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**The Hairy War (1640-1650):
Philology and Controversy in the United Provinces**

von

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am Montag, 10. Februar 2014 um 18.00 Uhr
im Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“, Langer Weg 11, SR 5)
einzuladen.

This paper will examine the relation between the semi-public setting of academic Latin and the more public character of the vernacular. In the controversial ‘Hairy War’ in the Dutch Republic, the world of Latin academic disputations, epistolary treatises and satirical dialogue, spilled over into vernacular sermons and theological dialogues.

In the 1640s, the United Provinces were shaken by a polemic over the question whether men were allowed to wear long hair. Preachers and professors, philosophers and philologists, poets and painters, all were pulling their hair out. They thundered from pulpits, defended theses in academic lecture halls, wrote satirical dialogues, artful poems, and histories thick as a brick. Central to all this was the question what precisely the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:14) meant when he wrote that nature taught that it was a disgrace for a man to have long hair. Every possible argument was mobilized: from Jewish rituals to Roman customs, from Indian pygmies to Germanic barbarians, from Christ’s beard to monks’ tonsures, from Roman catacombs to Dutch paintings, from medical discussions over the nature of hair to hairsplitting juridical disputes over the laws of nature.

In the paper, I will focus on the crushing scholarship and appealing satire of Claudius Salmasius, and tease out some of the more broad consequences of the historical and linguistic biblical scholarship of humanist philology: a potentially radical method which conquered the vernacular public sphere two decades before Spinoza.

Dirk van Miert is a senior researcher at Utrecht University and specializes in the early modern history of learning. Most recently, he published, with Paul Botley, the critical edition of the correspondence of Joseph Scaliger (8 vols, Geneva: Droz, 2012). Last month, a volume came out on *Communicating Observations, 1500-1675. Epistolography and Epistemology in the Age of the Scientific Revolution* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2013). He is currently finishing a monograph about the biblical scholarship of Scaliger, Daniel Heinsius, Hugo Grotius, Claudius Salmasius, and Isaac Vossius, and has started on studying the Latin historiography of knowledge in the eighteenth-century (*Historia literaria*) as part of a project on philosophical and scientific labels in the time of Immanuel Kant.