BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review

Guidelines for writing book reviews

BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review publishes book reviews continuously on the journal's website (on the 'Book Reviews' page).

A review serves three purposes that the reviewer should bear in mind:

1. **Positioning**
   The book should be placed within a historiographical framework so that the reader understands how it relates to existing debates in the literature. The review should indicate the points at which the work under discussion aligns with historiography or how it diverges from it.
2. **Description**
   The review should provide a clear and concrete impression of the book's content:
   a. What is the nature of the book: is it a doctoral thesis, a monograph, or an edited volume?
   b. What is the central theme of the work? Which topics does the author cover, and what is the argument put forward in the book?
   c. How is the book structured?
   d. What source material does the author draw on and what methods have been used? Do these align well with the research question and is the question answered satisfactorily?
3. **Assessment**
   A review is a (first) contribution to the debate on a book and highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of the work in question. A summary of the book is not sufficient. Both praise and criticism must be substantiated in a constructive manner, and the author's viewpoints should be reflected accurately.

When writing a book review, the following points should also be taken into account:

- A review should be between 800 and 1200 words in length.
- The review should be written in Dutch or English – the choice is up to the reviewer.
  - For texts in English written by non-native speakers, *BMGN – LCHR* generally prefers the use of British spelling. Native speakers may use the spelling of their choice.
  - Non-native speakers of English are themselves responsible for the language editing of their review by a native speaker.
- The text should have a clearly indicated structure.

- Quotations from the reviewed work should be followed by a page reference between brackets at the end of the sentence.
- The review should not contain footnotes or APA references. Brief references to other works can be included in the text itself by simply mentioning author, (abbreviated) title, and year of publication.
- A review should be easy to read and understandable to a broad audience with a background in history; it is therefore not aimed solely at a select group of experts.
- A review should be clear and verifiable: claims must be supported by an example.
- With regard to style, authors shoud follow the *BMGN* author guidelines.

Reviewing edited volumes
Edited books are a difficult genre to review. A brief summary of all individual contributions to the work is not desirable. The editorial team therefore advises book reviewers to focus their text on the theme and the main arguments of the work, whilst highlighting a number of important or notable contributions that deserve to be brought to the reader's attention.

Reviewing popularising books
The aim of popularising works is to make scientific knowledge accessible to a wide audience. For this reason, a popular science book need not be held to the same rigorous standards as a purely academic monograph. Nevertheless, popularising works should contextualise and present scientific knowledge in a verifiable manner. The editorial board therefore recommends that they be assessed on the basis of how effectively they make scientific knowledge accessible to a non-specialist audience.

Procedure, conditions, and other information

- A review must be submitted within three months after receiving the book by sending it to the editorial team's general email address: bmgn@huygens.knaw.nl.
- The review will be edited for language, style, and content by both the editorial team and the *BMGN* editorial office.
The review will be assessed to ensure it complies with all of the guidelines set out in this document.
- After approximately three to four months, you will receive a message from the editorial office asking you to revise the review within a few weeks, taking into account the editorial team's comments. Once the necessary revisions have been made, the review will be published on the *BMGN* website.
- The editorial team reserves the right not to publish a review if it does not comply with the guidelines set out in this document.
- If you have any questions, please contact editor Dr Wouter Egelmeers at bmgn@huygens.knaw.nl.