

Swiss Culture and History in European Perspective

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Johann Martin Veith
(1650-1717), Allegorie des
evangelischen Glaubens,
1698. Landesmuseum
Zürich. Foto/Photo: TES.

Republican Switzerland and the Seven United Provinces

The book ' *The Republican Alternative. The Netherlands and Switzerland compared*' (A. Holenstein, Th. Maissen, M. Prak (eds), Amsterdam 2008), is the result of the workshop on 7-9 May 2004, organised by the University of Bern. These two confederal republics of early modern Europe (1500-1795) were composed of (thirteen) independent cantons and powerful cities (Switzerland) in the *Eidgenossenschaft* and provinces and their powerful cities in the Republic of the Seven United Provinces). The book compares the religious, military and economic similarities and differences as well as personal ties and (scientific) relationship between these two republics.



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The Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) changed the constitutions of both countries: the monarchy and the unitary state in the Netherlands and the Confederacy and its independent cantons in Switzerland, at least until 1848. However, the comparison gives interesting and unexpected results and new facts.

The same can be said about the exchange between Dutch and Swiss artists in the period from the 15th to the 20th century. It is a fact that there are no mountains in the Netherlands. However, Dutch painters have depicted many mountains, waterfalls, caves and other alpine landscapes in Dutch surroundings since the sixteenth century, although many painters had never visited an alpine country. They did so even before the Swiss painters. Dutch painters thus became a source of inspiration for their Swiss colleagues and later vice versa.

Switzerland became a popular destination for Dutch painters in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They created a new (fantasy) image of alpine art, which would be imitated in many countries. Swiss artists also visited the (Protestant) Netherlands and were inspired by the Dutch masters and their motifs. The exchange was particularly strong in the nineteenth century.

The Edition *Kunst + Architektur in der Schweiz/Art + Architecture en Suisse* (Nr. 3, 2020) of the Swiss Society for Art History (*Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte/Société d'histoire de l'art en Suisse*) recently published an interesting dossier on this subject under the title *Schweiz-Niederlande. Kunst im Austausch/Suisse-Pays-Bas. Échanges artistiques*, (Switzerland-Netherlands. Artistic exchanges).

The results of the above book on the close religious, military, economic, scientific and personal relations fit seamlessly into the research into the intensive artistic exchanges between the two countries from the fifteenth century onwards.

<https://www.swiss-spectator.ch/republican-switzerland-and-the-seven-united-provinces/>