

Dat die leser 'n duidelike argitektoniese beeld van die Goudstad kry, kan waarskynlik as die grootste pluspunt van die publikasie gereken word. Want anders sou slegs mynhoop en skagte kon getuig van die stad se honderdjarige bestaan en argitektoniese bloeytydperk toe verskillende aangepaste boustyle aangewend is om dit op te bou en te laat groei.

Sowel die skrywers as kunstenaar moet gelukkigewens word met hul deeglike navorsing en insae in die verloop van die geskiedenis van Johannesburg, asook die simpatieke weergawe daarvan. Hierdie keurig voorbereide boek, gedruk op goeie papier en stewig ingebind, word sterk aanbeveel — ook by diegene sonder 'n direkte verbintenis met die Goudstad. Dit is voorwaar 'n uitstekende koop teen 'n billike prys.

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A. DE V. MINNAAR. *Graaff-Reinet 1786-1986*. HSRC : Pretoria, 1987. 189 pp. Illus. R21,00 (exclusive). ISBN 0 7969 0438 3.

This publication by the HSRC to co-incide with the bicentenary celebrations of Graaff-Reinet is a most welcome addition to our knowledge of local and regional history. It is moreover refreshing to find a professional researcher devoting time to the history of his birthplace.

However, I must review this publication with mixed feelings. Owing to the immense historical significance of South Africa's fourth oldest town, any author who attempts this subject, is faced with a challenge of viewing the story

three-dimensionally, i.e. in a national, regional and local context. There are short-comings in all these respects.

The impact of the historical past on the character and development of the emergent Afrikaner nation, is conspicuously absent. The fact that this little dorp produced some of our greatest Voortrekker leaders as well as three Boer Republic Presidents should merit more recognition. (Three names are omitted.) The section on politics (pp.39-48) appears to be a pointless maze of local detail. We learn that prior to 1881 the Afrikaner's political activity "was minimal" (p.39), but we are not informed why. The Gideon Scheepers monument is mentioned in passing (p.149), but just who was this man? The publication does not highlight Graaff-Reinet's colourful personalities which is often where the charm of a platteland settlement lies.

Correct historical chronology is important; for example, I find it irritating that the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) should precede the Graaff-Reinet Volunteers (1856-1878) and thereafter the story jumps to World War I (1914-1918). (Incidentally, why no reference to the battle at Petersburg where there were 131 casualties?)

The book, with its absence of well-defined chapters, gives one the impression of computerized data. It is extremely compact and fact after fact is squeezed into a small canvas, so much so, that it does not make for easy reading. A more detailed subject index would have aided the researcher.

The 19th century data is basically a condensed version of previous research. C.G. Henning's original thesis which appeared in 1971 was published in 1975 and this work influenced K.W. Smith (1976). In turn both have strongly influenced this publication. On p.99 I was delighted to discover something new about late 18th century schoolmasters, but bitterly disappointed when the footnote (No. 251) indicated that the source was the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser (GRA)* of 1952. Surely the particular article had an author who has to be acknowledged?

For information on the 20th century, the author used the *GRA* as his only newspaper source. He would have been well-advised to have consulted *De Graaff-Reinetter* (1881-1902) and *Omze Courant* (1892-1950) for an expression of Afrikaner opinion. In the story of this very bilingual community one looks in vain for those references to local colour such as biltong, melktert, hamels, kapaters and the mimosa. There are no quotations in either Dutch or Afrikaans (or English!) and this does detract from achieving a characteristic local atmosphere.

The author has unfortunately misjudged the importance of the farmer in the national, regional and local context, when he states that it is "to tourism that the people of Graaff-Reinet have attached their future hopes" (p.v and p.150). From history we should have learnt that the farmer has already survived the vicissitudes of a hostile climate for over 200 years. More up-to-date information on the Angora and Merino industries on which Graaff-Reinet prides itself as being the parent and the pioneer, would put the story into better perspective. A little more research on wool prices would have brought greater highlights to the surface, e.g. 60d. is negligible compared to the 1958 price of £1 to a pound of wool. Current prices too would have been useful for comparison and even Messrs. Hobson's record Angora (R67 000 in 1985) would have indicated just how far the industry has developed.

While public buildings and official restorations are described, there is unfortunately a void when it comes to the rich heritage of Karoo, Georgian and Victorian domestic architecture — the very aspects on which the tourist would like enlightened information.

The arts and social life in Graaff-Reinet have to a large extent been neglected. There is an apologetic reference to music and the theatre, but the leading cultural role it played in the Midlands, appears to have been overlooked. Some famous sons and daughters who were either born or lived in Graaff-Reinet and the area have not even been mentioned (for example, Mikro, the Hobson Brothers, Jan Pohl, Anna Neethling-Pohl, S. le Roux Marais, as well as countless others in the various professions).

Church history fortunately fares better and the list of ministers and other officials in the annexures provides useful historical information. The great DRC church upheaval in the 1920s is handled sympathetically. Unfortunately the significance of Andrew Murray (Sr) and the controversial religious challenges which the DRC faced during the 19th century have not been discussed in detail.

Sport is well surveyed and information on missionary and welfare activity is most welcome. However, reference to the current social problems brought about by a mushrooming Coloured population has been omitted. In a work which is so crammed with facts, one can expect a few errors. Finally, the inclusion of more photographs would have enhanced the value of this publication.

Despite these few blemishes, this highly-condensed and quite inexpensive paperback does succeed in presenting the reader with an overall picture of the general historical (but not cultural) development over the course of two centuries.

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E.G. RAVENSTEIN. *The voyages of Diogo Cao and Bartholomeu Dias 1482-88*. (Voorwoord deur M.A. Botha). Faksimilee-herdruk no. 97 uit *The Geographical Journal* 16(6), Desember 1900, deur die Staatsbiblioteek: Pretoria, 1986. 26 pp. Geill. R6,25 (eksklusief). ISBN 0 7989 1330 4.

Ofskoon die outeur in Duitsland gebore is, het hy hom later in Engeland gaan vestig waar hy in 1882 professor in Geografie aan Bedford College geword het. Hy het 'n aantal publikasies oor die Portugese ontdekkers die lig laat sien, onder meer *Vasco da Gama's first voyage* (1895).

Ravenstein se beskrywing van Cao en Dias se reis was oorspronklik 'n referaat wat hy in 1897 voor 'n vergadering van die British Association in Toronto, Kanada, gelewer het. Dit is drie jaar later gepubliseer in *The Geographical Journal* (in die voorwoord tot die herdruk verkeerdlik die *Geographical Magazine* genoem).

In die genoemde voorwoord wys M.A. Botha tereg daarop dat hierdie reisbeskrywings van besondere belang is met die oog op die herdenking van die Dias-fees in 1988. Hy lê ook klem op navorsing deur Suid-Afrikaners oor die Portugese ontdekkingsstogte ná die verskyning van Ravenstein se artikel en sonder die naam van prof. Eric Axelson uit. Iedereen wat bekend is met W.J. de Kock se uiters leesbare en deeglike werk *Portugese ontdekkers om die Kaap* (Kaapstad, 1957), sal dit vreemd vind dat hy nie eens vermeld word nie.

Interessant is die outeur se beskrywing van die *padraos* of klipkruise wat deur die Portugese ontdekkers opgetig is (pp. 6, 10 en 18), terwyl sy betoelening van die vertrek- en aankomsdatums van Cao en Dias (pp. 11 en 16) logies en aanvaarbaar is.

In sy oorsigtelike referaat het Ravenstein nie juis met nuwe inligting vorendag gekom nie, maar veel eerder die bestaande kennis aangaande die reis van Cao en Dias in 'n logiese en maklik verstaanbare vorm gegiet. Ravenstein wys op die gebrek aan bronne oor die reis en bespreek dié wat wel beskikbaar is. Van die belangrikste bronne by die studie van hierdie ontdekkingsstogte was, en is, ongetwyfeld die kaart wat in 1489 en 1502 geteken is en waarvan oortekeninge in *The Geographical Journal* in 1900 gepubliseer en ook in die onlangse herdruk opgeneem is. Hierdie kaart verhoog beslis die waarde van die publikasie, terwyl die sketse van die *padraos* en wapenskilde die teks goed aanvul.

Ravenstein se referaat is keurig uitgegee in 'n hardeband en word, ondanks die oorsigtelike aard daarvan en die skraal voorwoord, as leesstof aanbeveel vir diegene wat iets meer aangaande Dias se epiese ontdekkingsstogte wete wil kom.

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