

PATRIOTISM AND SATIRE. THE BELGIAN REVOLUTION IN THE PETIT ALBUM ALLÉGORI-PATRIOTIQUE

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Political revolutions provide fertile ground for satire and caricature. In the Belgian Revolution too, humour was employed as a political weapon to defend one's own message and discredit opponents. Surprisingly, the rich production of caricatures from 1830 and the subsequent years has received little scholarly attention, leaving it relatively unknown. This contribution focuses on one of the most remarkable collections of satirical images from the Belgian Revolution: the *Petit album allégori-patriotique*, a previously unknown manuscript from the collection of the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR). This unique, unpublished album contains 74 caricatures and allegories depicting the revolution and its aftermath between September 1831 and approximately 1838. The album's anonymous author positioned himself as a fervent supporter of the Belgian Revolution. He drew extensively from the satirical repertoire to defend the revolution, portraying king William I and his sons as cowardly ducks and the Belgian patriots as intrepid lions. Beyond offering insight into the world of a Belgian patriot, the album also reveals much about its political and visual context. The author drew inspiration from contemporary caricatures and texts, incorporating elements from them into his own work.

I. Introduction

Surprisingly little is known about satirical images from the time of the Belgian Revolution. Caricatures and cartoons have long interested political and cultural historians, especially since the rise of political culture in the 1980s.¹ This field has fostered an interest in the representation of politics, including visual representation and iconography. It is now widely agreed among historians that satirical images are a valuable source for understanding the history of political mentalities since at least the Renaissance.² Moreover, satire has itself played a vital role in periods of political and social conflict. The importance of caricature for the desacralisation of monarchy in the French Revolution for example, has been amply demonstrated.³

In Belgian history, too, political satire has found fertile ground. Caricatures were widely used in the political and religious conflicts of the Dutch Revolt.⁴ The Brabant Revolution of 1787-1790 produced several thousand satirical prints which the various parties employed to advance their arguments.⁵ In contrast, the succeeding decades

of French rule in the former Austrian (or Southern) Netherlands were less abundant in political satire, due to censorship.⁶ Nor did visual satire flourish under the succeeding United Kingdom of the Netherlands, when the Southern and Northern Netherlands were united under one crown.⁷ Technical innovations and the rise of the modern newspaper press in the early nineteenth century, combined with liberal press laws after 1830, heralded a new chapter for political caricature. Whereas they had hitherto been produced on broadsheets, caricatures now became a characteristic feature of newspapers and magazines.⁸ Several studies have charted the rise of modern political cartoons in the Belgian press of the nineteenth century,⁹ while others have examined the satirical representation of specific persons or episodes.¹⁰

While a comprehensive history of political caricature in Belgium remains to be written, its general outlines can be grasped from existing historiography. It is therefore all the more remarkable that the country's founding moment, the Belgian Revolution of 1830, has hardly been studied in its own right. Apart from a descriptive inventory of 1879,

1. E.g. MAURICE AGULHON, *Marianne au combat. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaine de 1789 à 1880*, Paris, 1979; JAMES CUNO, ed., *French Caricature and the French Revolution, 1789-1799*, Los Angeles, 1988; MICHEL VÖVELLE, ed., *Les images de la Révolution française*, Paris, 1988.

2. LAURENT BARIDON & MARTIAL GUÉDRON, *L'art et l'histoire de la caricature*, Paris, 2006; ANNA FONTES BARATTO, *De qui, de quoi se moque-t-on? Rire et dérision à la Renaissance*, Paris, 2004; ERNST HANS GOMBRICH, *Caricature*, Harmondsworth, 1940.

3. ANNIE DUPRAT, "Du Roi-père au roi-cochon", in ROGER BOURDERON, ed., *Le Jugement dernier des rois. Actes du colloque tenu à Saint-Denis du 2 au 4 février 1989*, La Garenne-Colombes, 1992, 81-90.

4. DANIEL R. HORST, *De Opstand in zwart-wit. Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand (1566-1584)*, Zutphen, 2003.

5. STIJN VAN ROSSEM, *Revolutie op de koperplaat. Repertorium van politieke prenten tijdens de Brabantse Omwenteling, 1787-1792*, Leuven, 2012.

6. An important collection of political allegories and caricatures was nevertheless produced under the Directoire by the Antwerp aristocrat Pierre Goetsbloets in his chronicle *Tydsgebeurtenissen* (KBR, ms II 1492). See: BRECHT DESEURE, *Revolutie in Antwerpen (1794-1797)*, Brussels, 2021. Literary satire was more abundant, in particular in periodicals. See: VANESSA VAN PUYVELDE, *Patchworks in Print: Cultural Community Building and the Making of the 'Belgian' Reading Public in Literary Journals (1750-1800)*, doctoral dissertation, KU Leuven, 2024.

7. JAN H. M. VAN DER MARCK, *Romantische boekillustratie in België*, Roermond, 1956, 93.

8. FRÉDÉRIC PAQUES, *Avant Hergé. Étude des premières apparitions de bande dessinée en Belgique francophone (1830-1914)*, doctoral dissertation, Université de Liège, 2012, 85. The first illustrated journal on Belgian soil was *Le Manneken*, which regularly published satirical images. See also: HENRI HYMAN, *Études et notices relatives à l'histoire de l'art dans les Pays-Bas*. Vol. 1: *La gravure*, Brussels, 1920, 431; VAN DER MARCK, *Romantische boekillustratie*, 94.

9. YVES QUAIRIAUX, ed., *De qui se moque-t-on? Caricatures d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, de Rops à Kroll*, Morlanwelz, 2001; PHILIPPE ROBERTS-JONES, *La presse satirique illustrée entre 1860 et 1890*, Paris, 1956.

10. *Images du passé. la caricature et l'illustration dans la presse belge 1830-1914*, Brussels, 1968; JO GÉRARD & DANIEL POLET, *L'union fait la farce. Une certaine histoire de Belgique de 1789 à nos jours en plus de 300 caricatures*, Brussels, 1976; PAUL VAN DAMME & STIJN VAN DE PERRE, *Zonder woorden? Een geschiedenis van België in spotprenten*, Kalmthout, 2011; ERIC VAN DEN ABEELE, *Léopold II. Caricatures d'un roi*, Liège, 2014; JACQUES WILLEQUET, *La Belgique dans la caricature politique: 1830-1980. Exposition*, Brussels, 1980.

and a handful of catalogues of exhibitions devoted to the caricatures of 1830, nothing substantial has been published about the subject.¹¹ Satirical images were nevertheless produced in great numbers during and after the Belgian Revolution, both by its supporters and its opponents. A preliminary search in the prints room of KBR and the websites of the Rijksmuseum, the British Museum and the Atlas Van Stolk yielded hundreds of specimens.¹²

While this material will be used as context in the analysis, it is not the focus of this article. Instead, I will look at a specific collection of satirical images from the collection of the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR), which, contrary to the examples above, has never been published in print. The collection comprises 74 original watercolours referring to events of the Belgian Revolution and its aftermath. They are chronologically organised and mounted in an album bearing the title *Petit album allégorie-patriotique* ('Small album of patriotic allegories').¹³ Although KBR acquired the album in 1949, it has hitherto been completely ignored by historians.¹⁴

The evidence from the album suggests that the watercolours were made by a contemporary (and possibly a participant) of the Belgian Revolution, who recorded events and situations as they unfolded. They were certainly not produced in hindsight, as the uncertainty of the political situation is a recurring topic. The collection likely

constitutes a completed ensemble, as the images are preceded by a title page and a preface, and they are continuously numbered.¹⁵ A concluding drawing is nevertheless lacking, suggesting that the author may have lost interest by that point. The album containing the drawings dates from the first half of the 20th century, but the title and numbering suggest that the collection has been organised in its current form from the beginning.

Contemporary images of the Belgian Revolution are not rare; several series of prints were produced to record the revolutionary events of 1830.¹⁶ The album is unique in that it does so in a satirical format. The drawings constitute a coherent narrative leading from the September days of 1830 until ca. 1838. The author did not aim for completeness, however: he took to the paper at irregular intervals, including certain events and leaving out others. It is not clear when he started to draw the revolutionary events, nor whether he intended to create a series from the beginning. The traditional beginning of the Belgian Revolution for example – riots in Brussels following the representation of *La Muette de Portici* on 25 August – is not included. The title page was certainly added later, since it looks back on the September Days from a later moment in time.

Judging by his highly personal choice of events, as well as the tone of his comments, the author aimed

11. *Het nationaal congres 1830 in spotprenten. Toonstellingen in het Paleis der Natie*, Brussels, 1980; *Toonstelling van spotprenten uit de periode van de revolutie van 1830*, Brussels, 2005; GASTON MERTENS, *Toonstelling van spotprenten uit het tijdperk der omwenteling van 1830*, Brussels, 1930; FREDERIK MULLER, *Historieplaten, zinne- en spotprenten over het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden van 1815 tot 1830, en de Belgische Omwenteling tot aan de definitieve scheiding van Holland en België, waarbij meer dan 600 platen uitsluitend over België*, Amsterdam, 1879. See also: HYMANS, *Études et notices*, 431 and SORAYA BELGHAZI, "La révolution belge à travers les caricatures" (April 2016): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305556708_La_revolution_belge_a_travers_les_caricatures, consulted on 30 December 2024.

Useful descriptions of individual caricatures can be found on the website of the Atlas Van Stolk: <https://www.atlasvanstolk.nl/>. For the prerevolutionary satirical images by Jean Louis Van Hemelrijck, see: VAN DER MARCK, *Romantische boekillustratie*, 94.

12. These collections also contain large numbers of anti-Belgian caricatures, some of which appeared in the journals *La Papillotte* and *Le Knout*.

13. KBR, ms. II 7557.

14. The album has recently been digitised and can be accessed online on the platform Belgica: <https://belgica.kbr.be/>.

15. The numbers must be contemporary, since the author occasionally used them to refer to earlier drawings. An intriguing exception is no. 50b: *Est-il homme de paille, ou ne l'est-il pas?* The drawing has not been numbered and it is all but identical to no. 51. It is the only item in the collection that shows traces of use: the paper in the middle of the borders is damaged in places where the other caricatures are not, as if has been affixed to another surface. Maybe the author produced a second version of his images for public use.

16. PIETER VERLAACK, *Chroniqueurs van de revolutie. Romantische lithografen en de verbeelding van de Septemberdagen (1830-1834)*, master's thesis, KU Leuven, 2013.

less to compile a complete record of the revolutionary events than to provide his opinion about the state of the revolution. Caricatures are a fitting medium for this goal, as they are not intended to provide a realistic portrayal of events but rather use satire to express an opinion. Like all caricaturists, the author assumed contextual knowledge of events he depicted on the part of the reader.¹⁷ The intended meaning of the scenes is therefore not always straightforward. Symbols and terminology used in the album were part of contemporary and highly topical discourses about the revolution, which the modern reader may not be familiar with. Cross-reference, interdiscursivity and ambiguity of meaning are of course proper to the genre of satire.

The author did not provide indications as to the intended purpose of the collection. On the title page, he presented himself as a Belgian patriot who actively participated in the revolution. Given their militant tone, the drawings may be considered as a continuation of the fight, transposed to the arena of public opinion. The impact of his work on contemporaries must have been small, however, given its limited public. There are no indications that the drawings have been turned into print at any point. The fragile paper works are, moreover, in an excellent physical condition, suggesting that they have not been publicly displayed. With one exception, they show no traces of wear.¹⁸ These elements suggest that the work was foremost intended for private use.¹⁹

In the title, the author describes his work as an album of patriotic allegories. Although allegory as a genre is not inherently satirical, in this case the meaning of the term is close to our contemporary understanding of political caricature: through various visual and textual means they aim to undermine political opponents via ridicule.²⁰

In what follows I will therefore use the term caricature when referring to the images in the album. The images vary in type, composition, and complexity, ranging from simple emblems to complex scenes with multiple characters. They are realised in an oblong format measuring roughly 25 by 35 cm. They always consist of a combination of visual and textual elements. Most scenes have a caption and/or a title indicating the subject of the scene. Additional textual explanation, always in French, is provided in or around the scene, in the form of monologues, dialogues, balloons, legends, poems, songs and speeches.

This article will constitute a first exploration of the manuscript and its contents. I will analyse them with three main questions in mind. What does the manuscript tell us about the author, his political views and his position vis-à-vis the Belgian Revolution? Which satirical and visual techniques did he use to convey his message? And how do these subjects and techniques relate to other texts and images produced in the context of the Belgian Revolution? The first three sections of this article will serve to provide a general understanding of the album and the context of its creation. They will discuss the album's authorship, the satirical techniques applied in the caricatures, and the political orientation of the work. The succeeding sections will discuss the caricatures from a thematic point of view, focusing on the following subjects respectively: Belgian patriotism, international diplomacy, the duck motif, the *buse* motif, and Orangism.

II. Authorship

The authorship of the anonymous manuscript cannot be determined with certainty at this time. A key clue lies in the way the author presents him-

17. *Coups de griffe, prises de bec : la satire dans la presse des années trente*, Brussels, 2018, 11 ; ANNE MORELLI, "Les thèmes de la caricature anticléricale en Belgique au XIX^e siècle", in QUAIRIAUX, *De qui se moque-t-on ?*, 13.

18. See fn. 15.

19. In this respect the work is comparable to the *Tydsgebeurtenissen* chronicle by Pierre Goetsbloets. DESEURE, *Revolutie in Antwerpen*, 42.

20. On the link between the genres of caricature and allegory, see: WOLFGANG CILESEN & ROLF REICHARDT, "Medium Revolutionsgraphik", in REICHARDT & CILESEN, *Lexikon der Revolutions-Ikonographie in der europäischen Druckgraphik (1789-1889)*, vol. 1, Münster, 2017, 11 ; CLAUDE LANGLOIS, *La caricature contre-révolutionnaire*, Paris, 1988, 29.

self to his readers. He does so on the title page, where he depicts himself working on the album: sitting at a desk with an inkwell, quill pens, paint, and brushes, in the act of drawing the Belgian Lion waving a flag. In line with similar authorial self-depictions, he gazes directly at the viewer. His glasses identify him as an intellectual, while his blue tunic suggests that he belongs to the Brussels militia (*garde civique*). After the street fights of 23-27 September 1830, the blue tunic or *sarrau*, worn by many of the volunteer fighters, became a popular emblem of Belgian patriotism.²¹ In October 1830 the tunic made a mandatory part of the Brussels militia's uniform.²² When the Provisional Government subsequently established a national militia, the blue tunic was designated as its uniform (31 December 1831).²³ The drawing is accompanied by a caption that can be read as the author's mission statement. In a satirical rendering of the opening lines of the Aeneid, he says: 'Par des coups de sifflet je chante le héros qui, sans peine, en nos murs crut vaincre les sarraux, qui pendant quatre jours, sans tactique et sans ruse, combattit vaillamment pour mériter la buse'.²⁴

The unfortunate 'hero' mentioned in the verse is Prince Frederick of Orange-Nassau (1797-1881), whose retreat from Brussels at the end of the September Days signified a crucial victory for the patriots. *Buse* (pipe) in this context means failure or defeat (cfr. *infra*). The album's title and the tricolour frame surrounding the image further emphasise the author's patriotic inspiration. A second figure is present in the drawing: the author's son, a young boy, is standing on a chair, dressed up like

a Belgian revolutionary. Wearing a tunic, a black militia shako with a Belgian cockade, and a false moustache, he begs his dad to replace his wooden sword with a real one, so that he can join the fight. The father's revolutionary enthusiasm is thus passed on to the younger generation. The author took on the persona of a revolutionary of 1830 who aimed to preserve the revolutionary spirit.

A second watercolour serves as a preface to the actual caricatures. This drawing shows a dialogue between two dogs, intended as a caveat for the reader against the author's supposed lack of drawing skills. The dog called Adonis announces that there will be plenty of *croûtes* to enjoy. In French, *croûte* can both mean a crust or bite, as well as a poorly executed or old painting. In the caption, the author states that he perfectly agrees with Adonis: 'Impossible de faire autre chose que des croûtes quand on n'a pas appris à dessiner'.²⁵ In other words, the author presents himself an amateur draughtsman, whose work does not aspire to artistic merit. The author signed the preface with his initials: F.-J. V.

Who conceals himself behind these initials? Since the author depicts himself in a militia uniform, and since the album's geographical focal point is Brussels, I examined the names of the known volunteers from the September Days and the enrolment lists of the Brussels militia. No complete list of volunteers exists: the ca. 3000 names we have pertain to those wounded in battle and/or decorated with the Iron Cross (1834) and the Commemorative Medal (1878).²⁶ In addition, we

21. ILSE BOGAERTS, "De blauwe kiel, van werkhemd tot hoogmodisch symbool van België", *Ons Heem* 58, 2005/3, 3-15; E. A. JACOBS, "De burgerwacht van Brussel en van de Brusselse agglomeratie (1830-1920)", *Militaria belgica*, Second series, 1979/4, 98; LUC KEUNINGS, *Les forces de l'ordre à Bruxelles au XIX^e siècle: données biographiques illustrées sur les officiers de la police, de la garde civique et de la gendarmerie (1830-1914)*, Brussels, 2007; PIERRE LECLERCQ, *Histoire de la garde civique*, Brussels, 2022, 33. E.g. the patriotic song *Éloge des blouses* (KBR, S II 89885).

22. BOGAERTS, "De blauwe kiel", 11; LOUIS LECONTE, *L'Infanterie de la garde civique et ses uniformes 1830-1881*, Brussels, 1832, 8.

23. *Code de la garde civique, ou Recueil de toutes les lois sur la matière rapprochées et conférées entre elles*, Liège, 1831.

24. 'With whistles, I sing of the hero who, without effort, believed he would conquer the tunics within our walls, who for four days, without tactics and without guile, fought valiantly to earn a *buse*'.

25. 'Impossible to create anything other than scribbles when one has never learned how to draw'.

26. *Liste nominative des citoyens décorés de la Croix de Fer, publiée d'après le Moniteur*, Brussels, 1865; ANDRÉ-CARLES BORNÉ, *Distinctions honorifiques de la Belgique, 1830-1985*, Brussels, 1985; ACHILLE CHARPIGNY, *Les combattants volontaires de 1830 devant l'histoire*, Brussels, 1912; AUGUSTE DE WARGNY, *Esquisses historiques de la Révolution de la Belgique en 1830*, Brussels, 1830, vol. 2; JOHN W. ROONEY JR, "Profil du combattant de 1830", *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis*, 12, 1981/3, 479-504; Idem, *Revolt in the Netherlands. Brussels 1830*, Lawrence, 1982.



Fig. 1. Title page of the Petit album allégori-patriotique. Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

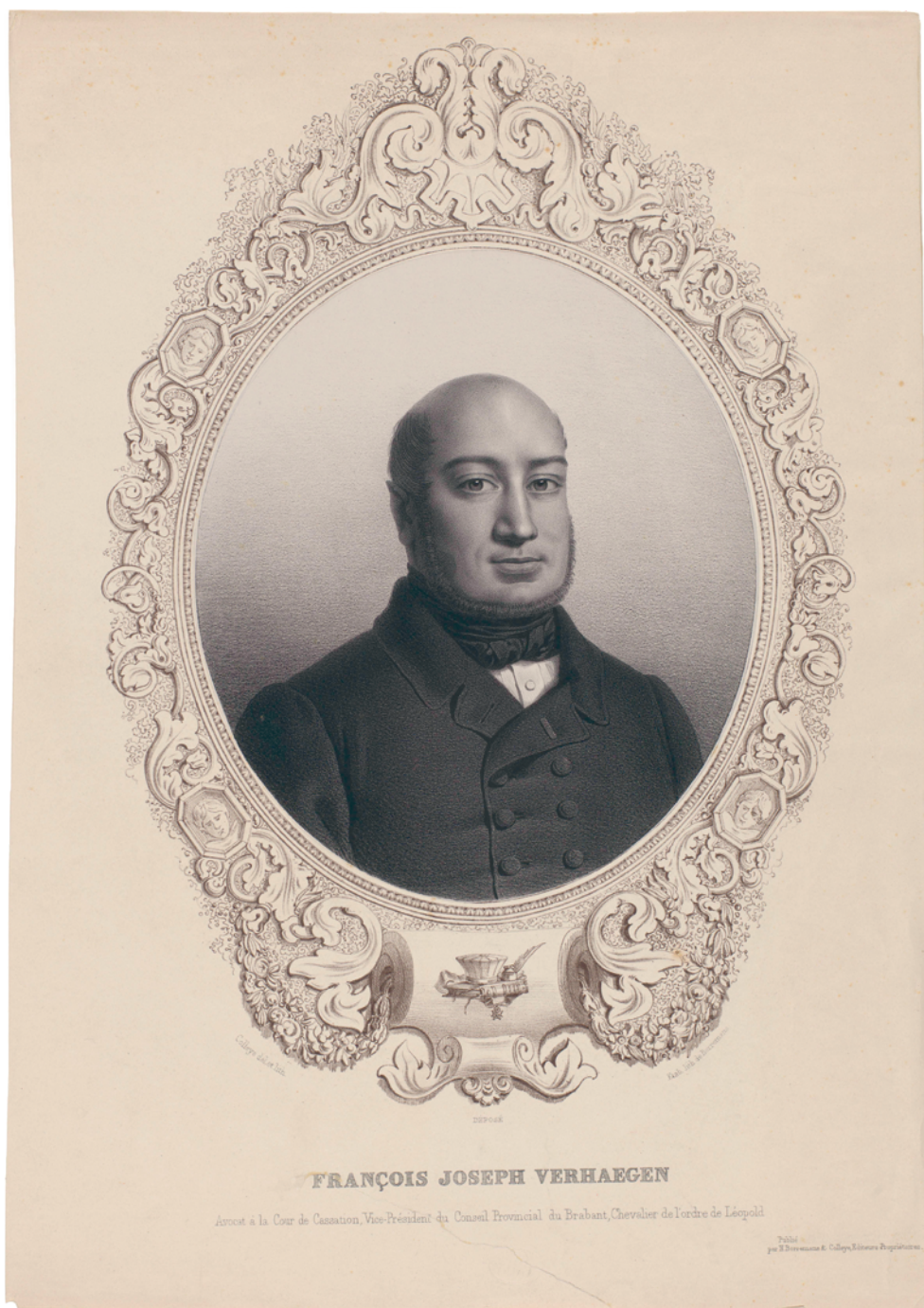


Fig. 2. Portrait of François-Joseph Verhaegen (after 1844), H.I. Colleye. Source : Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1906-841.

dispose of enrolment lists of the Brussels militia, membership of which was made obligatory for all male citizens between 21 and 50 of age by the decree of 26 October 1830.²⁷ All lists combined contain 27 names corresponding to the initials F.-J. V. Only one of these matches the profile of the author of the album (intellectual, affluent, married with young children), namely the lawyer François-Joseph Verhaegen (1800-1848), whose name figures on the enrolment lists of the Brussels militia.²⁸ He appears to have joined only after membership became mandatory, suggesting that he was likely not among the early revolutionaries.

In addition to membership in the militia, there is a second trace leading to the Verhaegen family, namely the provenance of the album. The album cover is decorated with the coat of arms borne by Jean-Henri-Marie-Joseph de Brouwer (1872-1951) after being created a baron in 1934. De Brouwer's first wife was Alice Everard (1874-1908), a step-granddaughter of François-Joseph Verhaegen's younger brother, Jacques-François (1802-1854).²⁹ From the Verhaegen family the album could have been inherited by Evard, who passed it on to her husband. KBR acquired it on 9 February 1949 from the Librairie Encyclopédique, for the sum of 8,800 francs.³⁰

Judging by the elements mentioned above, François-Joseph Verhaegen seems an excellent can-

didate for the authorship of the album. Who was he? The Verhaegen family belonged to the Catholic nobility of Brabant. François-Joseph's father, Pierre Verhaegen (1767-1835), practiced as a lawyer at the Council of Brabant.³¹ François-Joseph Verhaegen was the second son of three. He studied law at the State University of Leuven and became an attorney in 1820.³² He married Marie-Élisabeth Boels in 1822, with whom he had seven children.³³ After obtaining a doctorate in law in 1832, he was appointed an attorney at the Brussels Court of Cassation. In the legal world he was known as Verhaegen *jeune* or *cadet*, to differentiate him from his older brother. He built a brilliant career as a lawyer, invested in insurance companies, and amassed a considerable fortune in real estate. He had excellent connections in the Belgian establishment: he was a member of the exclusive dinner club Société des XII³⁴, rose through the ranks of Freemasonry³⁵ and sat on the Provincial Council of Brabant for the Liberals (1838-1846).³⁶ In 1844, he was knighted in the Order of Leopold.³⁷ Despite his social and financial success, Verhaegen suffered from mental instability and ultimately took his own life by drowning in 1848. Remarkably, contemporaries attributed his mental crisis to fears of communism and socialism instilled in him by the outbreak of the French Revolution of 1848.³⁸ His funeral was attended by numerous prominent figures, lawyers, and politicians, including the President of the Chamber, Étienne de Gerlache.

27. *La garde civique de Bruxelles et de son agglomération*, Brussels, 1979, 17.

28. Brussels City Archives, Fonds administratifs, Milice et garde civique, Registre des inscriptions pour la formation de la garde civique, 1800.

29. Everard's stepmother was Jacques-François Verhaegen's only daughter Zélie Verhaegen. 'Généalogie de la famille de PRELLE de la NIEPPE', available online: <https://genealogie.depelledelanieppe.be/individual.php?pid=I2263&ged=prellenieppe>; Alice Marthe Marie Victorine Eugénie Josine Everard 1874–1908 – Généalogie de la famille de Prelu de la Nieppe, consulted on 30 December 2024; MARIE-PIERRE VERHAEGEN, "Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen: l'homme et sa famille", in *Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen: l'homme, sa vie, sa légende. Bicentenaire d'une naissance*, Brussels, 1996, 28.

30. KBR, ms. III 1225, Inventory of manuscripts acquisitions.

31. ALAIN VERHAEGEN, "Les ascendants de Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen", in: *Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen*, 20-21.

32. GEORGES VAN HECKE, *Notes pour servir à l'histoire du barreau de cassation*, Brussels, 1979, 1.

33. VERHAEGEN, "Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen", 27.

34. *Cinquantenaire de la Société des XII. 16 décembre 1884. Annales gastronomiques, bachiques et littéraires*, Brussels, 1884.

35. He was initiated in the lodge Les Amis Philantropes on 25 March 1833 and in 1837 co-founded the lodge Les Amis du Progrès. Study and Documentation Centre of Belgian Freemasonry (CEDOM), Archives, 114-2-24, n. 37. See also: ELS WITTE & FERNAND BORNÉ, *Documents relatifs à la franc-maçonnerie belge du XIX^e siècle, 1830-1885*, Leuven, 1973, 60; O. HENNEBERT, *Aperçu de l'histoire de la loge des vrais amis de l'union et du Progrès réunis*, Brussels, 1892, 36.

36. *L'Indépendant*, 29/05/1838; 24/05/1842.

37. *Le livre d'or de l'Ordre de Léopold et de la Croix de Fer*, Brussels, 1858, vol. 1, p. 467.

38. *Cinquantenaire de la Société des XII*, 25; *L'Indépendant*, 22/03/1848, 2.

His older brother, Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen, delivered a touching eulogy.³⁹

However, two problems arise with this attribution. Firstly, the Verhaegen family was known for being Orangist, and thus rejecting the Belgian Revolution. The aforementioned Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen (1796-1862) was an influential liberal politician and Freemason, who positioned himself as an Orangist during and after the Belgian Revolution.⁴⁰ Nothing definitive is known about François-Joseph's political allegiance. However, we do know that in the Spring of 1831, he twice took on the legal defence of Orangist conspirators who were planning a counterrevolutionary coup. In April, he defended Colonel Borremans (1804-1876) in a highly publicised trial before the High Military Court for an attempted coup in March.⁴¹ Borremans was found guilty of 'not revealing a conspiracy' and convicted to five years in prison. In June, Verhaegen also took on the defence of Major Herman Kessels (1794-1851), who had been arrested in February on suspicion of involvement in an attempted coup. His case ultimately did not go to trial.⁴²

The fact that Verhaegen acted as counsel for an Orangist conspirator does not necessarily indicate political sympathy. For instance, the most notorious coup plotter, Ernest Grégoire (ca. 1800-1870), was defended in court by the anti-Orangist republican Adolphe Bayet (1804-1862).⁴³ Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Verhaegen chose to defend both suspected conspirators, which almost seems like a political statement in favour of Orangism. It should be noted, however, that in his closing

argument for Borremans, he adopted a distinctly Belgian-patriotic tone and even insisted on his doubts about taking on Borremans's defence.⁴⁴ In 1844 the satirical, Orangist newspaper *Méphis-tophélès* published a malicious editorial mocking the granting of the Order of Leopold to François-Joseph Verhaegen.⁴⁵ Between the lines, it was suggested that the Belgian decoration tarnished Verhaegen's otherwise spotless Orangist reputation.

A second problem with attributing the album to François-Joseph Verhaegen is of a material nature, namely his handwriting. His handwriting, as seen in various documents and in the papers he submitted to the Court of Cassation, differs drastically from the handwriting used in the album.⁴⁶ Whereas the first handwriting is small and cramped, the second is regular and neat. Yet, this alone does not exclude Verhaegen as the author. We do not know for certain whether the album was done in the author's own hand. If Verhaegen was indeed the author, he would have had good reasons, given his family's Orangist background, to conceal his authorship, as evidenced by the use of initials and the fact that the drawings were never published.

For the time being, no conclusive argument exists regarding the attribution. We know too little about the political views of François-Joseph Verhaegen, who has not left any known ego-documents. He fits the image that the author of the album painted of himself and he has certainly worn the militia's blue tunic. It would also not be surprising if F.-J. V. belonged to judicial circles. The album contains several scenes that refer to courts and

39. *L'Indépendant*, 25/03/1848; 28/03/1848.

40. FRANS VAN KALKEN, "Théodore Verhaegen", *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, 33/1, 1927, 79; VERHAEGEN, "Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen", 27; ELS WITTE, *Politieke machtsstrijd in en om de voornaamste Belgische steden, 1830-1848*, Brussels, 1973, 76.

41. *L'Indépendant*, 1704/1831. About the Borremans trial: ÉRIC BASTIN, *La justice militaire en Belgique de 1830 à 1850*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2012, fn. 118; ALEXIS EENENS, *Les conspirations militaires de 1831*, Brussels, 1875; ELS WITTE, *Het verloren koninkrijk. Het harde verzet van de Belgische orangisten tegen de revolutie, 1828-1850*, Antwerp, 2014, 220.

42. *L'Émancipation*, 11/05/1831; *Journal des Flandres*, 11/05/1831.

43. ELS WITTE, *Belgische republikeinen. Radicalen tussen twee revoluties (1830-1850)*, Kalmthout, 2020, 151.

44. *L'Émancipation*, 22/04/1831; *L'Indépendant*, 22/04/1831.

45. *Méphis-tophélès*, 13/06/1844.

46. Leuven City Archives, Marriage certificate of François-Joseph Verhaegen and Maria Boels, 25/07/1822; State Archives in Brussels (Forest), Archives of the Court of Cassation, Requêtes, box 6, nos. 83, 96, 131 and box 9, no. 286; Archives of the Barreau de Bruxelles, no. 416, Minutes 1832.

lawyers, and even gives special attention to the trials of the Orangist conspirators Grégoire and Borremans (cfr. *infra*). Hopefully, future research will allow for a definitive conclusion to be reached.

III. The language of satire

The author's caveat regarding his lack of formal artistic training seems justified. The watercolours in the album are clearly the work of an amateur and exhibit no artistic pretensions. Consequently, observations about style are of limited relevance. It seems far more relevant to situate the album within the context of the satirical genre and investigate its relationship to the satirical images and texts of the revolutionary period. It is evident that the author was influenced by existing works. Given his educated and bourgeois background, he was undoubtedly exposed to printed materials produced during the French and Belgian Revolutions of 1830 and before.⁴⁷ Even as an amateur, he inevitably engaged with the pre-existing works in this genre. Several themes, visual motifs and satirical techniques from printed caricature found their way into his work. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that he was the epigone of a particular artist or style. He never copied entire scenes or compositions but only inserted certain elements, combining them with inventions of his own. Older works do not appear to have served as an important source of inspiration. For instance, there are few stylistic or thematic similarities between the album and the political prints of the Brabant Revolution (with one exception, as discussed later).

Overall, the scenes in the album are characterised by their simplicity of composition. Complex metaphors featuring exalted allegorical figures (such as gods and virtues), which were frequent during the Brabant Revolution, are absent here. Many depictions consist of one or a few isolated characters without any background. Crowded compositions

with interactions between multiple characters are less common, and only a minority of scenes are set against a figurative background. As a result, some scenes resemble vignettes or illustrations rather than standalone compositions. Such simple setups were relatively common in the printed caricatures of the French and Belgian revolutions of 1830. The impression of illustrations is further reinforced by the prominence of text in the album. Textual elements often occupy a central position in the images and are indispensable for understanding the meaning of the scenes. They often consist of monologues or dialogues in which the characters express their views in direct speech. The tone is typically ironic and ambiguous, with frequent use of wordplay and double meanings. The interior scenes on the other hand, although limited in number, are notable for their visual richness, characterised by a profusion of colours, patterns, and decorations.

The author employs a wide range of techniques from the satirical repertoire. Since the heyday of political caricature during the French Revolution, this repertoire included a number of classical elements. Political opponents are invariably depicted in ridiculous poses or situations, thereby undermining their credibility in a humorous manner. For example, *Les sauts périlleux* (no. 1) portrays the Prince of Orange as a duck riding a greyhound who flees the Belgians patriots in a flight of panic (fig. 12). In *Le Héros de Hasselt et le peintre d'histoire improvisé* ('The hero of the battle of Hasselt and the improvised history painter', no. 33) (fig. 3), the prince is shown in an absurd pose during a posing session for his court painter, as he balances on a slanted bench in an attempt at recreating the moment during the Battle of Hasselt (1831) when his horse was shot from under him. In other scenes, the author uses infantilisation to undermine his targets. In *Petite parodie d'une grande affaire* ('Small parody of a big affair', no. 52), the prince is shown cooing with delight

47. About the persistence and transformation of motives in French caricature after the French Revolution: PASCAL DUPUY & ROLF REICHARDT, *La caricature sous le signe des révolutions: mutations et permanence (XVIII^e - XIX^e siècles)*, Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2021; REICHARDT & CILESEN, *Lexikon der Revolutions-Ikonographie*.

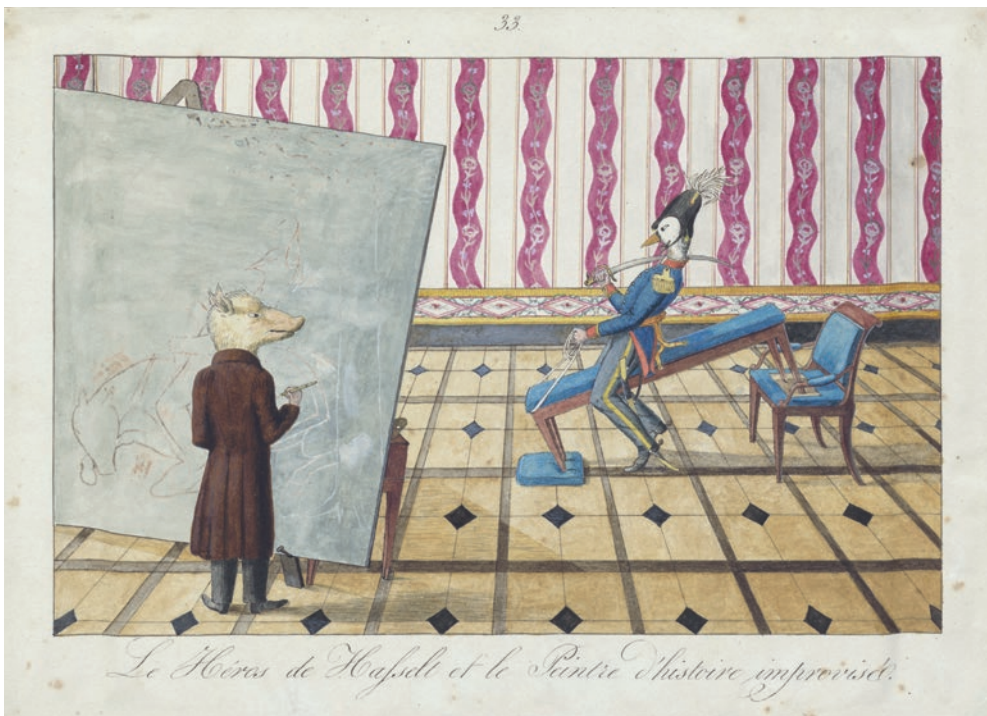


Fig. 3. Le Héros de Hasselt et le peintre d'histoire improvisé (no. 33). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

over a set of wooden toy horses (fig. 18).⁴⁸ In *Condamnation de Grégoire* (no. 21), the Orangist conspirator Ernest Grégoire (ca. 1800-1870) and his lawyer are depicted as diminutive, childlike figures dwarfed by the imposing Belgian lion and Lady Justice (fig. 8).

Representing humans as animals is another classical satirical device in caricature. This technique serves to dehumanise the subjects and associate them with animalistic traits.⁴⁹ In the album, most characters are depicted as animals or animal-headed humans.⁵⁰ Heraldic animals are employed to depict the several nationalities: double-headed eagles represent Russia, Austria, and Prussia; a rooster symbolises France; and a leopard personifies England. This technique was commonplace in political caricature and allegory since the early modern period, including in the caricatures of the Brabant and Belgian Revolutions. Opponents are often portrayed as animals associated with negative traits: Grégoire is depicted as a yapping dog (nos. 21, 29), the Dutch court painter as a pig (no. 33), and an Orangist journalist as a venomous chameleon (no. 50). The Belgian patriots are invariably shown as valiant lions, whereas the Dutch are represented as ducks (cfr. infra).

Scatological humour is also a staple element of the satirical repertoire since the French Revolution, with caricatures from the Belgian Revolution including some notable examples.⁵¹ The author of the album ventures into this territory on only a few occasions, particularly in his depiction of

the Siege of Antwerp in 1832. In *Moyen coërcitif, correctif et purgatif* ('Corrective, coercive and laxative measure', no. 45),⁵² concerning the French capture of the *lunette* (or fort) *de Saint-Laurent* on the Scheldt on 13 December 1832, he plays extensively on the double meanings of the words *évacuer* and *lunette* (fig. 4). A severely constipated General Chassé (1765-1849), positioned above the toilet seat (or *lunette*), is purged with the help of a cannon operated by the French rooster. In *Dernière extrémité* ('Last extremities', no. 46), the "pills" (or cannonballs) of the French Marshal Gérard (1773-1852) compel the beleaguered Chassé to surrender (or evacuate) the Antwerp citadel as well. Waving a white flag and with his trousers around his knees, he declares: 'Je sens que ça presse: je vais... je vais... je vais évacuer et rendre'.⁵³

True caricatures or *portraits-charge*, where the facial features of the subject are deliberately and humorously exaggerated, are notably absent from the album. This genre was practiced to great effect during the July Revolution and the ensuing July Monarchy, by such artists as Charles Philipon (1800-1862) and Honoré Daumier (1808-1879),⁵⁴ but it was far less present in the caricatures of the Belgian Revolution. The author of the album chose to depict almost all individuals as animals, possibly because he lacked the skill required for the work of a true caricaturist. Only in one caricature is King William I mocked for his physical appearance, namely in no. 59, where his embonpoint, caused by an excessive appetite, is ridiculed. This theme was frequently addressed in printed caricatures.⁵⁵ Another character identifiable by his physical traits

48. ANNIE DUPRAT, "Iconologie historique de la caricature politique en France (du XVI^e au XX^e siècle)", *Hermès*, 29(1), 2001, 28.

49. ANNIE DUPRAT, "Le langage des signes: le bestiaire dans la caricature révolutionnaire", *History of European Ideas*, 16/1-3, 1993, 201-205; DUPUY & REICHARDT, *La caricature sous le signe des révolutions*, 83-106. MARTIN MIERSCH, "Tiere", in REICHARDT & CILLESSEN, *Lexikon der Revolutions-Ikonographie*, vol. 3, 1928-1938.

50. The oldest political caricature in the Belgian press, which appeared in the humoristic journal *Le Manneken* on 19/08/1827, 3 (see fn. 8), features a giraffe, probably representing the French king Charles X (see JOHN GRAND-CARTERET, *Les Mœurs et la Caricature en France*, Paris, 1888, 187-188). In caricatures of the Belgian Revolution, the giraffe was associated to King William I. E.g. *Encore un bruit de la giraffe* (KBR, S II 29868).

51. *Zonderlinge werking der Natuur* (Atlas Van Stolk, object no. 27795); *Les incurables* (Atlas Van Stolk, object no. 27490).

52. Cfr. *Moyens coercitifs employés définitivement et sans remise contre la citadelle d'Anvers*, which appeared in the French journal *La Caricature* (Atlas Van Stolk, object no. 54838-001).

53. 'I feel it pressing. I will evacuate and surrender'.

54. See: SUSANNE BOSCH-ABELE, *Opposition mit dem Zeichenstift, 1830-1835. La Caricature*, Gelsenkirchen, 2000.

55. BELHAZI, "La révolution belge", 6.



Fig. 4. Moyen coërcitif, correctif et purgatif (no. 45). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

is the former regent Erasme-Louis Surlet de Chokier (1769-1839). In *Brioche de 1831* (no. 36), a Belgian lion is shown sporting Surlet's characteristic long hairstyle and sober black suit. The term *brioche* refers to strategic political errors for which the author held the former regent responsible, including those that contributed to Belgium's defeat in the Ten Days' Campaign (2-12 August 1831). The motif (see also nos. 29, 65, 66), which does not figure in printed caricatures, was probably inspired by patriotic songs.⁵⁶

William I's much hated Justice minister Cornelis-Felix van Maanen (1769-1846), on the other hand, is portrayed with a crescent-shaped head in a pun on his name. This depiction strongly resembles a visual motif from the Brabant Revolution, where soldiers with crescent-shaped bodies and heads appeared as a reference to the so-called army of the moon.⁵⁷ It is the only instance of possibly direct connection with that older tradition of political caricature. Orangist journalist Georges Libry-Bagnano (1780-1836), public enemy number one for the Brussels patriots, is the one character in the entire album who is being portrayed in a realistic and seemingly recognisable manner (nos. 6, 7, 26).⁵⁸ Printed caricatures by contrast often showed him as an ape.⁵⁹

One genre that the author employs conspicuously often is that of fictitious coats of arms and monuments carrying a political message. This technique was a staple in the satirical tradition, from the Brabant Revolution to the July Revolution.⁶⁰ For example, the album's author draws several monuments in honour of the veterans of the September Days, constructed from the remnants of bar-

ricades and symbols of armed resistance (cfr. *infra*). Although some of these are intended to appear solemn, an element of mockery is often present. For instance, the author draws several scarecrows built from discarded weapons and flags to keep the Dutch at bay (nos. 5, 27, 44). These fictitious monuments also include national clichés aimed at ridiculing the Dutch, as was common in printed caricatures.⁶¹ For example, a commemorative monument for naval commander Jan van Speijck (1802-1831) is constructed from cheese wheels (no. 34). A triumphal arch constructed in honour of the Prince of Orange after his return from the Ten Days' Campaign is made of Dutch cheese and hung with fish and tobacco pipes (no. 26). In the remainder of this article, I will systematically indicate direct influences and thematic parallels with printed caricatures, where I have been able to identify them. As we will see, the author freely combined inspiration from contemporary visual and textual material with inventions of his own.

IV. Political orientation

The album's primary focus is not on the underlying causes of the revolution, but on the patriotic resistance against Dutch oppression and the succeeding consolidation of Belgian independence. Over half of the caricatures concern the years 1830-1831. Only a third originates after the rendition of the Antwerp citadel in 1832, which ended the military phase of the conflict. The author may have reasonably assumed the causes of the revolution to be known to the reader. Such causes as he did mention always suggested that the Belgians fought for freedom against monarchical despot-

56. E.g. *Guillaume le Têtu, Roi des Pays-Bas, ou à ton tour, paillasse!*, Brussels, 1830.

57. VAN ROSSEM, *Revolutie*, 278; 356.

58. Cfr. his depiction in *Jeu de Poltrons* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.325). Both the album and printed caricatures depict Libry sporting a moustache and carrying two crutches for support. E.g. *Après/Pendant/Avant* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.197); *Quelle perte ils me font faire* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.198); *La force d'un Citoyen Belge* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.157); *Vive la liberté* (KBR, S II 29862); *Ouf* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.160); *Les Comédiens du Nord* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.170).

59. *Aux Armes! Aux Armes!* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.204); *Libry* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.196).

60. It was also frequently employed by an amateur like Pierre Goetsboets. See DESEURE, *Revolutie in Antwerpen*.

61. E.g. *Le roi des fromages* (KBR, S.II15666); *Où peut l'on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.319); *Vive la liberté* (KBR, S II 29862); *Sa Majesté Hollandaise réduite à ses fromages pour se fortifier* (Atlas Van Stolk, Object no. 27600); *L'armée hollandaise pendant son quartier d'hiver* (Atlas Van Stolk, Object no. 27598); *Le fromage remplis de malice, sous l'arbre de la Liberté* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.158). See also BELGHAZI, "La révolution belge", 6, and the giant clog in caricature no. 15.

ism. His caricature about the September Days, for example, contains the slogan: 'nos armes repoussent l'esclavage, nos armes sont pour la liberté' (*Le Vieux Brave*, no. 2).⁶²

Like many patriots, the author of the album interpreted the attempts at violent repression by the Dutch troops as proof of the despotic nature of the rule of King William I (1772-1834).⁶³ 'Belgian blood' made William forfeit his throne (*Nouvelles armes d'un roi parjure*, no. 7) (fig. 5).⁶⁴ The September Days, the bombing of Antwerp (27 October 1830) and the Ten Days' Campaign all served to prove the point. The Dutch King and his sons, who commanded the military campaigns in Belgium, indeed were prime targets for the author of the album; they served as the personifications of the vilified Dutch regime.

The original breach of confidence between the king and his Belgian subject lay elsewhere, however. In *Nouvelles armes d'un roi parjure* (no. 7), the author drew a new, satirical coat of arms for the king, representing the people's grief (symbolised by blood, cannonballs and a crown of thorns). The caption reads: 'Guillaume, tu fus sourd à des sages avis; tu violas la Loi fondamentale. Tes insignes royaux sont à jamais flétris'.⁶⁵ In other words, William's breach of the Constitution (or Fundamental Law) of 1815, which he had sworn to uphold at his investiture, had caused him to lose the Belgian

crown. The argument was repeated in a caricature of William's address from the throne on 18 October 1830, in reaction to the September Days (no. 9). The author made William praise his Dutch subjects for being 'un peuple qui comprend si bien ce que c'est qu'un roi constitutionnel, et qui ne croit pas, comme ces ignorans de Belges, que quand le chef d'un état a juré d'observer et de maintenir la constitution, il est obligé de l'observer et de la maintenir en tous points'.⁶⁶ The irony of the phrase highlighted the disagreement surrounding the nature of constitutional monarchy which had been going on between the king and the liberal opposition in the preceding decade.

Whereas the opposition maintained that the king's power was conditional on his inaugural oath on the constitution, William took the view that his monarchical sovereignty preceded the constitution.⁶⁷ The issue led to lengthy debates about such issues as the origin of sovereignty, ministerial responsibility, and freedom of opinion. The king's unwillingness to accept parliamentary control of his government, and the harsh repression against journalists who criticised the regime, led to accusations of despotism.⁶⁸ The author of the album clearly shared this point of view. Not coincidentally, he depicted Libry-Bagnano and Van Maanen as supporters alongside the coat of arms: the first was associated with aggressive attacks in the press against the Belgian opposition, the second with judicial repression.

62. 'Our weapons push back slavery, our weapons are for freedom'.

63. Els Witte, *De constructie van België, 1828-1847*, Leuven, 2006, 71.

64. 'New coat of arms of a perjurious king'. To be compared with the pro-Dutch cartoon *Projet de l'Ordre de Léopold* (Atlas Van Stolk, object no. 27797). Similar examples were produced by the opposition against the *juste milieu* in France. See examples by Daumier in SUSANNE BOSCH-ABELE, *Opposition mit dem Zeichenstift*, 65 and Philipon's *Armes du peuple, armes du juste milieu* (1831): <https://histoire-image.org/etudes/armes-peuple-armes-juste-milieu>, consulted on 30 December 2024.

65. 'William, you were deaf to wise counsel; you violated the Fundamental Law. Your royal insignia are forever tarnished'.

66. 'A people who understand so well what a constitutional king is, and who do not believe, like those ignorant Belgians, that when the head of a state has sworn to observe and uphold the constitution, he is obliged to observe and uphold it in every respect'.

67. BRECHT DESEURE, 'Constitutional Precedence and the Genesis of the Belgian Constitution of 1831', in ULRIKE MÜSSIG, ed., *Reconsidering Constitutional Formation II: Decisive Constitutional Normativity. From Old Liberties to New Precedence*, Berlin, 2018, 211-256.

68. See, among others: PETER VAN VELZEN, *De ongekende ministriële verantwoordelijkheid. Theorie en praktijk, 1813-1840*, Nijmegen, 2005; Els Witte, 'De Grondwet van het Verenigd Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (1815) en het ontstaan van de Belgische Constitutie (1831)', in ANDRÉ ALEN, A.W. HERINGA, DIRK HEIRBAUT & C.J. ROTTEVEEL MANSVELD, eds., *De Grondwet van het Verenigd Koninkrijk der Nederlanden van 1815*, The Hague and Bruges, 2016, 15-44; I.J.H. WORST, 'Koning Willem I. Het begin van 'ons grondwettig volksbestaan'', in COEN A. TAMSE & Els Witte, eds., *Staats- en natievorming in Willem I's koninkrijk (1815-1830)*, Brussels, 1992, 56-75.



Fig. 5. Nouvelles armes d'un roi parjure (no. 7). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

The album contains no allusions to the other Belgian griefs, such as language and religion.

Tribulations du Vieux Brave ('Tribulations of le Vieux Brave', no. 18), is revealing as to the author's political position within the conflict (fig. 6). It dates from the Spring of 1831, when the revolution seemed to have reached a deadlock: the Belgian Constitution had come into force under the government of the regent, but the throne remained vacant, the international recognition of Belgian independence was all but guaranteed, and internal stability was threatened by Orangist plots. The tribulations of the patriots are represented by a series of crosses, including the crosses of Orangism, warfare, the London protocols, internal opposition, and opportunism. A tri-color cross represented unification with France, a position which was popular with part of the delegates in the National Congress, but which the author expressly refuted. A cross with a Belgian flag and a Jacobin cap, on the other hand, symbolized the republican movement around Louis de Potter (1786-1859). The author repeatedly expressed his support for constitutional monarchy and his dislike of republicanism, e.g.: 'Ce serait un spectacle nouveau qu'un roi abdiquant en faveur de la république, et des monarques plus traitables envers un président coiffé d'un bonnet rouge, qu'envers une noble tête couronnée!... Sottise! Sottise!' (no. 38).⁶⁹ The motto on the banner held by the Belgian lion confirms that message: 'Liberté, Royauté, Honneur national' ('Liberty, Monarchy, National Honour'). As a member of the liberal bourgeoisie, the author was a natural ally of established order. His political moderation and aversion to proletarian insurrection are evident from the last cross, made up of weapons, which represented street fighting and looting of the houses of so-called traitors.

Despite the author's unmistakably liberal convictions, he avoided making explicit political state-

ments (except for his undisguised anti-Orangism). Liberty and patriotism were presented as the revolution's universal battle cries. In his most explicitly political caricature, *Rêve du Vieux Brave* ('Dream of le Vieux Brave', no. 66, ca. 1836), he expressly denounced internal political discord between 'liberals' and 'anti-liberals' (the term Catholic figures only once in the album, but not in relation to Belgium). *Commedia dell'arte* figures Arlequin (liberals) and the Magician (anti-liberals) are shown in the act of openly breaking their alliance, to the dismay of Pierrot and Paillasse, veterans of the September Days who both lost a limb in the fight. Pierrot complains that the spirit of 1830 is being squandered in favour of ideological dissension: 'J'étais donc bien bête moi, quand je croyais que cette union ferait notre force, pendant et après?'.⁷⁰ Unionism, the coalition between liberals and Catholics which allowed the revolution to succeed, indeed came under increasing pressure as Belgian independence was consolidated.⁷¹ The caricature shows that for the author, the end of unionism jeopardised the legacy of the Belgian Revolution and disrespected the sacrifice of the veterans.

The legacy of the revolution is one of the album's major themes. In *Apparition de l'ombre de l'arbre de la liberté* ('Apparition of the ghost of the liberty tree', no. 55), the author stages a dialogue between the ghost of the liberty tree planted on the Place royale in 1794 under French occupation, and the Belgian liberty tree of 1830. The first tree, planted by the Jacobins, had signified the advent of liberty and the end of the old regime. It had however been neglected under the 'new despotic power' of Napoleon, until it had finally been cut down. The older tree came to warn its younger colleague that it would undergo the same fate once patriotic enthusiasm subsided. The younger tree nevertheless expressed confidence in its destiny: 'Apprends qu'un sentiment très sage a prescrit mon érection: les Belges, sortis de l'esclavage, craignaient la restauration'; 'Symbole de l'indépendance d'un peuple pacifique,

69. 'It would be a novel spectacle for a king to abdicate in favour of the republic, with monarchs being more compliant towards a president wearing a red cap than towards a noble crowned head! ... Nonsense! Nonsense'.

70. 'Was I foolish then, to believe that this union would be our strength, both during and after?'

71. Witte, *De constructie*, 153.

humain et non celui de la licence, j'ai confiance en mon destin. Tant que vivra la Brabançonne et que Septembre ici sera fête, mon vieux, l'on se verra personne saper l'arbre de la liberté'.⁷²

V. A patriotic revolution

The album's protagonist is *Le Vieux Brave* ('the old warrior'). He is shown as a Belgian lion dressed in a blue tunic, who personifies the patriotic movement. He first appears in the second caricature, at the occasion of the September Days: fully uniformed, and holding a Belgian flag, he fires a gun across a barricade in the streets of Brussels (fig. 7). The lion was an obvious choice to incarnate patriotism: apart from being associated with strength and valour, it had a long history as a Belgian national symbol.⁷³ The lion's specific incarnation as *le Vieux Brave* seems to have been an original invention on the part of the author, since it does not figure in contemporary political caricatures and allegories.⁷⁴ His depiction as a seasoned veteran ('old warrior') instead of as a youth is a meaningful choice: it suggests that the fight for Belgian nationality and freedom was not a recent phenomenon but instead was rooted in the past, in accordance with the precepts of romantic nationalism.

Le Vieux Brave appears in no less than 16 watercolours, often in connection to military resistance and warfare, or the threat thereof. He always wears a blue tunic, but in combination with the headgear of various corps and ranks of volunteers, militias, and military units. In *La prise de Regent* ('The taking of the Regent', no. 13), *le Vieux Brave* mans a canon, while vowing the uphold the

newly installed government of the regent. In a caricature on the Ten Days' Campaign, he is shown in the heat of battle while supporting the Belgian troops against the Dutch (no. 24). In an allegory on the inauguration of King Leopold I (no. 23) he supports the Belgian Constitution on one side, while a crowned Belgian lion supports the other. After 1832, when the military threat decreased, he became less prominent in the album.

A tone of romantic nationalism pervades the scenes relating to the Belgian Revolution. The author was concerned with honouring the 'heroes' of September and safeguarding their memory. *Aux braves morts pour la défense de Bruxelles* ('To the brave ones who died for the defence of Brussels', no. 4) shows an improvised monument to the patriots who had fallen during the fighting in the capital: on a base made of wood and cobblestones from the barricades, two blue tunics are joined together and crowned with laurels.⁷⁵ The broken crown and chains in front of the monument indicate the end of despotic monarchy. Other debris of the fighting in Brussels is used for building a scarecrow against the Dutch soldiers (*Épouvantails des soldats hollandais*, no. 5)⁷⁶ and for providing the foundation of the Belgian Constitution (no. 23). In *Le Vieux Brave portant son offrande au Cimetière des Martyrs* ('Le Vieux Brave bringing his offering to the Cemetery of the Martyrs', no. 22), the patriotic lion, assisted by Love of the Fatherland, transports a commemorative shrub decorated with Belgian flags and a blue tunic to the Place des Martyrs, where the fallen patriots of September were buried. The wording of the title was directly copied from newspaper articles that reported on the inauguration of the monument in July 1831.⁷⁷ The accompanying verse is imbued

72. 'Know that a very wise sentiment dictated my creation: the Belgians, having emerged from slavery, feared the restoration'; 'As a symbol of the independence of a peaceful and humane people, and not of lawlessness, I trust in my destiny. As long as the Brabançonne is sung and September is celebrated here, old friend, the tree of liberty will not be undermined'.

73. SÉBASTIEN DUBOIS, *L'Invention de la Belgique. Genèse d'un état-nation, 1648-1830*, Brussels, 2005, 362; RONALD V. TOOLEY, *Leo Belgicus: an Illustrated List of Variants*, London, 1963, 4.

74. Digitised Belgian newspapers from the same period do not contain references to the character of *le Vieux Brave*. The National Congress received several constitutional proposals signed 'Le vieux belge'. See: BRECHT DESEURE, ed., *Drafts and Proposals for the Belgian Constitution of 1831. Critical Edition*, Brussels, 2020.

75. A similar monument is depicted in the caricature *Grande triomphe d'une petite nation*. Museum Broodhuis/Maison du Roi: <https://collections.heritage.brussels/fr/objects/48097>, consulted on 30 December 2024.

76. 'Scarecrows of the Dutch soldiers'.

77. *Le Belge*, 11/07/1831, 21/07/1831; *Journal de la Belgique*, 02/07/1831.



Fig. 7. Le Vieux Brave (no. 2). Source : KBR, ms. II 7557.

with patriotic fervour: 'En contemplant ces objets symboliques, je sens couler mes pleurs. Ô souvenirs patriotiques, que vous êtes chers à nos cœurs!'.⁷⁸

The flipside of the author's idealisation of Belgian patriotism were his concerns over fake patriotism, and the slackening of the revolutionary spirit. A telling example is no. 20, showing *le Vieux Brave* in conversation with another member of the Brussels militia, who informed him of an alteration to their uniforms. The *blouse* (tunic) worn during the September days was no longer to be the daily uniform of the militia; a much grander outfit had taken its place. *Le Vieux Brave* disapproved of the removal of this important emblem of the revolution, which had so deeply impressed their adversaries in the days of the fighting: 'Vous savez, je crois, quel effet a produit la blouse, quels vertiges elle a causés aux canards?'.⁷⁹ As it turned out, his interlocutor had spent the September Days in the safety of his country residence and had only joined the militia when all danger has passed. The patriotism he flaunted was fake, as symbolised by the lion's mask he wore over his face. Disgusted, *le Vieux Brave* recounted his own participation in the fights: 'Et moi, j'étais derrière une des barricades que j'avais aidé à élever, et dont j'avais posé la première pierre. Ah, si vous aviez vu ces nouveaux monumens de l'industrie nationale, le mouvement de ces lions en blouse qui excitaient, par leur exemple, le courage des autres, quel respect, quelle vénération vous auriez pour la blouse! O modeste blouse!'.⁸⁰ The drawing was almost certainly inspired by a newspaper article highlighting the change in uniform among some of the militia officers.⁸¹

Similarly, the author devoted a series of caricatures to the lenient persecution and eventual

acquittal of the insurrectionary Orangists colonels Grégoire and Borremans, which in his view did not do justice to the seriousness of their crimes (nos. 21, 29, 35) (fig. 8). Former regent Surlet de Chokier for his part was heavily criticised for his supposed absence of political and strategic vision, which had led to military defeat in the Ten Days' Campaign. According to the author, Surlet silently accepted his generous honorary pension while refusing to take responsibility for his failures: 'Ne nous occupons donc que des dix mille florins par ans qui m'ont été offerts, et dont l'acceptation prouve que j'ai servi ma patrie avec désintéressement et loyauté' (*Brioche de 1831*, no. 36).⁸²

VI. An unholy alliance

A second feature of the patriotic discourse permeating the album was the patriots' frustration vis-à-vis the Holy Alliance. The revolution was dependent on the great powers for its survival; yet their support for the Belgian cause seemed lukewarm at most. Like many patriots, the author attributed the lack of progress of the Belgian cause to the deliberate slowing down and diplomatic intrigues going on at the London Conference. In printed caricatures too, international diplomacy was often commented upon.⁸³ An important issue was the search for a Belgian king, whose candidacy needed the Conference's approval. No. 10 shows *le Vieux Brave* hawking the Belgian crown amidst a chorus of dissenting opinions: 'Je vais donc, la couronne en mains, faire un appel aux souverains'; 'La voilà, cette bonne couronne! Qui la veut? Je la donne'.⁸⁴ After Louis Philippe's declined the crown on behalf of his son, *le Vieux Brave* angrily commented that the great powers' advise to the Belgians to stall their

78. 'While contemplating these symbolic objects, I feel my tears flow. Oh, patriotic memories, how dear you are to our hearts!'.
79. 'You know, I believe, what effect the tunic has had, what dizziness it caused the ducks'.

80. 'And I was behind one of the barricades that I had helped to build, and of which I had laid the first stone. Ah, if you had seen these new monuments of national industry, the movement of those lions in tunics who, by their example, inspired the courage of others, how much respect and reverence you would have for the tunic! O modest tunic!'.
81. *L'Indépendant*, 06/05/1831; *Le Politique*, 07/05/1831. See also: LÉCONTE, *L'Infanterie*, 19, 31.

82. 'Let us therefore concern ourselves only with the ten thousand florins per year that were offered to me, and whose acceptance proves that I have served my country with selflessness and loyalty'.

83. BELGHAZI, "La révolution belge", 10-11.

84. 'I am going, therefore, with the crown in hand, to make an appeal to the sovereigns. Here it is, this fine crown! Who wants it? I give it away'.



Fig. 8. Condamnation de Grégoire (no. 21). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.



Fig. 9. Foreign Office (no. 14). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

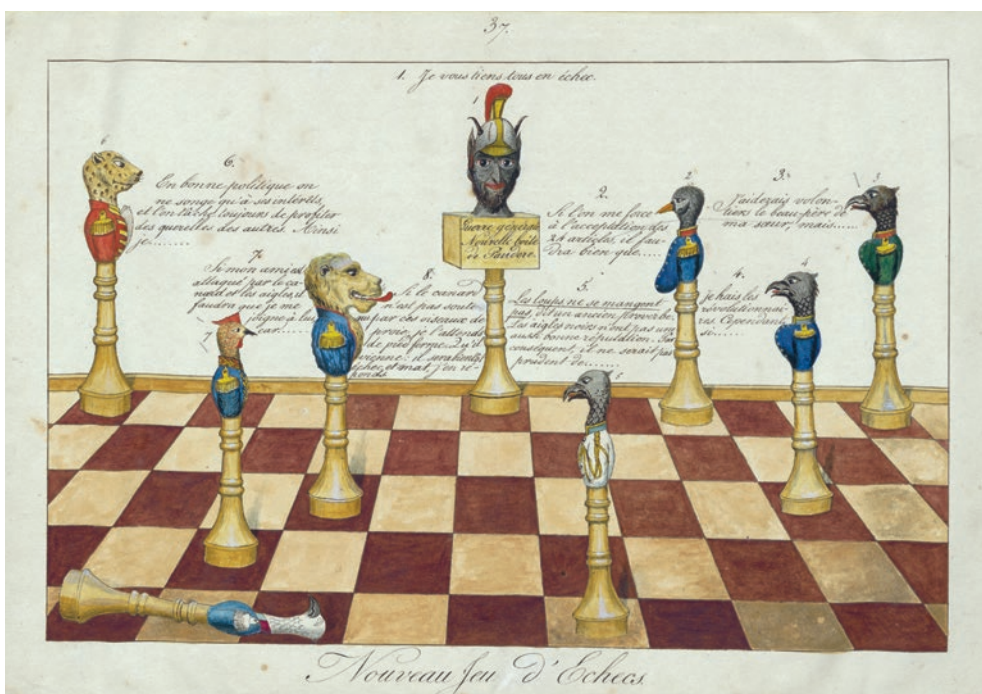


Fig. 10. Nouveau jeu d'échec (no. 37). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

revolution for the sake of the balance of powers had resulted in an impasse: 'O! partisans du fameux équilibre, si des traités vous voulez le maintien, ne souffrez point qu'au parjure on se livre, sur vos pattes tenez-vous toujours bien. A des canards j'ai dû faire la guerre; par vos conseils j'ai cessé mes combats. Vous avez fait que je n'avance guère. Un jour, un jour je ferai de grands pas' (*Retour du Vieux Brave*, no. 12).⁸⁵

The symbol par excellence of these endless tergiversations were the infamous protocols issued by the London Conference. This subject was much discussed in the patriotic press, and frequently surfaced in contemporary caricatures too.⁸⁶ Patriots detested the protocols both for the delays they imposed on the Belgian cause, and for the concessions they forced Belgium to make to William I. The protocol of 27 January 1831 for example laid down the equal division of the national debt of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands over the Dutch and the Belgian states.⁸⁷ The author reacted with a furious caricature against the perceived injustice of that decision (no. 14), in which he depicted the Foreign Office as a protocol machine (fig. 9).⁸⁸ *Le Vieux Brave*, holding the scales of justice, rejects the protocol and accuses the great powers of assisting William I in pillaging the Belgians: 'ne serait-il pas sot de payer les dettes de mon ennemi, de ce Crésus qui m'a arraché des poils pendant mon long sommeil, et qui a recours à vous pour m'arracher des dents'.⁸⁹ The Dutch duck (see further), concealed beneath the protocol machine, rejoices at the fresh delay: 'Plus qu'il

perd de temps, plus que j'en gagne'.⁹⁰ When, in its protocol of 20 March, the Conference ordered the Belgians to evacuate the contested territory of Luxemburg, the author reacted with a call to arms (*Le Vieux Brave part pour le Luxembourg*, no. 19).⁹¹ It shows *le Vieux Brave* heavily armed and setting out to defend Luxemburg in defiance of the great powers' advice.

In a complex allegory called *La Sainte-Quinte, ou le croquemitaine moderne* ('The Holy Quint, or the modern boogeyman', no. 30), the Alliance is depicted as a fearsome bogeyman. Standing on the broken scales of justice, the creature threatens to use force against those who disobey its decisions. A little devil warns the Belgians to be careful and not contradict the creature, since its position is fixed by the protocols, the Treaty of London, and other decisions. However, the creature's club is immobilised by a series of restraints, including mutual distrust, conflicting interests, jealousy, liberalism, and fear of general war. In short, the author suggested that the Alliance would never be able to carry out its violent threats. The context of the allegory was the ultimatum issued by the London Conference to the Belgians for the signature of the Treaty of London in November 1831.⁹²

After Belgium, France and the United Kingdom accepted the treaty, the other powers again slowed matters down.⁹³ *Nouveau jeu d'échecs* ('New game of chess', no. 37) depicts the European powers as chessmen who emit strategic considerations concerning the Belgian question (fig. 10).⁹⁴ None

85. 'Oh! Supporters of the famous equilibrium, if you want treaties to be maintained, do not allow anyone to commit perjury, stand firm on your feet. I have had to wage war against ducks; by your advice, I have ceased my battles. You have caused me to make little progress. One day, one day I will make great strides'.

86. *Dernier protocole en chair et en os* (KBR, SII 85117); *Quand il n'y en aura plus il y en aura encore* (KBR, SII 49721).

87. J.S. FISHMAN, *Diplomacy and Revolution. The London Conference of 1830 and the Belgian Revolt*, Amsterdam, 1988, 104.

88. Another protocol machine, called 'Protocol-making office', appears in the caricature *Les despotes de Downing Street* (KBR, S II 26816). Congressman Alexandre Rodenbach referred to 'des protocoles fabriqués au Foreign Office par les grands fabricants' in his speech for the National Congress on 02/04/1831. ÉMILE HUYTENS, *Discussions du Congrès national de Belgique*, vol. 3, Brussels, 1844, 28.

89. 'Would it not be foolish to pay the debts of my enemy, that Croesus who pulled out my hairs while I was in a long sleep, and who now turns to you to pull out my teeth?'.

90. 'The more time he loses, the more I gain'.

91. 'Le Vieux Brave leaves for Luxemburg'.

92. FISHMAN, *Diplomacy*, 164-168.

93. FISHMAN, *Diplomacy*, 180-190.

94. The chess motif is also present in the caricature *De koning schaak mat* (Atlas Van Stolk, object no. 27794).

move however, since they are all held in check by the devil-headed piece representing 'General warfare, or new Pandora's box'. On the side lies a discarded piece in the form of a white eagle: Poland, which has been slain by Russia with the great powers' consent. In *Bureau de ratification* (no. 38), le Vieux Brave and his interlocutor comment on the uncertainty of the political situation created by the status quo. Was a new protocol in the making, or was war at hand? As long as the treaty remained unsigned, occasional threats of war revived the patriotic spirit of le Vieux Brave.

As time progressed, the author increasingly accused the Holy Alliance of siding with despotism against liberty. He especially criticised the support lent by England and France to the illiberal regimes in Germany. In *Les trois équipées royales de 1837* ('The three royal expeditions of 1837', no. 68) for example, England is shown burning Hannover's liberal constitution in favour of royal absolutism. In the next caricature (no. 69), France submits to an eagle-headed embodiment of absolutism, which holds the motto: 'Paix aux peuples soumis, châtement au rebelles'. Among the monster's aims figures 'annulation graduelle des constitutions libérales'.⁹⁵

VII. Ducktales

As we have seen, animalisation was one of the author's preferred satirical techniques for ridiculing his political adversaries. In this section I will focus specifically on his representation of the Dutch as ducks. This motif was systematically applied throughout the album and is one of the most distinctive characteristics of its visual repertoire. The author was in all probability inspired by contemporary caricatures, in which the motif

occasionally appeared. *Chasse royale* (sic) ('Royal hunt') for example shows King William as a duck and his sons as herons, who are chased over the Moerdijk by the gunfire of Belgian volunteers.⁹⁶ In *La chasse aux canards*, the king and the prince of Orange, accompanied by a couple of ducks, are driven back North by an armed group of Belgians waving the flag of liberty.⁹⁷ The author went on to develop the motif in a highly original way in order to discredit the members of the Dutch royal family and their supporters.

Despite the obvious connection with water, the exact origin of the duck motif is unknown. The third caricature in the album suggests that it may have been derived from a well-known *bon mot* attributed to Voltaire, expressing his aversion of Amsterdam and its inhabitants: 'Adieu canaux, canards, canaille' ('Farewell canals, ducks, scoundrels'). The image mocks Prince Frederick's retreat from Brussels following the September Days. The prince is shown as a duck who laboriously drags a pipe (*buse*), painted in the Belgian colours, attached to its tail by rope (fig. 11). He says: 'Je le jure par mes canaux, je n'irai plus me frotter aux rebelles. N'y eût-il à Bruxelles qu'une jambe de bois et cinquante sarraux'.⁹⁸ 'Jambe de bois' was the nickname for Jean-Joseph Charlier (1794-1866), a one-legged patriot who operated the canons during the September Days and became a symbol of Belgian resistance.⁹⁹ The caption of the image reads: 'Plaignez, canards, plaignez cette Altesse confuse, condamnée à traîner cette humiliante buse!'.¹⁰⁰

The author's aversion for the Dutch princes seems to have predated the violence of the September Days, however. The first caricature in the album, *Les sauts périlleux* ('The perilous leaps'), depicts the entry of the Prince of Orange (1792-1849) into

95. 'Peace to the subdued peoples. Punishment to the rebels'; 'Gradual annulment of liberal constitutions'.

96. KBR, SII 15647. The heron motif occurs in several other printed caricatures but does not figure in the album.

E.g. *Le fromage remplis de malice, sous L'arbre de la Liberté* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.158).

97. KBR, S II 44844.

98. 'I swear by my canals, I will no longer confront the rebels. Even if there were only one wooden leg and fifty tunics in Brussels'.

99. JEAN STENGERS, "La Révolution de 1830", in ANNE MORELLI, ed., *Les grands mythes de l'histoire de Belgique, de Flandre et de Wallonie*, Brussels, 1995, 127-135.

100. 'Pity, ducks, pity this embarrassed Highness, condemned to drag this humiliating *buse*'.



*Plaignez, canards, plaignez cette Alsace confuse,
 Condamnée à traîner cette humiliante Buse!*

(Le prince Frédéric.)

Fig. 11. Plaignez canards (no. 3). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.



Fig. 12. Les sauts périlleux (no. 1). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.



Fig. 13. Retour du vainqueur de Bruxelles (no. 6). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

Brussels on 1 September 1830 (fig. 12). His visit to the capital was intended as a conciliatory gesture after the first outbreak of riots in the night of 25 August, which had led to the formation of the militia.¹⁰¹ The prince's visit took place in a tense atmosphere: barricades had been erected amidst fear of Dutch military intervention, intimidating crowds lined the streets. After being received by the mayor on the Grand Place, the prince and his retinue tried avoiding the crowds by breaking into a hurried gallop. They found their passage blocked by barricades, however, and a violent scuffle with a group of patriots ensued.¹⁰² The author ridiculed the prince's behaviour by depicting him as duck with a feathered hat who rides a greyhound (known for their speed). While the dog jumps a barricade, the panicking duck cries out: 'To the palace, Messieurs!'. Amid the debris outside Saint Jacob's Church lie the broken letters of his father's name, indicating the king's lack of popularity.¹⁰³

The duck motif was developed in succeeding images. *Retour du vainqueur de Bruxelles* ('Return of the victor of Brussels', no. 6) depicts the return of Prince Frederick and his troops to the North (fig. 13). The scene is set among the green reeds of a Dutch stream. The prince, his *buse* floating on a raft behind him, swims at the head of a pack of ducks wearing military headdress, many exhibiting the injuries incurred in the fight. They are welcomed by the king, his ministers and the Prince of Orange. In this and other caricatures, the king is shown as a black duck wearing a crown, whereas the other ducks are usually white. *Séance solennelle* ('Solemn session', no. 9) depicts the special session of the Estates General on 18 October 1830, in which the king announced his intention to recapture Belgium with military means (fig. 14). William, seated on the throne and flanked by his ministers, speaks to an assembly of ducks which

he addresses as 'Noble and mighty ducks' (instead of the habitual 'lords').¹⁰⁴ The crown he wears is half-missing, signifying the loss of his Belgian territories. The image corresponds to the part of the speech in which William mentions 'la grâce divine par laquelle je tiens encore une partie de ma couronne'.¹⁰⁵ The halved crown does not seem to figure in contemporary caricatures; it probably represents an original motif devised by the author. In succeeding watercolours it was systematically associated to William I.

To disambiguate between the different royal ducks, King William, the prince of Orange and Prince Frederick were nicknamed *le Gros Canard* (the fat duck), *le Grand Canard* (the big duck) and *le Petit Canard* (the little duck) respectively. Caricature 28 shows the three of them together in a scene of domestic dissatisfaction. King William, in a fit of rage, is prevented by Prince Frederick from assaulting the prince of Orange. The latter blames his father for sending him on the disastrous and treacherous Ten Days' Campaign in Belgium, which has ruined his reputation and culminated in a defeat by the French. Throwing down the laurels so unjustly earned, he refuses to continue fighting.

Judging by the strong focus on the king and the princes, the author's discourse was anti-Orangist rather than anti-Dutch. Along with the royals, the king's cronies, like Van Maanen, Libry-Bagnano and general Chassé, were regularly attacked. Ordinary Dutch soldiers and civilians, on the other hand, hardly received attention. Nor were the Dutch people collectively vilified, although national clichés were certainly present. *Discours du bourgmestre* ('The burgomaster's speech', no. 26) for example shows the prince of Orange entering a Dutch city at the head of his troops at the close of the Ten Days' Campaign (fig. 15).

101. ARNOLDUS SMITS, *Scheuring in de Nederlanden*, vol. 1, Heule, 1983, 136-143.

102. DE WARGNY, *Esquisses historiques*, vol. 1, 83; JEROEN VAN ZANTEN, *Koning Willem II, 1792-1849*, Amsterdam, 2013, 315.

103. Royal insignia had indeed been destroyed by the people all around Brussels. WARGNY, *Esquisses historiques*, vol. 2, 82.

104. For caricatures about the same event, see: *Guillaume Ier ouvrant à La Haye la cession (sic) des Etats-Généraux le 18 Octobre 1830*, which depicts the king and the MPs as jugs (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.262); *Discours du trône* (Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-88.264).

105. 'The divine grace by which I still hold part of my crown'.

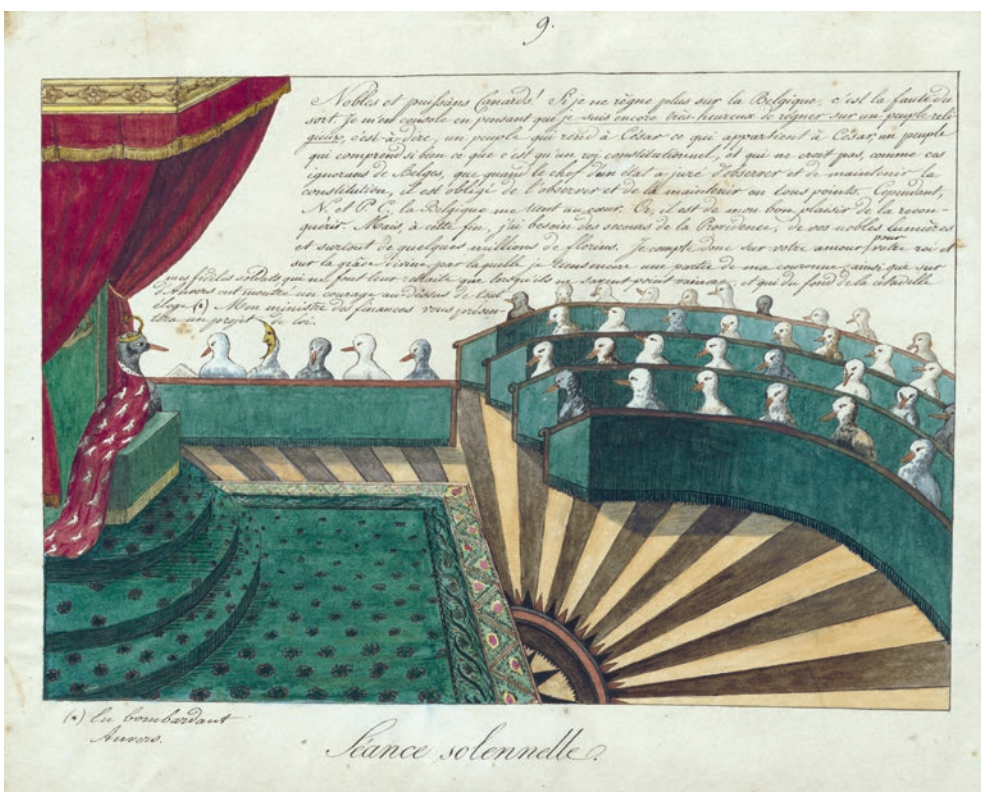


Fig. 14. Séance solennelle (no. 9). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

Despite having been driven back by the French army, the prince is received as a victorious hero. The burgomaster welcomes the prince with a grandiose eulogy while subtly accusing him of securing victory through underhanded tactics, violating the armistice and employing foreign mercenaries. The latter, depicted as eagle-headed German soldiers, carry a rich loot while boasting of the Belgian farms they have plundered and the priests they have killed. A duck-headed Dutch soldier on the contrary bitterly regrets the crimes he has been made to commit. Onlooking Dutch citizens also speak disapprovingly of the campaign, calling it a stain on the national image. Only Libry-Bagnano, standing in the foreground, comments that the prince should have seized the occasion to burn Brussels down to the ground. In short, the author attributed the excesses and the violence not to the Dutch people, but to their wicked leaders and their foreign accomplices. Similarly, a few years after the event, the author depicted the Dutch people sympathetically as a cheese-headed figure named 'Jantje Kaas' who struggles to sustain the endless war effort of his proud and obstinate king (*Guillaume-le-Furieux et Jantje-Kaas*, no. 54, 1834).¹⁰⁶

VIII. Pipe dreams

We have seen that the military and tactical failures of the Dutch King and his sons were depicted by the author as pipes or *buses*. Given its prominence in the caricatures, this motif deserves to be looked at more closely. In Belgian French, *attraper une buse* or *être busé* signifies to fail or to be disqualified (from the Dutch *buizen* or *een buis krigen*).¹⁰⁷ Originally, *buis* referred to a wicker basket large enough for a

man to fall through (as in the expression *door de mand vallen*), thus forming a cylinder or tube.¹⁰⁸ The author of the album on the other hand depicted the *buses* as narrow lengths of pipe without a clear function. In caricature 17, all three ducks are carrying *buses* tied to their uniforms: a Belgian *buse* for Prince Frederick, a French *buse* for the Prince of Orange, and two more *buses* for King William: on one is written 'La Muette', referring to the outbreak of the Belgian Revolution at La Monnaie theatre in August 1830; the other mentions the words 'Exclusion à perpétuité', a reference to the perpetual exclusion of the Orange-Nassa dynasty from the Belgian throne by virtue of the National Congress' decree of 24 November 1831.¹⁰⁹

The prince of Orange's failure in the Ten Days' Campaign is depicted in caricature 25, showing the duck-headed prince in conversation with the rooster-headed French general Gérard. The latter forces the prince to turn back and abandon the military campaign but promises to offer him something in return: a copy of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and a *buse*. On his signal, an officer named *porte-buse* brings forward the humiliating object dangling from a stick. The image is accompanied by a satirical song entitled *Les ramoneurs* (the chimney sweeps): 'Par votre z-honteuse ruse/ les belges n'ont pas eu le tems/de fabriquer une buse/pour vous et vos Allemands/Quoi qu'ça, ha houé! Ha houé! Houé ha! Les Français vous en donneront z-une'.¹¹⁰ French rooster-soldiers, armed with broomsticks, stand at attention, ready to sweep the Dutch troops and their German auxiliaries away. Another *buse* is awarded at the occasion of the rendition of the Antwerp citadel in 1832 (*Les héros de la citadelle sortent avec*

106. 'William the Furious and Jantje-Kaas'. Jantje Kaas was the subject of contemporary patriotic songs, e.g. "Liedeken. Tot lof van de dappere Belgische troepen en het verjaegen van Jantje Kaes". Brussels City Archives, Archives historiques, liasse 866.

107. ISIDORE DORY, *Wallonismes*, Liège, 1878, 58. Satirical journals like *Le Charivari* used the expression, in the meaning of failure, in the 1830s.

108. F.A. STOETT, *Nederlandsche Spreekwoorden, Spreekwijzen, Uitdrukkingen en Gezegden*, Zutphen, s.d., 1248: <https://etymologiebank.nl/trefwoord/buizen3>, consulted on 17 July 2024.

109. ÉMILE HUYTENS, *Discussions du Congrès national de Belgique*, vol. 1, Brussels, 1844, 319. Stove pipes with words inscribed on them are also present in *La dernière ressource (sic) de Guillaume 1er ou le manquement de matériel (sic)*: <https://www.gettyimages.com.au/detail/news-photo/last-way-out-for-william-i-la-derniere-resorce-de-guillaume-news-photo/2189868648?adppopup=true>, consulted on 30 December 2024.

110. 'Through your shameful deceit, the Belgians did not have the time to make a pipe for you and your Germans. However, ha ha! Ha ha! The French will provide one for you'.

[illegible]

les honneurs de la guerre, no. 47).¹¹¹ A sign outside of the Citadel indicates that French troops again secured Belgian independence: 'Expropriation forcée. Arrêt de la Cour de France' (fig. 16).¹¹² Duck-soldiers are shown leaving the fort, with the Dutch general Chassé dragging a French *buse* addressed to King William behind him. A lion in civilian dress hands another present for the king to one of the officers: a giant nose, as a sign of derision (from the French *rire quelqu'un au nez*).

Contemporary printed caricatures reveal that the *buse* motif frequently appeared in satirical discourse about the revolution, and that it referred in fact to stove pipes (see the song of the chimney sweeps above). Like in the album, printed caricatures used it first in connection to Prince Fredrick's defeat. The prince was shown with pieces of stove pipes tied to his uniform or struggling under the weight of a bunch of stove pipes piled on his back.¹¹³ In later caricatures, the motif was applied to king William and to his, minister Van Maanen.¹¹⁴ Pipes were awarded for failures on the Belgian side as well: in *Le Retour*, the Belgian delegates returning from Paris ride stove pipes instead of horses, signifying Louis Philipp's refusal of the Belgian crown on behalf of his son.¹¹⁵ *La blouse deshonorée* depicts the Belgian defeat in the Battle of Leuven (12 August 1831) as a blue tunic on a stand, accompanied by a stove pipe.¹¹⁶

The reason why the *buse* motif gained prominence in satirical discourse about the revolution, and

why it was connected specifically to stove pipes, is not clear at this point. The subject was also treated in the patriotic song *Liedeken op Frederik, koopman in buyzen* ('Song about Frederick, seller of stove pipes'), which may have inspired the caricatures.¹¹⁷ The example suggests that the author took inspiration from contemporary caricatures as well as textual sources such as songs.¹¹⁸ Several printed caricatures contain *buse* depictions as narrow lengths of pipe, without the association of stove pipes.¹¹⁹ *La chasse au canards* appears particularly relevant in this context, since it combines the 'narrow' *buse*, attached to the characters with a piece of string, with the duck theme. Like in the case of the duck motif, the author copied the motif from contemporary caricature but developed it in an original way, allowing him to accentuate his anti-Orangist message.

IX. The withered orange tree

Despite his consistent ridicule of William I and his sons, the author was clearly apprehensive of a restoration of the Orange-Nassau dynasty. Orangist plots and intrigues are among the album's main themes. The prince of Orange was cast as the evil genius behind many of these manipulations. His ambition to succeed his father to the Belgian throne was the subject of several caricatures. *Passage du grand sabot royal devant Ostende* (no. 15) for example shows the prince-duck who, on his way back from the London Conference, sails before the coast of Ostend in

111. 'The heroes of the citadel leave with the honours of war'.

112. 'Forced expropriation. Ruling of the Court of France'.

113. *Vive la liberté* (KBR, S II 29862); *Frédéric des Pays-Bas fléchissant sous le poids de ses lauriers* (KBR, S II 15614); *Entrevue d'un roi avec ses fils* (KBR, S II 15627). See also *Chasse royale* (sic) (KBR, S II 15647).

114. *Entrevue d'un roi avec Vanmannen* (sic) (KBR, S II 15612); *Entrez Messieurs et Dames* (S II 15615); *La fuite des hollandais* (KBR, S II 15637); *Trait de générosité du prince d'Orange envers les maquignons de Bruxelles* (KBR, S II 29871); *Produit ministérielle* (sic) (KBR, S II 15643); *Quator royal* (KBR, S II 15623). The motif is also present in the following caricatures, of which the meaning is less clear: *Après* (KBR, S II 14447); *Voyage de la grande harmonie* (KBR, S II 144471).

115. Stove pipes instead of horses also appear in *Persévérance et Courage* (Atlas Van Stolk, object no. 23996) and *Le retour des nouveaux chevaliers* (KBR, S III 44864).

116. 'The dishonoured tunic' (KBR, S II 85113).

117. *Liedeken van Frederik, koopman in buyzen*, 1830. It especially bears similarities with the caricature *Frédéric des Pays-Bas fléchissant sous le poids de ses lauriers* (KBR, S II 15614).

118. The motif continued to be used in Belgian caricatures until at least the early 20th century. E.g. *Nos souhaits pour 1913* in *Le Sifflet*, reproduced in LAURENCE VAN YPERSELE, "La caricature catholique belge de la Belle Époque", in QUAIRIAUX, *De qui se moque-t-on ?*, 41.

119. Very similar *buse* depictions, without the association of stove pipes, figure in the printed caricatures *C'est fini* (S II 15667); *La chasse aux canards* (S II 44844); *Le départ d'un nouveau Don Quichotte* (S II 51422).



Fig. 16. Les héros de la citadelle sortent avec les honneurs de la guerre (no. 47). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

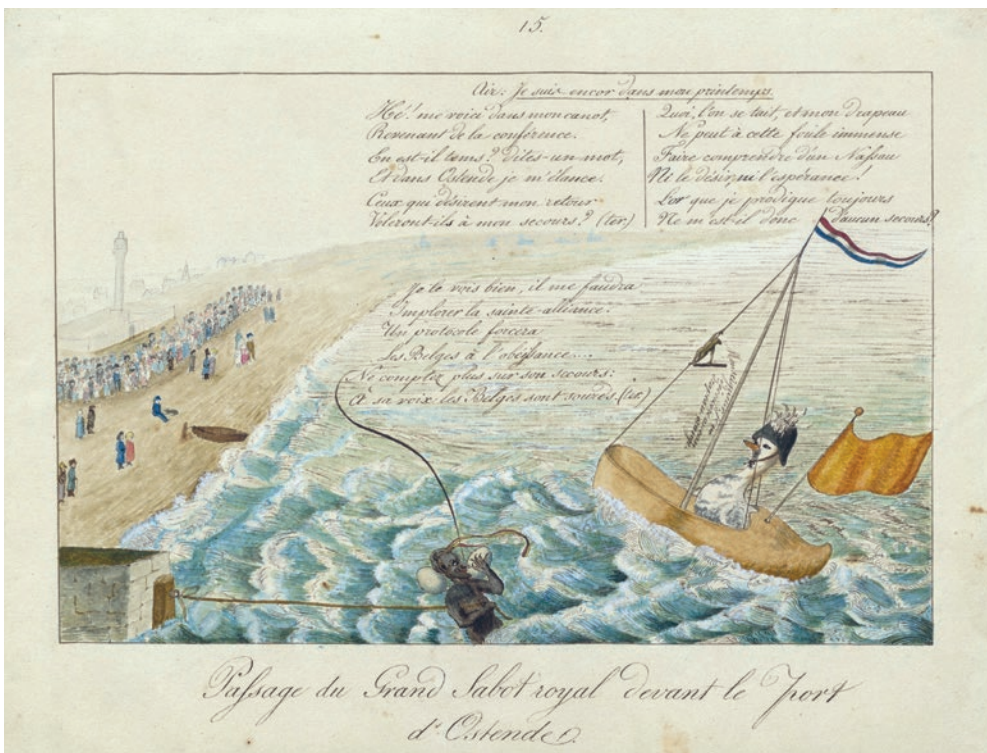


Fig. 17. Passage du grand sabot royal devant Ostende (no. 15). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

a boat shaped like a giant clog and decorated with an orange flag (fig. 17).¹²⁰ The scene was very probably inspired by a newspaper article of 24 March 1831 signalling the sighting of the princely vessel *Batave*, before the coast of Ostend.¹²¹ In the accompanying song, the prince expresses his intention to go ashore to be proclaimed king. However, the lack of orange flags among the crowd on the beach makes him doubt the people's mood. Disappointed at the lack of support, he asks: 'L'or que je prodigue toujours, ne m'est-il donc d'aucun secours?'.¹²² The prince's belief that the Holy Alliance would force the Belgians to accept him is disclaimed by a mocking little devil: 'Ne comptez plus sur son secours; à sa voix les Belges sont sourds'.¹²³ In *Constitution belge* (no. 23), which celebrates the inauguration of Leopold I, le Vieux Brave comments that the Belgian crown is now definitely out of the duck's reach. The latter is shown complaining to his father: 'Ce n'était pas assez de m'avoir soufflé une princesse, il fallait encore me souffler une couronne!'.¹²⁴ The quote refers to Leopold's marriage to English crown princess Charlotte (1796–1817), who had previously been engaged to Prince William of Orange-Nassau.

The idea that the prince tried to buy support among the Belgians was repeatedly expressed. In *Encore un effort* ('Another effort', no. 11), the prince expects to be proclaimed king by colonel Ernest Grégoire (ca. 1800–1870), whose Orangist plot (2 February 1831) he funded.¹²⁵ Another attempt at an Orangist coup was launched by colonel Borremans (1804–1876) on 25–26 March.¹²⁶ This plan too came to nothing, as depicted in caricature 17: the duck-prince sheds bitter tears over the gold he

has wasted on the failed Orangist coups. While his money goes up in the air, he contemplates a pipe, painted in Belgian colours, lying before him: 'Enfin, j'ai aussi ma buse!'.¹²⁷ *Épouvantails de l'ex-aspirant à la couronne de Belgique* ('Scarecrows of the former aspirant to the Belgian throne', no. 27) shows a scarecrow, made of broomsticks and Franco-Belgian insignia, designed to scare away the unwanted pretender to the Belgian throne.

The prince's position in Belgium was delegitimised not only via accusations of violence and plotting, but also via attacks on his person. Although he enjoyed popularity among his father's Belgian subjects, he was also known for his elaborate lifestyle, political intrigues and disreputable friendships.¹²⁸ His reputation further suffered from the spectacular theft of the jewels belonging to his wife Anna Pavlovna (1795–1865), including Russian imperial heirlooms, from their Brussels palace in 1829.¹²⁹ Given the apparent ease with which the crime was committed, it was immediately rumoured that the precious diamonds had been stolen at the prince's orders as a way out of his financial difficulties. The author of the album eagerly played upon these accusations by adopting nicknames referring to the affair. In 1831, he started calling the prince 'le canard Agrippa', later extended into 'Agrippa-Diamanski'. The first part of the name probably referred to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535), a scholar and occult writer about whom rumours of magical feats circulated in the early modern period. One anecdote involved money forgery: Agrippa had supposedly paid his creditors with specially treated coins which after a few days turned out to be made of wood.¹³⁰

120. 'Passage of the great royal clog before Ostend'.

121. *L'Indépendant* and *Le Belge*, 24/03/1831.

122. 'Does the gold that I constantly dispense offer me no assistance?'

123. 'Do not rely on his aid any longer; the Belgians are deaf to his voice'.

124. 'Taking a princess from me was not enough for him; he also needed to steal my crown'.

125. WITTE, *Het verloren koninkrijk*, 203–295.

126. *Ibidem*, 207–211.

127. 'Finally, I too have my buse'.

128. VAN ZANTEN, *Koning Willem II*, 301.

129. See: MARIUS DRAAISMA, *De Polari-affaire, 1829–1834. Een juwelendiefstal wordt een diplomatiek incident*, master's thesis, Groningen University, s.d.; VAN ZANTEN, *Koning Willem II*, 299–301; PAUL VERHAEGEN, 'Le vol des bijoux de la princesse d'Orange à Bruxelles en 1829', *Annales de la Société d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 15, 1901, 330–336.

130. The origin of the anecdote is unclear. It is recounted in several newspapers: *L'Emancipation*, 25/02/1834, 2; *Den Vaderlander*, 06/09/1846, 2.

Diamanski obviously referred to the stolen Russian diamonds. The affair appeared in pamphlets, songs and the satirical press, which clearly served as an inspiration to the author.¹³¹

Temple de mémoire (no. 56) shows a temple built to the memory of Agrippa-Diamanski, with Fame praising him for having graciously established a saving's account for all the Belgians whose work or services he bought over time. It was a sarcastic way of denouncing the massive debts the prince still owed in Belgium: newspapers indicated the figure of 150.000 francs.¹³² In *Gloire au digne papa du Seigneur Agrippa* ('Glory to the worthy father of Lord Agrippa', no. 57), Fame is replaced by Paillasse, who eulogises William I for his (fruitless) attempts to pay off the debts of his eldest son.¹³³ The culprit of the jewelry theft, a certain Constant Polari, alias Carara, was arrested in New York in 1832 and found guilty of the crime by the court in The Hague in 1834. Most of the jewels were retrieved, but rumours of the prince's involvement persisted. The author left no doubt as to his conviction in the matter. He repeatedly portrayed Carara as a straw man, accompanied by the rhetorical question: 'est-il homme de paille ou ne l'est-il pas?' ('Is he a mere puppet or is he not?', nos. 45, 50b, 51, 62).

The same year 1834 saw an outbreak of public Orangist activism which, as it turned out, was also its swan song. The incident was provoked by the Belgian government's decision to sell a number of horses, belonging to the prince of Orange, which

had stayed behind in his stables in Tervuren.¹³⁴ Leading Belgian Orangists promptly bought the horses, discreetly returned them to the prince, and afterwards organised a subscription among their sympathisers.¹³⁵ In April 1834, the subscription lists were leaked to the press, revealing that many noble families and other prominent figures secretly backed the Orangist cause. The affair caused outrage among the patriots and triggered a wave of violent attacks on Orangist homes in Brussels on 5 and 6 April 1834. The affair was a mighty blow to the Belgian government, since it exposed the scale of internal resistance and the government's inability to contain outbreaks of popular violence.¹³⁶

The author of the album ridiculed the affair by depicting the four horses as wooden toys, bought at a local Brussels toy shop (*Petite parodie d'une grande affaire*, no. 52).¹³⁷ The prince, touched by nostalgia for his time as commander of the Brussels militia, foolishly believes them to be real (fig. 18). The horses turned out to be hard to tame, however. In no. 60, one of the horses is shown throwing its rider, who comments: 'Il a comme les trois autres, le démon de la rébellion dans sa tête'.¹³⁸ The prince of Orange agrees but insists that they must be ready for his grand entry into Brussels in May 1835. King William had supposedly held out the prospect of the prince's triumphant return, which prompted hilarity from the author. In no. 62 he shows a carnival procession of *commedia dell'arte* characters who merrily mock the hopes of the 'souscripteurs des fameuses listes, et vous

131. The diamonds figure in the caricature *Vive la liberté* (KBR, S II 29862) and in the song *Van eenen gewezen koning, nu koopman in kaes en droogen visch*, 1830. The nickname is used in an article in the satirical journal *Méphisophélès* on 04/09/1831, suggesting that the prince and Carara are the same person. Further mentions are found in *Le Belge* and *Den Vaderlander*.

132. *Le Belge*, 24/10/1834, 2.

133. Caricature probably inspired by an article in *Le Belge*, 21/10/1834, 2, about the sequester of the prince's possessions in Belgium.

134. WITTE, *Het verloren koninkrijk*, 321 and further.

135. François-Joseph's elder brother Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen co-authored a motion of protest against the supposed illegality of that decision. JACQUES LOGIE, "L'avocat Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen", in *Pierre-Théodore Verhaegen*, 42.

136. WITTE, *Het verloren koninkrijk*, 333.

137. 'Small parody of a big affair'. The affair of the horses of the prince of Orange was also treated in printed contemporary caricatures like *La jument futur du prince en Ligne* (KBR, R/2009/26180); *Arrivée des chevaux du prince d'Orange* (KBR, S II 29869) and *Trait de générosité du prince d'Orange envers les maquignons de Bruxelles* (S II 29871), but a direct influence cannot be established.

138. 'He, like the other three, has the demon of rebellion in his head'.

1. Monsieur, la garde bourgeoise de Bruxelles, dont votre
allége s'est nommée commandant, en la mémorable année 1830,
m'a dépêché vers votre allége, pour la prier d'agréer l'hon-
mage qu'elle veut, à son tour, lui présenter. Je viens donc très-hum-
blement vous prier, Monsieur, d'accepter 4 beaux chevaux qui
sortent du haras des Deux Écuries. (1) S'ils coûtent infiniment
moins que ceux de messieurs les orangistes, je puis assurer V. A. qu'ils
ont un mérite bien plus estimable que celui d'avoir coûté 40
mille francs, des carreaux de vitre, des meubles, etc. Je ne citerai
qu'une seule de leurs bonnes qualités, celle d'être exercés à franchir des bornes
c'est: ce qui, comme V. A. le sait, n'est pas un petit avantage.

(1) Mages
sont de jeu
joues!

2. Ciel!... Est-il possible!... La garde bourgeoise!... Dites à
ces messieurs que je suis ou ne peut pas plus sensible à leur
hommage. J'ai vu les chevaux.

1. (à part.) Bon, il n'a pas aperçu
mes petites bêtes. Faisons-les passer
entre mes jambes; cette gentillesse
me méritera peut-être un diamant,
s'il n'a pas perdu son
dernier au jeu.



Petite parodie d'une grande affaire.

Fig. 18. Petite parodie d'une grande affaire (no. 52). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.



Fig. 19. Poisson de Mai (no. 62). Source: KBR, ms. II 7557.

tous autres orangistes': they carry an April fish for 1834 shaped like Carara the diamond thief, and a 'May fish' for 1835, addressed to the Orangists and shaped like the prince of Orange (fig. 19).¹³⁹ The closing verse of their song reads: 'Messieurs les orangistes, contentez-vous de ce poisson de mai, car si le ciel exauçait vos vœux, tout comme nous, vous seriez malheureux'.¹⁴⁰

The affair of the princely horses ultimately led to harsh repression of the Orangist movement by the Belgian government.¹⁴¹ The Orangist press, which publicly opposed the Belgian cause, had long been a thorn in the flesh of the patriots. The author expressed his disdain of these newspapers in *L'Oranger en souffrance* ('The suffering orange tree', no. 49), which shows a withered orange tree with hardly any leaves left.¹⁴² The fallen leaves bear the titles of Orangist publications which had ceased to exist. The titles who continued to appear are inscribed on the remaining leaves: *Journal de Liège*, *Le Knout*, *L'Industrie*, *Le Messager de Gand* and *Le Lynx*. A disgusted beetle refuses to eat them, commenting: 'Fuyons-les! Elles sont mauvaises'.¹⁴³

In *Le journaliste orangiste* (no. 50), an Orangist journalist is depicted with the head of a chameleon (fig. 20). The journalist is disheartened at the birth of a Belgian crown prince (24 July 1833) and the public rejoicing it has caused. The fake articles he has prepared on the subject are no longer useful. The maid, carrying a night pot away, is disgusted by the bile continuously produced by her employer, and inquires when these filthy things will finally stop: 'Mr Caméléon ne fait que vomir de la bile.

Quand est-ce que ces saloperies-là finiront?'.¹⁴⁴ The journalist replies that he is paid for being vicious: 'Je ne suis qu'une méchante bête, qui se voit bien payée pour mordre et pour piquer'.¹⁴⁵

After 1834, only a few more instances of Orangism occur in the album, mostly related to King William's hope to reclaim the Belgian throne with support of the Wellington and Peel ministries (1834). The very last caricature mocks the lack of success of Orangist initiatives among the Belgians. The owner of a stall called 'Willem's-Vriend' ('William's friend') complains that clients are no longer interested in his products, on account that they are bad.¹⁴⁶ Despite the hat he wears over his eyes, he can clearly be recognised as William I. The stall's table is made of cheese, which three rats are preparing to eat until it crumbles: 'Ruinons les fondements de cette boutique, et la faisons écouler'.¹⁴⁷ In the caption, the author expresses his expectation for William to finally give up his resistance and stop subsidising the Orangist movement: 'Le canard, honteux et confus, jurera-t-il enfin qu'il n'en offrira plus?'.¹⁴⁸ The image, dating from late 1837 or early 1838, probably anticipated William's acceptance of the Treaty of London in March 1838, which marked the end of the conflict.¹⁴⁹

X. Conclusion

Petit album allégori-patriotique constitutes a unique testimonial of the Belgian Revolution and its aftermath. It is the only known document in its

139. 'Subscribers to the famous lists, and you Orangists'.

140. 'Messieurs les Orangistes, be content with this May fish, for if heaven were to grant your wishes, just like us, you would be unhappy.

141. WITTE, *Het verloren koninkrijk*, 334-338.

142. The motif of the withered tree also appears in *Le laurier du Baron Chassé* (KBR, S.II 15624).

143. 'Let us eschew them! They are bad'.

144. 'Mr. Chameleon keeps on spewing bile. When will this dirty mess end?'

145. 'I am nothing but a wicked beast, who is well paid to bite and sting'.

146. The product in question is a *langue de boeuf* or cow's tongue. The meaning of this motive needs to be further investigated. It also appears in *Vriendschappelyk vaarwel* (KBR, S.II 89588, ca. 1840) and *Le roi des fromages* (S.II15666, ca. 1830).

147. 'Let us ruin the foundations of this shop and bring it to an end'. The motif of Belgian rats besetting William the cheese seller is also present in the song *Van eenen gewezen koning, nu koopman in kaes en droogen visch*, 1830.

148. 'Will the duck, ashamed and confused, finally swear that it will offer no more?'

149. William I communicated his consent to the London Conference on 14 March 1838. The treaty was signed on 19 April 1839. FISHMAN, *Diplomacy*, 216.

50.
Le Journaliste orangiste?



- 1 - M^{re} Camille ne fait que vomir de la bile. Quand est-ce que ces saloperies-là finiront?
 2 - Ces cent et un coups de canon retentissent encore à mes oreilles... C'est un garçon! Mille tonnerres! C'est un garçon! Et la mère et l'enfant se portent bien... Le son des cloches, la joie des habitants de Bruxelles surtout, me font bien le cerveau, au point qu'il n'en sortira pas un seul trait piquant propre à consoler mes lecteurs. Et ces articles-ci: C'est une fille; C'est une hermaphrodite; et l'article: Pre-
 quiescat in pace, sont maintenant tous à être jetés au feu... Mais... ce dé-
 sespère... Hélas! non... Le marmot ne mourra pas. Son existence doit achever
 de nous désoler, de nous désespérer... Nous, n'est pas le mot, disons mes abonnés;
 Car je me suis qu'un méchant bête, qui se voit bien payé pour mordre et pour piquer.

Fig. 20. Le journaliste orangiste (no. 50). Source : KBR.

genre: a first-hand account of the revolution in the form of a series of caricatures. Far from providing an objective account of the conflict, it reflects the opinions of a patriot who claims to have participated in the revolution. As such it is representative not only for his individual lived experience but also for the experiences and views of the Belgian patriots of 1830. His patriotic discourse reflects a romantic, Belgian nationalism which celebrated the heroism of the September Days as the founding moment of the Belgian state. His patriotism was informed by a strong anti-Orangist sentiment: the Dutch royal family are treated as the foremost enemy of the Belgian people. William I and his sons figure as the incarnations of despotic and authoritarian government, who take recourse to violence and low ruses to thwart the Belgian's legitimate aspirations for freedom.

Apart from his patriotism, the author's liberalism stands out. He presented the Belgian Revolution as a fight for liberty against tyranny. William I's rule was judged tyrannical on account of his lack of respect of the constitution, a position in line with that of the liberal opposition during the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. The author's commitment to self-government and liberal constitutionalism made him a critic of the Great Powers, who in his view used the balance of powers as a pretext to legitimise despotic absolutism. Despite his revolutionary enthusiasm, the author was a stranger to proletarianism: he unwaveringly supported the established order and embraced constitutional monarchy. He moreover expressed his devotion to the unionist cause: the unity between liberals and Catholics needed to be preserved to safeguard national independence.

The album reflected many of the patriots' concerns and thematically interacted with patriotic pamphlets, songs and newspapers. In some cases, specific newspaper articles can be pinpointed as a source of inspiration. In others, the author visually interpreted motives and expressions taken from

patriotic texts and songs (e.g. Agrippa-Diamanski, *bricoches*, the princely horses). Visual influences from printed caricatures also appear. The author applied a series of techniques typical to the satirical genre since at least the French Revolution. Among these are ridicule, animalisation, infantilisation and the use of national clichés. Whereas direct influences from older caricatures from French and Brabants Revolutions of the 1790s are scarce, the caricatures of the Belgian Revolution served as a source of inspiration. Examples include the *buse*, duck, protocol and cheese motifs.

The author nevertheless produced an original work. While he chose to integrate certain motifs and techniques, he left out others. He integrated borrowed motives in his own visual universe and added many inventions of his own. His consistent portrayal of the Dutch as ducks, and his visual development of that motif, for example, were innovative, even though the original association between the inhabitants of the Netherlands and ducks was taken from printed caricatures. The album's protagonist, *le Vieux Brave*, a powerful incarnation of Belgian patriotism, seems to have been an original creation by the author.

Despite his lack of artistic instruction, the author of the album managed to create a coherent visual universe which combined motifs derived from contemporary visual and textual sources with original inventions, expressed in a distinctive, somewhat naïve style. Future research into the album's visual universe would benefit from the systematic analysis of the subjects and iconography of the caricatures of the Belgian Revolution, which as yet is lacking. This investigation should include Dutch and Orangist caricatures about the Belgian Revolution and also take into consideration the thriving satirical scene under the French July Monarchy.¹⁵⁰ The author, F.-J. V., also warrants closer examination. Current research does not permit the definitive attribution of the album to François-Joseph Verhaegen or to any

150. HYMANS, *Études et notices*, 432.

other yet unidentified contemporary. This article provides an initial exploration of these subjects,

which I aim to further develop in a future edition of this unique manuscript.¹⁵¹

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