



PROJECT MUSE®

Floris V

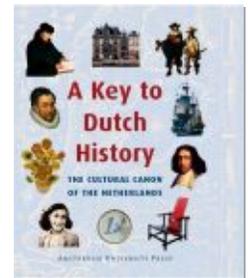
Published by

Slings, Hubert and Frits van Oostrom.

A Key to Dutch History: The Cultural Canon of the Netherlands.

Amsterdam University Press, 2007.

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1254 - 1296

Floris V

A Dutch count and disgruntled nobles

Today, the “Binnenhof” is symbolic of the Dutch political scene that has its home in The Hague. Few people realise that the history of the complex goes back to the thirteenth century and is closely linked to the period in which the most famous medieval Count of Holland, Floris V, ruled. When Floris was born in the summer of 1254, a new castle was being built in *des Graven Haghe* (The Hague). Floris’s father, Count William II had commissioned the building. In 1256, during an expedition against the Frisians near Hoogwoud, Count William and his horse fell through the ice. The Frisians were quick to rush up and smash in his skull. At only two years old, Floris was now officially the new count, although power was temporarily vested in the hands of his uncle.

Once he gained his majority, Floris decided to avenge his father’s death by conquering the Frisians. The campaign was a huge failure and allowed the peasants

and town-dwellers in Kennemerland the opportunity to rebel. Floris was only able to quell the rebellion by granting Kennemerland a number of privileges that would afford the inhabitants protection from the noble lords. The indignant nobles sneeringly called Floris: “Der keerlen god”, the god of the peasants.

In the years that followed, however, Floris was able to expand the territory of the counts of Holland considerably: he snatched the Amstel region and Woerden from the Bishop of Utrecht (thereby making the very young Amsterdam a town of Holland) and he conquered West Friesland. To consolidate his victories, Floris had citadels built near Alkmaar, Medemblik and Wijdenes.

In about 1280, the new castle in The Hague was finally completed with its proud Great Hall (literally the Knight’s Hall, *Ridderzaal*), symbol of chivalry, regal and imposing in style as Floris had desired. Floris had a second castle built: Muider Castle (Muiderslot).

In 1296, Floris' rebellious vassals Gijsbrecht van Amstel, Gerard van Velzen and Herman van Woerden took him prisoner in Muider Castle. The peasant population trekked to the castle to demand the release of their count. The three conspirators fled the castle



with their prisoner, in the hope of escaping the angry peasant mob. They had tied Floris' legs together under his horse's belly and when he tried to escape he ended up in a ditch where his captors slashed him to death with their swords.



129

Sub-topics

Primary education sector

The age of chivalry (fighting, but falconry as well)
The Hague as a court-capital
The campaign of Count William II against the Frisians (1256) & the discovery of the body of William II by Floris V (1282)

Secondary education sector

Gijsbrecht van Aemstel
Waging war in the Middle Ages
Floris V as a ruler caught between the nobility and the townfolk
The murder of Floris V in literature
Floris V and the dominion of the Counts of Holland contested by England and France

Past and Present

How has the Great Hall been used over the centuries?
Prinsjesdag (Prince's Day): politics then and now

In the Treasure Chest

A pair of knight's spurs

References

Places to Go

The Hague: the Binnenhof
Muiden: Muider Castle (including falconer)

Books for young people

Arend van Dam, *Schildknaap op het Muiderslot*
Martine Letterie, *Het geheim van de roofridder* (6+)
Martine Letterie, *Een valk voor Berend* (6+)
Martine Letterie, *Berend en het verdwenen stadszegel* (6+)
Martine Letterie, *Ridder in een slag, hoe Focke en Eilco worden opgeleid tot ridder* (6+)
Brigitte Coppin, *Arno in de ridderburcht* (8+)
Deborah Murrell, *Mijn eerste boek over ridders en kastelen* (7+ info)
Dugald Steer, *Van schildknaap tot ridder* (8+ info)
Philip Steele, *Het beste boek over ridders en kastelen* (10+ info)
Gerard Sonnemans, *Ridders (series: Notendop junior)* (10+ info)

Background literature

D.E.H. de Boer et al. ed., *Wi Florens... De Hollandse graaf Floris V in de samenleving van de dertiende eeuw*, Utrecht 1996

Websites

www.literatuurgeschiedenis.nl/teksten.asp?ID=15
(ballad about Count Floris and Gerard van Velsen)