

Homo Ludens and No End:

A Bibliography of International Reflections on
Johan Huizinga's Masterwork

Compiled and Edited by: Léon Hanssen



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(A work in progress)

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ISBN: 9789403657721

DOI: 10.26116/7z0q-tx63

Published by: Open Press TiU

Contact details: info@openpresstiu.edu

<https://www.openpresstiu.org/>

Layout Design by: Wolf Publishers, Claudia Tofan & KaftWerk, Janine Hendriks

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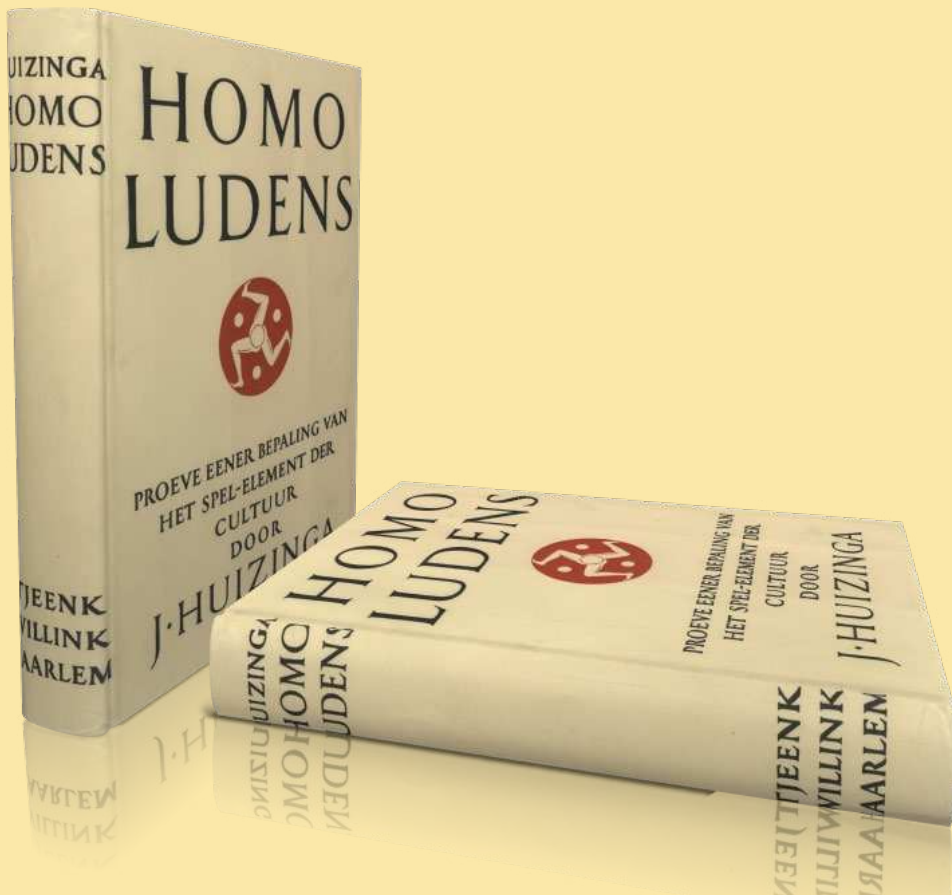
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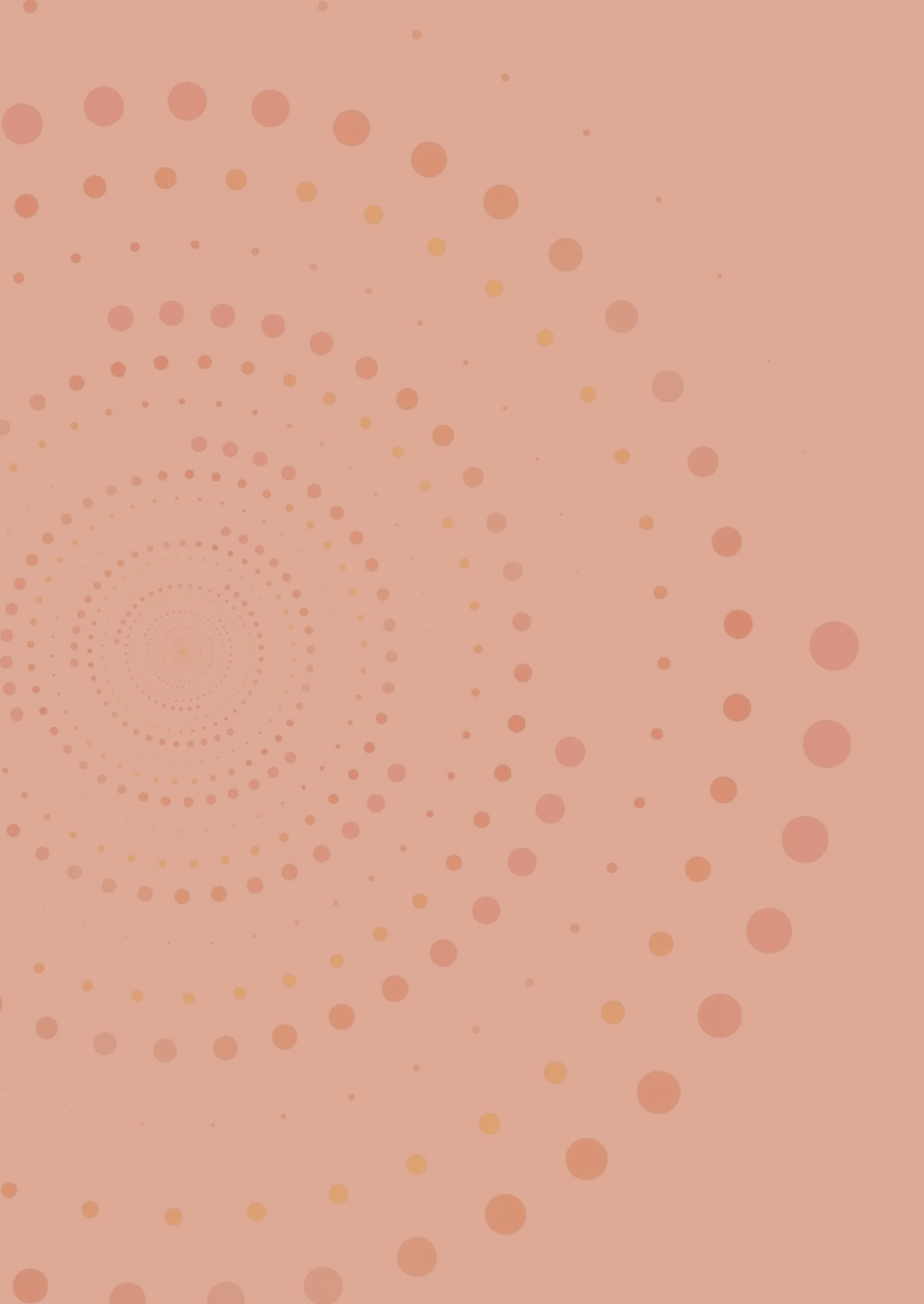
Last updated: 30 January 2022

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Léon Hanssen is co-editor of: J. Huizinga, *Briefwisseling 1894-1945*. Léon Hanssen, W.E. Krul, Anton van der Lem (Eds.) (3 Vol., Utrecht, Antwerpen: Veen / Tjeenk Willink, 1989-1991); German translation: Johan Huizinga, *Briefe I (1894-1927) & Briefe II (1928-1945)*. Aus dem Niederländischen von Annette Wunschel. Herausgegeben und mit einem Nachwort von Thomas Macho (2 Vol., Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2026-17).

Léon Hanssen is author, amongst others of: *Huizinga en de troost van de geschiedenis: Verbeelding en rede* (Amsterdam: Balans, 1996).





Introduction

Johan Huizinga is among the foremost scholars the Netherlands has ever produced. He studied Dutch literature in Groningen and received a broad academic education. In the winter of 1895-96 he visited Leipzig University, attending lectures in comparative linguistics. His dissertation in 1897 dealt with a subject related to Indonesian dramaturgy. In 1905, having worked for a number of years in secondary education, Huizinga became Professor of General and Dutch History at the university of Groningen at the age of 32. Within a few months after his wife's early death in July 1914, he accepted the chair of General History at the university of Leiden.

In 1919 he published a book which was to make him famous all over the world: *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (Autumn Tide of the Middle Ages). This specimen of cultural history is usually looked upon as the counterpart of Jacob Burckhardt's *Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy). It was the first of three works that would bring him lasting international fame. Five years later his biography of Erasmus appeared, and in 1938 his last creative phase culminated in *Homo Ludens: Proeve ener bepaling van het spelelement der cultuur* (Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element of Culture). This work was received worldwide with great enthusiasm not only by cultural historians, but also by anthropologists, philosophers, sociologists, and representatives of many other disciplines. In the sixties the adjective *ludiek* ('playful'), which was coined by Huizinga, became a vogue word in the Netherlands.