



het HInT

Historisch Institutioneel Tijdschrift

Alternative
history

HInTerview with
Nathalie de Haan

La Divina
Commedia

Underground

Issue 3 - 2020

EDITORIAL

Dearest reader,

Fall has arrived and the first exams are almost upon us. Now that we are gradually getting used to disinfecting our hands at the entrance to the Erasmus building, to complicated walking routes and half-empty lecture halls, the semester seems to have started as normal. Okay, that may be a little optimistic, it still doesn't feel 'normal', does it? Fears of a 'second wave' and social discomfort are not yet a thing of the past: the coronavirus is still among us.

That was a slightly creepy start of the editorial, apologies, but the theme of this issue is 'underground': think of Halloween, ghosts and monsters. In any case, that was the initial approach, but the editors interpreted the term diversely and creatively while writing the articles! Not only creepy stuff is featured, but also archeology in an interview with assistant professor Nathalie de Haan, conspiracy theories in a column by Ivo and Dante's Inferno in an article by Veronique! Finally, this HInT contains a brand new kind of column (see page...) and it has been compiled by a lot of brand-new editors! Well, that's a happy ending to this creepy editorial after all.

Kind regards and have fun reading!

Ellen

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William-Adolphe
Bouguereau (1825-1905),
Dante et Virgile (1850)

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CONTENT

04 LA DIVINA COMMEDIA

Afterlife in the underworld

06 ACANTHUS' SACRIFICE

A historical tragedy

08 GOING IN DEPTH

HInTerview with Nathalie de Haan

12 REVIEW

Notes from the Underground

13 DEVESTATING DOOM THINKIN

What to do with the tinfoil hats?

14 WORD SEARCH

Solve and win two books!

17 TEACHERS' TOP TEN

Most important historical figures

18 ALTERNATIVE HISTORY

Writing with a dark edge

20 TOP-5

The greatest moles

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LA DIVINA COMMEDIA

Afterlife in the underworld

By Veronique Lageweg

Mankind has been fascinated with death for a long time. This can be seen in the many ancient works that deal with life after death. In ancient Egypt, death was not the end of life, but merely the beginning of the next phase of a person's eternal journey. When the soul had successfully passed the judgment of the god Osiris, it traveled on to an eternal paradise, where all lost things were returned to the individual. Although the idea of life after death was a comforting thought for the people in Ancient Egypt, people still feared death. This is something that has remained a fairly constant phenomenon over the centuries and thus was also present in medieval society.

One of the most famous writers and moralists of the Middle Ages is the Italian poet and philosopher Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). His most famous work, *La Divina Commedia*, is an unfinished work on the afterlife and is considered one of the highlights of global literature.

The book, which contains more than 14,000 verses, consists of three phases in which the reader travels from Hell (*Inferno*) to Purgatory (*Purgatorio*) to Paradise (*Paradiso*). The first part, *Inferno*, has always attracted readers more than the second and third part, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. It is unclear why this part receives the most attention. Presumably, human curiosity or fear about life after death plays a role, or perhaps it is for a completely different psychological reason. My personal interest also lies mostly in *Inferno*. For this reason, I will discuss the nine circles of *Inferno* below as an introduction to *La Divina Commedia*. For a more in-depth analysis of the work, it is best to study it yourself.

Inferno

Before Dante entered *Inferno*, which, according to him, consists of nine circles, he walks through a gate that provides access to Hell. On top of the gate, there is a sentence written: '*Lasciati ogni speranza, voi ch'intrate*', which means 'Abandon hope, all ye who

enter here.'

After Dante has walked through the entrance gate, he ends up in an intermediate area. This place is not yet Hell, but an area for individuals who could never choose between good and evil. People that are punished here are endlessly chased by wasps while following a banner.

After crossing this area, Dante crosses the Acheron River, which is known from Greek mythology, to enter *Inferno*. The ferryman, Charon, initially refuses to take Dante to *Inferno* because he has not died yet. But suddenly, Dante passes out and awakens on the other side of the river, in *Limbo*, the ninth circle of *Inferno*. Here Dante finds numerous unbaptized figures, such as Cicero, Plato, and Socrates.

In the second circle of *Inferno*, we find people that sinned because of lust. These individuals are punished with violent gusts of wind that throw their bodies back and forth within the circle. Because of the wind, the sinner will never find peace and tranquility. In this circle, Dante sees several notable people from history and mythology, such as Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, and others who have committed adultery.

When Dante steps into the third circle, he sees sinners who were greedy during life. Individuals punished here are endlessly being buried by a thick layer of snow and icy rain. In this part of the poem, Dante speaks to a character named Ciacco who tells him that the Guelphs (a faction that supported the Pope) will defeat and drive out the Ghibellines (the Emperor-supporting faction) from Florence. This happened in 1302, before this part of the poem was written.

The fourth circle of Hell is reserved for individuals who will be punished for greed. Various jousting games are performed in this circle, with the people using large weights as a weapon. This circle is guarded by a character named Pluto, who is probably the ancient Greek god of the underworld. Dante sees a lot of cardinals and popes here.

As Dante travels through *Inferno* and comes along the River Styx, he passes the fifth Circle, where people are punished for wrath. In the river Styx the sinners fight fiercely against each other, to avoid sinking in the river. This penalty reflects the type of sin they committed during their lifetime. In this circle, Dante passes Filippo Argenti, a politician who had confiscated the poet's property after his expulsion from Florence.

In the sixth circle, Dante sees heretics who are condemned to live inside flaming graves for all of eternity. Here, Dante talks to a few Florentines, such as Farinata degli Uberti. He also sees other historical figures, including the Greek philosopher Epicurus, Pope Anastasius II, and the Roman Emperor Frederick II. Modern scholars say that Pope Anastasius II was accidentally condemned as a heretic, even though he wasn't. The poet probably referred to the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I.

The seventh circle in Hell is reserved for violent individuals and is divided into three separate rings. In the outer ring, there are murderers and others who were violent towards people and their property. Here Dante sees Alexander the Great, Dionysius I of Syracuse, and many other historical and mythological figures. In this outer ring, sinners are being drowned in a river of boiling blood and fire. In the center ring, the poet sees individuals who committed suicide, who were hunted and torn to pieces by dogs. In the inner ring, he sees blasphemers and sodomites, dwelling in a desert of burning sand and scorching rain.

In the eighth circle of *Inferno* individuals who have committed fraud during their lifetime reside. This circle of hell consists of ten *Bolgias*, a stony ditch with bridges between them. In the different *Bolgias* are various types of fraudsters, including flatterers, corrupt politicians, hypocrites, thieves, forgers, and bad advisers.

The last circle of *Inferno* is reserved for the worst sin: treason. The sinners are trapped in a river of ice, the thickness of the ice based on the gra-

vity of their sin. Lucifer, the archangel who betrayed God, is also trapped in the ice.

The Origin

Why Dante Alighieri wrote *La Divina Commedia* is not known with certainty. Some suspect that Dante was depressed or suicidal when he was writing his work. At the same time, it is speculated that he used this work to punish and belittle his political opponents. This is reflected in the fact that some of Dante's political opponents are present in the *Inferno* circles. The religious theme, which is strongly present in the poems, is also related to the influence the church had on society during the time that *La Divina Commedia* was written. Still, the question remains: what motivated someone to think so deeply about death and the afterlife? What could be other reasons to spend hours writing poems about Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise? It's an interesting question, but we'll always have to speculate about Dante's reasons.



Ἡ Θυσία ἡ τοῦ Ἀκάνθου - ACANTHUS' SACRIFICE

A historical tragedy

By Jon Hartjes

In *De architectura* Book IV, 1.9-10, the Roman architect Vitruvius writes about the origin of the Corinthian building order. This building order is characterized by the richly decorated capitals, which are supposed to represent the leaves of an acanthus plant. Some time ago I thought it would be interesting to do something that is strictly forbidden to those who study history: writing alternative history. However, in this alternate course of history, the outcome is the same! The Greeks were fond of tragedies, so a tragic story seems appropriate here. But if you want to know the true origin of the Corinthian building order, I would like to refer you to Vitruvius! This is the tragic story of Acanthus and Calisto.

According to his fellow citizens, the young Corinthian Acanthus had a perfect life: he was rich, healthy, smart, handsome, of high descent and favored by the gods.

But Acanthus himself wasn't happy at all. He had not what he desired most: Calisto, his perfect wife. Being a poor farmer, this gorgeous and sweet young lady detested the rich upper class, for most of them had repeatedly looted the farmers to increase their own wealth. Acanthus had pleaded for his family's innocence in this misdemeanor many times - his parents would never rob someone! - but Calisto refused to believe him.

One day, when Acanthus was trying to convince the love of his life of his innocence for the umpteenth time, Calisto was sick of it. She forged a plan to get rid of Acanthus' nagging for good.

'Okay, I believe you!' Calisto said, when Acanthus once again visited her and told her he and

his family were innocent. 'Follow me, please. I'd like you to meet my parents!'

Surprised as well as rejoiced, Acanthus followed Calisto, who was walking toward one of the city gates. He didn't know what Calisto was up to, since the only things that were to be found outside the gates were graves. Due to hygiene and spatial matters, the corpses were earthed outside of the city.

'Where are your parents?' Acanthus asked Calisto, while he was looking at the graves, just outside of Corinth's city walls.

'There!' Calisto replied, her voice trembling as she pointed at two small tombstones that were placed side by side between two enormous, white marble mausolea.

Acanthus was shocked. 'But... what?' he stammered, as Calisto's eyes filled with tears.

'Do you still remember the lootings of ten years ago, when the rich robbed the poor again?' Acanthus nodded. He did remember the lootings, since they were considered one of the most outrageous series of lootings in Corinthian history.

'When my parents refused to cede their possessions, your father... he...' Calisto burst into tears and ran back to the city, leaving behind a shocked Acanthus.

Acanthus was not feeling well. He felt as if he was falling in a bottomless pit. His father, who he had always seen as an honest and honorable man, had killed and robbed people?

Defeated, Acanthus fell to his knees between the graves of Calisto's parents.

On the third day after the incident, Zeus was watching Acanthus from Mount Olympus. For

two whole days, Acanthus had been grieving in between the graves of Calisto's parents, mourning the result of the cowardly deed his father committed. Sometimes, an individual walked by, but, apart from a quick glance, they paid him no attention, for Acanthus refused to do anything other than grieving. He even refused to eat and drink. Zeus began feeling sorry for the mourning young man and he forged a plan that he presented to the other gods and goddesses.

The next day, Calisto woke up feeling quite bad about what she did to Acanthus. She decided to go and see if Acanthus was still grieving at the graves of her parents, a rumor which soon had spread through the entire city.

Calisto was happily surprised when she saw that Acanthus was no longer grieving, but soon, the flower which was placed between her parents' graves caught her eye. It was a pretty flower, bearing white and purple leaves. Did Acanthus plant it?

At that very moment, Hermes, the divine messenger, approached Calisto, disguised as an old man.

'Such a pretty flower, isn't it? The acanthus,' the man said with a cracking voice. Calisto gave him a confused look, but, after giving her a mysterious wink, he walked away, right into the world outside of Corinth's strong city walls.

Calisto was surprised. Had Acanthus regretted his father's deed so much, that the gods turned him into a flower, as a sign of compassion for the young man?

Moved by Acanthus' sacrifice, Calisto walked back towards the city.

Calisto told her story to every single person

willing to hear it, and soon the whole city had heard of Acanthus' sacrifice. The Corinthians weren't any less moved than Calisto herself was. Acanthus' father, who managed to keep his shameful deed a secret for ten years, fled the city before the angry mob could confront him with the results of his deed.

On the agora of Corinth, the people gathered to discuss how to honor Acanthus and his noble deed.

'We should cultivate the flower and use it in funeral bouquets,' one of the Corinthians yelled. The people agreed with him, cheering.

'No, we should erect a temple for Acanthus!' another man replied. 'And to honor Acanthus even more, we could have the capitals of the temple edited in such a way, that it looks like they're the leaves of the acanthus!' The Corinthians were evenly enthusiastic about this idea.

After long deliberation, it was decided that both ideas were to be put into operation.

And thus, a temple was erected, which capitals were ornated with acanthus leaves by the Greek sculptor Callimachus. A temple built in a new order, which would later be called the Corinthian order.

From that day, if people died in Corinth, a few acanthuses, picked in a nearby field, were put in the funeral bouquet, and one acanthus was placed on the altar standing in front of Acanthus' temple.

Temples like Acanthus's, built in the new Corinthian order, were spread over a large part of the Roman Empire by the Romans.

And regarding Acanthus? His fair flower is, more than 2000 years after his sacrifice, still used in funeral bouquets

HINTERVIEW

With Nathalie de Haan

By Rick van Brummelen and Ellen Theuws

Given the theme of this HInT edition – Underground – the editors soon established the link with archeology. That is why HInT paid a visit to Nathalie de Haan this edition, hoping that she would be able to tell us more about archeology. After taking a seat in one of the comfortable seating areas on the ground floor of the Erasmustower, De Haan begins to talk passionately about her field.

De Haan started her academic career at the time with a study of Classics at our Radboud University. When we ask why she made the choice for Classical Languages at the time, the enormous passion for history and literature immediately strikes us. “I cannot and will not imagine a life without literature.” History was therefore a realistic option – just like French and Dutch – but in the end, the choice fell on Classical Languages. The great advantage is the combination of both history and languages. Once she started her studies, she was convinced that she would specialize in Greek Literature, but as a second-year student, she could go to Pompeii. And then she was sold. From that moment on, she felt pulled towards Italy, which would prove to be an extra motivation to do archeology anyway. When we ask if she never wanted to do anything else, she simply indicates that she would have liked to do more, “A day has too few hours and a week too few days. Modern languages would have been great too. There are also many periods where I know significantly less about than I would like, I have only limited knowledge about the Middle Ages for example.” After her education at Radboud University, she obtained a grant for her master’s thesis via the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome and a Ph.D. position via the NWO. Because of this, she would

spend several years in Italy, North Africa, and Great Britain doing fieldwork. After a period in Rome as the Director of Studies in Archaeology and Ancient History at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome she was hired in Nijmegen as a lecturer in Ancient History, she has been here ever since.

Despite the fact that she has not studied History, she now teaches Ancient History classes in our BA and MA programs. When asked whether there are major differences in the professional approach between History and Classical Languages, she especially emphasizes that she considers Antiquity Studies to be one common field. “It is impossible to be good at everything and do everything. That was still possible in the 19th century when the field was in its infancy. Largely embodied by men who could devote their entire lives to History. Now, in times of specialization, you just have to map out and develop certain lines of research. So you can’t do everything anymore. But I still see the discipline of Classics in a wide sense as a whole.” Fortunately, the connections between the various studies dealing with Antiquity are very close in Nijmegen, according to De Haan. Because of this division into specializations, it is important to delve into the fields of your colleagues. She explains that as an archaeologist, she has never been interested in objects for the sake of material remains, but mainly from a cultural-historical perspective. So the questions de Haan asks are comparable to those of cultural historians. Therefore, over the years she has come to identify herself more as a historian than as an archaeologist.

Fieldwork

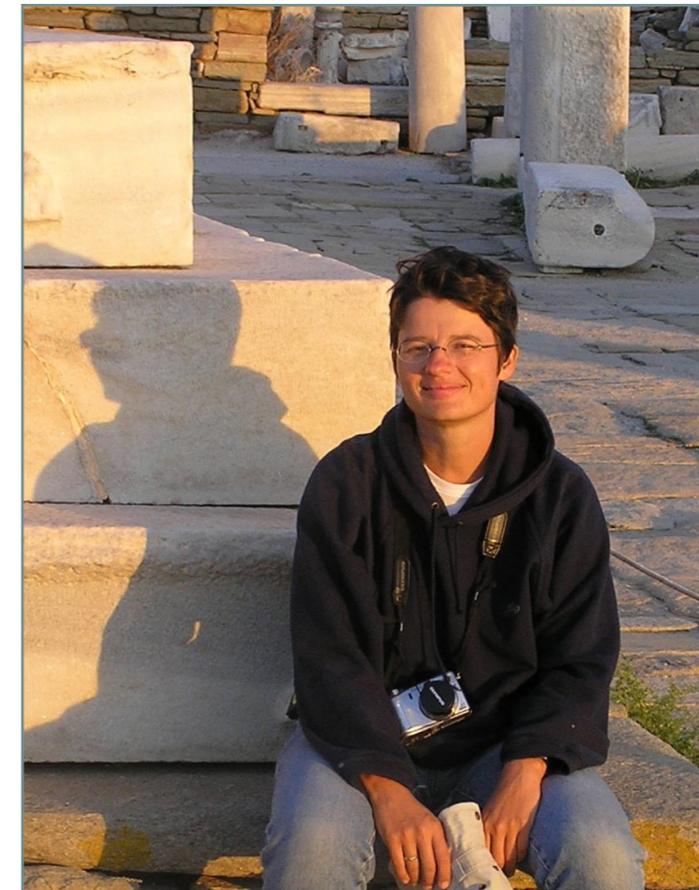
De Haan then tells us more about fieldwork. Fieldwork is difficult to describe on its own; how you

proceed depends strongly on the location where you dig. She herself mainly excavated in Pompeii, which on the one hand is of course an archaeological treasure trove, but Pompeii also brings difficulties. Because if you walk through Pompeii nowadays, you walk through a provincial town that has been wiped out in one fell swoop. And this special archaeological site was already damaged at the time, refugee residents who came to look for their valuables. But what makes an excavation like Pompeii particularly difficult is that underneath nowadays exposed Pompeii from the first century there are seven more centuries of history underneath. “These kinds of sites are therefore complicated because you are not going to destroy a wall from the first century CE to see what happened in the seventh century BCE.” But other interests also play a role. The Pompeii that is now open is vi-

sually much more attractive, so it is a bigger tourist attraction than what is still hidden underground.

Of course, we were also curious about her personal experiences. De Haan describes her first

archaeological find as the most memorable object she has excavated. “I did my first excavation here in Nijmegen. The first thing I found, I found in a first-century waste pit. I found a sieve in there. An ordinary colander in which you would now drain your pasta. Hardly used, but with a sharp crack in it. Then I found the second part, very close by. Someone had had a bad day because the colander was brand new and it had already broken. I find these very ordinary objects very special, just the fact that I hold something in my hands that someone had in their hands two thousand years ago. Exactly what Huizinga described with historical sensation.” When De Haan



is digging, tourists often ask her whether she has found gold yet. “Coins are often useful for dating, but often the seemingly very silly finds are the ones that are much more interesting to you as an archaeologist. Gold is even more annoying because it causes a lot of publicity, sometimes resulting in illegal excavations.” It is the everyday objects in which she takes an interest. “We often don’t think about it at all”, she says, “that everyday objects in our current world can be of interest to generations after us. Still, I hope that one day, a plastic colander will be found somewhere, because even such a colander can tell a lot about ages past. In the seventies, for example, everything was orange or purple! A simple orange colander could now tell us something about those times.”

For later research, de Haan also dived into the Roman archives. “I find archival research comparable to archeological excavation. When you suddenly find a letter as a puzzle piece.” She then talks about her current project, for which she is researching an anti-fascist Italian from the 1930s who, as a political statement, was conducting Greek excavations on Italian soil. “He was busy with Greek archeology like a thorn in the flesh. For this research I spent a lot of time in archives and finding such a puzzle piece is comparable to digging up such a colander; you feel suddenly very close to it.” De Haan certainly advises history students to dive into the archives for their research. “That is a different way of gathering knowledge other than rummaging through footnotes. Which is also helpful. And, of course, you cannot personally view every inscription you come across. But it really has added value to view objects, go to museums or archives. Fortunately, the world is full of them.”

The added value and difficulties of archeology

When asked about what she considers to be the great added value of archaeological finds in historical research, De Haan undoubtedly answers “The tangibility of it! The kind of information.” She compliments the generations of Ancient historians who did research long before her time “They had long known that material sources also contain important information for historical research. Specialists for later periods in History took longer before they too recognized that objects and images are real information carriers, rather than just nice pictures.” As an example of a research field in which archaeological research has only recently been carried out, she mentions a project that excavates around former concentration camps in all kinds of places in the world. “For example in Nazi Germany, the camps that were partly destroyed by the Germans at the end of the war with great haste, the attention for material remains is quite recent there.” “The interplay between visual, material, and written sources,” says de Haan, “is of great importance for research into every age.”

With regard to possible obstacles to archaeological research, de Haan specifically mentions funding. “Archeology is expensive because you can’t start digging on your own. You can of course grab a shovel and start, but you really need a team and specialists for large projects.” As an example of the necessary specialists, she mentions people who can perform pollen analyzes, so scientists who can recognize seeds and pollen from as many as 2000 years ago. In the case of construction on an archaeological site of interest, the research is sometimes partly paid for by the client. Of course he hopes that nothing will be found, because that increases the project costs considerably. “Sometimes, however,

there is a successful collaboration between archaeologists and the client of the building. “The display of Roman remains at the Waalkade beneath the casino, is an early attempt at this. Some clients find it interesting, such an archaeological find, they can make a good impression with it. The Derlon hotel in Maastricht is another example: there you can still see the remains of a Roman sanctuary building. Of course, such a chic hotel likes that. “

Archaeological dreams

“Which archaeological excavation would you most like to do?” We asked De Haan in conclusion. She hesitates for a while before answering, but then she knows: “Digging up a Greek or Hellenistic bathhouse, that seems nice. I’ve been researching Roman baths a lot, but there aren’t that many Greek baths.” The dream is not very realistic, she says, “but it would be great”. A little later she adds that she would also like to excavate a Roman house in North-Africa. “Or something in Pompeii, of course, because two-fifths is still underground there.” You are allowed to dig in Pompeii, but not “to destroy a mosaic floor with a pickaxe, and that’s a good thing,” says de Haan. “Three-fifths of the city was dug up in the last three centuries and the biggest campaigns took place during the fascist regime. Pompeii had to become a showcase, the assignment was to dig up as much as possible’. After the Second World War, things slowed down a lot. De Haan does not rule out the possibility that in the future there will be more possibilities to find out what archaeological material is still buried under the mosaic floors of Pompeii. Modern technology will offer many opportunities, she believes. “In the past thirty years so much has changed: 3D reconstructions, laser scanners. When I started we still had to work with measuring tapes.

The gaming industry has been very important for these kinds of developments.” She continues, “I expect that in fifty years time there will be all kinds of new inventions again, virtual reality stuff may be, perhaps you can then really go look and walk around underground, so to speak! Now you already have magnetometric measurements, resulting in accurate plans of an ancient building without putting a shovel into the ground!” De Haan would love to be able to investigate the soil under Pompeii by means of new technology someday. “Yes, Pompeii, that’s what my archaeological heart still beats the strongest for.”

REVIEW: NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

The tale of a man who looks at the world through pitch-black glasses

By Thom Tolboom

When we descend into the underground of nineteenth century Saint-Petersburg, we stumble upon a remarkably obscure figure: Dostojevski's underground man. In *Notes from the Underground*, the reader gets acquainted with this frenzied, nihilistic person and his attitude to life, which is filled with paradoxes. On the one hand, this work is very typical for Fjodor Dostojevski (1821-1881) because of the utter pessimistic tone. The setting of the underground and the rest of Saint-Petersburg are portrayed as poor, dark and filthy. On the other hand the *Notes* are unique as well, for example when we look at the form: the first sixty pages consist of a neurotic monologue in which the underground man informs the reader of his philosophical beliefs. After this, we get to read his actual notes, which tell us about some impactful events from his past. With this work, Dostojevski manages to make the reader think while also confusing and frustrating him.

Throughout the whole novel, the underground man stays shrouded in mystery. Not only his name is withheld from the reader, his personal past is unclear as well. Consequently, hanti-heroic is reduced to the philosophical ideas he proclaims. In this first part then, the work more strongly resembles a philosophical tractate than an actual novel. So who is looking for a fluent and enervating narrative will lose interest quickly. Though they who keep reading will most definitely be rewarded by the fascinating tirade that the man unleashes upon rationality and the idea of the constant progress of humanity. He tries to confront the reader with the dark and paradoxical aspects of human nature, that make realizing an ideal society impossible by definition.

These aspects seem to all come together in the person of the underground man, who therefore comes across as a madman. This makes him and

his monologue fascinating, but frustrating as well. Just when you feel a connection between yourself and the antihero, you are suddenly estranged from him when he starts rambling about the pleasure of his suffering or when he starts contradicting himself. Nevertheless, the themes he discusses are still very much relatable for the twenty-first century reader. For example his intelligent and sensitive character makes him fall into complete passivity, because he doubts all moral principles that underlie human action. The man also goes against the grain on all matters, and in this way emphasizes his free will to knowingly act contrary to whatever is the rational thing to do in a certain situation. That this middle finger in the face of the positivistic zeitgeist often has detrimental consequences, is of no real importance to him. This obsessive clinging to the fickleness that – at least according to the underground man – forms the essence of being human, is an attitude that translates well to our time, where technology plays a bigger and bigger role in society.

In the second part of the novel, Dostojevski's literary and dramatic qualities come to the forefront a bit more. Here, the writer makes the underground man as a person the center of the story. He manages to convey the tragedy of this figure, that constantly feels humiliated and is full of self-hatred, in a convincing way to the reader. In this second part as well, it is very challenging to completely understand the main character, and as a reader you will find yourself reading certain parts multiple times out of confusion or amazement. His suffering however, comes across crystal clear and hits you with great intensity. The fact that Dostojevski is able to stimulate and challenge the reader not only on a philosophical, but also on a psychological level, is reason enough to recommend this novel to everyone who has the guts to start a conversation with the underground man.

DEVASTATING DOOM THINKING

What to do with the tinfoil hats?

By Ivo Huberts

Conspiracies, for how idiotic they often seem, are not limited to the idiots of society. From all of my little detours on the internet and the peculiar people I've met, I know that anyone can get infected. Just like a certain disease, I have lately caught some symptoms of crazy conspiracy thinking as well. Does that make me crazy? Or is it the world that is crazy?

It's oh so tempting to say "no" to the former and "yes" to the latter. With a completely sober face, you can spread on the internet how you are "being followed by the Illuminati" or how "5G is spreading COVID-19", or even that "Michael Jackson and several other random celebrities aren't dead, they're on a deserted island playing hide and seek together or whatever they do". I've seen a fair share of these and believe me, all of these are existing theories.

If there is anything more clearly underground than the literal lower layers of earth and hell, it's probably the internet. The place where all these conspiracy theories form a soup of different flavors of madness. And if I'm honest, that soup is delicious, but I've burnt my tongue on it too many times. Do not, I repeat... do NOT argue with those people. I have tried this, but it's comparable to arguing with cult members. Some people can't be convinced that the earth is definitely round, or that vaccines don't cause an infusion with a malignant demon from another plane of existence (or was it autism? My apologies, conspiracies change often).

That said, perhaps mocking wasn't the best idea to convince anyone to change their mind. Insults never win anyone over. Instead, I learned to beat them in their own game of deceit, which was by acting with understanding and respect. Very controversial but yes, I actually managed to convince someone by throwing all my self-respect out of the window. I told a person (I will keep his identity secret) that I agreed that Donald Trump is indeed not a human being and that he created the coro-

navirus together with the Illuminati, led by lizard people. But here's the catch, I did not agree with the lizard part. Obviously, because lizards can't talk. By that sound reasoning, he was convinced. Trump is not a lizard, he is an alien. This was a great victory. Baby steps are key to winning this. This person was only a conspiracy theorist, imagine doing this to a terrorist or a neo-nazi!

What we can learn from this, is that conspiracy thinking isn't so unnatural. It is quite easy to understand where they were coming from. Who hasn't ever thought that someone or some group must be planning a secret plan? It could be a teacher planning to give you an unjustified lower grade. It could be someone planning to steal the cookie you just bought at the Spar. No matter how you look at it, we all get suspicious once in a while. The truth is not always easy to find, in both the overworld and underworld.

So next time I argue with conspiracy theorists, I will start telling them I have a super-secret theory that the government is putting chemicals in the tap water. Those chemicals make us believe the trash random people tell us on the internet. Such a hellish fate.

WORD SEARCH

By Anne-Jet Bults



Disclaimer: participators in the word search need to be members of GSV Excalibur. The editors at HInT are excluded from participation. Completed puzzles can be handed in by e-mail (hintredactie@gmail.com) or at the GSV room until November 10th, 2020. All results are final.

QUESTIONS

1. Which horror story was first released in 1818?
2. Who wrote *Dracula*?
3. What is celebrated on October 31st?
4. Which author interweaved horror and science fiction in short stories?
5. Historical secret society.
6. Which film director made the stop-motion film *The Nightmare before Christmas*?
7. Which people originated the celebration of Halloween?
8. Well-known book by Stephen King.
9. What is Halloween in origin?
10. Who is the main character in the 1988 film *Child's Play*?



NIJMEGEN ARTISTS AND A CHANGING CITYSCAPE

Word search prize

By Emma Ruiter

It's a terrific opportunity: in this edition, prize puzzlers can get their hands on not one, but two books! *De Gebroeders Van Limburg: leven, werk en wereld* by Clemens Verhoeven and *Panorama Nijmegen: vijf eeuwen schoonheid aan de Waal* by Marja Beheyn-Huisman will be raffled among the good entries. As usual, both works are excellent reading material for the Nijmegen history student.

De Gebroeders Van Limburg is a good introduction to the life of the famous Nijmegen painter brothers. The brothers - also known by their original family name the *Lymborch Brothers* - spent much of their lives at the French court, where they produced masterpiece after masterpiece. Verhoeven discusses some of these masterpieces in detail, thus shedding light on the life of "the Rembrandts of the Middle Ages". Would you like to know more about these Nijmegen celebrities? Then plan a visit to the *Gebroeders van Lymborch Huis* on the Burchtstraat!

In *Panorama Nijmegen*, Huisman uses detailed maps, paintings and drawings to show the changing cityscape of Nijmegen from around 1570. The imagery is discussed in detail and compared with each other, so that the changing view of the Waalfront is clearly visible. *Panorama Nijmegen* is clearly an ode to "our" Waalstad.

In short, get started! Solve the puzzle and win!



TEACHERS' TOP TIEN

The ten most important historical figures of all time!*

By Ellen Theuws

Who was the most important person to ever walk the face of the earth? Every historian has their own opinion on this, since time immemorial it has been debated who has had the greatest influence on humanity. The editors of HInT thought it was about time to establish a definitive top ten. Although the editors themselves are quite convinced of their list, we have decided that it is reasonable to have a few professional historians look at it as well. Therefore, for the next edition of the HInT, we are going to ask one of the teachers from History here at Radboud to replace two historical characters in the list for two figures who are not yet in it, but that they think belong to the 'most important of all time', along with a brief commentary on why these historical characters are so important. For the subsequent HInT, another teacher will be asked, and so on until the end of the time, or until the column loses interest, because, as we know, it is impossible to arrive at definitive truths within historical research.

Having said all that, here is the *definitive* top ten of the HInT. Without explanation, because it speaks for itself.

HInTs Top Ten

- Plato
- Cleopatra
- Mary, mother of Jezus
- Genghis Khan
- Charlemagne
- William Shakespeare
- Elizabeth I
- Charles Darwin
- Karl Marx
- Elvis Presley

To be continued...

*chronologically ordered

ALTERNATIVE HISTORY

Writing with a Dark Edge

By Dion Merkelbag

The month of October yields a number of different reactions from the modern student. For many the horror of exams, for others the horror of American Halloween knick-knacks and for some the umpteenth month of the year that they are looking forward to a DUO-deposit. However, there is a number of people who turn autumn and the accompanying emotions into something creative: writing. This article will discuss the problems one can experience in writing 'alternative history', specifically the dark version of it. 'Alternative history' in this context means writing a fictional variant of real history. This means that one deviates from the real course of history as we know it. 'Dark history' adds the element of horror, which in turn has its own set of difficulties to overcome.

Alternative history starts with a choice of time. This is different for every writer: where one wonders what would have happened if Germany had won World War II, the other wonders what would have happened if America had lost the revolution. Deciding on a particular period can be difficult, as each period requires a fairly extensive knowledge of the era, culture and other minute details. However, this should not deter the novice writer as it is best to just get started. Immerse yourself in the period and choose what seems most interesting to you. After all, writing should not be a task but an expression of yourself and your interests.

Once a period has been chosen, the next problem quickly rears his head: to what extent do you want to deviate from history? What the writer of this article has noticed is that it is nice to start

with a strong foundation, namely grounding your story in actual possibilities. After all, if America had not interfered with World War I, there would have been a good chance that Germany would have defeated France and England in the last offensive of 1918. By choosing a particular moment, such as this offensive, one is assured of a relatively easier time in writing the fictional continuation of this story. In this way one can write a valid but fictional alternative history.

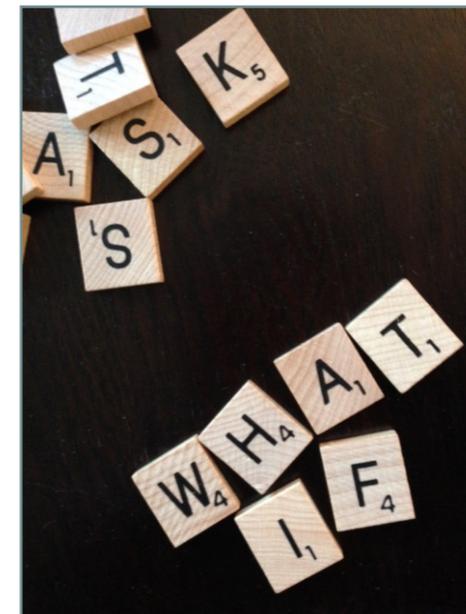
The last major problem in alternative history is the choice of a main character. Are you basing your story on an actual person like Churchill or are you making up your own protagonist who fits within the context of the time period? Neither is a better choice than the other. It can be attractive to choose an existing person as his or her character is already formed and thus known to the writer. However, this can also feel limiting, precisely because of this preformed character. The story also feels more autobiographical, instead of really fictional. An own protagonist circumvents this limitation, as the writer can choose who this person is: his thoughts, emotions and characteristics. However, the writer benefits from not going too far in designing his own protagonist, since the story must remain grounded in actually logical choices. So when choosing a main character, these issues must be taken into account, although this is based on exactly what the writer wants from the story.

When writing alternative dark history, there are some new hurdles that must be overcome. How do you create tension if you cannot use sound, sight or smell like in the typical horror film? The

solution to this problem lies in the description of a scene. There should be a slow build-up describing the protagonist's sensory experience in detail. Horror is not only found in obvious tropes such as a serial killer or a horde of zombies, but can also lie in the daily and sensory. Describing the smell of death and gunpowder is often enough to make the hairs on your neck stand on end. Sometimes it also helps to brutally deal with characters that were previously considered safe. Play with emotion and take the reader along in a story in which nothing is sure. The final composition of a dark scene naturally differs

per author, but sometimes it helps to put yourself in the reader's point of view.

Writing is a process that can often take years. During these years, the aforementioned problems will often emerge. The writer of this article hopes that the tips given will help to overcome some of those problems but also to interest more people in and perhaps give that final push to start writing. After all, it is a wonderful way to express yourself, something which this writer will certainly do in the coming period.



TOP-5

The greatest moles

By Emma Ruiter

With an average audience of 2.5 million per episode, *Wie is de Mol?*—comparable to the American version called *The Mole*— is an incredibly popular Dutch TV show. No fewer than 3,002,000 people watched the first episode of the new season at the beginning of this year. A new record, the creators announced. Also this year, episode one of the extremely special anniversary season attracted more than 3,393,000 viewers. Because about 40 percent of this number of viewers turns out to be history students, the *Historisch Institutioneel Tijdschrift* has chosen to examine the most important animal in this game: the Mole. Who are the greatest moles ever? Which Dutch celebrity turned out to be exceptionally experienced in the game of trickery and deceit? Even if you are not a 'Moloot', as many *Wie is de mol?*-viewers call themselves, it is always useful to have this list at your disposal. It may just happen that you have to recite five old moles in a television quiz like the Dutch show *De Slimste Mens*, or that you experience social pressure to participate in conversations about 'mole-actions', 'black exemptions' or the new shirt of Rik van de Westelaken. In that case, you are in for a good time with this Top-5. You're welcome.



5. Yvon Jaspers (2005)

Boer zoekt vrouw-host Yvon Jaspers (47) was the first well-known person to take on the role of the Mole. In 2005 she travelled with nine other celebrities—including Marc-Marie Huijbregts and Gijs Staverman—to Australia and Indonesia. Even though this season was broadcasted some fifteen years ago and Jaspers is not the most famous Mole, she still makes it to fifth place in this list. During the season she convincingly played the role of a comedic, chaotic and innocent candidate, while in reality she made many assignments fail as the Mole. Jaspers, for example, excelled in one of the final assignments in which she was sent to a Balinese village by presenter Angela Groothuizen to track down a person named 'Nyoman' within half an hour. Yvon managed to find eleven Nyomans, but returned somewhat theatrically with only a sweaty head and empty hands. Good job, Yvon!

Final amount in 'the pot': €23,000



4. Kees Tol (2013)

The saying '*Kees Tol is de Mol*' seemed too good to be true, but the jolly Volendammer stepped forward during the showdown when Art Rooijakers asked the Mole to make him, or herself, known. Actor Kees Tol (38) was the saboteur in South Africa during the thirteenth season and eagerly took advantage of the fact that he was charismatic and well-liked from the first moment. He quickly became the heart of the gang and no candidate suspected him. Only writer Paulien Cornelisse managed to pierce through Tol's lies during the two weeks and won more than €17,000. The most famous mole-action of this thirteenth season undoubtedly took place during the fifth episode. During the helicopter assignment, Tol obscured a whopping €3000 when he was the only one sent up a mountain in a helicopter. This Mole was lucky that he was appointed treasurer a few minutes earlier, so that only he was allowed into the helicopter. Just like that, 'three thousand euros, gone with the wind', as *Kees Tol the Mole* laughed cheerfully during the confession later that day, as if it were nothing.

Final amount in 'the pot': €17.120



3. Margriet van der Linden (2015)

During the fifteenth season, ten well-known people—including current *Wie is de Mol?*-host Rik van de Westelaken—left for Sri Lanka. After two weeks of toil, making alliances, and suspicion, journalist Margriet van der Linden (50) turned out to be the cunning saboteur after an exciting finale. She is still known by many Mollots as one of the best moles ever, and rightly so! Not only was the state of 'the pot' after the final episode historically low (only Merel Westrik managed to match this performance two years later), Margriet also performed several daring mole-actions. During the seventh episode, when there were only four candidates left in the game, van der Linden for instance obscured €1000 euros in one quick swoop. She nonchalantly threw the money out of a moving train in front of the candidates. 'A pounding heart, but it had to be done' declared the journalist after the denouement. Because Margriet had only one goal in mind: to achieve a historically low pot. With the 'paltry' amount of €10.500, she has certainly met this goal!

Final amount in 'the pot': €10.500



2. Dennis Weening (2008)

The season of radio DJ Dennis Weening (43) is a classic according to many. When a brand new club of ten celebrities left for Mexico in 2008, Weening was at the bottom of almost every candidate's list of suspects. At first glance, Weening had a quasi-indifferent attitude towards the game, which turned out to be a perfect cover for the Mole! He was immediately comfortable in the group and, just like Kees Tol, made frequent use of this. During the eighth episode of this season, the remaining four candidates were expected to explore a cruise ship, where Weening was 'given the perfect space to act as a mole'. During this assignment he literally did *nothing*, blocked the walkie-talkie traffic and simply threw the envelopes with money overboard. After two weeks, only actor Edo Brunner exposed him as a saboteur and won the pot. *Final amount in 'the pot': €20.375*



1. Jan Versteegh (2018)

The season of BNN presenter Jan Versteegh (34) is still freshly engraved in most people's minds. He may be the most recent candidate on this list, but he is best known for his cheeky and daring attitude as the Mole. During the eighteenth season in Georgia, Versteegh quickly stepped to the foreground from the first episode and convincingly took on the role of the extremely fanatic candidate. As he stated after the finale, he immediately spread lies with the now infamous comment: 'Where in Kiev are you?' during the opening assignment. 'Ah', thought many Mollots and almost all other candidates, 'Versteegh is certainly not the Mole'. Oh, how naive! Only musician Ruben Hein managed to unmask him after two long weeks. Incidentally, Hein only entered the name 'Jan' twice in the last test question (who is the Mole?): during the seventh episode and the final test. How has this Mole not been unmasked before this? How was Versteegh not recognized when he walked right past the candidates without disguise during the famous assignment in the park? Perhaps Ruben Hein was right when, after the finale in VondelCS, he euphorically stated that 'Jan should get an Oscar for his role as the Mole in the eighteenth season!' *Final amount in 'the pot': €17,750*

Student's den: Anne-Jet Bults



To stay within the theme of this edition, we went underground in a monumental mansion, situated at the Graafseweg. This house is over a hundred years old and a real GSV house, because all residents are members of the association. One of these residents is our new board member Media, Anne-Jet. She lives in the surprisingly vast basement of the house. A downside of living in the basement is the lack of sunlight that enters the room. Nonetheless, Anne-Jet has made the place supremely cosy with lights, stuffed animals and posters. The finishing touch of her room is the old, blue typewriter, dating from the sixties.

Photo and text by Nicolette Oosterom