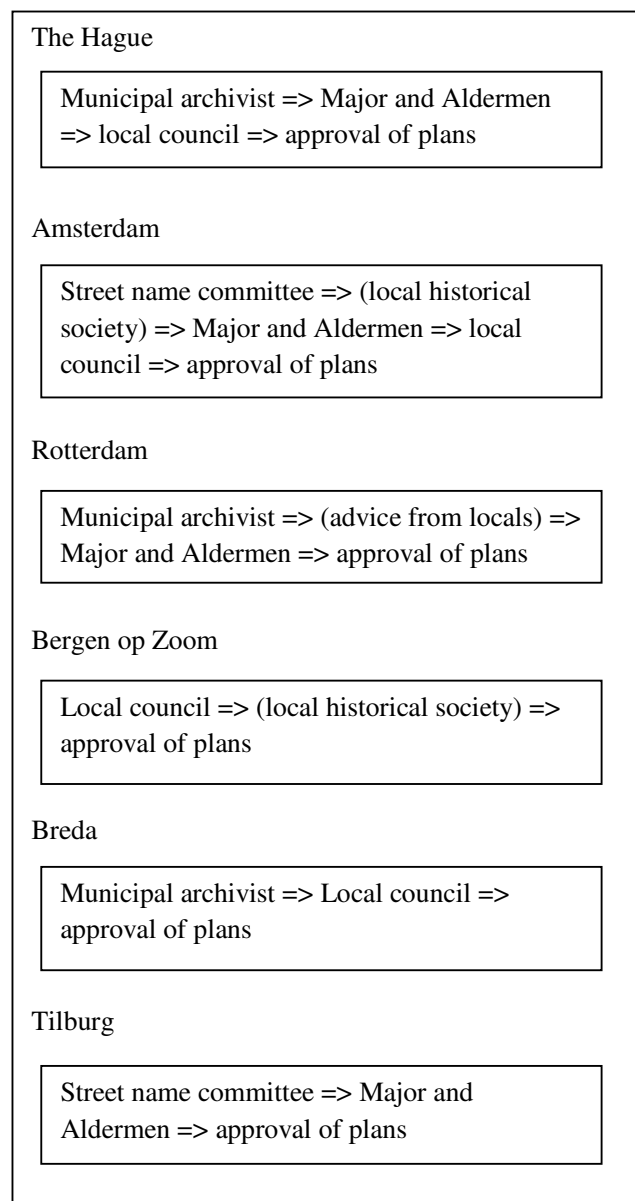
that period.⁵³ After the Second World War, with the second feminist wave and a rapidly growing list of important women, this situation did improve slightly. Leiden and Alphen aan de Rijn for example decided to use only women to name the streets in their new quarters.

§2.2 Practice of naming streets

The law of 1851 did not explicitly state how cities should organize the naming of streets. This led to slightly different processes that can be seen in the examined cities. The processes in Holland differ from the ones in Noord-Brabant in the sense that in Holland it frequently happened that the municipal government gained possession of streets of building companies. The building company had already given names to the streets in such a case. The government thus had to consider whether to take over the names as well. Some of these (often single) streets (*Annastraat*, *Jacobastraat*) were named after family relatives of the builder's supervisor, but in the case of a big quarter serious themes (Royal Family, geography) were used. Although honoring the wife of the building supervisor may seem strange, the governments only made changes if double names or confusing names had been given by the builders. The trouble of renaming a street was too big to change a good working name.

Each city organized the process of naming street in its own way. A somewhat simplified version of those processes can be seen in figure 2.1. The process

Figure 2.1: *Processes of naming streets in selected cities in the Netherlands in 1930.*



Sources: W. van Ham, *De straatnamen van Bergen op Zoom* (Alphen aan de Rijn 1995); J. Okkema (ed.), *De straatnamen van Rotterdam, verklaring van alle bestaande en van verdwenen straatnamen* (Rotterdam 1992); G. Otten, *De straten van Breda* (Tilburg 1988); R. Peeters, *De straten van Tilburg* (Tilburg 1987); S. Veldhuijzen, *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984); J. Wiersma, *De naam van onze straat, geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1977).

⁵³ An advice of an alderman in Maastricht to name new (single) streets explicitly speaks of finding the men that played an important role in history. See. J. Schaepkens, *Rapport der commissie voor het algemeen huishoudelijke bestuur betreffende het geven van namen aan verschillende straten* (Maastricht 1902) 1.

always started with the plans for new streets. When it was clear that the building plans were approved and well financed, naming streets could begin. However, when it was doubted whether the plans would be set in motion, the responsible authority could wait until the street itself was drivable. A drivable street (with or without houses) should always have a name. In some cases, those men responsible for coming up with new names found inspiration elsewhere. In Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Bergen op Zoom local input for street names was asked. Amsterdam asked the local historical society whether certain men were important enough to name street after⁵⁴, while the council of Bergen op Zoom asked their local historical society for a list of possible inhabitants of Bergen op Zoom to name streets after.⁵⁵ In Rotterdam, the municipal archivist asked the director of an art museum to make a list of painters from Rotterdam after whom streets could be named.⁵⁶ In the other cities local input might have been asked too, but I found no evidence of this.

After local input had been gathered, some civil servant(s) had the task of choosing names from a list and deciding which street on the map was to receive which name. Then, such a complete plan would be sent to the Major and Aldermen. In some cities they would approve the plan (perhaps with slight alterations) or they would send it to the local council first.⁵⁷ After the local council had agreed (again proposing sometimes small alterations), then the Major and his Aldermen could finally approve the plan.⁵⁸ Citizens had the possibility to take a look at the plans in the city hall, but the chance that the plans were changed after the complaints of a dozen citizens was very small. The approved plans were also published in a local municipal newsletter, also informing the public after whom the streets were named.

The different processes in the various cities have one thing in common. It is impossible to establish why certain choices have been made by simply following the paper trail. Plans for a new theme could have been agreed upon in (secret) conversations in small, smoky chambers in the city hall or its corridors.⁵⁹ Controversial or silly plans could thus never have left a trail on paper. Furthermore, in

⁵⁴ Stadsarchief Amsterdam, archief van de straatnamencommissie (access number 5436), Stukken betreffende de mogelijke vernoeming van straten naar personen, plaatsen en bedrijven (1938-1940) (inventory number 827) (1939).

⁵⁵ Gemeentearchief Bergen op Zoom, archief gemeentebestuur 1814-1925 (access number 7), notulen der vergaderingen van de gemeenteraad van Bergen op Zoom (1923) inventory number 44 (28 december 1923) 164.

⁵⁶ Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam – Gemeentearchief Rotterdam (GAR) (access number 297.01), Ingekomen stukken betreffende de vergaderingen van de Straatnamencommissie, 1904-1985 (inventory number 720) letter from the director of the museum Boijmans van Beuningen to the municipal archivist of Rotterdam (1918).

⁵⁷ Note that in Tilburg the local council handed over the authority to approve the plans of streets to the Major and Alderman in 1901. See R. Peeters, *De straten van Tilburg* (Tilburg 1987) X.

⁵⁸ In Amersfoort a plan for new street names was not approved upon in 1921, but this is the only exception that that I found. The plan foresaw naming streets after weapons (saber, gun, cannon, pistol et cetera). Socialist members of the local council found these names too militaristic and successfully talked the Major and Aldermen into rejecting the plan. See: *Voorwaarts, social-democratisch dagblad*, 9th of August 1921, 'Militarische straatnamen'.

⁵⁹ Ideally, one would interview members of the street name committee or the municipal archivist him self. For the period of 1859-1939 that is nearly impossible. I have to confess however that I have not started a search for some 91-year-old retired civil servant who might still live and remember some (secret) conversations.

cities where the municipal archivist was responsible for coming up with new names, the choice for names was the result of the caprices of that man. He may have copied names from other cities or he may have used a theme that some friend came forward with on his birthday party. Another possible source of inspiration (and thus an explanation for strange choices) could be found in the sidelines of the municipal archivist. Figuring out new names was just one of his tasks. The role of the Major and Aldermen and the local council was in the end nothing more than technically purifying an already existing plan. In the shady process before the meeting, weird or undesired names would have been changed. So during the meeting, only workable plans would come to the table, but as just one of the dozens of points on the agenda. In most of the cases, the plans for street names were nothing more than a formality (*hamerstuk*).

In chapter 1 I explained the concept of *lieux de mémoire*. Street names are possible *lieux de mémoire* but they differ from for example a museum or a statue. For the construction of a museum and the erection of statue money and permission is needed. If this money has been gathered, the road to the opening of the museum is still a long one with many obstacles. Therefore, if the will to create that museum is not strong enough to overcome practical and ideological obstacles, the project will be abandoned before its completion. With street names, the opposite is true. In the cities of Holland, every years building companies proposed new plans for streets (either a new quarter or expanding an already existing quarter). The men responsible for street names had to give names, whether they wanted it or not. A strong will to use street names to commemorate certain heroes may have been present in the 1860s (the private initiatives leading to a *Rembrandtstraat* and *Michiel de Ruyterstraat*), and it could show itself in certain turbulent periods, but overall the municipal archivist or the members of the street name committee just had to come up with something that could pass. It means that a basic consciousness about what ‘good’ names were was always present in city hall (and this consciousness about proper names could differ between Holland and Noord-Brabant), but a strong will to remember the artists or scholars after whom streets were named was mostly absent. However, it is not possible to know whether such a strong will was present at a certain theme of street names, so every commemorative street names is a possible *lieux de mémoire*.

It will turn out that in some cases the historical context (specific events or a wave of nationalism) were strong enough to influence the choice of names, while in other cases (practical) obstructions were enough to prevent an effect of the historical context onto street names. It is precisely this spectrum of themes which are clearly and easily related back to certain historical events, themes which you would not expect in a certain historical climate and the group of themes from which the theme does fit in the historical context, but the factor which gave rise to the them is unknown, which makes themes of street names a difficult subject. The risk of using too much or too speculative theories trying to explain cases that simply cannot be explained is always present.

§2.3 Naming & general characteristics of the used themes

The process of naming streets itself was a bit shady, but the ideas on *how* to name streets were quite clear. The problem of naming new streets in the cities was a subject for a manual that W. Hartsink wrote in 1896. He criticized long and difficult names, but also streets names from which he thought that the common people would not know who they were named after. Instead of naming streets after unknown painters, writers or generals he advised civil servants to keep the names as simple as possible. Hartsink introduced twenty groups based on existing (historical) streets in the major cities of the Netherlands.⁶⁰ A few examples of his advise are: metals, animals, plants & flowers, trees, tools and vehicles. Giving the show already away a bit, but his advise was not widely followed as will be shown in later chapters.

Table 2.1: *Number of groups and average number of streets per group in selected Dutch cities, 1859-1939.*

City	Number of groups	Average number of streets per group
Amsterdam	40	27,1
Rotterdam	40	13,7
The Hague	46	24,5
Holland	126	22,7
Tilburg	24	11,9
Breda	15	7,3
Bergen op Zoom	8	6,3
Noord-Brabant	47	9,5

Sources: *Idem*

Still, Hartsink's manual gives some insight in the thinking of civil servants in the late nineteenth century. The idea of Hartsink to name streets after one theme seems obvious, but it is *the* key in naming streets. The idea implied that it was easy to locate a street if you could deduct in which quarter it was to be found. This idea itself is interesting, because theoretically it is not necessary to name streets systematically. As long as you have a good map of the city you can find every street. The increase in traffic in the city (bicycles and cars made their appearance around 1900), including growing numbers of total foreigners (who could come by train) in combination with the ever growing city meant that more and more people could get lost in the city if the signs were not adequate, but also

⁶⁰ W. Hartsink, *Namen van straten. Een handleiding voor gemeente-besturen en allen, die in gemeentezaken belang stellen* (Arnhem 1896).

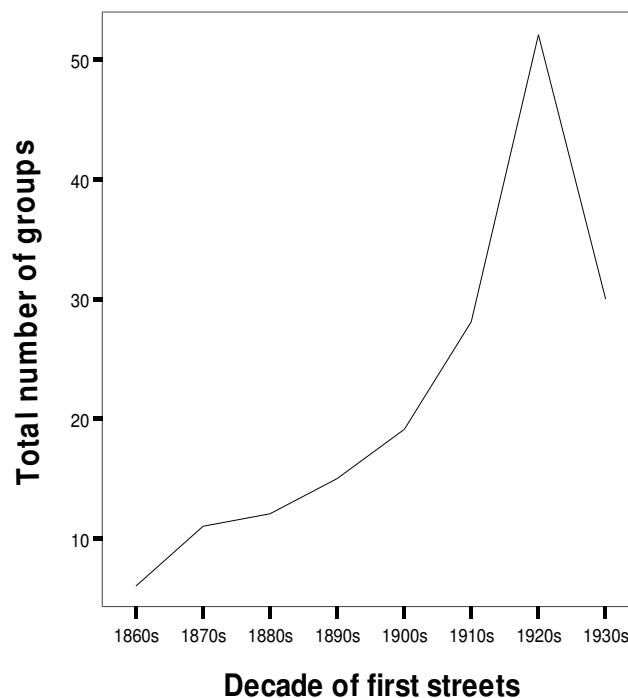
if a complicated, illogical naming system was used. For reasons of orientation and smooth traffic flows a systematic approach to naming streets was thus needed.

The systematic approach meant that confusion should be avoided. Street names that sounded too familiar or could be interpreted as lying in another quarter had to be prevented or changed.⁶¹ In The Hague the *Cabelliastraat* was changed to *Jacob Cabelliastraat* to prevent confusion with streets named after fishes (the *Kabeljauwstraat* is pronounced the same as *Cabelliastraat*) which were located in a totally different part of the city. The systematic to ordering of the city became the ultimate goal of the civil servants concerned with spatial planning, so every proposal that was unsystematic was mercilessly shot down.

Finally, as Hartsink also proposed, difficult and long names were slowly becoming less preferable. This meant that the names of old and noble men were less easy to use.⁶²

The lists of groups of street names that I composed for Holland and in Noord-Brabant differ in length. Table 2.1 shows that the number of groups of street names is far lower in Noord-Brabant than in Holland. However, the average size of a group in Holland is bigger than in Noord-Brabant. It is furthermore likely that the streets in Holland's cities were longer and the houses bigger so that on average more people lived in a street in Holland than in Noord-Brabant.⁶³ This way it is explained why the ratio between the number of groups of names is different from the growth ratio of the cities. For

Graph 2.1 Total number of new groups of streets per decade in selected Dutch cities, 1859-1939.



Sources: *Idem*.

⁶¹ Nonetheless, in some cities there were multiple quarters named after flowers. Or in the case of The Hague, two quarters were named after literature themes. One after old and one after modern literature, but if you didn't know this you could still go to the wrong quarter.

⁶² An example of those difficult and long names from The Hague: Christoffel van Swollstraat, Carel Reinierszkade, Hendrik Zwaarddeconstraat & Joan Maetsuyckerstraat.

⁶³ One could think that Holland ran out of groups, which prompted them to use painters, politicians or other obvious group that they hadn't used before. I think however that street name committees were quite innovative.

example, the ratio between the number of groups in Breda and Amsterdam is 1:2,66, while the growth ratio is 1:13,59.⁶⁴

Because of the leveled off differences in the number of groups, comparing the big cities in Holland with the smaller ones in Noord-Brabant is justifiable. If something can be deducted from those differences it is the importance of the choice of names. The local council knew that Bergen op Zoom would not grow so explosively that dozens of themes had to be used. Therefore, they also knew that they could only pick a few from the dozens of possible themes. In contrast, in Amsterdam and The Hague those responsible for coming up with new names were afraid that the names were soon all used up. Amsterdam ‘even’ had to use Flemish names in the literature quarter⁶⁵, while the municipal archivist of The Hague was thinking about alternatives for the current system (a numbered system or the same name in one city more than once as for example was the case in London).⁶⁶

Given the relation between *lieux de mémoire* (in this case street names) and the historical context, it does matter whether most names were given before 1900, between 1900 and 1920 or between 1920 and 1939. Graph 2.1 shows that until the 1930s the number of new themes kept growing. Only in the 1930s did the number of new themes drop considerably. Note however that the vast majority of groups before 1900 comes from Holland.

Table 2.2 *The use of natural themes for the naming of streets in selected Dutch cities, 1859-1939.*

	Flowers/plants	Trees	Farmer's themes	Birds	Other
Amsterdam	0	0	1	0	0
The Hague	3	1	0	2	1 (fruits)
Rotterdam	1	0	3	1	1 (insects)
Bergen op Zoom	0	1	0	0	0
Breda	1	1	1	1	0
Tilburg	0	1	1	1	1 (fishes)

Sources: *Idem*.

If they wanted to name as many new streets after local history and the obvious names were already used, they would just look for some old dukes or lords that had something to do with local history (although no-one thought of that until then).

⁶⁴ Based on the birth- and migration surpluses in the period 1881-1940. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, *Historische databank Nederlandse Gemeenten* (versie 1, 2003) (CDROM).

⁶⁵ Stadsarchief Amsterdam, archief van de straatnamencommissie (access number 5436), Notulen van de vergadering van de Commissie voor de Straatnamen (1934-1955) (inventory number 170), 27 mei 1938.

⁶⁶ W. Moll, ‘De moderne praktijk van de straatnaamgeving’, in P.J. Meertens, *Middeleeuwse en moderne straatnaamgeving* (Den Haag 1953) 44.

A last characteristic that should be mentioned is the interest in nature as a theme to name streets. Naming streets after flowers, birds or trees is not an act of commemoration that can be compared with streets named after naval heroes or painters. The farmer's themes are nevertheless an exception to the non-commemorative nature of nature themes. In several cities, streets which were built on former farmer's land were given names that remembered the crops that were grown there or even the farmer's family that lived there. In general, the natural themes reflect a longing for lush, green environments. The inhabitants of the city could travel outside their cities to explore the countryside when bikes, tramways and cars were introduced.⁶⁷ Trees, birds and the farmer's theme were favorite themes to express the longing for the countryside. Bergen op Zoom and Amsterdam lagged behind compared to the other cities if we look at this table. Remember though that Bergen op Zoom only had eight groups of streets in total, so dedicating one of those groups to trees is quite comparable to the other cities. Amsterdam's lack of natural themes stems from the directive that the local council approved upon in 1870. They stated that new streets should be named after persons, not after plants, animals or objects. Only a few exceptions were made to this directive.⁶⁸

This sidestep to natural themes shows that besides the more interesting commemorative names, an entire section of names was non-commemorative, although not non-expressive. One could wonder whether it does undermine the main theory of street names as *lieux de mémoire*. As said in the previous chapter, not all street names are *lieux de mémoire*. Street names *can* be a place of memory and although not all of them are, a big part of them is. From the commemorative street names it shows that those responsible did pay (at least some) attention to their choice of names. Still, the nature themes do underline the fact that street naming politics is not a hard politics, but more a fuzzy subject.

§2.4 Context of the Dutch nation-state coming together

The process of naming streets has to be seen in the right historical context. Therefore, I will discuss some key events in the nineteenth and early twentieth century that shaped the identity of Noord-Brabant and its relation with the nation-state. I will also introduce some elements which will be brought into remembrance as explanations for certain choices and differences in later chapters.

Although some Dutchmen like to begin the story of the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, the Dutch *nation-state* is much younger. In 1815 a kingdom was formed including Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg and the colonial possessions in the West and East. Holland (up till 1840 one province) was dominant in this kingdom. Noord-Brabant was nothing more than a rural province. In fact, the officers in the Dutch army distrusted Noord-Brabant when Belgium started fighting for its independence in

⁶⁷ H. van der Windt, *En dan: wat is natuur nog in dit land? Natuurbescherming in Nederland 1880-1990* (Amsterdam 1995) 41.

⁶⁸ J. Wiersma, *De naam van onze straat, geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1977) 8.

1830. Therefore, troops from other parts of the country were placed in this province to act when Northern-Brabant would choose the Belgian side.⁶⁹ Although some small incidents happened (many of them in Catholic enclaves north of the big rivers), the people of Noord-Brabant did not choose to join the Belgians (but neither the *Hollanders*). Only Limburg wanted to join with Belgium after its independence, but this matter was settled by making Limburg a Duchy (the only province so) and letting it become a member of the *Deutsche Bund*.⁷⁰

Some years after the Belgian independence, in the European revolutionary year 1848, the Dutch king William II agreed with a new constitution, the importance of which cannot be underestimated. The king lost much of its autocratic power to the parliament, but for Noord-Brabant more importantly the right of freedom of religion was declared. So, in 1853 the hierarchy of the bishops was restored. Still it would last more than half a century before the educational side of freedom of religion was finally settled. In 1917 the 'special' (i.e. religious) schools were granted the same subsidies as public schools. For this result, the Catholics and Protestants had joined forces and negotiated with the liberals who got general suffrage as part of the deal. After 1917 the pillarization (*verzuiling*) advanced quickly. As one of the pillars, the Catholics locked themselves up in their own pillar consisting of Catholic schools, radio, hospitals, sport clubs, newspapers and so on. Pillarization allowed the Dutch people to coexist peacefully under a narrow umbrella of shared heritage and culture.⁷¹

This umbrella of shared heritage and culture was, however, centered around Holland. From all the dialects, the Hollandish dialect became the standard language of the Netherlands. Historically, it was the Golden Age that was celebrated, leaving little room for the regional history of the Hanseatic cities or the Duchy of Brabant.⁷² For the people of Holland this program of cultural homogenization meant few changes.⁷³ They did not have to alter their language or learn history from other provinces.⁷⁴ In contrast, the inhabitants of Noord-Brabant had to adapt to the new context and they did. Something must have attracted the people of Noord-Brabant to join with the fellow inhabitants of the nation-state.

Multiple explanations coincide to explain for Noord-Brabant's integration in the nation-state. For one part, it was a story of having no choice. Noord-Brabant could not and did not wish to join with Belgium, so they were stuck with the rest of the kingdom. From that perspective, they could better

⁶⁹ H. Knippenberg & B. de Pater, *De eenwording van Nederland: schaalvergroting en integratie sinds 1800* (second edition, Nijmegen 1990) 23-24.

⁷⁰ J. Perry, "'t Nachtegaaltje zingt': regionalisme in Nederlands-Limburg 1900-1950', *Studies over de sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Limburg* 52 (2007) 8-12. G. Zonderland, 'Separatisme en regionalisme in Nederland sinds 1814', in *Goed en kwaad: vijftien opstellen van fascisme tot pacifisme, van Rudolf Steiner tot Colijn* (Antwerpen, Apeldoorn 2002) 129-130 & 134.

⁷¹ P. Raedts, 'Inleiding', in H. ten Velde & H. Verhage (red.), *De eenheid en de delen. Zuilvorming, onderwijs en natievorming in Nederland 1850-1900* (Amsterdam 1996) 3.

⁷² R. van Ginkel, 'Hollandse tonelen, een etnografische verkenning', in T. de Nijs (red.), *Geschiedenis van Holland deel III B 1795 tot 2000* (Hilversum 2003) 647.

⁷³ Knippenberg & de Pater, *De eenwording*, 14.

⁷⁴ T. de Nijs, 'Slotbeschouwing', in T. de Nijs (ed.), *Geschiedenis van Holland, deel 3B 1795 tot 2000* (Hilversum 2003) 700.

make the best of it. A second explanation is the freedom of religion. Although jobs in the higher circuit in Noord-Brabant were up into the twentieth century still disproportionately often given to Protestants, a basic freedom was guaranteed from 1848 onwards.⁷⁵ The third part of the explanation lies in the economical welfare that Noord-Brabant gained from joining in the nation-state. During the nineteenth century, waterway and road connections were improved in the province. Even more important was the coming of railways. In the 1880s an extensive network of rail had been constructed in Noord-Brabant.⁷⁶ Due to these connections, new factories set up in Bergen op Zoom, Tilburg, Eindhoven and Helmond. In Eindhoven the company of Philips even attracted bright men from all over the country to come and work in the Philips-factory. The increase in employment meant that in general prosperity rose. Famines and poor, rural living conditions were beginning to become something of the past. The modernization and increase in wealth in Noord-Brabant was an important reason for wanting to join in with the Dutch nation-state.⁷⁷

Despite the welfare that was the result of Noord-Brabant's integration in the Netherlands, a small and late counter reaction to the Dutch nationalism arrived in the 1930s. In a broader discourse of interest in regional history, a part of the population in Noord-Brabant started to long back for the old Noord-Brabant, without the noisy and ugly factories and rail roads cleaving through the countryside. This longing for an over glorified past (the old Brabant was also very poor) was sometimes explicitly mixed with a Catholic identity in for example the student organization *Brabantia Nostra*⁷⁸, but the regionalism also showed itself in other smaller choices. Up into the 1940s new sport clubs for example chose names that reminded of the past (e.g. *Were di* after a speech from a Duke of Brabant or *Taxandria* after the old Roman name for an area roughly comparable to Brabant). Old traditions of guilds including standards and skeet were restored and celebrated as vivid traditions that dated centuries back (while in fact during most of those centuries only some old men had been concerned with the traditions). As this small wave of regionalism only struck when the Netherlands was already a unified, although pillarized, nation-state, it could not endanger its unity. However, it might have had an effect on the choice of names of streets.

§2.5 Conclusion

As the process of naming of streets is complicated, an elaborate discussion of its different parts was needed. It should now be clear that the naming of streets was a process that was executed at the local level. Furthermore, different cities organized the process in various ways. In every city plans were

⁷⁵ C. de Gast, 'Protestantisme en overige gezindten, kerkelijke verscheidenheid en versterkte identiteit', in H. van den Eerenbreemd (red.), *Geschiedenis van Noord-Brabant, deel 2 1890-1945: Emancipatie en industrialisering* (Amsterdam 1996) 334.

⁷⁶ Knippenberg & de Pater, *De eenwording*, 49.

⁷⁷ J. van Oudheusden, 'Brabantia Nostra: rooms en romantisch regionalisme, 1935-1951,' in C. van der Borgt (ed.), *Constructie van het eigene, culturele vormen van regionale identiteit in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1996) 124.

⁷⁸ Idem, 128-129.

probably approved or rejected in small chambers. Then, the general differences between the groups of names of streets in Holland and Noord-Brabant are not so large as they may seem. They can be compared, but it should be kept in mind that Brabant's cities started somewhat later with naming streets than Holland's ones. Finally, I made clear that precisely in the period I examined, the Netherlands came together as a nation-state due to cultural homogenization and an modernization in the country. Precisely in this climate of nation-building, the new street names, the *lieux de mémoire*, could contribute to a further nation-building on the local scale (or instead expressing regionalist feelings). In the next chapter the use of national themes will thus be discussed.

Chapter 3: National themes: appropriation and obscuring of history

In the great pool of themes that can be used to name streets I distinguish national themes (referring to national geography or (any) national history) from regional and local themes. National themes are discussed previous to the regional and local ones because the latter ones were more of a niche in the national discourse than vice versa. This chapter thus consists of a comparison of national themes in Noord-Brabant and Holland. The question I will be trying to answer is what the differences are between the national themes used in Noord-Brabant and Holland in the period 1859-1939.

Furthermore, how do these differences relate to the historical context in which the street names were given?

The order of sections in this chapter is not randomly chosen. I begin with looking at the themes of national geography, the least controversial ones. Slowly becoming more controversial, the colonial themes – with special attention for the theme of the Second Boer War –, the Royal Family and nineteenth-century politicians will be discussed, before we reach the climax of the Golden Age. Note that not all national themes are reviewed in this chapter. The themes of writers, poets, musicians and painters from the nineteenth and twentieth century and scholars/scientists from Dutch history in general are not discussed. Based on my stocktaking of street names no apparent differences between Holland and Noord-Brabant can be found with regard to the themes of the nineteenth-century artists, while the bright men from the Golden Age seem to have been used in an equal way in street names as the painters from the Dutch Golden Age. The fact that those names were used is however in line with the argument that will follow.

§3.1 National geography

Streets that are named after local villages or cities could be found well before street naming became an organized affair in the nineteenth century. Such streets lay in the direction to/from the place it was named after. It could happen that both The Hague as Rotterdam had a *Delftseweg*, a road leading to the city of Delft. Using geography as a theme for a new group of streets, required thus a new way of thinking. These streets did not lead to the places that they were named after. One can therefore suspect that those new streets might have caused some orientation problems in the beginning. The theme of national geography includes not only the names of names of villages and cities, but also of specific regions and Dutch rivers and streams. Naming a street after a city in a different province might not seem a clear expression of positive feelings for the nation, but – as we will see in the next chapter – choosing for local geography is also an option. Therefore, I do consider national geographical nomenclature as a choice for the nation (and in that sense against the region/locality).

Amsterdam has three groups of streets named with the theme of national geography. The first group (from 1922 onwards) entails rivers and streams throughout the country, from north to south. The

second somewhat smaller group consisted of the names of Dutch isles; all those names have been given in 1931. The third group, which dates from 1939 and lies next to the other groups of national geography is composed out of seven streets named after specific regions in the Netherlands (*Betuwe*, *Veluwe*). Taken together, these three groups do form a quite important segment of streets, but they were lately thought of and they are balanced in number by local geography as we will see in the next chapter.

The situation in Rotterdam is quite similar to Amsterdam, but in this city local geography clearly outnumbered national geography. In 1916 the building company *De 11 Provinciën* (the eleven provinces) constructed some streets in Rotterdam South. The streets were named after the provinces of the Netherlands. The names thus found their provenance in the building company, not in city hall. Street names that were thought of (or copied from other cities) by the municipal archivist were those of Dutch isles in 1938. Some ten of the Dutch isles were honored by a street name. In the year 1940 plans were approved for streets carrying names from villages in Noord-Brabant (*Oisterwijksestraat*, *Dongensestraat*), but due to the outbreak of the war those streets were never built. Neither were the names used after the war. The names of the villages of Noord-Brabant can have three different origins. Two practical issues might have led to the names. People who originated from Noord-Brabant (emigrated to Rotterdam to work in the harbor) could have asked for names of their hometowns (or the archivist thought they would like that). The rural style of the new quarter could have been the inspiration for the new names too. Noord-Brabant was, although home to some industrial cities, still a rural province. The names of the villages do also fit in the increased interest in regions in the 1930s, but then it would be strange that the names from Holland have not been used. This theme does show interest in regional geographical, but not of the own region which makes it likely that it can be better explained by the practical context.

The city of The Hague again resembles the case of Amsterdam. Quite early (1880) the big rivers of the Netherlands were used to name streets after. Next, as in Rotterdam, a building company came up with a number of street names based on their own name. An alliance between a Belgian and a Dutch building company (*Hollandsch-Belgische Bouwgrond Maatschappij*) building new houses resulted in streets named after Belgian and Dutch cities.⁷⁹ The Hague started with the theme of Dutch isles before Rotterdam and Amsterdam, in 1921. Apparently, the national geography theme was popular in The Hague, because from 1924 onwards a huge group (almost 100 streets!) was named after smaller villages and cities from the provinces of Southern Holland, Northern Holland, Utrecht and Gelderland. Because both the Northern as the Southern provinces were excluded, it does not seem that the goal was to discriminate against the former Generality Lands of Noord-Brabant and Limburg. From the three cities of Holland The Hague has used the theme of national geography the most, Amsterdam came second and Rotterdam lagged behind with the use of the theme national geography.

⁷⁹ S. Veldhuijsen (red.), *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984) 28.

In Noord-Brabant both national as well as local geography as themes for street names are very rare. In fact, the only geographical names can be found in Breda. This group of names (from 1932) consists of five major rivers – Maas, Merwede, Rijn, Schelde & IJssel – in the Netherlands. In 1939 the small river of Noord-Brabant the Amer is added to the other five, which might be a small hint of a regional discourse. The big difference between using geography as a theme for street names between Holland and Noord-Brabant immediately raises questions. It might help to contextualize geography in general. Geography became a mandatory subject in primary education in 1857.⁸⁰ Young children learned about topography at school, but travelling by train improved the knowledge of adults as well. In general, interest in geography rose in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1873 the Dutch Geographical Society was established. This society was formed by people from the higher classes of society, proving that geography was something which had its base of supporters not so much in the academic world, but in society itself.⁸¹ So the use of geography as a theme for naming streets is a reflection of interests that could be found in society. With mostly simple names that all people knew, the geography theme was also a very suitable theme for naming streets. Although the limits of geographical names are endless, – in Paris a creative mind from high society thought of creating a map of the country by means of street names – geography as a theme for street names was just a small part of the total array of themes.⁸²

This contextualization of geography has, however, not provided a reason for Noord-Brabant not using geography. If we – for the sake of reason – assume that Holland liked the geographical names and Noord-Brabant did not, there seems to be some logic in this reasoning. In Holland naming streets after other places in the Netherlands expressed a sense of Holland being the center of the nation. One could list dozens of other places that were all less important than the cities in Holland or the own city. In contrast, if a city in Noord-Brabant would name streets after the cities in Holland they would emphasize that Noord-Brabant is just a part of the Netherlands and not the center. It is therefore possible that to avoid a sense of being on the periphery of the nation, the cities in Noord-Brabant did deliberately avoid national geography.

§3.2 The Dutch colonies

Expressing your attachment to the nation-state could also be done by using the theme of Dutch colonies when naming streets. The Netherlands had a big imperial empire in the period before the Second World War, including the archipelago of the Dutch East-Indies, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. In the twentieth century in primary and secondary education, this colonial situation, the pride of the nation, was drummed into the minds of the youngsters. The Netherlands thought themselves a

⁸⁰ P. Boekholt & E. de Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland, vanaf de Middeleeuwen tot aan de huidige tijd* (Assen 1987) 150.

⁸¹ B. de Pater & H. van der Wusten, *Het geografische huis, de opbouw van een wetenschap* (Muiderberg 1991) 52-53.

⁸² W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, London, Massachusetts 1999) 518-119.

grand nation not to be less than France or England due to this colony.⁸³ Next to learning geography of the Netherlands itself, the geography of the colonies was an important part of the curriculum.

The Hague started naming streets after the isles of the East-Indian colony relatively early. Already in 1861 the first street was named after Java. This quarter was soon surrounded by other quarters named after other themes, so it became not bigger than some twenty streets with the last isle named in 1889. This last street was named after Lombok, as if the local government could see into the future. In 1894 rebels in Lombok ambushed Dutch soldiers. The Dutch decided to strike back and the victory that followed was widely celebrated. One way of doing that was naming streets after Lombok.⁸⁴ This quarter is not the only group of names referring to the Dutch colonies in The Hague. In 1890 a street was named after Jan Pietersz Coen, the first governor-general of the East-Indian colony. A list of governors-general of the colony from Coen down to the end of the nineteenth century could easily be drawn up and this theme was thus used up to 1928 for the new quarter. The usage of the whole spectrum from Coen to the latest dead governor-general gave a sense of continuity to the colony. The Dutch were there in the seventeenth century and nowadays they were still there. The presence of general Van Heutz, who had violently repressed the rebels in Aceh round the turn of the century, in this group of governors-general emphasized the idea of future Dutch rule over the colony.

Amsterdam has a big group (60) of streets named after the Dutch isles in the East. This group does not only consist of the names of isles, but also of cities at those isles. The group thus hosts very exotic names as *Soembawastraat*, *Gorontalostraat* and *Karimatastraat*. The process of naming in this quarter lasted from 1900 to 1927. A much smaller group of street names was reserved for those other colonies in the West. Some fifteen names referred to Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. These names were given in the period 1922-1935. In contrast to Amsterdam, Rotterdam has almost no street names referring to the Dutch colonies in either the West or the East. Some four names (probably inspired by companies in those streets trading with the colonies) dating from 1888-1894 can be found on the Noordereiland.⁸⁵ In this case a practical issue was at stake. The Noordereiland is small, so they quickly ran out of streets there. If the first streets were named after the East Indies somewhere else, then, very likely, this group would have been bigger.

In the time that people from Holland (and foreigners) sailed the world's oceans, the estate Noord-Brabant had save for some adventurers that applied for the dangerous sailing nothing to do with the colonies. In the nineteenth century, a change occurred. Noord-Brabant was incorporated in the Dutch nation-state and the colonies now partly belonged also to Noord-Brabant. As the conquering of the inland East Indies only gradually began in the second half of the nineteenth century to finish in the

⁸³ M. Bossenbroek, *Indië en Zuid-Afrika in de Nederlandse cultuur omstreeks 1900* (Amsterdam 1996) 355.

⁸⁴ Van Goor, 'De Lombokexpeditie en het Nederlandse nationalisme', in J. van Goor, *Imperialisme in de marge? De afronding van Nederlands-Indië* (Den Haag 1986) 69.

⁸⁵ The Noordereiland is a total mess of street names. One can find flowers, prins Hendrik (the brother of William III, not the husband of Wilhelmina!), Thorbecke and Aceh all lying next to each other.

twentieth century, the people of Noord-Brabant witnessed and could share in this activity which made the Netherlands an imperial power nearly equal to England and France. Therefore, for the cities in Noord-Brabant, naming streets after the Dutch East Indies was, although a memory to the Golden Age of Holland (and thus the exclusion of Noord-Brabant), mostly expressing the pride for the new nation-state and its colonial glory.

Bergen op Zoom has a small group of streets named after the most important isles of the Dutch East Indies. These names were decided upon in 1930. As Bergen op Zoom has not used many themes, the importance of this one should not be underestimated. The local council of Bergen op Zoom must have considered the Dutch East Indies important enough to refer to in their street names. Breda however lacks any reference to the colonies. It remains unclear why Breda has not used the East-Indian theme, which is an example of the sometimes unexplainable character of street names.

Tilburg just as Bergen op Zoom had no problem with references to the colonies. An average-size group of streets was given names referring to the isles in the East in 1922.⁸⁶ Three streets named in 1930 after Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao, which is a hint to the willingness of the local government to accept the national colonial history. Also in 1930, streets in a new quarter were named after some governors-generals of the Dutch East-Indies. General Van Heutsz was commemorated by a street as well. Van Heutsz ended the Aceh-uprising (*Atjehoorlog*) in 1904 by brute force. His employed methods were not without doubts. The doubts about general Van Heutsz are exemplified by the case of the Van Heutszmonument (erected in 1930) in Amsterdam. After protests at the time of its erection, in the 1960s and the 1990s, in 2004 it was formally changed from an imperial monument to a friendship monument, losing its original meaning.⁸⁷ The street name van Heutszstraat in Tilburg however still exists to date.

Most of the names referring to the colonies date from 1890 or later. As I will describe in the next section, in the decade 1900-1910 a volatile mix of nationalism and anxiety for the colonies was raging through the Netherlands. The attack in Lombok in 1894 was the overture to this turbulent period. When the news of Lombok was heard, celebrations for the birthday of Wilhelima were directly cancelled.⁸⁸ Support actions were undertaken, although response from the Northern provinces, Limburg and Noord-Brabant was lower than in Holland.⁸⁹ When the soldiers who had repressed the rebels of Lombok returned they were received as real heroes. From this context (and in the later decades the sense of the colonies being the pride of the nation), the choice for the street names can be explained. People would be proud to live in the *Javastraat*, but the early quarter in The Hague formed

⁸⁶ Some new streets were built in this quarter after the independence of Indonesia. Tilburg decided nevertheless to continue naming the streets after then Indonesian isles (Ceram in 1971, Flores in 1985). This is quite unique in the Netherlands and it shows that the systematic process of naming was not easily abandoned.

⁸⁷ K. Ribbens, 'De vaderlandse canon voorbij? Een multiculturele historische cultuur in wording?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 117/4 (2004) 511.

⁸⁸ M. Bossenbroek, *Indië en Zuid-Afrika*, 215.

⁸⁹ Van Goor, 'De Lombokexpeditie', 52/53.

in a period when the empire in the East was still very much in progress is remarkable. Either a group of officers or tradesmen connected to the East Indies or a private initiative might have been at stake there.

§3.3 The Second Boer War

An interesting theme that was used to name streets with was the theme of the Second Boer War. The Boers, a white people that originated from Dutch settlers who settled on the coast of Southern Africa in 1652, fought two wars against the English which tried to control the territory of Southern Africa. The Boers had left the English territory and established their own republics in the North-East. In their war against the English they fought for their right to exist as a sovereign country. In the Netherlands, Protestants and people believing in the imperial history and future of the Netherlands still felt (or quickly developed) a connection with the Boers. It was argued that the Boers belonged to the Dutch branch of peoples (*volksstam*) – although the Boers themselves in contrast believed to be a unique people. They did not deny that they originated from the Dutch, but stressed instead that they had become a different people. The Dutch nevertheless sent some help to the Boers in the First Boer War (1880-1881), but medical help was organized late and arrived only when the battle was over.⁹⁰ This war and the one that would follow were in the Netherlands seen as a imperial war of the English repressing the Boers, not accepting the fact that the Boers were trying to set up their own country. The Second Boer War broke out in 1899 and lasted until 1902. This time, the Dutch felt even stronger support for the Boers, although the government had to remain neutral in order to protect the important trade connections with the English.⁹¹ Besides a private medical team and self-recruited soldiers that shipped to South Africa, naming streets after the Second Boer War was a symbolical act of support.

As the support for the Protestant Boers came predominantly from Protestant societies, street names supporting the Boers are not likely to be found in Noord-Brabant.⁹² Indeed, Bergen op Zoom and Breda lack such a quarter before the Second World War. As mentioned above, Bergen op Zoom had a group of streets named after isles in the Dutch East Indies. In all investigated cities the Boer War theme was only used when the theme of the East-Indies had already been used before that. If the archivist or street name committee would not want to take pride in the East-Indian isles, then it would be strange that they supported the Boers. Supporting the Boers was at least one step further down the imperialist road than taking pride in the colonies in the East. In the case of Bergen op Zoom (in which no new groups of street names appeared after 1930) it was still possible that the city wanted to name some streets after the Boers, but, as evidence lacks, it is equally possible that the theme of the Boers would have been deliberately avoided because of the Protestant nature of the Boers.

⁹⁰ G. Verspijck, *Het Nederlandsche Roode Kruis (1867-1967)* (Nijkerk 1967) 86.

⁹¹ M. Bossenbroek, *Indië en Zuid-Afrika*, 185.

⁹² Bossenbroek, *Indië en Zuid-Afrika*, 189.

Breda's lack of the use of the Boer War theme is even more puzzling than Bergen op Zoom's. In 1952, in a big naming operation Breda named streets after naval heroes, poets and scientists from the Golden Age, but also using the theme of the Second Boer War. While the minutes of the local council show that the first three groups were adopted without any discussion, some arguments were exchanged about the Boers. One of the council members thought that the *Krugerlaan* should be named *Paul Krugerlaan*, to underline the importance of the president of one of the Boer Republics. The chairman of the council however argued that none of the men have their first name on the street sign, so an exception for Kruger would be an inconsequent change. Nevertheless, the majority of the council voted in favor of the change (*Smutslaan* was also changed in *generaal Smutslaan*).⁹³ The chairman also replied that some information will be given about the figures on the street signs. This last remark is interesting. Some 50 years after the Boer War, the younger generations would not recognize the proposed names, so additional information was needed on the signs.

Catholic Tilburg did not react immediately when the Second Boer War broke out. Seven years after the first names in the East Indian quarter (1922), the Major and Aldermen of Tilburg however decided to name streets using the theme of the Second Boer War. With almost 30 names, this group is quite big, but as all the names were adopted in one time, this has to do with the building plans which foresaw a big new quarter. Most of the chosen names refer to generals (including the word general in front of the name) or other important figures in the Second Boer War. In some cases the geography of South Africa was used, as in *Zandrivierstraat* or *Bloemfonteinstraat*. Although Tilburg did name streets after the Second Boer War, it did this quite late. Note however that one year later in 1930 three streets were named after the Dutch isles in the West (Aruba, Bonaire & Curaçao) and a group after governors-general in the East Indies. So something sparked an interest in the colonial theme in the period 1929-1930 in Tilburg.

The situation in Holland was totally different. Already in 1900 Rotterdam and The Hague started to name streets after the Second Boer War. The local council and the people of The Hague were reportedly very happy with these names.⁹⁴ Amsterdam awaited (possibly as the capital of a neutral country) the end of the war and began to name streets after the Second Boer War in 1904. The composition of the groups (new names were given up to the 1920s, in Amsterdam even up to 1939) in the three cities of Holland is quite similar. Generals (without the word general, which is an indication that in Tilburg in 1929 people did not know who had been a general), battle grounds, statesmen and more general names form the group of street names. Rotterdam however placed also 'Van Riebeeck', the Dutch explorer who set sail to South Africa and founded the Dutch colony from which the Boers would descent, between the Boers to stress that the Boers were descendants of the Dutch colonists. This explicit connection was nonetheless scarce in the cities in Holland, because people already

⁹³ Stadsarchief van Breda, Notulen van de openbare vergaderingen van de Gemeenteraad van Breda, 17 september 1952 (Breda 1952) 396-397 [accessed via library].

⁹⁴ *Het Nieuws van den Dag*, 29th of January 1900 (Tweede Blad), 'ingezonden brief'.

believed that the Boers were a sort of Dutch people. They did not need to be reminded of that fact through street names.

Two questions pop up in comparison with Noord-Brabant. Why did the cities in Holland begin naming the street earlier than in Noord-Brabant, and why did they want to name streets after the Boers so quickly? Around the year 1900 the colonial fever spiked. After the prelude of Lombok, the war in Aceh and the Second Boer War gave rise to a feeling of fear and anxiety.⁹⁵ It seemed that the Dutch colony and the ‘Dutch’ settlers in Africa were attacked all at once, almost like a conspiracy. Another ingredient in the mix was the national unity that began to show itself. The new queen Wilhelmina (queen from 1898 to 1948) travelled as a young girl through the country to unite the different parts of the country under a new monarch (the previous kings all had had their oddities).⁹⁶ In this volatile mix, the Boer War provoked fevered reactions in mainly Protestant locations. The need to react with naming is therefore not so surprising in Holland.

In Noord-Brabant the situation was seen through different spectacles. The Boers were a faraway Protestant people – even an obstacle in the civilization work of the English⁹⁷ – for which the people in Noord-Brabant had no special feelings. The remote colonies in the East, although something to be proud of, was still mostly an affair of Holland. Thus, given the lack of a volatile mix of nationalism and colonialism in 1929, the choice for naming streets after the Second Boer War (and in 1930 the other colonial themes) is remarkable in Tilburg. The case of the Second Boer War can therefore serve as an example how eager they were to name streets which reflected the proud and joy for the nation in Tilburg. It also showed that where in Holland the historical context directly led to street names supporting the Boers, in Noord-Brabant the Catholics were an obstacle strong enough to prevent such a reaction. Instead of supporting the Boers, in Tilburg, the conflict was remembered, while in Breda in 1952 it was a proper historical theme not so much unlike governors-generals of the East Indies.

Scholars have researched street names politics in countries which witnessed political regimes changes (Spain, Germany) or struggled with their identity (Israel). Big events, such as a regime-change, a revolution or a war were reasons for renaming streets. For example, in the city of Almonte in Southern Spain, the regime change to Franco in 1937 meant that the percentage of streets named after military officers rose from four to over twenty percent.⁹⁸ In the Netherlands the Second Boer War is in fact the only ‘big event’ which has triggered a simultaneous reaction in street names. Pinchevsky & Torgovnik noted that after the 1967 war in Israel, new streets were given names as ‘The Paratroopers,

⁹⁵ R. Aerts & B. Broekhuizen, *Land van kleine gebaren, een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990* (Nijmegen 1999) 149.

⁹⁶ H. Beunders, ‘Regina vivat! Regina vivat? In de publicitaire monarchie is de liefde tussen volk en vorst als het leven zelf’, in R. Meijer & H. Schoo (red.), *De monarchie, staatsrecht, volkskunde en het huis van Oranje* (Amsterdam 2002) 104.

⁹⁷ *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 3rd of June 1900 (Tweede Blad), ‘De oorlog in Zuid-Afrika’.

⁹⁸ F. Gonzalez, D. Murphy, & J. Carlos, ‘Street names and political regimes in an Andalusian town’, *Ethnology* 36/2 (1997) 135.

Tank Forces and Israeli Defense Forces'.⁹⁹ This situation is somewhat similar to the Dutch situation around 1900. The choice for the names in the Second Boer War in Holland's cities is thus caused by a big event, a response that is not unique in the literature on naming streets. It is also the most clear example of what Geyer and Bright argue. They say that world history is formed by choices at the smallest of administrative levels.¹⁰⁰ The choice for the themes of the Second Boer War were such a low-level-decision, showing that street name choices in the Netherlands were sometimes a part of world history, influenced by events on the other side of the globe.

§3.4 Kings and queens

In 1815, after the final defeat of Napoleon, William VI (in the line of *stadhouders* [stewards]) was installed as king William I of the Netherlands. This kingdom consisted also of what is now Belgium and Luxemburg in order to form a strong state against France. The Belgians revolted against the Dutch king in 1830 and they gained full independence in 1839. Luxemburg broke away from the kingdom in 1890 when William III had not succeeded in providing a male heir for the position of king (his sons had died early). The Dutch kingdom was survived in 1890 by queen-mother Emma, until little Wilhelmina could become queen in 1898. Princes Wilhelmina toured through the country during her youth to show herself to the people, trying to unify the country under a beloved monarch. The attempt was quite successful.¹⁰¹ This explains why the Royal Family (the members from 1815 onwards) can be found in every Dutch city I investigated. Sometimes also Juliana, Bernhard and Beatrix were used, because the marriage between Juliana and Bernhard was quite well appreciated.¹⁰² However, it is still interesting to look for the differences between the cities of Holland and Noord-Brabant.

Amsterdam, the capital of the monarchy, has in fact little attention for the Royal Family in street names. In the period 1888-1904 some ten streets are named after Emma, Hendrik, Wilhelmina and Sophia (the first wife of William III). Also William of Orange (together with his wives) was remembered in street names in Amsterdam. However, he was positioned just besides the naval heroes of the Golden Age. Therefore William of Orange seemed to be linked to the Golden Age instead of linked to the kingdom. Rotterdam resembled the situation of Amsterdam. In 1912-1916 some streets were named after the members of the Royal Family, but in Rotterdam this group was expanded in 1937 by streets named after wives of William of Orange. In Rotterdam they therefore explicitly linked the current Royal Family with the far ancestors from the sixteenth century, bridging a period of over three centuries this way. Although I believe that this was a practical choice, – the nineteenth-century Oranje Nassaus belonged to sixteenth-century Orange Nassaus – the sole fact that such a connection

⁹⁹ A. Pinchevski & E. Torgovnik, 'Signifying passages: the signs of change in Israeli street names', *Media, culture and society* 24/3 (2002) 372, 376.

¹⁰⁰ M. Geyer & C. Bright, 'World history in a global age', in M. Grever (ed.), *Reader Historical Culture in a globalizing world* (Rotterdam 2009) 191.

¹⁰¹ Aerts & Broekhuizen, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 146.

¹⁰² J. van Osta, *Theater van de staat, Oranje, Windsor en de moderne monarchie* (Amsterdam 1998) 113.

was thought of as logical, means that there existed a mental bridge between the early Orange-Nassaus and the current ones. According to Zerubavel mental bridging makes a continuous story out of discontinuous events, stressing in this case also the founding myth of the Netherlands.¹⁰³ So, even if three centuries in which many things happened lay between William of Orange and the Dutch kings of the nineteenth century, the connection between them was still made without any hesitation.

In the Hague the nineteenth-century Royals were used to create the first group of streets (in 1859). As they began early with using this theme, a second and third group were used to refer to the 'new' Royals of Hendrik, Emma and Wilhelmina. Emma was – as had happened in Rotterdam – placed between streets named after the wives of William of Orange. In Holland two of the three cities linked William of Orange with the recent Royals in their street names planning. The Hague is again special with its early names. Although it was a city with many connections with the family of Orange-Nassau (as *stadhouders* and as Royals the lived in The Hague), the popularity of the Dutch Royals began only to rise from 1870 onwards.¹⁰⁴ The Hague thus wanted to stress the connection between the Orange-Nassaus and the city, risking the possible negative reaction of its inhabitants.

As in The Hague, in Tilburg and in Breda the theme of nineteenth-century Royals was the first theme to be used for a group of street names. In Tilburg in 1881, after 'eenige beraadslaging en uitwisseling van gedachten [after some deliberation and interchange of thoughts]',¹⁰⁵ in the local council, even the oldest existing street name (*Komediestraat*, after a theater in that street) was renamed to honor king William II. King William II had a special relationship with Tilburg. During the Belgian uprising the Royal Family had stayed in Tilburg and William II occasionally went hunting in the woods around Tilburg. As king he ordered a palace to be built in Tilburg, but this was only finished after his death. In Tilburg, except for a single *Juliana van Stolbergstraat* (the mother of William of Orange), no streets were named after the early Oranges or *stadhouders* from that family. For Tilburg, there seemed to be no purpose in naming streets after *stadhouders*, as there were no connections to the city. In contrast to naval explorers or heroes, *stadhouders* were not glorious enough and too much a reminder of the secondary position of Noord-Brabant, to be used as a theme for street names. A direct confrontation with the truth of Noord-Brabant being a second-rank attachment to the Republic and lacking a glorious past in that time was thus averted. A piece of history was obscured while the Royals were eagerly appropriated as beloved monarchs.

Breda had a different relationship with the Orange family. Some early Nassaus and one Orange-Nassau lie buried in the Great or Our-Lady Church of Breda.¹⁰⁶ Breda was also liberated from the

¹⁰³ E. Zerubavel, *Time maps, collective memory and the social shape of the past* (Chicago, London 2003) 40.

¹⁰⁴ Beunders, 'Regina vivat!', 103.

¹⁰⁵ Regionaal Historisch Centrum Tilburg, Secretariearchief Tilburg, 1810-1907 Access number 4. Inventory number 15: Notulen van de Gemeenteraad van de Tilburg van de openbare vergadering gehouden op 8 oktober 1881 (Tilburg 1881) .

¹⁰⁶ Two big roads on are named after two of these early Nassaus (Count Engelbert & Count Hendrik III).

Spaniards (reconquered and again liberated) by the army of Maurits (the son of William of Orange).¹⁰⁷ Wilhelmina was not mentioned in the first group named after the Royal Family, so when a new park was constructed, this was named after Wilhelmina (as happened in Tilburg two years later). In the first quarter of the twentieth century a special group of street names appeared in Breda. This group had a specific function. It had to connect Breda with the recent Royals explicitly.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the barony of Breda which would become one of the territories and titles of the Royals was linked by the people of the right marriages to the ancestors of William of Orange. While Tilburg thus had a link with William II, Breda had a link with the early pre-Republic roots of the Royals. However, in neither cities, the *stadhouders* of the Golden Age were used to name streets after. Breda furthermore had the problem of the neighboring municipality of Ginniken which was sometimes one step ahead of Breda with the names of Royals. Ginniken had in 1933 streets like *Waldeck Pymontlaan* and *prins Hendrikstraat*. A proposal to use the same names in Breda in 1936 had to be cancelled. (As Ginniken was annexed during the Second World War this cancellation was wise in hindsight.). Recent new members of the Royal Family like Bernhard, Juliana and Beatrix were however used for new street names in 1937-1939. This time Breda was faster than Ginniken.

Bergen op Zoom did not have a special relationship with early or recent members of the Royal Family. So, naming streets after the Royal Family was an expression of national unity and joyous feelings for the Dutch monarchy rather than emphasizing a certain connection between the Royals and the city. In 1923 over ten streets were named after the Royal Family at once. The group would become the largest of Bergen op Zoom before the Second World War. Except for William of Orange, all the names referred to Royals from the nineteenth and twentieth century. As in Breda and Tilburg, no *stadhouders* were used in this group. Bergen op Zoom is in this case – supported by the happily celebrated memorial day of William of Orange in 1933¹⁰⁹ – a fine example of expressing national feelings. In fact, the idea of the Netherlands being a kingdom under the same rule of the family which had a leading role in Holland in the Republic (when Noord-Brabant and Limburg were secondary territories without religious freedom), seemed to have been forgiven (or at least forgotten). However, in all three cities in Noord-Brabant a direct confrontation with the *stadhouders* was avoided. The emphasis was placed on the recent period (or in Breda the very early period). Even if all cities in Noord-Brabant and Limburg named streets after the nineteenth-century Royals – the Royals rank very high in the list of most used streets in contemporary Netherlands – the lack of streets referring to

¹⁰⁷ The Dutch version of the Trojan Horse tactic: a ship carrying hidden soldiers entered Breda and the soldiers could surprise the Spaniards. The shipper, Adriaan van Bergen, is honored by a street name.

¹⁰⁸ G. Otten, *De straten van Breda* (Tilburg 1988) 117.

¹⁰⁹ 'Programma van de viering van de vierhonderdste geboortedag van Willem van Oranje', in *Gids van Bergen op Zoom* (Bergen op Zoom 1959).

stadhouders is very significant.¹¹⁰ It means that still a hidden page of ‘painful’ Noord-Brabant’s (and Catholic’s) history should not be highlighted by street names. This piece of history was therefore obscured.

§3.5 Members of Parliament

After a trio of ‘wise men’ (van Hogendorp, van Limburg Stirum & van der Duyn) had watched over the Netherlands in the years 1813-1815 awaiting the arrival of the family of Orange, the Netherlands became a kingdom under William I. This kingdom had a constitution which resulted in – among others – two Houses of Parliament. For the people from Noord-Brabant this meant that for the first time in a long period representatives of Noord-Brabant gained an official status. Politicians from the cities of Noord-Brabant could go to The Hague to fight for the needs of their province. As many cities wanted to name streets after persons, nineteenth and twentieth-century politicians were a good source.

Amsterdam honored the three wise men of 1813-1815 by naming streets after them in 1886. The group would be expanded with Members of Parliament (MPs), but also political scientists. Thorbecke, the man of the new constitution of 1848, is missing in this group, but only because he was given his own square some years earlier. The square was renamed in 1876 when a statue of Thorbecke was placed there.¹¹¹ The Amsterdam group also entails Schaeapman, the emancipator of the Catholic South of the Netherlands. Therefore, this group seems to be a ‘representative sample’ of politically active men.¹¹²

The Hague has made quite a mess of streets named after politicians. A small group (from 1865 onwards) honors the trio of wise men as was done in Amsterdam and some other men (Falck, Fannius Scholten) who played some role in the 1813-1815 period. Most of the important events in this period happened in The Hague (note that Scheveningen where William landed in 1813 belonged to The Hague as well). Naming quarters after the theme of 1813-1815 is thus not strange in The Hague. However, some other politicians of the nineteenth century are spread throughout the city. Thorbecke, Groen van Prinsterer and de Savornin Lohman all have their own big lanes crossing through the city. The archivist of The Hague must have thought that naming big lanes after important politicians was more honoring than small streets in a residential neighborhood. Abraham Kuyper lived in The Hague for a while, so that a (small) street was named after him, making it a rare, old-fashioned street name.¹¹³ Curiously, dr. Schaeapman was (years later) explicitly placed within the literature quarter (as he wrote some poems). Although the important politicians were used to names streets or lanes in The Hague, the city did not develop the full potential of the theme of politicians. As the political centre of The

¹¹⁰ R. ten Kroode & J. Brouwer, *Benoemen, nummeren en begrenzen. Handboek van gemeenteambtenaren die zijn belast met het benoemen van de openbare ruimte, het nummeren van vastgoedobjecten en het begrenzen van gebieden* (Den Haag 2002) 52.

¹¹¹ J. Drentje, *Thorbecke, een filosoof in de politiek* (Oosterhout 2004) 510.

¹¹² Note that Abraham Kuyper was not given a street named before after the Second World War.

¹¹³ S. Veldhuijzen, *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984) 71.

Netherlands this is remarkable, but then again street naming is easily influenced by practical obstructions.

Rotterdam began using national politicians (members of the Lower House of Parliament) as a theme for street names over half a century later than Amsterdam and The Hague.¹¹⁴ Only in 1932 was a substantial group of streets named after MPs. This group included all major MPs, with the notable exception for two. Thorbecke had found its streets decades earlier (on Noordereiland) and Schaepman was again to be found besides other writers and poets. The name of Schaepman had been given before the group of national politicians came about. It is impossible to establish whether or not this was done with the intent to keep Schaepman out of the group of national politicians. Although Schaepman, an important emancipator for the Catholics, might have written good poems, portraying him as a poet and not as an MP, downplayed his importance. This could thus only happen outside the Catholic South and Catholic enclaves. The theme of politicians of 1813-1815 was not used in Rotterdam. This episode in Dutch history was at that time (1930s) getting more and more forgotten, as the emphasis was placed on either the Golden Age or the history from 1815 onwards.

The only nineteenth-century politician in Bergen op Zoom after whom a street was named before the Second World War was van Hogendorp (the leader of the trio of wise men). He can be found next to Jan de Witt, van Oldenbarneveldt and Hugo de Groot, creating an eclectic mix of Dutch politically active men. In my opinion this eclectic group can be interpreted as a will to name politicians from Dutch history, but the lack of streets to do so. If Bergen op Zoom had had more streets, other nineteenth-century politicians would have been used to name streets after too. However, with street names one cannot be sure whether a choice was deliberate or not, so I might be wrong here. Another result of this eclectic collection of Dutch politically active men is however the creation of historical continuity. In this small group the gap between the sixteenth century and the nineteenth century is bridged showing that also in Bergen op Zoom it was believed that the nineteenth-century nation-state had its roots in the sixteenth century.

Breda totally lacks any streets named after national politicians. Even Thorbecke did not have a street named after him before the Second World War. After the War, Breda did catch up and created a groups of streets named after nineteenth and twentieth-century politicians. Tilburg followed Breda in naming streets after Thorbecke and other national politicians only after the war. Of course there was always critique on the parliament. It would be undemocratic and the politicians acted too little, but this critique was not a problem in Holland for naming streets after politicians.¹¹⁵ The lack of Thorbeckestreeets in Noord-Brabant is even more remarkable. The new constitution of Thorbecke gave

¹¹⁴ The reception of street names is not subject of study. However, it is interesting to note that all hell broke loose in Rotterdam when a tiny, tiny street was named after Troelstra (while other politicians such as Kuyper got appointed big lanes). Many socialists (quite a big number in Rotterdam) were dismayed. Eventually, the street plans were changed and a bigger street was named after Troelstra.

¹¹⁵ I. van den Broek, 'De taal van het anti-parlementarisme, poëzie en politiek in Nederland 1870-1940, in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 120/3 (2005) 469.

the Catholics the chance to emancipate. Thorbecke was even blamed by Protestants for the restoring of the Catholic hierarchy in 1853.¹¹⁶ It seems that Thorbecke, although celebrated as a national hero after his death, fell between the different pillars. Neither Catholics nor Protestants were willing to appropriate this liberal emancipator, while the liberals themselves were not organized strongly enough to do so.¹¹⁷

Tilburg did however name streets after Catholic politicians before the Second World War (between 1929-1933). In this case, the glory of Catholic emancipation (some of the men came from Limburg, so it was not an expression of Noord-Brabant's unity) was given more priority than glorifying the national parliamentary history. Note that the streets were explicitly named after ministers, no simple MPs. One could interpret this group thus also as an expression of gratitude or pride that Catholics could become ministers. Dr. Schaepman, the first leader of the Catholic party, was just a simple member of parliament, so he would not fit between the ministers. Schaepman was however already in 1909 honored by a street name.

Comparing the streets named after MPs in the cities of Holland and Noord-Brabant delivers interesting results. Amsterdam and The Hague honored the politicians involved in the 1813-1815 episode of national history. Rotterdam had in contrast to the other cities in Holland a group named after later MPs, but – as in The Hague – Schaepman was put between writers and poets. In Noord-Brabant, a 'representative sample' of important national MPs lacked in all three cities. None of the cities named a street after Thorbecke before the Second World War. Bergen op Zoom did honor van Hogendorp but only as a part of an eclectic group of national political figures. Breda totally lacked any politicians, while Tilburg placed the Catholic emancipationist politicians before the important national ones. In total, it seems that Noord-Brabant was not very happy with the political process. Yes, Noord-Brabant could participate in the process, but it was still something done in Holland by highly educated, wealthy men. The distance between the industrial laborers and the political discussions in The Hague was maybe just too great to use politicians for street names.

§3.6 The Golden Age

During the Dutch Golden Age (roughly 1580-1660) trade and arts flourished in the Dutch Republic, but the wealth was mostly concentrated in the cities of Holland.¹¹⁸ Politically, the Republic was renowned for its tolerance, but everybody who was not a Calvinist could face repression at some point.

¹¹⁶ Aerts & Broekhuizen, *Land van kleine gebaren*, 106.

¹¹⁷ H. ten Velde, *Stijlen van leiderschap, persoon en politiek van Thorbecke tot Den Uyl* (Amsterdam 2002 second edition) 21.

¹¹⁸ Some background information for non-Dutch readers: The Golden Age was the time of the Dutch Revolt against the Spanish troops. This fight is in the nineteenth century pictured as the founding fight of the Netherlands. The brave Dutch fought for their freedom (against tax and for freedom of religion) against the mean and evil Spaniards. William of Orange organized the Revolt and after his death, the Dutch provinces decided to join in a Republic to continue to fight the Spaniards. Eventually, the Dutch won this 80-year-war and signed the peace treaty in 1648.

The Catholics who mostly lived in the southern attachment (Generality Lands) of the Republic were not free to openly worship their Catholic faith and were treated as second rank civilians. Furthermore, Noord-Brabant was not profiting much from the wealth in Holland. The heydays of the prosperous Duchy of Brabant (for example the markets in Bergen op Zoom which attracted men from all over Western Europe) were long gone. Therefore, naming streets after persons, events or objects from the Golden Age is at some point always a painful memory of a dark past for Noord-Brabant. From the above sections it seemed that Noord-Brabant wanted to remember the glorious parts of the nation's history, without being directly confronted with the adjoining truth of the superiority of Holland. So what about the Golden Age?

I will look into two different themes of names reflecting the political or military Golden Age in this section. In the next section I will look into the artists of the Golden Age. The political and military men that were active in the Dutch Republic include the *watergeuzen*, an unordered group of naval men that fought alongside the Dutch against the Spanish troops, and names of friends and advisers of the *stadhouders* which tried to control the Republic. Together they form the first group of themes of military of politically active men of the Golden Age. A second theme which is more or less representing the military glory of Golden Age are naval heroes and explorers. The men used in this group are not always from the Golden Age (certainly not Van Speijk, who lived in the nineteenth century), but if ones thinks of naval heroes and explorers, the first association is the Golden Age.

The Hague has put all the politically active men of the Dutch Golden Age in one quarter. From 1901 this group kept growing until it was proposed in 1909 to name streets after some *watergeuzen*. Rentenaar tells that this infuriated the Catholics in the local government and that in return they named a new parochial church the *Martelaren van Gorcumkerk* [Martyrs of Gorcumchurch]. Two of the *watergeuzen* were according to the Catholics involved in the killing of the martyrs of Gorcum in 1572 (see also §4.3).¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, the Catholics could not overrule the decision of the local council (as they were outnumbered) and the names were given after all. This quarter became one of the larger ones in The Hague.

Amsterdam was more careful in using the theme of the politically active men of the Golden Age. Maurits and Frederik Hendrik (sons of William of Orange) were used to name streets after in 1886. Before that in 1881 Hugo de Groot (also known as Grotius) had been used to name four streets.¹²⁰ Since for example Jacob Cats (a poet) was used as well, the overall composition of the group does refer to the Golden Age, but not so aggressively as in The Hague. Rotterdam used the theme of the politicians from the Golden Age much later than Amsterdam. It was only in 1932 that at once a new

¹¹⁹ R. Rentenaar, 'Straatnaamgeving, de geschiedenis van een oud probleem', in idem et al, *Straatnaamgeving. Een congres over straatnamen.* (Den Haag 1993) 11; S. Veldhuijsen (red.), *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984) 323.

¹²⁰ A feature of early street names is the existence of more streets with the same name: Eerste [first] Hugo de Grootstraat, Tweede [second] Hugo de Grootstraat, Derde [third] Hugo de Grootstraat.

quarter of 25 streets was built. So, maybe this was the first good opportunity in Rotterdam to use the men from the Golden Age. In this group, the same *watergeuzen* which caused trouble in The Hague were present. Earlier, in the city center, Maurits had been honored by a street name. This might have been a reason for the low priority of the Golden Age theme. With Maurits the most important protagonist had been named already, so the incentive to use the names of less well-known Golden Age politicians was meager. Rotterdam could have copied the names of the *watergeuzen* from The Hague, without having an explicit intention of naming streets after them. However, the internal comparison between the cities of Holland is secondary and therefore I turn to the comparison with Noord-Brabant.

Comparing Holland with Noord-Brabant delivers interesting results. Bergen op Zoom has an eclectic group of four different politically active men. These were: Jan de Witt, van Oldenbarnveldt, Hugo de Groot and van Hogendorp. The sons of William of Orange are nowhere to be found in Bergen op Zoom, Breda or Tilburg.¹²¹ In Bergen op Zoom and in Breda the lack of especially Maurits, the son of William of Orange who led the Republic's army after his father's death is remarkable. Bergen op Zoom was fortified in 1567, just before the outbreak of the 80-year-war and during that war the Spaniards never conquered it. Bergen op Zoom was thus an important stronghold for the Republic, but did not express this in the street names. In contrast to Bergen op Zoom, Breda was conquered by the Spaniards, but prince Maurits recaptured the city. Some mental obstruction blocked the use of the names of politically active men from the Golden Age. Not only the *stadhouders* were avoided, neither can *watergeuzen* or politicians from Holland be found in the city-text of Breda and Tilburg. The history of the Dutch Revolt with Noord-Brabant being nothing important except for a battle field to fight the Spanish or a provider of food, but especially the Protestant *watergeuzen* who had killed Catholic priests in 1572 was still an open nerve.

In 1572, the Protestant *watergeuzen* captured the small town of Den Briel. This liberation of this town is sometimes portrayed as the start of the liberation from the Spanish troops of the whole of the Republic. However, the *watergeuzen* encountered a group of nineteen Catholic priests and lower clergyman in Den Briel. Those men were captured and asked if they wanted to convert to Protestantism. They refused, were tortured and eventually they were killed by the *watergeuzen*. In the nineteenth century these priests grew out to saints, commonly known as the Martyrs of Gorcum. A small article from a local newspaper of Tilburg illustrates the Catholic view on the use of Lumey and Sonoy (the men who reportedly had a major part in the killing of the priests: the 'priest-murderers') in The Hague. 'Aan buitengewone schurken mag geen openlijke hulde gebracht worden. Ellendelingen zooals Lumey en Sonoy, die zich als beesten, als tijgers gedragen hebben, mogen niet op het voetstuk geplaatst worden, waarop men anderen verheft of duld. Daartegen moet zich het eenvoudigste begrip

¹²¹ Note that Maurits and Frederik Hendrik were also names given to princes in the nineteenth century. Fortunately, which of the two is meant can be looked up in the books about street names per city as the governments did explain who the people were the new street were named after.

van eerlijkheid, rechtvaardigheid en fatsoen verzetten.’¹²² The journalist – who can live with the idea of *watergeuzen* as a theme for street names if chosen with the idea of the goal of political freedom that they pursued – further argues that the use of Lumey and Sonoy is not only grieving and offending for Catholics, but for all who have some idea of justice, honesty and humanity.

The *watergeuzen* and the Martyrs were subjects that can demonstrate how the nation-state of the Netherlands searched for an identity in the nineteenth century. Both scholars as ordinary people played a part in the process. Catholic historian W. Nuyens wrote extensively about the priests who were murdered in 1572, but with the goal to fit them into national history. These priests, declared holy in 1867 by the pope, gained a mythical status in the nineteenth century. Van der Zeijden even calls the mythical priests an invented tradition.¹²³ Nevertheless, invented or not, it was enough for small riots that broke out with the celebration of the liberation of Den Briel in 1872.¹²⁴ These small riots show a discrepancy between what the historians Nuyens and Fruin wrote (called *conciliante geschiedschrijving*) about the martyrs (National-Catholic heroes that were fitted into Dutch history without provoking the Protestants) and what the people thought. The Dutch Catholic church did not want the priests to be declared holy in the first place, because the Vatican’s story about the martyrs was the precise opposite of the Protestant view of Dutch history.¹²⁵

Although the opinions of historians and common people could differ from each other on these festivities, the celebrations that were held the second half of the nineteenth century show how the Netherlands sought a shared, undisputed history. In 1848, the Catholics were still quite happy with the celebration of the Peace of Münster, although they did blame the Protestants for making William of Orange too much of a defender of the Protestant faith.¹²⁶ The next celebration of 1868 (Battle at Heiligerlee, the start of the 80-year-war) proved fertile ground for discussions. All major historians of that time tried to make their point. The national identity was thus highly debated.¹²⁷ What should be the celebrated past of the Netherlands? It is only with the inauguration of queen Wilhelmina that a real and national people’s party was organized.¹²⁸ The Protestants and Catholics each stuck to their own vision of history, but the Royal Family and the Golden Age were the national framework for the past and the future. The centennial celebration of 1913 was a genuine people’s party with the Netherlands

¹²² [No public tribute should be paid to extraordinary scoundrels. Villains as Lumey and Sonoy, who have behaved as animals, as tigers, should not be put on a pedestal on which others are elevated or allowed. The simplest sense of honesty, justice and decency should oppose against this.]

Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant, 04th of October 1909, ‘Lumey en Sonoy’.

¹²³ A. van der Zeijden, *Katholieke identiteit en historisch bewustzijn: W.J.F. Nuyens (1823-1894) en zijn ‘nationale’ geschiedschrijving* (Amsterdam 2002) 112-114.

¹²⁴ F. Groot, ‘Gewapende vrede, ontwikkeling op levensbeschouwelijk gebied’, in T. de Nijs (ed.), *Geschiedenis van Holland, deel 3B 1795 tot 2000* (Hilversum 2003) 504.

¹²⁵ H. de Valk, ‘Nationale of pauselijk helden? De heiligverklaring van de Martelaren van Gorcum in 1867,’ *Trajecta* 6/2 (1997) 144-145, 154.

¹²⁶ Van der Zeijden, *Katholieke identiteit*, 238-239.

¹²⁷ Van der Zeijden, *Katholieke identiteit*, 253.

¹²⁸ N. van der Sas, ‘La nation Néerlandaise au dix-neuvième siècle’, in P. den Boer & W. Frijthoff (éd.), *Lieux de mémoires et identités nationales* (Amsterdam 1993) 204.

boasting with confidence.¹²⁹ The whole Golden Age was thus not boycotted to use for naming streets in Noord-Brabant. On the contrary, the cultural Golden Age was ripped for any glorious men or artists.

Amsterdam has an old quarter (from 1878) named after naval explorers and a more recent one after naval heroes (from 1910). In both of these quarters it were mostly men from the Golden Age that were honored (new names appeared until 1939). The Hague combined naval heroes and explorers in one small and old (1875) quarter. This quarter only consisted of the most well-known men (de Ruyter, Tromp, Piet Hein, Barentz, van Speijk, Tasman and so on). Rotterdam, *the* harbor city of the Netherlands, however lacks a quarter honoring naval men. As streets were named after Witte de With (buried, but not born, in Rotterdam), Piet Heyn (born in Delfshaven) and De Ruyter by private initiative before the systematic naming of streets had taken off, a quarter with the other naval heroes would have been confusing (although renaming these two streets was theoretically an option). However, there were certainly some ten to fifteen Dutch naval explorers waiting to get a street named after them. This could have been done without any spatial planning problems in Rotterdam, but it has not been done.

The situation in Noord-Brabant, with Breda and Tilburg far away from the sea – some people would not even have seen the sea with their own eyes before the Second World war – is quite similar to Holland. Two cities try to name streets after naval men. Bergen op Zoom is not quite successful as it got stuck at three (Piet Hein, Michiel de Ruyter & Tromp) in 1930, but the intent to name more streets after naval men can be imagined in the case of Bergen op Zoom. Tilburg is far more successful in naming streets after naval men. The two groups honoring naval heroes (1922) and naval explorers (1927) together form an important part of the total array of names in Tilburg. As mentioned earlier, Breda only got their naval quarter after the Second World War. The appropriated naval heroes and explorers in Noord-Brabant helped imagining the new nation-state with its ‘glorious’ past.

§3.7 Artists

A book by Busken Huet, *Het land van Rembrandt* [the country of Rembrandt], visualized the Golden Age in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. This book evoked a wave of cultural nationalism.¹³⁰ Statues of painters, writers and philosophers, for example, were erected in different cities – as many cultural or military heroes could only be found in the city in which they were born, had worked or had died, one can question the national idea of placing statues, it might be a more complex relationship with cities showing their importance for the nation state – although not as much as in Germany or France.¹³¹ The Calvinist nature prevented too much and too glorious statues.¹³² Historiographer Piet

¹²⁹ Grever, M. & K. Ribbens, *Nationale identiteit en meervoudig verleden* (Amsterdam 2007) 64.

¹³⁰ P. Blaas, *Geschiedenis en nostalgie, de historiografie van een kleine natie met een groot verleden* (Hilversum 2000) 58-59.

¹³¹ J. Leerssen, ‘Een beetje buitenland: Nederlandse natievorming en Limburgse regionalisme’, *Studies over de sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Limburg* (2007) 35; J. Bank, *Het roemrijk vaderland: cultureel nationalisme in Nederland in de negentiende eeuw* (Den Haag 1990) 41-42.

Blaas notes that the nineteenth-century vision on the Golden Age was very bright. Ideas on the strong entrepreneurship and economic miracle were later shot down, but then people believed it was really a Golden Age.¹³³ The Golden Age was, according to Blaas, also used to deliberately connect the Royal Family with wealth and glory, to create a national history by picking together the right pieces.¹³⁴ Indeed, the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the invention of new nation's founding myths. National history suppressed all others sorts of history. The appraisal of the Dutch painters of the Golden Age internationally gave confidence to the Dutch nation state. Rembrandt was really someone who deserved a statue and to be honored by street names.¹³⁵ This confidence in turn boosted the cultural nationalism. This can also be seen in street names.

Amsterdam honored Rembrandt with a statue and a square quite early, in 1876, sacrificing the old *Botermarkt* [Buttermarket].¹³⁶ In 1870 Amsterdam started to build new streets and named them after painters from the Golden Age. The painters served as a metaphor for the splendor and might of Amsterdam in the Golden Age.¹³⁷ However, the quarter was expanded again and again, until the painters from the Golden Age were at an end. Without creating a clear border between the group of Golden Age painters and the later ones that were now used to name streets, the council switched to more contemporary painters. Exactly the same happened with the theme of writers and poets from the Golden Age. The Hague had an identical problem as Amsterdam with its theme of Golden Age painters. The Hague however did prevent a similar problem in the 1930s. Two separate quarters were built: one with names derived from modern literature (nineteenth and twentieth century) and one with names from all (including very early works like *Esmoreit*) earlier literature. One has to be well educated in Dutch literature to know whether the street belongs in the early or modern literature quarter, so the practical functionality can still be questioned. In both Amsterdam and The Hague the cultural nationalism had struck ground and it resulted in large, but often eclectic, groups of names of streets named after artists from the national history.

Rotterdam made quite a mess of the heritage of great artists from the Golden Age. Due to private initiative, a *Rembrandtstraat* was called into life already in the 1860s, which made the systematic honoring of the other painters more difficult. Therefore, Rotterdam began with using painters from Rotterdam as a theme for street names. Only in 1928 a small group with both Golden Age and nineteenth-century painters was used to name streets. Also the theme of writers and poets was not split, so that an eclectic mix of writers and poets was used to name streets in 1918.

¹³² Van der Sas, 'La nation Néerlandaise', 201.

¹³³ P. Blaas, 'De Gouden Eeuw : overleefd en herleefd : kanttekeningen bij het beeldvormingsproces in de 19de eeuw. ', *De Negentiende Eeuw* 9 (1985) 111.

¹³⁴ Blaas , 'De Gouden Eeuw', 111, 119.

¹³⁵ Blaas, 'De Gouden Eeuw', 123.

¹³⁶ J. Wiersma, *De naam van onze straat, geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1977) 162.

¹³⁷ Grijzenhout, F. & H. Van Veen (red.), *De Gouden Eeuw in perspectief, het beeld van de Nederlandse zeventiende-eeuwse schilderkunst in later tijd* (Heerlen 1992), 84

The wave of cultural nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century did not affect naming in Noord-Brabant it seems, although not that many streets were built in that period in Noord-Brabant.

Bergen op Zoom decided in 1930 upon one small eclectic group of writers, but with painters no more progress was made than the *Rembrandtstraat* and *Jan Steenstraat*. In Breda the situation is just the opposite. In the 1930s a small group of painters (again consisting of people from different periods) was used to name streets,¹³⁸ but only three poets were honored (Bredero, Hooft and Van den Vondel). In Tilburg the theme of Golden Age artists was more abundantly used than in Breda and Bergen op Zoom.

Three separate themes started to be used in 1921-1923 (which could be an indication of

a very nationalistic street name committee).¹³⁹ But, not surprisingly, all groups consists of artists from different periods. Tilburg thus had no problem embracing the painters, architects, writers and poets from the Golden Age and the other periods. Appropriating a painter has no negative consequences. You can proudly say that the painter that made that beautiful painting came from your country, without having to turn open the history books. In contrast to the lack of *stadhouders* in Noord-Brabant, the example of artists shows that the content of the name you use to name your street matters, not the period. Not all names from the Golden Age were associated with the dark past, so these name could be used.

As Noord-Brabant gradually integrated in the Netherlands, the disputes of the past were slowly settled. Some parts of the history were just obscured, while naval heroes and artists were appropriated. What applies for the naval heroes, applies also for inventors of the Golden Age, although in street names those got quite often mixed with later or even foreign inventors. The Golden Age became *the* shared history of the Netherlands and thus also the basis of the imagined community of the new nation-state. Even in popular culture, the link to the Golden Age was being made.¹⁴⁰ This national discourse of the Golden Age, Royal Family and traditional Dutch culture was also seen in stamps and bank notes. The painters and writers from the nineteenth and twentieth century which were also used



Figure 3.1: A 'nationalistic' bank note of 25 guilders from 1921. The portrait in the centre is one of William of Orange. The ship on the right reminds of the Golden Age.

Source: <http://www.catawiki.nl/> (Home > Catalogus > Bankbiljetten > Landen > Nederland > 25 gulden Nederland) 1921).

¹³⁸ Vincent van Gogh, Jeroen Bosch, Pieter Breughel, Rembrandt and Vermeer.

¹³⁹ In this period also the themes of Dutch inventors and Dutch publicists were began to be used. These themes also do refer to national history.

¹⁴⁰ A. de Jong, *Dirigenten van de herinnering, musealisering en nationalisering van de volkscultuur in Nederland 1815-1940* (Nijmegen 2001) 579.

for naming streets of course also have a place in this discourse. It was important to stress that the contemporary Netherlands also produced great men, so therefore these men (and some women) were used.

§3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I did not discuss all themes that were used to name streets and that refer to national history or geography. However, two themes have to be discussed before I will turn to a conclusion. In The Hague, a building company gave names to streets using Dutch generals from the nineteenth century as a source in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. This theme is not used in the other five cities. I believe that these names were the source of inspiration for a small group (begun in 1911 and extended in 1922 and 1939) with the theme of the Dutch military answer to the Belgian uprising. The names in this group are mostly those from officers that distinguished themselves by fighting the Belgians. When even the military success against the Belgians is celebrated as a glorious victory, then this must mean that a very nationalistic archivist was in charge of the street names in The Hague (or the inspiration had run very dry). None of the other cities have a group with the theme of the Dutch response to the Belgian uprising.¹⁴¹

The national discourse that made the Netherlands a unified nation with a Golden Age in the past, a strong support for the monarchy and freedom for the different groups in society has greatly influenced street naming. A national imagined community was created by uniting people from all provinces. That does not mean that there is a direct relation between nationalism and street names. Those responsible for coming up with new names were sucked into the turmoil of the moment, were influenced by what they read in the news papers and talked about with others. The one civil servant was more susceptible for nationalism than the other. It is unclear whether the themes of national geography are a result from the national discourse. If so, Noord-Brabant possibly felt itself too much a peripheral province to name streets with national geography as a theme. In contrast to the investigated cities in the international literature on street names, the cities in the Netherlands were not (fully) aware of the power of the instrument of street naming and not aware of the fact that the national themes supported the national (imagined) community. The general idea or ideology of the nation-state of the Netherlands, with its rich history and ruling monarchy, was so strong and so strongly believed to be normal that those responsible for coming up with new names found governors-general as normal as trees or painters, although some regional differences in the interpretation of the nation's history did exist (i.e. *watergeuzen, stadhouders*).

¹⁴¹ Breda has honored two officers with a street name, one of which was involved in the battle for Antwerp in 1832, but this was done on demand of the Royal Military Academy located in Breda.

Table 3.1 *The order of themes of street names referring to national history of geography in selected Dutch cities, 1859-1939.*

City	Chronological order of groups and attempts to groups (between brackets)
Amsterdam	1872 painters – 1876 Literature – 1878 naval explorers – 1879 Golden Age – 1886 nineteenth-century politicians – 1900 East Indian isles – 1902 Royal Family – 1904 Second Boer War – 1910 naval heroes – 1922 West Antilles – 1922 rivers – 1931 Dutch isles – 1936 Royal Family II – 1939 literature – 1939 Dutch regions
The Hague	1859 Royal Family – 1870 nineteenth-century politicians – 1878 East-Indian isles – 1878 naval heroes/explorers – 1879 painters – 1880 rivers – 1894 governors-general East-Indies – 1894 Royal Family II – 1894 nineteenth-century generals – 1898 Royal Family III – 1900 Second Boer War – 1901 Golden Age – 1921 Dutch isles – 1921 modern literature – 1922 Belgian uprising – 1924 Dutch geography – 1932 Early Modern literature
Rotterdam	1888 East Indian isles – 1900 Second Boer War – 1916 Royal Family – 1916 Dutch provinces – 1918 literature – 1928 painters – 1932 nineteenth-century politicians – 1932 Golden Age – 1938 Dutch isles
Bergen op Zoom	1923 Royal Family – (1923 naval heroes) – 1930 East Indian isles – (1930 painters) – 1930 literature – 1938 Politicians (mixed)
Breda	1877 Royal Family – 1921 link Breda and Royal Family – 1932 rivers – 1936 painters – (1937 Golden Age literature) – 1939 Royal Family II
Tilburg	1881 Royal Family – 1921 painters – 1922 East Indian isles – 1922 naval heroes – 1923 architects – 1923 literature – 1929 naval explorers – 1929 Second Boer War – 1930 Catholic politicians – (1930 West Antilles) – 1930 Governors-general East Indies

Sources: W. van Ham, *De straatnamen van Bergen op Zoom* (Alphen aan de Rijn 1995); J. Okkema (ed.), *De straatnamen van Rotterdam, verklaring van alle bestaande en van verdwenen straatnamen* (Rotterdam 1992); G. Otten, *De straten van Breda* (Tilburg 1988); R. Peeters, *De straten van Tilburg* (Tilburg 1987); Sv. Veldhuijzen, *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984); J. Wiersma, *De naam van onze straat, geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1977).

Table 3.1, which gives a chronological overview of themes discussed in this chapter, leads us to several conclusions. Painters and writers from the Golden Age and the Royal Family appear in some form in all cities. It thus seems that the only uncontested shared heritage was the cultural Golden Age

(basically Rembrandt and van den Vondel) and that the Royal Family was the glue holding the nation together. So, these themes are likely real *lieux de mémoire* as there was a proper will to remember the Golden Age and the Royals. It is possible that also the themes of the East Indian isles and naval heroes (both referring to the maritime glorious past of the Netherlands) could have been present in all cities if the dice had rolled otherwise. Instead of differences, I found thus also quite some similarities. It turned out that the national discourse was strong enough to influence the street names in remote province of Noord-Brabant. The imagined community to speak with Anderson was strong enough to lead to symbolical support in street names.

However, there is more to the story than just this table. Cities, deliberately or not, emphasized certain parts of history, obscured others and appropriated heroes and geniuses. The cities of Rotterdam and Breda differ from the other ones. They have not picked up the national discourse as much as other cities. In the case of Rotterdam, the answer lies in what will be discussed in the next chapter. The municipal archivist of Rotterdam had a special link with local history which meant that he used that more than national history. In Breda, there is not a very strong answer. Breda was relatively little allotted with the industries in Noord-Brabant, but as a sole explanation that would not be enough. The answer may lie with the quirks of the archivist and maybe also some practical reasons. The next chapter might give further clues to this riddle, when I will analysis street names that refer to regional or local history or geography.

Chapter 4: City's identities: noblemen, clergymen and local geography

In the previous chapter we saw which themes were used in street naming in Holland and Noord-Brabant that referred to national history or geography. As much as it was possible to express a sense of warm feelings for the Dutch nation-state, the cities of Holland and Noord-Brabant could with the same means express a regional or local identity.¹⁴² Local and regional themes are however not necessarily in conflict with the national ones, they can complement each other. This makes street names with regional or local references interesting. What was – behind the façade of national themes – the own story of the city which was expressed through street names? Did the street names show how local figures were important for national history, strengthening the national themes or did they counteract against the national themes by expressing feelings connected to the region or own city? In this chapter I will ask whether differences between local and regional themes used for the naming of street names existed between the cities of Holland and Noord-Brabant in the period 1859-1939, and how these relate to the historical context.

The first section of this chapter will be dedicated to street names that refer broadly to local history, for example names of by-gone industries or old majors. The subsequent sections will have a more specific character. I have selected the themes which have the greatest potential for difference between Holland and Noord-Brabant. In the first of these sections I will compare the themes of Dutch Counts with that of the Dukes of Brabant. The Dukes of Brabant would be *the* source of names for a regionalist discourse. The second specific section will deal with Catholic and Protestant names of streets. How big was the influence of religion on the naming of streets? The third and last case of street names is about local geography. A conclusion will end this chapter.

§4.1 Local history

A common feature in both Holland and Noord-Brabant was the wish of local council members to name streets after local figures from the nineteenth or twentieth century.¹⁴³ Sometimes, they even tried to get family members named, but these requests were often denied with the argument of systematic planning and naming.¹⁴⁴ A single alderman would not fit between painters or flowers. Nevertheless, local (systematic) themes formed a part of the total array of names. Instead of telling how the city's

¹⁴² The difference between local and regional is somewhat arbitrary. I will use local if the names are directly related to a specific city. If the names relate to a bigger area than the city and its direct vicinity, then the term regional is used.

¹⁴³ Stadsarchief van Breda, Notulen van de openbare vergaderingen van de Gemeenteraad van Breda, 27 januari 1921 (Breda 1921), 42-43 [accessed via library]; Stadsarchief van Den Haag, Gemeentebestuur van 's-Gravenhage, 1851-1936 (access number 0353-01), Handelingen van de Haagsche gemeenteraad 1894 (inventory number 112), 4 september 1894; Gemeentearchief Bergen op Zoom, Archief gemeentebestuur 1814-1925 (access number 7), notulen der vergaderingen van de gemeenteraad van Bergen op Zoom gehouden in het jaar 1923 (inventory number 44), 164; Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief van de Gemeenteraad (access number 5079), Notulen van de openbare vergaderingen 1902 part 1 (movie number 1435), 12th of March 1902.

¹⁴⁴ G. Otten, *De straten van Breda* (Tilburg 1988) 70,71 & 104.

relation was with the nation-state, local themes tell the story of the (history of the) city itself. The question is whether there are differences between the way the cities in Holland and Noord-Brabant presented themselves in street names.

Before turning to the cities themselves, two pieces of background information on local themes are necessary. Firstly, every city named some single streets after factories or factory-owners. The *Gasstraat* in Tilburg, leading to the site of a former gas factory, had a practical function. Other streets were named after the owner, expressing also gratitude of the municipality. As this happened in every city and as it is only a marginal aspect of street naming, I will not go into more details on this. Secondly, it can be useful to distinguish between two types of local figures. Some local figures which were used to name streets in a certain city were born there, but moved out of the city. Then they gained status as a politician, artist or hero, but those accomplishments had nothing to do with the city in which they were born. In this case, the municipality expressed the feeling that it had played an important role in *national* history. The other type of local figure used to name streets is the one that – either born in the city or not – has done great things for the city itself. Having been an aldermen, noblemen or doctor, the city wanted to honor this man which was important in *local* history.

From all the cities, Bergen op Zoom had the least means of expressing a local identity, but that did not keep them from doing so. Just like other cities in Noord-Brabant (Breda, 's-Hertogenbosch) Bergen op Zoom was a fortified city for a long part of its history. The fortifications of Bergen op Zoom in particular were very effective. For centuries, the city was not conquered, until the French eventually managed to do so in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century brought changes to warfare and the old fortifications were not as useful anymore as they once were. With an increasing population throughout Noord-Brabant, the city walls and other fortifications were demolished between 1850 and 1900.

With the demolishing of the fortifications a part of the visible history of the city disappeared. The created room was used for the building of new streets. Between 1873 and 1930 streets were named using many names that referred back to the time of the fortifications. The *Coehoornstraat* after the architect of improvements on the fortifications in 1697, but also more obvious ones as *Bolwerk Noord* (bulwark north) are examples. In the quarters in Bergen op Zoom the two types of figures are both present, but the local figures dominate. The idea of the national type could have been to stress that Bergen op Zoom was such a flourishing city that it even produced some national figures. There is no clear time period emphasized in the groups because the people date from the seventh to the eighteenth century. In sum, these names express the idea that Bergen op Zoom was a strong, old city which had also been important in the national history.

As mentioned above, Breda was a fortified city as well during a part of its history. The difference with Bergen op Zoom is – besides the fact that Breda was more often conquered than Bergen op Zoom – that it had a special relation with the Royal Family. The link with Royal Family was expressed in

street names, but the idea of a fortified city was not. Two separate groups of local street names can be found in Breda, but their composition is unclear. The men date from the sixteenth to the twentieth century and were all local figures. The figures were not of any importance for the nation-state as they for example donated money to build a new school in Breda. Even the local importance of some figures can be doubted. Two names were (suspiciously) approved upon in the council while family members were councilors.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore the Royal Military Academia asked to honor two officers which was done as well. In the 1920s, a few streets were then named after nineteenth-century majors of Breda, but that does not make the picture less blurred. It is unclear what the precise goal was of the local themes in Breda. I think there might not even have been a clear goal and the archivist was just giving names that he liked or that people asked him to give.

The Catholic identity of Tilburg will be discussed later in this chapter, but Tilburg expressed another image as well. Tilburg was granted city rights by Louis (Lodewijk) Napoleon as late as 1809. Before that year Tilburg was not much more than some farmer's settlements around the village green, but after 1809 Tilburg grew fast to become a big city. Although Tilburg had no rich history of before 1800, it tried to present such a history after all. As there was no local history to appropriate, in my opinion Tilburg invented its own history story. The major's quarter in Tilburg does not only consist of majors from the nineteenth century, but also of *schouten* (bailiffs) ruling over the small village of Tilburg before 1800. The history goes all the way back to the thirteenth century with another group dedicated to 'Tilburg's history' in which some noblemen are present who might have lived somewhere near to the place where Tilburg is now located. This medieval history is confirmed by the presence of the Middle Ages as a theme for streets (*Ridderstraat, Vazalstraat, Blazoenstraat* and so on).¹⁴⁶ So, Tilburg presented itself as an old city, but two others themes stressed the industrial business of the nineteenth century. One theme consists of terms used in the textile industry, while another one consists of terms used in shipping. These themes celebrated the textile industry and the Wilhelminacanal that opened up Tilburg to the waterways of the Netherlands.

Local themes are of course locally inspired, but that does not mean that there are no parallels between the cities of Noord-Brabant. Each of the cities in Noord-Brabant celebrated its own success through street names. Bergen op Zoom stressed its role as an important city in mostly the Early Modern period, while Tilburg stressed its current industrial position. Breda's commemoration of local people is unclear, but apparently something is celebrated, otherwise no fifteen men would have been used to name streets after. Next to celebrating and commemorating a part of the own history, all cities show that they are old (even if they are not). These two resemblances are not very strong. The differences between the cities are stronger, but will this also be the case with Holland's cities?

¹⁴⁵ Otten, *De straten van Breda*, 70, 71 & 104.

¹⁴⁶ Knight street, Vassal street & Crest street.

Only one local theme in The Hague itself attracts attention.¹⁴⁷ The major's quarter does not consist of nineteenth-century majors, but of fifteenth to eighteenth-century bailiffs. This way The Hague emphasized its age. There are other local themes within the municipality of The Hague, but not in the city itself. They can be found in Scheveningen, the coastal fisher's village that is part of The Hague. In Scheveningen, local figures who did something for the village are commemorated. Furthermore, the sea/fishery-theme has been a source of inspiration for many street names (*Stuurmanstraat, Haringstraat, Sloepstraat, Oesterstraat*).¹⁴⁸ With these street names Scheveningen expressed its own identity to distinguish it from the big city of The Hague. The village was a fisher's village, but with its own history – again old bailiffs were used – and its own local figures.

Another small village that tried to create an own identity was Loosduinen. Just before it was annexed by The Hague in 1923, it named new streets after majors of Loosduinen. After annexation The Hague changed some of these names, but then in 1928 some new names were again majors of Loosduinen.¹⁴⁹ This small conflict about street names is sometimes called a street name war, but in the Netherlands no fierce battles over street names have been fought. The contrast between Scheveningen and Loosduinen who preferred a local identity and The Hague which only paid tribute to national history emphasized the latter. The Hague thus presented itself as an important city both in earlier times as in current times.

The situation in Rotterdam bears resemblance to The Hague in the sense that parts of the city expressed their own identity. Delfshaven used the theme of local figures who had done something for Delfshaven to form a large group of streets. Furthermore it remembered its old industrial past by recalling which crafts were practiced in Delfshaven once. Parts of the city could also emphasize their age by naming streets after old noblemen, but this is discussed in the next section of this chapter. Kralingen named four streets after its nineteenth-century majors, but also Rotterdam itself in contrast to The Hague formed a local identity.

Rotterdam used the theme of the old bailiffs in 1932 for a new quarter and of course the naval/shipping theme could not be missed in the harbor city. The most interesting theme is however that of the Rotterdam theatre company. In 1911 ten streets were named after people linked to the Rotterdam theatre company. Such a systematic and original local figure theme (usually groups of local figures include a mix of different people not linked to each other) can not be found in any of the other cities. Where do these names come from? Was the archivist himself connected to the theatre (or one of his relatives or friends)? Was he asked by the director of the company? The book I consulted of the street names of Rotterdam did not have the answer and the letter from the director of the company to

¹⁴⁷ At first, it looked like the themes of water engineers and those of terms used in water management linked The Hague to water. On second thought, the water engineers were national scientists/inventors and the water management terminology is either a very original theme or part of the natural themes.

¹⁴⁸ Helmsman street, Herring street, Smack street, Oyster street.

¹⁴⁹ S. Veldhuijzen, *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984) 44-45.

the archivist which contains the names which were later used does not solve the riddle either.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, I must presume that the answer lies in one of those conversations in a smoky room in city hall or at a birthday party. Nevertheless, the theme does show along with the other themes a difference with the situation in The Hague. Rotterdam saw itself not so much as a city which played a part in the Dutch history and economy, but also as a entity in itself. In the growing harbor city with a bright future on the horizon an awareness had developed that there were enough things in Rotterdam that were good enough to name street after.

In chapter 3 we saw that Amsterdam adopted quite a neutral position with regard to national themes. In that line of reasoning one would not expect a strongly pronounced local identity. This expectation indeed comes true. Except for the major's quarter (with majors from the seventeenth century), there are no clear local references. Nevertheless the local figures that were born in Amsterdam and who did something for the whole nation can be found in many of the national themes. The city attracted artists and scholars from all over the country from the Golden Age to date. By naming national figures, some of whom were born in Amsterdam and some of whom had lived there, Amsterdam automatically made references to the city. Amsterdam as a single city in its own right did therefore not exist, because it was always related to national history.

The six investigated cities have used the themes of their own history much for the names of new streets. For practical reasons it was convenient to name streets after dead persons, but then still a whole field of hundreds of names from several centuries could be used. Eviatar Zerubavel says that the deeper you can trace back your origin – either as person, nation or organization – the more prestige you gain.¹⁵¹ However, as we will also see in the next section, cities did not go back as far as they could. They emphasized the most prosperous and glorious episodes from their history. This idea coincides with what we saw in the previous chapter. With national themes the emphasis was placed on the prosperous Golden Age and the nineteenth and twentieth century, even when themes that went further back in history (Middle Ages, Roman period) were a possibility.

As mentioned above, the three cities in Holland all had a quarter with streets named after old rulers of the city, but the resemblances end there. While Amsterdam and The Hague have no outspoken local identity, but only a national one, Rotterdam does express a sense of local identity. The differences between Holland and Noord-Brabant with regard to local themes seem to be less interesting than the differences per city. Furthermore, these general stories about the cities do not give much ground for deeper analysis. Therefore, I will turn to some more specific themes in the next sections.

¹⁵⁰ Gemeentearchief Rotterdam, Gemeentelijke Archiefdienst Rotterdam – Gemeentearchief Rotterdam (GAR) (access number 297.01) Ingekomen stukken betreffende de vergaderingen van de Straatnamencommissie, 1904-1985 (inventory number 720) letter from the director of the theater company to the municipal archivist of Rotterdam (1911).

¹⁵¹ E. Zerubavel, *Time maps, collective memory and the social shape of the past* (Chicago and London 2003) 102.

§4.2 Dukes versus Counts

During the Middle Ages, nobles played an important role in the political field in Europe. Either as a vassal under a king, or as an autonomous leader, they ruled over pieces of land, defending them against adversaries. The Dutch nobles were not as important and rich as their French and English counterparts, but Holland and Brabant have been ruled by nobles, respectively counts and dukes. This happened well before the 80-year-war. The County of Holland dates from before 1000 CE, while the Duchy of Brabant was somewhat younger. The big difference between Holland and Noord-Brabant with regard to the period in which they were ruled by nobles was the relative success of the regions. While Noord-Brabant went through a flourishing period (Bergen op Zoom was an internationally important market city), Holland's success in relation to cities like Bergen op Zoom was minor in the late Middle Ages. Cities were built and industries were set up, but wealth and splendor as would be the case in the Golden Age (or least what people in the nineteenth century believed to be wealth and splendor) were not yet present. In sum, while the people of Noord-Brabant had at least theoretically good reasons for naming street after the independent, Catholic and prosperous ducal history, for the people of Holland naming streets after figures from the period of their County did not make much sense save for outdating the rest of the country.

One of the few statues of a Dutch count, William II (1228-1256 CE), stands on the *Binnenhof*. It is the man who settled in the dunes of The Hague making it an important residential and political place.¹⁵² This statue that dates from 1885 had a clear link to the place in which it was erected, but the theme of these counts could have been used for street names, one could think. However, The Hague and Amsterdam (of all cities the one that is the most attached to the image of the Golden Age) have not named streets after the Counts of Holland or related nobles. Rotterdam proves a different story. Four groups of streets can be found in Rotterdam which are named using nobles (including some female ones) from the (late) Middle Ages. The first names in the groups were given in relatively short time period, 1889-1911, well before the period of regionalism in the 1930s. Except for Count Floris (V), no streets are named after the counts of Holland themselves. Instead, other nobles were used to name those streets. The reason that these other nobles (Benthem, Teilinger, Hoylede) were used, was that they had some connection (ownership, living there) with the localities in the neighborhood of Rotterdam.

To understand the use of the theme of nobles from a far past, the situation in Rotterdam has to be examined more closely. While two of the groups can be found in the (northern part of) Rotterdam itself, the other two quarters were built in former independent localities annexed by Rotterdam in the 1880s and 1890s. Charlois has an enormous group of streets named with the theme of its history (up in to the sixteenth century). Delfshaven on the other hand did not abandon the Middle Ages for the use of

¹⁵² A. Kok & L. van Ginneken, *Haagse beelden: Gids voor Haagse beelden in de openbare ruimte* (Den Haag 1991) 24.

names (and neither did Rotterdam). They stuck to the thirteenth to fifteenth century. As some nobles were connected to Charlois, while others had links with Delfshaven, naming streets after these nobles was an act of identity-expression. The names show that Charlois and Delfshaven and their histories differed from each other, but also from Rotterdam. This is remarkable because, – as Charlois and Delfshaven had been annexed – the archivist of Rotterdam came up with the names related to the different localities. Rotterdam thus stressed its countrified identity; an identity of a city which had absorbed independent villages.¹⁵³ Those parts of the city were granted their own independent identity.¹⁵⁴ That is interesting, because the rules of not confusing street names were violated. One had to be an expert in the history of Holland to know which noble was related to which locality. The common civilian – or worse visitor – could not distinguish between the Herlaer-, Haemstede- and Hoyledestraat which were located in three different parts of the city!

I did find an explanation for the large numbers of local street names in Rotterdam (also local geography is abundant as we will see in section 4.4). In 1888, after two earlier attempts in the past decades to establish a historical magazine, the *Rotterdamse Jaarboekje* was published. In the prologue it says that Rotterdam's history is not well researched and that the *Jaarboekje* wanted to contribute to a better story of Rotterdam's history.¹⁵⁵ In these little books – they appeared not every year but most of the years before the Second World War – Rotterdam's history in all its facets is discussed. Medieval events in and around Rotterdam are thus discussed as well. The contributors of this book, including in almost every edition the municipal archivist, actively sought for those counts and other noblemen.¹⁵⁶ The trick now is that the municipal archivist was the chief editor and initiator of this book.¹⁵⁷ So, he had to read all those stories about the history of Rotterdam, coming in contact with names of small villages and names of local men. Furthermore, he himself was interested in the local history and wrote articles about the history of Rotterdam too. It is very likely that this sideline and interest in local history of the municipal archivist explains (together with the parochial idea of the city) the great number of local names in Rotterdam. The man killed two birds with one stone. Editing the books gave him a huge pool of names which he could just copy to a map, saving time and effort.

If we assume that indeed a practical reason was the explanation of the multitude of locally inspired names in Rotterdam, then it is also clear that Rotterdam's local names of Holland's nobles were not an expression of regionalism, but of local affairs. Neither is a regional discourse present in the theme of the Golden Age. It could be presented as *the* flourishing period of Holland stressing the importance of Holland against other parts of the country, but the Golden Age was shared between the provinces.

¹⁵³ K. Fortuin & P. van der Graaf, *De stad verhaalt van de stad, Rotterdamse lokale identiteit en cultuur als hulpbron* (Utrecht 2006) 26.

¹⁵⁴ Note that Hilligersberg (annexed in the Second World War) had also a group of streets named with the names of Middle Ages nobles.

¹⁵⁵ J. Unger (red.), *Rotterdamsch Jaarboekje* 1 (Rotterdam 1888) VI.

¹⁵⁶ J. H.W. Unger was editor of the book from 1888 to 1900. His successor as main municipal archivist, E. Wiersum, edited the book from 1910 until 1935.

¹⁵⁷ http://www.rotterdamum.nl/site/index.cfm?itm_id=2 (accessed 24-05-2010).

Noord-Brabant was free to appropriate from it what it wanted. That does mean that no regionalist trend in street names in Holland could be seen. Holland as the region which was formed by the provinces of North and South-Holland had been dominant during the Dutch history from the Golden Age onwards. In fact, Holland was often seen as a synonym for the Netherlands.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, an idea of a region of Holland had little chance to develop. Holland was just the heart of the Netherlands and a regional picture could not add anything to that idea.

If Noord-Brabant wanted to express a sense of either regional pride or resistance against the nation-state, using the Dukes of Brabant would be ideal. Bergen op Zoom, which was important during the times of the Dukes has not used the theme of the Dukes. As Bergen op Zoom did not create new names after 1930, it is possible that it wanted to do so, but there are no clues for this. In chapter 3 it turned out that Bergen op Zoom embraced the national history without much hesitation. Instead of naming streets after dukes, Tilburg has looked for its own rulers, just as happened in Rotterdam. Although Tilburg was a very tiny settlement in the late Middle Ages, some nobles lived around there and controlled the settlement. These nobles (Van Grobbendonck, van Vessem, d'Hamale) are remembered in a small group of names of streets. Together with the general theme of the Middle Ages, the history of Tilburg sounded more exciting and prestigious than it actually was. No regionalist feelings are in play here, merely a form of identity creation by boasting about its invented history.

Based on the meager adoption of national themes, the one city in Brabant you would expect streets named after Dukes of Brabant is Breda. Indeed, it is Breda where two streets were named after Duke Jan and Duke Hendrik. According to Otten, the municipal archivist believed that the *Lovensdijk* dated back to the time of the Duchy, it was possibly even constructed by order of the Duke (Jan I) himself. That is allegedly the reason that the theme of the Dukes of Brabant was used in 1936 when new street were built around the *Lovensdijk*.¹⁵⁹ Otten also mentioned the increased interest in the 1930s for regional history. So, it is fairly sure that the 1930s have led to one regionalist theme. Then again, Breda wanting to take pride in the glorious history of the Duchy of Brabant would contradict the image of a Breda wanting to emphasize link between Breda and the Royal Family.

In this case, I did find some background information in the minutes of the local council. In chapter 3 I wrote that a plan for new streets in Breda named after the Royal Family was not approved upon because it would bear too much resemblance to the streets in nearby Ginniken. The streets were still built, but they received other names. It are exactly these streets that were given the names of Duke Jan and Duke Hendrik. One member of the council wanted to name the streets after Dutch writers and poets, but he had no problem with the dukes either (and got his way the next year). Reading the minutes, an atmosphere of 'I don't care,' 'Whatever you like,' 'Fine with me,' can be imagined. Ideologically, switching from the Royal Family to the Dukes of Brabant is a 180 degrees turn, so a

¹⁵⁸ R. van Ginkel, 'Hollandse tonelen, een etnografische verkenning', in T. de Nijs (red.), *Geschiedenis van Holland deel III B 1795 tot 2000* (Hilversum 2003) 647.

¹⁵⁹ G. Otten, *De straten van Breda* (Tilburg 1988) 20.

certain nonchalance or lack of interest must have been the case to explain such a switch. Although the choice for this Duke theme was likely inspired by the general interest in regional history in the 1930s, I do not think that this choice was one from a regionalist ideological background. The idea that the Duke himself might have commissioned the building of the *Lovensdijk* (a boast to the identity, maybe broadening the image of Breda from ‘the (Orange-)Nassaus liked it here’ to ‘multiple nobles liked our city’) seems more important than a regional unity with the rest of the province (let alone unity with the former Duchy of Brabant which would include parts of Belgium). In fact, it almost makes the theme a practical one directly related to the place the street are built. Furthermore, if the first plans were for names of the Royal Family, it is unlikely that as a bolt from the blue the council members suddenly wanted to take pride in the history of the Duchy of Brabant. Both the local historical names as the Dukes of Brabant in Breda are not so much explained from the historical context, but from practical reasons. It shows that next to the historical context out of which an impulse for a *lieux de mémoire* arises, the practical context and details can matter.

The concept of imagined communities can shed more light onto the possible use of the Duke theme. The Duchy of Brabant was an area that stretched from central Belgium up into Noord-Brabant. The heart of the Duchy (including the residence of the Duke) lay in the Belgian part of the Duchy. Therefore, if the Duchy was remembered in Noord-Brabant, the imagined community would also consist of Belgians. The people of Noord-Brabant and ‘Southern Brabant’ had however been separated for centuries. Even though Noord-Brabant had been a Generality Land in the Dutch Republic, its historical bond with the Dutch Republic was stronger than its bond with the areas that once belonged also to the Duchy of Brabant. More importantly, however, is the process of Noord-Brabant integrating in the Dutch nation-state in the nineteenth century. The imagined community of a Dutch nation-state was actively supported by the Dutch government. So, from the two possible imagined communities (the Duchy of Brabant and the Dutch nation-state), the Dutch nation-state community was far stronger than the Duchy of Brabant community. This factor may also explain the lack of the Duke theme in Noord-Brabant.

The history which predates the 80-year-war is little used to name streets after in both Holland and Noord-Brabant. As the history of the country started with the beginning of the 80-year-war, events that happened well before 1568 were not a crucial part of the historical identity. Furthermore, in neither regions did a sense of regional unity shine through in the choice for the names of streets, although the regionalist context of the 1930s did almost certainly inspire the council members of Breda in the choice for the Duke theme. The different parts of Rotterdam could express a sense of history and identity by naming streets after different nobles from Holland, but instead of creating unity, it was more an idea of multiple identities within one city.

§4.3 Religion and street names

As the task of naming streets was left to the cities itself, there was much room for expressing an identity related to the city itself. A part of this identity had to do with religion. In this section I will look at themes used for naming streets that are (likely) inspired by religion.

In Holland, explicit religiously inspired themes (e.g. biblical figures, names of clergymen) of street names are non-existent. Two themes do bear some Protestant marks. As mentioned in chapter 3, The Hague named two streets after what the Catholics believed to be priest murderers. Rotterdam used these names as well in the 1930s. Because the Catholics were angry about the use of these names, they could be seen as 'Protestant' names. However, in the context of the entire group which the two contested names were part of, the theme was national history, not the Protestant religion. Nonetheless, this case turns our attention to the fact that Protestant figures are dominant in street names, even in predominantly Catholic cities. Most of the naval heroes, painters, early modern politicians and other national figures came from Holland and were Protestants. As a result, according to rough estimations I made from all the persons after which streets were named in Catholic Tilburg, Breda and Bergen op Zoom, respectively 60%, 65% and 50% was Protestant. So, as in The Hague, also in the cities in Noord-Brabant, it was not the Protestant faith of the men that mattered, but their accomplishments for the nation. Note however that these figures are only achieved by the use of Catholic local figures and Catholic themes. In Holland the local figures are mostly Protestants and Catholic themes are not used, so the percentage of Protestant people will lay around 80-95%.

The second theme that has a whiff of Protestantism around it was the theme of local people of Delfshaven. Many of these men were clergymen in Delfshaven. The groups includes non-clergymen as well, for example majors. The reason to name street after the clergymen was thus not their Protestant faith, but their importance for Delfshaven. So in Holland, no explicit references are made to Protestantism, but the big majority of people after whom a street is named belonged to one of the Protestant denominations. If we look at the number of Protestants in the cities in Holland (see table 4.1), it makes sense why no explicit Protestant themes were used. Although a majority, the Protestants (which are of course divided in various denominations) were no absolute majority. In order not to antagonize the substantial group of Catholics living in the cities, Protestant themes were not used explicitly. Instead, without many people realizing this, through the entire city Protestants names were present (although not because they were Protestant, but because of their deeds for the nation).

As can be seen in table 4.1, the Catholics had – especially in Tilburg – a great majority. The risk of offending those few Protestants or others could be neglected, but in Breda there are no themes used which suggest Catholic inspiration. In Bergen op Zoom however, there is a small group of streets with a manifest Catholic theme. Around a newly built church (1922) two streets are named after the city of Lourdes, one after Bernadette (the girl who claimed to have seen Mary) and one after a local priest. The newly built church (itself named after Lourdes) no doubt prompted this modest group of Catholic

names. The Catholic theme cannot be denied, but on second thought, I think this theme is a practical one. It is for example not that different from the practical group around an abattoir (*slachthuis*) in The Hague. That groups consists of the *Slachthuisstraat*, *Slachthuisplein*, *Slachthuislaan* and *Slachthuisdwarsstraat* [Abattoir side-street]. The streets in such a practical group are named after an important building or activities in the vicinity. In case of the *Lourdesstraat* and *Lourdesplein*, the argument could follow the same lines. The streets tell that the Lourdeschurch is nearby. One is unlikely to find a *Lourdesstraat* outside ‘Catholic territory’, but the names of this group are not by nature Catholically inspired.

Table 4.1: Average percentage of Catholics and Protestants¹⁶⁰ in selected Dutch cities, 1869-1930.

City/region	Catholics	Protestants	Other
Amsterdam	22,68	50,55	26,77
The Hague	30,1	55,18	14,72
Rotterdam	27,4	59,45	13,15
Holland	26,73	55,06	18,21
Bergen op Zoom	80,35	18,15	1,5
Breda	80,88	16,35	2,77
Tilburg	96,97	2,38	0,65
Noord-Brabant	86,07	12,29	1,64

Source: Figures of religious convictions, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, *Historische databank Nederlandse Gemeenten* (versie 1, 2003) (CDROM) (own composition).

The case of Tilburg is different. Three big groups and some single streets bear a Catholic seal. Sometimes this seal is obvious (e.g. streets named after bishops, cardinals and priests), but the group of Catholic politicians is harder to recognize as a Catholic theme. As the streets of the three themes lie next to each other, in total a massive block of streets has Catholic names. Already in 1900, one street was named after a Martyr of Gorcum (*Martelaar van Gorcum*), likely by the Catholic building company. Then, except for Schaepman, the important Catholic political leader in parliament, after whom a street was named in 1909, for some twenty years no Catholic names were used. Instead

¹⁶⁰ Includes: Christelijk gereformeerden, Evangelisch Luthersen, gereformeerde gemeenten, gereformeerde kerken, hesteld Evangelisch Luthersen & Nederlands Hervormd. This collection comprises the most important denominations within the Protestant religious Group.

themes of trees, flowers, painters, the East-Indian isles, naval heroes and birds were used. Only with the construction of a new church the Catholic theme (as a practical one just like in Bergen op Zoom) was used again. The difference with Bergen op Zoom is that the Catholic theme was now used in a non-practical manner too.

In 1923, the theme of Saints was used to name a group of ten new streets. In 1928 and 1929, the big storm burst and priests, bishops and cardinals were used, along with the group of Catholic politicians. So, in Tilburg, national (and natural) themes were used *before* Catholic themes. Note also that only three Martyrs of Gorcum were used to name streets after (one in 1900, two in 1937), while a group of nineteen Martyrs was on offer to use for a new quarter. It appears – practical considerations may have



Figure 4.1 Detail of a map of Tilburg in 1915. The Leonardstraat (later Leonard van Vechelstraat) was surrounded by streets with totally different names which might explain why the theme of the Martyrs of Gorcum was not used except for two more streets in the 1930s. Source: Regional archief Tilburg, photonumber 066011 (Tilburg 1915).

been the reason not to use the whole group too – that during the heyday of Catholic street naming in the 1920s, some sense was present in Tilburg that the Martyrs of Gorcum were ‘too hot to handle’.

A characteristic of the pillarization process in the Netherlands was the little contact between people of the different pillars. The idea was to let the others live their life while we live our own life. The journalist who condemned the street names of the ‘priest murderers’ in The Hague put it this way: ‘(...) menschen die genoodzaakt zijn samen te leven, behooren te vermijden alles wat onnoodig den buurman kwetst.’¹⁶¹ Avoiding possible disputes (also a form of contact) was a strategy that fitted into this idea.¹⁶² So, using all of the Martyrs to name streets after was possibly a provocation (just as in 1867 which we saw in chapter 3) which did not make sense (and was thus not used) in the pillarized society which was characterized by the lack of interpillar contact.

Around 1900 the Catholic pillar is still in the making. As a result, the national rhetoric around the colonies and the Royal Family had the chance to influence the Catholics in Noord-Brabant. During the 1920s however, with the right (and equal subsidies) to Catholic schooling and for example the Catholic radio broadcasting cooperation (*KRO*) established in 1925, the Catholics are locking

¹⁶¹ [(...) people who are forced to live together, should avoid everything which grieves the neighbor needlessly.] *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 04th of October 1909, ‘Lumey en Sonoy’.

¹⁶² E. Kossmann, *De Lage Landen 1780/1980 twee eeuwen Nederland en België deel II 1914-1980* (Amsterdam, Brussel 1986) 74.

themselves up in their own pillar.¹⁶³ They got all the room to live their own Catholic lives.¹⁶⁴ Naming is a part of this process. Catholics schools can be distinguished from Protestant ones by their very names and often the same goes for football clubs or hospitals. The use of the Catholic themes in the (late) 1920s fits into the historical picture. An example can illustrate the spirit of that age. In 1926 a report was written by a P.J.J. Kok and he investigated the measure of religious conviction in the Netherlands. His conclusion was that Catholics living in cities were worse worshippers (more prone to becoming a passive Catholic or even non-believer) than Catholics living in rural villages. Jansen and Beckers argue that this has influenced the policy in Eindhoven; new quarters were built in rural style to resemble the rural villages to support the Catholic faith.¹⁶⁵ This effect of the report in Eindhoven showed that the Catholics did worry about their identity and were willing to use anything at hand to protect it. The identity derived from the street names fits in the historical context. In this case the sketched relationship between the historical context and *lieux de mémoire* was not hindered by practical obstruction and it thus clearly visible.

The fact that Tilburg used Catholic names only in the 1920s after most national ones had been used, does not automatically mean that the community which could be imagined through street names changed. Before the 1920s, the inhabitants of Tilburg were both Catholic and Dutch (next to other identities related to their position in the family, to their work and so on), but after and during the 1920s, the inhabitants are Catholic and Dutch too. The difference lies in the organization of the community. Before the 1920s the Catholic pillar was not yet very well organized, so national influence could penetrate deep and easy into Tilburg society. As the pillarization set in, the people of Tilburg presented themselves more explicitly as a Catholic and became more shielded from nationalism in their Catholic pillar. Nevertheless, a residue of nationalism still resided in the hearts of the people of Tilburg (love for the Royal Family – ‘*We mogen gerust zeggen, dat de Oranjeliefde wortelt in de volksziel, ook hier in het katholieke Zuiden.*’¹⁶⁶, proud of the nation’s past (which could be



Figure 4.2 *Statue of Mary built-in in a building in Tilburg, 1935. Such built-in statues were very common in Tilburg.* Source: Regionaal archief Tilburg, photonumber 067845 (Tilburg 1935).

¹⁶³ C. Slegers, *Mensen uit de kringen van Brabants Heem: heemkundebeoefening in Noord-Brabant* (Zaltbommel 2004) 38; A. Bijsterveldt, *Het maakbare verleden. Regionale geschiedenis en etnologie in Brabant op de drempel van de eenentwintigste eeuw* [lecture] (Tilburg 2000) 7.

¹⁶⁴ P. Raedts, ‘Tussen Rome en Den Haag: de integratie van de Nederlandse katholieken in kerk en staat’, in H. te Velde & H. Verhage (red.), *De eenheid en de delen, zuilvorming, onderwijs en natievorming in Nederland 1850-1900* (Amsterdam 1996) 40.

¹⁶⁵ J. Janssen & T. Beckers, ‘Katholieke planologie. Verzuiling en ruimtelijke ordening in Noord-Brabant en Limburg, 1920-1960’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 120 (2007) 364.

¹⁶⁶ [We can certainly say that the love for the Orangefamily takes root in the soul of the people, also here in the Catholic South.] *Tilburgsche Courant, dagblad van het Zuiden*, 29th of April 1927 (Eerste Blad), ‘Juliana-dag’.

interpreted from Catholic viewpoint)), which could for example be activated on Queen's day. It is an example of the dynamic character of multiple identities.

Tilburg is the only city where religiously inspired themes were used. The city was after all the only city with more than 95% of its inhabitants of one denomination and has therefore expressed a Catholic identity in the 1920s. For other cities the religious themes were possibly too provocative to use. No identity was expressed by using religious themes in these cities, although the 80-95% Protestant people in Holland might be a hidden form of a Protestant identity.

§4.4 Local geography

In chapter 3 we saw that Amsterdam and The Hague used the themes of national geography intensively. In Breda the theme was also used, but only once. Turning to local geography, in the cities in Noord-Brabant streets that are named after nearby villages can be found. These streets (*Bredaseweg, Tilburgselaan*) dated from (well) before 1859. They simply originated from/lay in the direction to the place that they were called after. Local geography as a theme for a new quarter is, however, not applied in the three cities in Noord-Brabant. The argument given in the discussion of national geography may also apply here. For the cities in Noord-Brabant naming streets after other bigger cities was emphasizing its own peripheral status. While naming streets after small villages in Noord-Brabant could show how relatively big and important the city was within Noord-Brabant, the fact that it was relative importance could not be undone.

The Hague used the theme of local geography twice in the short period of 1885-1900. Two small groups of streets can be found which bear names referring to nearby villages or cities (*Naaldwijksestraat, Delftselaan, 's-Gravensandelaan*). The group that is found in Scheveningen is named using the names of coastal cities and villages, strengthening the coastal identity. On second thoughts, the term local geography is not appropriate for these streets. Local geography would only entail names from the direct environment of the city, while cities as far as IJmuiden are used in Scheveningen. Regional geography is thus a better term. Another small group in The Hague is named after some small villages in the province of Southern Holland, but this group pales into insignificance compared to the huge group of national geography. Regional geography in The Hague thus emphasized the coastal identity of Scheveningen, but it did not conflict with the clear 'national' city-text of The Hague.

Amsterdam has one group which can be labeled as 'local geography' (Aalsmeer and Hoofddorp are really close to Amsterdam), but two other groups have names of villages further away of Amsterdam (*Scharwouderstraat, Wognummerstraat, Volendammerstraat*). These groups which are evenly balanced to the groups of national geography seem to suggest that Amsterdam, even in its role as national capital, wanted to stress its role as regional and local leading city as well. As some element of arbitrariness is always present in the Netherlands in the process of naming streets, it would be too

speculative to say that Amsterdam had doubts about its role as capital and therefore needed to crank its confidence by showing that it was at least the local and regional leading city. The regional geography theme might just have been used as a natural theme without any ideological or identity-expressing meaning.

Not that keen on national themes was the city of Rotterdam. With three groups of names of local geography and two groups of regional geography, local and regional geography outnumbered national geography. The groups of local geography consisted of names of the smallest of hamlets in the vicinity of Rotterdam. In fact, these hamlets (*Dortsmont, Benthuizen, Blokland*) were so small that it can be questioned whether the inhabitants of Rotterdam knew these places. It is a good example of the unlimited freedom of the municipal archivist. There was no central institution that would check upon the names of the streets, so that even tiny dots on old maps could be used for street names.. The editorship of the archivist of the local historical book is again the most likely explanation for these groups of names in Rotterdam.

In Holland, the themes of local and regional geography are used in three gradations. In The Hague the themes are less important than national geography, in Amsterdam they are equally important as national geography and in Rotterdam there are more important than national geography. Does that mean that geography played a different role in each of the cities? No, it does not have to mean that. In fact, I think that the geographical themes were not so much an identity-expressing theme, but more like practical or natural themes. Why Holland's cities did use it is in my opinion a combination of practical and contextual matters. Local and especially regional geography provided not too difficult names that were in general easily recognized by the people. In a situation where names could run out in the long run, there was no argument not to use geography as a theme for naming of streets in Holland. Furthermore, geography was something which interested people from the upper class. It is possible than an archivist or member of the street name committee was highly interested in geography. The question why geography was much used as a theme in Holland and not in Noord-Brabant is partly explained by the periphery-argument, but chance and practical issues are probably more plausible explanations.

§4.5 Conclusion

By using national themes for street names cities could express their connection to the nation-state and help to create an imagined community of the nation-state. The local and regional themes, however, could be used to express other loyalties. By using local and regional themes, cities created multiple identities. Bergen op Zoom and Tilburg depicted themselves in their street names as Catholic and industrial cities, while references to the Duchy of Brabant were not present. In Breda the Dukes of Brabant were remembered by street names, but not with a wholeheartedly 'regionalist' feeling. Where in Noord-Brabant there is no feeling of a unity in Noord-Brabant identity, the local and regional

geography themes in Holland come close to such an ideal. From IJmuiden to Spijkenisse, almost the whole region of Holland was used in street names. Nevertheless, next to this group of geographical names stood the national ones. As no explicit Protestant names were used, and the nobles from the Medieval times in Rotterdam were used to emphasize different identities in one city instead of an idea of one Holland, in sum, no Holland-centered regionalism can be found in the street names in Holland. Instead Amsterdam and The Hague wanted to be national cities, while Rotterdam searched for its own urban identity.

The lack of regional themes in street names was quite unexpected. The assumption had always been that the different histories of Holland and Noord-Brabant led to different street names. This came true in regard to some national themes, but I still expected a strong regional identity in Noord-Brabant. Such a strong identity cannot be found in Noord-Brabant's street names, and neither is a strong Catholic identity found in street names in all of Noord-Brabant. Instead, it were local themes that were used to name streets, which helped to create a local imagined community. Since all the cities, but especially Tilburg, had grown rapidly between 1859 and 1939, small communities that existed in the beginning of the nineteenth century had resolved in the bigger cities, causing a new community to be imagined. That was the purpose of the local themes.

In general, the cities share the lack of pre-1568 history in their street names, although majors from before 1568 can sometimes be found. Noord-Brabant's Catholicism manifested itself in Tilburg and partially in Bergen op Zoom, contrasting the hidden Protestant identity in Holland. Also the geographical themes that are so common in Holland and lack in Noord-Brabant form a difference, although hard to explain. Then again, maybe if we compare the results from chapter 2,3 and 4 in the conclusion, we might come with an answer.

Chapter 5: The Dutch story of street names

After having studied street names in Noord-Brabant and Holland in the period 1859-1939, this conclusion will provide the answers I set out to find. First, I will turn my attention to the practical story of the streets names, showing how the local and national themes fit within the complete framework. Secondly, I will answer the research question what the differences are in the use and composition of local, regional and national themes used to name streets in Holland and Noord-Brabant and explain as much as possible why or at least in what context they were given.

In chapters 1 and 2 I explained how peculiar street names in the Netherlands are. In contrast to strong centralized states in the Netherlands there was much room for the local governments to come up with their own names. Furthermore, some of these names, thought of in a shadowy process, were not *lieux de mémoire*, but had solely a practical function. Table 5.1 shows that in each investigated city around 30% of the groups had either a practical theme or cannot be considered ideological (mostly nature themes).¹⁶⁷ The percentage of 30% does however imply that 70% of the groups had a theme that (un)intentionally sent a message.

Table 5.1 *Division of groups of streets names per main frame of reference in selected Dutch cities 1859-1939 (in percentages).*

	National	Regional	Local	Practical groups & other
Bergen op Zoom	50	0	25	25
Breda	31	7	31	31
Tilburg	46	0	25	29
Amsterdam	53	6	11	30
The Hague	50	2	21	27
Rotterdam	23	2	45	30

Source: W. van Ham, *De straatnamen van Bergen op Zoom* (Alphen aan de Rijn 1995); J. Okkema (ed.), *De straatnamen van Rotterdam, verklaring van alle bestaande en van verdwenen straatnamen* (Rotterdam 1992); G. Otten, *De straten van Breda* (Tilburg 1988); R. Peeters, *De straten van Tilburg* (Tilburg 1987); Sv. Veldhuijzen, *Geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in 's-Gravenhage* (Den Haag 1984); J. Wiersma, *De naam van onze straat, geschiedenis en verklaring van de straatnamen in Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1977).

¹⁶⁷ Table 5.1 is heavily dependent on the interpretation of the composer. However, despite the interpretation used, the low percentages of regional references and the substantial group of practical and other themes will always show.

The percentage of 70% does in my opinion sound stronger than it is. In the minutes of the local council or street name committee one does not find ideological discussions. It is doubtful whether the civil servants knew that they wielded an instrument of power and influence. Their choices can still be seen on the map of the cities nowadays, something which was not thought of then. It was not so much a will to create *lieux de mémoire* (as would be the case with the erection of a statue), but the necessity to give names to streets. As the civil servants gave much attention to the systematical planning of streets and their names and no direct involvement of the national government was the case, the research has found differences which strongly suggest that those responsible for coming up with new street names were directly or indirectly influenced by the public discourses of their age. Those responsible for the names were conscious of the choices that they made. Some piece of history was deliberately left out in the city-text, while others were highlighted. So most of the new themes make sense if seen from the right historical perspective. Some themes however must be explained from the practical context.

Through the thesis I used different discourses as a background to place the street names in the right perspective. Sometimes this discourse was prominently elaborated upon, in other cases it was more hidden in the text. Now, with those four different discourses I can try to explain the differences and similarities between the street names in Holland and those in Noord-Brabant. The first discourse is that of the nation-state of the Netherlands. Around 1860 the Netherlands were already well underway to become one state instead of a loose bond of provinces. The Royal Family which bonded the Netherlands is thus present in every city. The colonial power of the Netherlands was also celebrated, even before the colonial turmoil of Lombok in 1894. The Golden Age which was something to be proud of for the whole nation with the great poets and painters it produced fits in this discourse as well. The cities of Noord-Brabant appropriated all these themes (leading to a big similarity between Holland and Noord-Brabant) although all of them were indirect reminders of exclusion in earlier times and most of the men for the street names were Protestants. Nevertheless, direct memory to the political Golden Age was obscured, – no *watergeuzen* and *stadhouders* were used to name streets after in Noord-Brabant – which is an important difference. In this discourse Amsterdam and The Hague presented themselves as the important cities of the Netherlands, not only now but also in the Golden Age. Rotterdam did not fully embrace this discourse, although some practical planning obstructions and the personal taste and his sideline as editor of a historical local book of the municipal archivist are plausible explanations here.

The second discourse is one present in Noord-Brabant; that of a sense of pride for the history and culture of Noord-Brabant. People from Noord-Brabant and Holland did differ in dialect, history, culture and economical opportunities in around 1800. However, these differences began to dissipate in the nineteenth century. Noord-Brabant became a part of the Netherlands and that meant that a part of its identity was given up. Only as late as the 1930s made the regionalist feelings a revival, but in a

solid nation-state they could not conquer much ground which was nonetheless a surprise as I assumed big differences to appear between Noord-Brabant and Holland. Street names in Noord-Brabant were thus not used to remember the past of this province itself as I would have thought, but instead the nation's history (except for those black pages of the *watergeuzen* and *stadhouders*). De facto it was Holland's and Protestant history that was remembered in Noord-Brabant. As the nation's history was so much linked to Holland and Protestantism, the cities in Holland did not have to create a regionalist sense of Holland. Their city-text read mostly national history and geography. However, the lack of this regionalist discourse might also explain the lack of geography as a theme, the second major difference. Geographical names would be too much a reminder of the (relative) unimportance of Noord-Brabant in the nation-state. This argument is hard to prove and thus it also possible that a matter of chance and practical issues are at stake here.

As an obvious difference between Noord-Brabant and Holland was the religious composition of the population, the third discourse is religious. In 1848 the Catholic emancipation leaped forward with the civil right to freedom of religion. This process lasted until 1917, but by then a pillarization process had started which divided up the country. As Catholics started to unite themselves in their pillar, Catholic street names are used in Tilburg in the 1920s. In the other cities religiously inspired names were not used. The Catholic religious discourse was not strong enough in Breda and Bergen op Zoom, while in Holland the Protestant discourse was mingled with the national one.

The fourth discourse is actually not one discourse, but it are six. Each city had a certain idea about itself and this local discourse did leave its traces in street names. While the nation-state as a whole search for a shared identity, individual cities sought their own identity, often within the national historical framework. This had to be done, because the cities changed greatly between 1858 and 1939. Numerous new quarters were built and a new community had to imagined. The idea of the city as its own *milieu de mémoire* had to be abandoned and a new city-text had to express a new sense of identity. Tilburg presented itself as an old and industrial city, Bergen op Zoom showed its rich history and its role in the nation's history, Breda emphasized its link with the Royal Family, while in Holland The Hague admitted its partly coastal identity of Scheveningen, Amsterdam expressed its sense of a regional capital and Rotterdam, well, that is a strange story. Rotterdam express a countrified identity which placed much emphasis on the city instead on the nation. It does show, together with the lack of national politicians in Noord-Brabant and the blurred identity of Breda, the sometimes unexplainable and always fuzzy story of street names in the Netherlands.

On the tomb of Piet Hein it says: 'Rouwt gij Verenigde Nederlanden om het verlies van de overledene, wiens glorieijke verdiensten ten aanzien van de Republiek hem niet zullen toestaan

sterfelijk te blijken'.¹⁶⁸ Thanks to (among others) street names which can last for centuries Piet Hein will not be forgotten. Without a strong ideological pressure from a communist or dictatorial regime, street names given in the period 1859-1939 reflected the search for a shared past which was found in the Golden Age and the Royal Family. From the rest of the street names complementing identities can be derived. Even though I did not find the strong differences I would have expected between Noord-Brabant and Holland, a detailed and nuanced analysis of the street names gives an interesting and telling picture of a Noord-Brabant integrating in the nation-state of the Netherlands.

¹⁶⁸ [Mourn thy United Netherlands for the loss of the deceased whose glorious merits for the Republic won't let him be permitted to turn out to be mortal.] Source: Hervormde gemeente te Delft, *Oude Kerk Delft (brochure)* (seventeenth edition, Delft 2010) 11.

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