

Book Forum



The Empire that Never Was

The Nearly-Dutch Atlantic Empire in the Seventeenth Century

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Abstract

This book forum focuses on Wim Klooster's *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Cornell University Press, 2016). In his book, Wim Klooster shows how the Dutch built and eventually lost an Atlantic empire that stretched from the homeland in the United Provinces to the Hudson River and from Brazil and the Caribbean to the African Gold Coast. The fleets and armies that

fought for the Dutch in the decades-long war against Spain included numerous foreigners, largely drawn from countries in northwestern Europe. Likewise, many settlers of Dutch colonies were born in other parts of Europe or the New World. According to Klooster, the Dutch would not have been able to achieve military victories without the native alliances they carefully cultivated. Indeed, Klooster concludes, the Dutch Atlantic was quintessentially interimperial, multinational, and multiracial. At the same time, it was an empire entirely designed to benefit the United Provinces.

The four reviewers – Trevor Burnard, Joyce Goodfriend, Cynthia Van Zandt, and Willem Frijhoff – all offer praise, some more profusely than others. Their reviews critically question some aspects of Klooster's narrative, particularly in relation to slavery, the inevitability of the Dutch Atlantic empire's decline, his assessment of the rule of Johan-Maurits van Nassau-Siegen in Dutch Brazil, the role of violence and of women in Dutch colonization, as well as the relationship between microcosmic and macrocosmic perspectives on the history of Dutch America.

Keywords

Johan-Maurits of Nassau Siegen – Dutch Atlantic World – Dutch Brazil – Caribbean – New Netherland – Dutch Republic

Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016), viii + 419 pp. ISBN 978-0-8014-5045-7 (hbk).

Review by Trevor Burnard

The Dutch, according to a popular stereotype, are a bracing people, fond of being blunt to the point of rudeness and not inclined to sugar coat reverses or to overstate triumphs. Whether that stereotype is true I do not know but directness, an aversion to overstatement and a reluctance to overhype one's subject is certainly characteristic of Dutch historians' approaches to the now established field of Atlantic history. The many excellent Dutch historians who have examined the Dutch role in the Atlantic world in the early modern period and who have been instrumental in developing several institutional links within Atlantic history in the last twenty years have been conspicuous both for showing the centrality of the Dutch to Atlantic interconnections in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and also for insisting on placing limits on the importance of Dutch influence on the Atlantic world. This approach is refreshing in a historiography that in its Anglo-American manifestation is often notable for dramatic overstatement. It is hard to imagine a Dutch historian of the Atlantic exclaiming that “we are all Atlanticists now” or making grandiose claims that doing Atlantic history was the key to understanding the making of the modern world as Anglo-American historians of the Atlantic world are prone to do. The tone in the now extensive historiography of the Dutch Atlantic world is one of restraint and of moderation, with an emphasis on the limits of interpretation.¹

Wim Klooster is one of the principal chroniclers of the Dutch involvement in the Atlantic world and is himself responsible for establishing a down-beat tone about the Dutch Atlantic world. He is an author of a controversial but influential article in 1999 that has been subsequently interpreted as denying that a Dutch Atlantic ever existed.² In that article, co-written with Pieter Emmer, who has remained faithful to the thesis presented in 1999,³ it was asserted that the Dutch Atlantic was never imperial even if it involved expansion into the New World. In subsequent writings, Emmer has argued that the Dutch provided a model of a “purely mercantile expansion” that in fundamental ways

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- 1 For some representative essays, see Gert Oostindie and Jessica Vance Roitman, “Repositioning the Dutch in the Atlantic, 1680–1800”, in *Itinerario* 36, no. 2 (2012), 129–160; Pepijn Brandon and Karwan Fatah-Black, “For the Reputation and Respectability of the State’: Trade, the Imperial State, Unfree Labor and Empire in the Dutch Atlantic”, in eds. John Donoghue and Evelyn P. Jennings, *Building the Atlantic Empires: Unfree Labor and Imperial States in the Political Economy of Capitalism ca. 1500–1914* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 84–108; Henk den Heijer and Victor Enthoven, “Nederland en de Atlantische Wereld, 1600–1800. Een historiografisch overzicht”, in *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis* 24, no. 2 (2005), 147–166. For “we are all Atlanticists now,” see David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History”, in eds. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* 2nd. ed. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 13.
 - 2 Pieter C. Emmer and Willem Klooster, “The Dutch Atlantic 1600–1800: Expansion without Empire”, in *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999), 48–69. See Benjamin Schmidt’s quip in response to this article: “There was no such thing as a Dutch Atlantic and this is an essay about it,” in Schmidt, “The Dutch Atlantic: From Provincialism to Globalism”, in eds. Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 163. Of course, we need to distinguish between a Dutch Atlantic, which might be hard to define, and a seventeenth-century Dutch Empire, which certainly existed.
 - 3 For his most recent work, see Pieter C. Emmer and Jos Gommans, *Rijk aan de rand van de wereld: De geschiedenis van Nederland overzee, 1600–1800* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2012).

“differed from a policy designed by a central state in shaping the foundations of a maritime empire.”⁴

In their 1999 article, Emmer and Klooster insisted that the Dutch Atlantic Empire, such as it was, existed only briefly, between 1630 and 1645, mostly in Brazil with some secondary and relatively unimportant side missions to the southern Caribbean, the Guianas, and New Netherland, all of which had largely ended or were greatly diminished by the 1670s. A fifteen-year empire hardly compares with that of Britain, let alone ancient Rome, and was too temporary to have more than minimal impact upon the Dutch, then at the height of their seventeenth-century economic boom. Thus, they concluded, the Dutch Atlantic meant little to the Dutch. The economic opportunities it provided were marginal and the demographic consequences limited while its cultural impact on the Dutch republic was “virtually invisible.”⁵

If the Dutch Atlantic Empire was so unimpressive, especially when compared to its British counterpart (one feature of Dutch-Atlantic historiography has been its comparative concentration on Britain rather than France), it was hardly surprising that it went quickly from irrelevance into decline. Emmer and Klooster were less than enthusiastic about the impact of the Dutch Atlantic Empire in its short period of glory, claiming that the only unique feature of Dutch expansion was that it wasted more young unmarried men to tropical disease than any other European country (and as the Dutch tended to outsource the hard processes of colonization to other northern Europeans like the Germans and Scandinavians this unusual feature did not have much impact at home). Even the prominent Dutch role in the mid-seventeenth-century Atlantic slave trade was not important – they concluded that “the truly unique features of the Africans in the Dutch Atlantic were minor and of limited importance.” It might be true, they grudgingly admitted, that in the first half of the seventeenth century the Dutch were the most dynamic Atlantic power. But, they insisted, even the much vaunted organisational and financial skills of the Dutch were rendered impotent as the integrated Atlantic world of the first half of the seventeenth century disappeared under the pressure of European imperialism. In this new form of Atlantic imperialism after roughly 1670, the Atlantic became compartmentalised into national regions policed by increasingly powerful armies and especially navies. It was governed by protectionist mercantilist policies in which imperial powers strongly favoured planters and

4 Pieter C. Emmer, “The Dutch and the Atlantic Challenge, 1600–1800,” in eds. P.C. Emmer, O. Pétre-Grenouilleau and J.V. Roitman, *A deus ex machina Revisited: Atlantic Colonial Trade and European Economic Development* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 151–177, herein 174.

5 Emmer and Klooster, “Dutch Atlantic”, 48.

merchants from their own empires at the expense of Dutch merchants oriented to free trade.⁶

Has Klooster moderated his views on the essential irrelevance of the Dutch within the Atlantic world since 1999? That his book is entitled *The Dutch Moment* suggests that he still holds in part to ideas that the Dutch were minor players in the Atlantic and that the Atlantic was of limited importance to how we should understand the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Entitling a historical period and topic as a “moment” is a quintessentially Dutch form of understatement – one cannot imagine many Anglo-Americans being so circumspect and constrained about the subject of their inquiry.

Klooster has mostly been an historian of Dutch Atlantic trade in the eighteenth century and his view of the seventeenth-century “moment” appears to be shaped by his extensive knowledge of what happened after that moment passed when the Dutch were mostly important in the Atlantic as both legal and also illegal traders.⁷ But in the last decade he has been moving away from his 1999 position towards considering the seventeenth-century Dutch Atlantic important, especially geopolitically. His new book, based on long years of study in a variety of imperial archives and covering an impressive range of subjects, from war and trade to settlement and to cultural influences, shows that Klooster’s ideas have evolved. He has a more nuanced and more convincing view of the Dutch Atlantic than he did. In particular, he places the Dutch Atlantic outside the narrow confines of trade and colonization and as an important dynamic within the crucial theme of seventeenth-century Dutch history, which is the Dutch struggle against the Spanish for autonomy at home.

Colonial expansion through the West India Company (WIC) can only be understood, he suggests, as part of an ambitious geopolitical battle by the Dutch to counter Spain at home and abroad. It was this desire to subvert Spanish power that encouraged military aggression in the New World in the 1620s and 1630s, culminating in the takeover of Brazil – easily the most important part of the Dutch Atlantic Empire. And it was in Brazil where this ‘Grand Design’ failed. The successful revolt by Luso-Americans against Dutch rule in 1645 led

6 Ibid, 56, 58, 62.

7 Among Klooster’s more important works on eighteenth century Atlantic history are *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998); “Slave Revolts, Royal Justice, and a Ubiquitous Rumor”, in *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser. 71, no. 3 (July 2014), 401–424 and “Defying Mercantilism: Dutch Inter-Imperial Trade in the Atlantic World”, in ed. Ignacio Gallup-Díaz, *The World of Colonial America: An Atlantic Handbook* (London: Routledge, 2017). He is working on a follow-up to the book under review, with Gert Oostindie, which deals with the second Dutch Atlantic Empire in the eighteenth century.

to the ouster of the Dutch from Brazil by 1654. The Dutch were unable to maintain through military force the gains that they had achieved through conquest. Klooster puts a lot of stress on the military and geopolitical aspects of Dutch expansion overseas. He suggests, in an argument I have not seen made so forcefully before, is that we need to see the Dutch Atlantic less as a place of trade, as is conventionally the case, as an area shaped by warfare, and especially by Dutch military aggression.

Indeed, Klooster's new position on the Dutch Atlantic, derived from his appreciation of the Dutch as a warlike republic, has the Dutch playing a central and not altogether positive role in changing the fabric of Atlantic life. His principal contention, which he proves conclusively, is that the Dutch were agents of what he calls "the great transformation" through which the Spanish Atlantic world of the sixteenth century, based on the exploitation of bullion, became a quite different Atlantic world in the eighteenth century, focused on transatlantic slavery and on sugar. But if they were the architects of the great transformation, the Dutch were not the beneficiaries of these changes. They did achieve some of their ambitions, through their continual and often successful raids against the Spanish (Piet Heyn taking the silver fleet in 1628 was a notable triumph) and especially through their successful takeover of Brazil, when Portugal was under Spanish control. They destabilised the Spanish empire, allowing other European powers opportunities for economic gain they would not have otherwise have had. In one sense, therefore, the Dutch succeeded magnificently. The main effect of their relentless military aggression overseas was to free the Dutch at home from Spain's continual desire to subjugate them and take their riches for themselves.

Klooster makes this conclusion indirectly. One of the weaknesses of the book is that it pays relatively little attention to how the Atlantic world shaped geopolitics at home. The emphasis is firmly on the Dutch and their surrogates overseas with little attention paid to how Dutch successes overseas ensured the survival of the Dutch Republic in the perilous times of the Thirty Years' War. More attention to the metropolitan dimension of Dutch overseas expansion would make for a richer analysis.⁸ In another sense, however, the framing of Dutch activities within the Atlantic within the context of subverting and defeating the Spanish Habsburg Empire prevented the Dutch from seeing wider contexts. Klooster's picture of the seventeenth-century Dutch in 2016

8 For works that have a stronger metropolitan emphasis, see Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocents Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Michiel van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

is less positive than how he thought of them in 1999. The contemporary implication of the 1999 view is that the Dutch were not particularly implicated in the messy and morally dubious practice of colonization in the Americas in the ways that the Spanish, Portuguese, French and British were. Slavery, as we have seen, was downplayed by Emmer and Klooster and the Dutch flair for commerce, finance and organisation were highlighted. In some respects, the Emmer/Klooster view of the Dutch in the Atlantic is an attractive one – the Dutch were traders more than planters with little respect for imperial rules and boundaries and reluctant imperialists when they were allowed entry into that exclusive European club.

The Dutch seem less appealing in Klooster's 2016 version. They seem not so much reluctant imperialists but more people so committed to creating mayhem abroad that they missed the trees (colonization) for the wood (plunder). Klooster's 2016 Dutch imperialists might be good, if brutal, soldiers and great traders, even if not very concerned with obeying international law or commercial niceties (and we need to remember that this international law was one, through the arguments of Hugo Grotius, which the Dutch largely themselves shaped). But they were poor colonists. The WIC performed great services to the state but was badly run and, Klooster suggests, was always handicapped by being underfunded and second-guessed by parsimonious and short-term oriented governments within the Dutch republic. One conclusion that is suggested by his account of state penny-pinching and short-sightedness towards the WIC is that imperial ambitions might only be possible when there was a monarch with absolutist tendencies, like Charles II of England or Louis XIV of France, who could insist on providing authoritarian direction for embryonic imperial enterprises.

But the Dutch themselves seem to have had a limited vision of how the changes in the "great transformation" of the Atlantic that they themselves largely initiated might lead to effective colonization overseas. Thus, after they took over Brazil, they destroyed most of the plantations in the northeast, which not only earned them the implacable hostility of Luso-Americans but also stopped them from enjoying the major benefits of occupying tropical territories, which was the opportunity to develop plantation agriculture and entrench slavery. Moreover, by alienating soldiers and Dutch settlers (about whom Klooster writes an especially strong chapter) through heavy-handedness and harsh punishment, the Dutch prevented any group emerging that cared about colonies and colonization. If we asked in the Dutch case, who cared about the colonies and, more importantly, who had a vision for long term development, then the answer seems to be no-one. It would be instructive to examine the Dutch colonization efforts in the mid-seventeenth

century against those made by the French, Spanish or British. I suspect that one of the main differences would be that the Dutch were both less committed to colonization than other European nations and also, despite the presence of Hugo Grotius as a principal legal theorist, unable to think of good reasons why they should develop an imperial ideology.⁹

Of course, if the clock was stopped in the mid-seventeenth century and the imperial policies of all the non-Iberian imperial powers were compared, then we might conclude that imperialism everywhere was haphazard and unplanned. The French had hardly started colonization efforts. The English were distracted by a momentous Civil War which meant that metropolitan control over American colonies imploded for a crucial twenty years during which time American colonies developed autonomous forms of governance they never relinquished until the American Revolution. And the Western Design of 1655, intended to wrest Hispaniola from Spain, the English counterpart to the Dutch Grand Design of the 1620s, was an unmitigated failure.¹⁰ It is only because the colonial enterprises started by the English and French later turned into mighty empires that we do not see mid-seventeenth-century colonization in these empires in the way that Klooster thinks we should see Dutch colonization, as being a bit of a damp squib.

The key event that stopped Dutch imperialism developing as in English or French America was the revolt against Dutch rule in Brazil in 1645, leading to Dutch withdrawal from Brazil in 1654. If the Dutch had kept Brazil, then everything would probably have been different. It might be true, as Klooster argues, that the Dutch were over-reaching themselves in the 1640s and that the WIC was riddled with problems, but if Brazil had been kept as the centrepiece, then the Dutch were well placed to develop their own empire. They had, unusually for a European empire, possessions everywhere in the Atlantic, including, crucially, West Africa. One can imagine a Dutch future in which slaves from Dutch territories in Africa were shipped to Dutch plantations in Brazil and

9 The best comparative history of Atlantic colonization remains John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). For Dutch imperial ideology, see Martine Julia van Ittersum, “The Long Goodbye: Hugo Grotius and the Justification of Dutch Expansion Overseas (1604–1645)”, in *History of European Ideas* 36 (2010), 386–411 and Arthur Weststeijn, “Republican Empire: Colonialism, Commerce, and Corruption in the Dutch Golden Age”, in *Renaissance Studies* 26, no. 4 (August 2012), 491–509.

10 See the forthcoming book by Carla Pestana on the failure of the Western Design. For English colonization before 1660 as mostly chaos, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

the Guianas, with the small entrepôts of Curaçao and St. Eustatius facilitating trade with Europe and perhaps Spanish America and with a growing European population in New Netherland providing provisions for a vibrant plantation sector. The Grand Design made a lot of sense as long as Brazil linked all other Dutch colonies together. In this respect, it is a pity that Klooster does not pay more attention to the causes and consequences of the Luso-American revolt of 1645. He shows that it is one of the key events in the whole chronology of the Atlantic world.¹¹

One consequence of the failure of the Dutch to hold Brazil was that from the second half of the seventeenth century the Dutch concentrated less on building their own Atlantic empire but involved themselves in developing trade with other European empires. Previous scholarship suggested that the Dutch role in providing ideas, examples and capital in the great transformation of places like Barbados and Martinique into plantation societies with large African-born slave populations was pivotal, but Klooster follows more recent work that suggests that the Dutch role as Atlantic innovators has been overstated.¹² Another more important consequence was that the Dutch gave up on colonialism and focused in the eighteenth century upon creating an Atlantic world linked by trade. In many respects, Klooster's book is an explanation of why that second world came to be. He makes an argument that it came about less by choice than by happenstance. Klooster argues, moreover, that the Dutch were never likely to become colonial in the way that the British became colonial. As he details in a rich chapter on the social history of Dutch settlement in the Americas, few Dutch people at home were impressed by their colonial possessions. A few Dutchmen trained in the violence of the Thirty Years' War found American adventures financially worthwhile and a good outlet for their aggression. But most Dutch men and almost every Dutch woman found the idea of moving to the New World appalling. They had no need to go on perilous sea voyages to dangerous locales as the Dutch economy was booming and the Dutch Republic enjoyed full employment.

11 Klooster has treated this event at more depth elsewhere, though without much attention to seeing the revolt through Portuguese American eyes. Klooster, "The Geopolitical Impact of Dutch Brazil on the Western Hemisphere", in ed. Michiel van Groesen, *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 25–40.

12 Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 51. For another aspect of the Dutch influence on Barbados, see Wim Klooster, "De Ruyter's Attack on Barbados: The Dutch Perspective", in *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Perspective* 60 (2014), 42–53.

It is good that Klooster mentions the reluctance of women to move to the New World as a significant factor preventing Dutch colonization as hardly anyone ever discusses why European women were immune to the New World's charms. Certainly, the picture Klooster provides of the seventeenth-century Dutch Atlantic – violent, xenophobic, uncivilized (especially in its dodgy settler population), and full of chancers on the make in frightening tropical settings surrounded by hostile Amerindians and resentful soldiers and slaves – is so unattractive that one can perfectly understand why virtually no Dutch woman with any options at home even contemplated migration. Without women, of course, there cannot be children; without children, there cannot, it might be thought, can be colonies.¹³

But is that true? Klooster does not quite have a demographically determinist explanation for the failure of the Dutch to establish flourishing permanent communities in the Atlantic World but he gets very close to one. His argument seems to be that without substantial Dutch migration similar to that which occurred in English colonies and subsequent population growth, as in New England, no New Holland or New Zealand or New Netherland could be expected to emerge. People were needed to staff plantations, settle farms and develop settler colonialism on the English and (to an extent) French model. I am not so sure he is correct. You did not need many white people to create a viable plantation society, as the British and French discovered in the Caribbean and as indeed the Dutch worked out in Batavia, even if Batavia was not strictly speaking a plantation society, and, as the Dutch achieved, to an extent, in Surinam, Berbice and Demerara.

And what white people you had did not need to be from your own country in order for colonialism to succeed. The Dutch were very good at getting foreigners both into their colonies and also into fighting as proxies in their wars. Klooster notes that the differences between the Dutch and Rhineland Germans in this period were slight – it is for this reason that Germans moving to eighteenth-century Pennsylvania were denoted as “Dutch.” If the Dutch had established major colonies in Brazil and kept New Netherland, who doubts that the Pennsylvania Dutch would not have moved to places where they could keep their language and their religion under the protection of a benevolent state. Moreover, as Klooster shows, the Dutch were significant slave traders – the most important nation involved in African commerce in the mid-seventeenth

13 Trevor G. Burnard and Ann M. Little, “Where the Girls Aren’t: Women as Reluctant Migrants but Rational Actors in Early America”, in eds. S. Jay Kleinberg, Eileen Boris and Vicki L. Ruiz, *The Practice of U.S. Women’s History: Narratives, Intersections, and Dialogues* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 12–29.

century – and they settled in places ideally suited to the development of plantation agriculture. Plantation agriculture, as I have argued elsewhere, was crucial for colonial success – much more so, I would argue, than even mercantile proficiency and skill in inter-imperial trade.¹⁴

It seems to me that the Dutch had everything they needed in the 1640s to become a dominant imperial power in the late seventeenth century. Most of all, they had access to African labour. The weakest part of Klooster's book is on slavery and on the Dutch attitude to slaves and enslavement. If the Dutch were the agents of a great transformation and if slavery was the key driving force behind that great transformation, then we'd like to know more both about what Dutch attitudes to Africans and to slavery were and also to how they intended to use their developing involvement in the Atlantic slave trade to create big plantations with large African slave labour forces. Klooster writes a little about these topics but not enough. He does not address, for example, except in passing, David Eltis' provocative argument that the Dutch and English were peculiarly well suited to introducing harsh forms of chattel slavery into the Americas mainly because they had a particular conception of the relationship between the individual and the state which allowed them to divide people easily into "insiders" who had all the advantages of citizens and "outsiders" who could be treated with extreme violence and callousness. In short, to be Dutch or English, no matter how poor or downtrodden, was to win the lottery of life while to be African was to have a losing ticket.¹⁵

He also does not consider very much Voltaire's damning assessment in *Candide* that of all slave-holding nations the Dutch were the cruellest. I would have liked to have seen discussion of Dutch attitudes to slavery and slaveholding if only to highlight how the loss of Brazil stopped the Dutch from putting their plans in regard to African slaves fully into action. It is true, of course,

14 Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650–1820* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). For another model of a successful Atlantic World strategy that was not based upon plantation agriculture, see Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians in the Maritime Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). But the most important eighteenth-century colonies were those that harnessed the labour of Africans and the capital of Europeans to develop a form of Atlantic capitalism based upon plantation agriculture. See Trevor Burnard and John Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine: Atlantic Capitalism in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

15 David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

that Dutch attempts to develop plantation agriculture were handicapped by their inability to protect the producers of colonial sugar from price competition through state-inspired mercantilist protectionist policies. That market failure made Dutch plantation agriculture uncompetitive. But I suspect that if Brazil had been kept, if the Dutch had moved to the large integrated plantation system that Barbados developed, if the Dutch had maintained their capacity for Atlantic trade, and if colonies in Africa and North America had been retained, allowing for an integrated Dutch Atlantic world, then it might have been the Dutch who became the lowest cost producers of tropical goods in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

In short, this Dutch “moment” could potentially have become much grander. The loss of Brazil was crucial and needs to be highlighted more in surveys of the Atlantic World. But even leaving the loss of Brazil aside, what the Dutch did in the Atlantic world in the seventeenth century was of more than “momentary” importance. Contrary to Emmer and Klooster’s view in 1999 but consonant with Klooster’s judicious survey of 2016, a distinctive Dutch Atlantic world did exist for a considerable length of time during a period of profound change in Europe and in the Atlantic World. Klooster provides us with a masterly guide to these transformations, transformations in which the Dutch played a vital role. The role the Dutch played in “the great transformation” deserves to be called more than a “moment.” It was decisive and indispensable in the making of the Atlantic world. By stating this, I am betraying my Anglo-American tendency to hype and overstatement. In this case, however, I believe that Anglo-American overstatement makes more sense than Dutch understatement.

Review by Joyce Goodfriend

Wim Klooster has filled a conspicuous gap in the literature on the seventeenth-century Atlantic world with this carefully crafted study of what he calls “the Dutch Moment,” the period between the 1620s and the 1670s when the Dutch Republic forged an empire that spanned Europe, Africa and the Americas. Based on a prodigious amount of research in a dazzling array of Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, and English sources, this volume traces the origins, peak and decline of the Dutch Atlantic empire. But it does much more. It provides an illuminating analysis of the distinctive features of this short-lived empire – the centrality of military activity and hence soldiers to its mission, a trade pattern at variance with that of contemporary European colonizing nations, the stunted development of its settlements in the Americas, and its reliance on non-Dutch people to achieve its goals. Embedded in the chapters devoted to

these subjects and the more speculative conclusion is Klooster's critical appraisal of the Dutch Atlantic empire's strengths and weaknesses.

Klooster sets the stage by outlining the geopolitical forces that shaped the Dutch empire-in-the-making and then using this context to explain what was foremost in the minds of the merchants and political leaders of the Dutch Republic – securing the foundation of the newly independent Calvinist state. In practice, this meant curtailing the power of Catholic Spain through military action, a policy carried out through the vehicle of the West India Company (WIC), a commercial entity formed in 1621 with the express purpose of hindering the transfer of wealth from the Americas that funded Spain's war effort in Europe. Given the overarching political and religious goals of the WIC and its focus on attacking enemy ships and territories, the subsidiary position of trade and colonization in its scheme becomes plausible.

In a narrative enlivened by biographical sketches of influential figures and vignettes relating the personal experiences of ordinary people caught in the web of empire, Klooster chronicles the advances and reversals of Dutch fortune as Dutch sailors, soldiers and traders roamed the ocean, intent on expanding Dutch interests in Africa, South America, the Caribbean and North America. Setting his story against the backdrop of politics and public opinion in the United Provinces, and intermittently drawing comparisons with the practices of the East India Company (VOC), Klooster situates the Dutch imperial project in the Americas in a broad framework, yet keeps his sights trained on specific events as they unfolded. Klooster's comprehensive account of the evolution of the Dutch empire in the Atlantic world is marked by the exemplary even-handedness with which he treats the subject. Immersion in Dutch and Portuguese sources enables him to widen the reader's horizons by presenting the complex story of Dutch Brazil from both sides.

The notoriety of the Dutch in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world ordinarily is associated with their engagement in what Klooster terms "inter-imperial trade", much of it illegal. Adept at skirting rules laid down by rival nations increasingly committed to mercantilist policies, Dutch mariners acted as intermediaries, traversing the ocean to supply manufactured goods as well as slaves to residents of other nations' colonies. The maritime superiority of the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century was crucial in boosting the economic development of the English in Virginia and Barbados as well as the French in the West Indies. Once they had captured the Portuguese colony of Brazil with its flourishing sugar industry, the Dutch moved to expand their stake in the transatlantic slave trade. Links were forged between recently acquired slave trading posts in West Africa such as Elmina and the island of Curaçao, now transformed into an entrepôt for distributing cargoes of enslaved Africans to

Brazil and other markets across the Caribbean and South America. The subsequent sugar boom in the West Indies was linked to the increased access to slaves provided by Dutch ships. Klooster questions the extent of Dutch influence on establishing sugar production in Barbados, but he does confirm that the Dutch played a pivotal role in getting sugar mills up and running in the French colonies of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Christopher.

The success of the Dutch imperial project, Klooster explains, depended on the involvement of an assortment of men and women who were not Dutch. Indigenous peoples in Africa and the Americas advanced Dutch interests by serving as trading partners and military allies. Africans, involuntarily transformed into commodities by Dutch traders, provided the labor essential to the operation of sugar plantations in Brazil and elsewhere. Since most natives of the Dutch Republic were averse to resettling overseas, Western European migrants to the United Provinces became indispensable to populating the few Dutch colonies in the Americas. One exception to this rule was the group of Jews who had found refuge from Portuguese persecution in Amsterdam. Some of their number sought and found opportunity in Dutch Brazil as well as other small Dutch settlements in South America. Klooster singles out these Jewish colonists for their contributions to the Dutch Atlantic economy. He also points out how significant the Dutch inclusion of Jews in their imperial vision was for early modern Jewish history. By tying the much celebrated arrival of two dozen Jews in New Amsterdam in 1654 to the transfer of Dutch Brazil to the Portuguese, Klooster shows how essential it is to contextualize this popular story in narratives of American Jewish history. That these Jewish immigrants to New Amsterdam joined a diverse urban community comprised of Dutch, German, French, English, Scandinavian and African men and women illustrates one of the major themes of *The Dutch Moment*, the multiethnic makeup of the Dutch Atlantic empire.

Whether through coercion or cooperation, an assemblage of non-Dutch people helped forward Dutch goals in the Atlantic world. In places such as Recife and New Amsterdam, Dutch authorities, aware of the economic advantages that ensued from tolerance in the homeland, took steps to integrate Europeans – Protestants and Jews – into colonial society, with vary degrees of success. Yet concessions to Portuguese Catholics in Brazil were limited given the widespread antipathy to their religion. Concern for the rights and well-being of people defined as outsiders was notably absent when it came to human beings of African ancestry. Even though moral objections to slavery had been raised by Dutch intellectuals such as Caspar Barlaeus (246), assumptions about the superiority of whites prevailed among the seventeenth-century Dutch.

Conquering and subduing trading posts in Africa and territories in the Americas required military might. Soldiers, therefore, were assigned a key role in expanding Dutch power in the Atlantic world. But many of the troops who fought wars for the Dutch Republic were not Dutch due to the reluctance of native-born Dutchmen to serve as soldiers for the WIC in Africa and the Americas. Officials therefore had to rely on the enlistments of foreigners who had moved to the United Provinces in search of a living to fill their quotas. As a result, the units dispatched to Brazil and New Netherland contained large numbers of individuals without a firm attachment to the nation. Klooster leaves us to ponder the consequences of incorporating foreign recruits into the Dutch army. Was Dutch military capacity compromised by the presence of so many rootless and economically marginal individuals? Was it foolhardy to think that men drawn into military service by financial incentives rather than love of country would stand strong when put to the test of battle?

With the loyalty of enlisted men to the Dutch cause already tenuous, the abysmal treatment soldiers received while on duty gave them added reason to balk when instructed to defend Dutch Brazil. Klooster spells out in graphic detail the unsavory conditions in which these men worked – the inadequacy of the food supply, the exposure to deadly diseases, and the harsh punishments inflicted for disobedience. Soldiers who witnessed the brutality that marred the lives of the enslaved Africans around them could not help but notice the parallels between their own circumstances and those of these suffering human beings. It was not difficult to compare a soldier's existence to that of a slave.

The weapons of the weak are few, but as Dutch leaders learned to their dismay, if they are applied at the right time in the right place they can cause irreparable harm. Mutinies and riots initiated by disgruntled sailors, far from uncommon, undermined Dutch maritime power. Soldiers charged with fighting the Portuguese rebels so as to maintain Dutch rule in Brazil clearly were not eager to put their bodies on the line. The indifference of many soldiers stationed in Brazil and the desertion of some to the Portuguese side had dire consequences for Dutch imperial ambitions. Following several years of turmoil, the Portuguese regained control of Brazil. Once Brazil, the linchpin of the Dutch Atlantic empire, was gone, the fate of the entire empire was sealed.

Klooster does not hesitate to assign responsibility for this debacle to the metropolitan elites who directed the Dutch imperial project. Dutch leaders not only neglected Brazil during the crucial early decades of its history, but failed to heed the complaints of the soldiers they had tasked with the preservation of the empire. Inured to thinking of soldiers and slaves as dispensable, they devalued the contributions of those who fought for the empire and had little inclination to take their grievances seriously. The evidence Klooster

sets out on the unraveling of Dutch control in Brazil constitutes a veritable indictment of the men of privilege who presided over the downward spiral of the Dutch Atlantic empire. That they willingly sacrificed the lives of countless soldiers and slaves to the pursuit of profit and power compounds their offenses.

Another sobering truth about the costs of empire emerges from Klooster's dissection of the mentality of the Dutch soldiers stationed around the Atlantic world. Desperation can unleash violence. In Brazil, troops deprived of their pay, fearful that their wives and children were starving on the streets of Amsterdam, and wary of losing their lives in battle reached their limit. Urgently seeking a reason to go on, men primed for combat uncritically embraced the rationale for war against Spain and Portugal invented by Dutch imperialists bent on seizing Iberian colonies and resources. To justify aggression against these Catholic enemies, leaders of the Dutch Republic depicted their military crusade as an apocalyptic contest between good Protestants and evil Catholics. The dramatic overtones of such a scenario appealed to soldiers stranded on a far frontier and bereft of a moral anchor. In kindling the passions of men who could find meaning in a conflict between religious absolutes, Dutch leaders in the metropole unleashed a torrent of hatred toward so-called Papists. For men trapped in what amounted to a life or death struggle without any support from kin or friends, perpetrating violence against Portuguese Catholics was cathartic. Destroying churches and profaning sacred objects energized them, creating a spirit of solidarity among isolated individuals and perhaps fostering an illusory sense that they were engaged in breaking their chains. Iconoclasm of this sort had not been seen in the Netherlands since the middle of the sixteenth century. If such religious-based violence offended the sensibilities of the powerful men at the center of the Dutch Atlantic empire, it did not alter their course of action. They condoned it, just as they did the savagery and cruelty exhibited in attacks against Amerindians.

Klooster exposes the ruthless tactics of Dutch military men in their wars against the Munsees in New Netherland and the callousness of their counterparts in Brazil who thought nothing of abandoning their native allies. Such behavior comported with the Dutch eschewal of proselytizing among indigenous peoples. Far from considering missionizing an essential component of empire building in the Americas as their Spanish, Portuguese and French rivals did, the Dutch preferred trading with or fighting alongside natives to worshipping with them. The paltry record of conversions by Dutch Reformed clergymen in the Americas bespeaks not only a lack of missionary zeal but an abiding skepticism about the rewards of Christianizing native peoples seen as innately inferior to the Dutch. Denying the spiritual worth of Native Americans, of course,

made Dutch settlers vulnerable to attacks by Natives who had grounds for disputing the claims of the Dutch.

The tableau of brutality against Africans, Amerindians, and Catholic Europeans across the Dutch Atlantic empire leaves Klooster little choice but to declare violence an integral part of the mindset that propelled Dutchmen around the globe in their quest for empire in the seventeenth century. Military initiatives and their accompanying violence formed a prominent thread in the fabric of seventeenth-century Dutch colonialism. Klooster goes further by asserting that “violence was the ultimate expression of what it meant to be Dutch in both a religious and a cultural sense.” (255) Readers accustomed to elevating the seventeenth-century Dutch to a place of honor for their artistic accomplishments will find this a jarring statement, one in need of amplification. How should we square the saga of conquest and coercion presented in *The Dutch Moment* with the far more benign profile of the Dutch implanted in the prevailing image of the Dutch Golden Age? Is it possible to reconcile the fact that Vermeer and Rembrandt were gracing the Dutch Republic in the same era that soldiers were on a rampage in Brazil, smashing religious icons and terrorizing Portuguese Catholics? Klooster tempers his indictment of Dutch colonial violence by citing the misdeeds of English colonizers, but his tactic falls short of dealing with this weighty problem.

By neglecting to give sustained attention to the moral dimensions of empire building, Klooster misses the chance to clarify his position on issues that remain vital today. He opts to connect what happened in the Dutch Atlantic theatre to the models of society and culture available in the Republic only tangentially. His assessment of the administration of Johan-Maurits of Nassau-Siegen’s administration in Brazil is a case in point. He shies away from lauding Johan-Maurits for his well-known accomplishment of transplanting elements of Dutch science, architecture and art to Brazil, preferring instead to cast him as an imperfect ruler. But Johan-Maurits’s attempt to create an urban culture in Recife that resembled that of cities in the homeland was a deliberate effort to bridge the two faces of seventeenth-century Dutch culture. Imposing the ideals of an advanced civilization on a frontier society can be interpreted as an arrogant gesture by a man of great privilege, but it also can be viewed as a version of a practical strategy aimed at resolving tensions and curbing violence in volatile societies in unfamiliar environments. Emulating and replicating metropolitan institutions – the Reformed Church and Roman law – as well as customary codes of behavior infused embryonic Dutch communities with an aura of legitimacy. The scale of Johan-Maurits’s ambitious endeavors may have been anomalous, but the vision they embraced represents the impulse to reproduce defining elements of Dutch life as known in the Republic in remote territories.

The great strength of *The Dutch Moment* is the panoramic view it gives of Dutch ventures in the Atlantic in the mid-seventeenth century. Klooster consistently maintains control over this complicated story and, in the process, explicates a host of intricate issues. His narrative retains a fine balance between developments in various regions of the Dutch Atlantic and the policies devised at the administrative heart of the empire in the United Provinces. Quite simply, he succeeds in explaining how changing circumstances in different parts of the empire affected the whole. But it is fair to ask if the history of the whole is everything. Is there a case to be made for assembling histories of the empire's parts that might complicate the history of the whole?

Speaking as someone whose research has been confined to one particular part of the Dutch Atlantic empire – New Netherland – I am most grateful for the big picture that Wim Klooster has now painted. Although the minor position occupied by New Netherland in the arc of Dutch colonial ventures, both West and East, in the middle decades of the seventeenth century is incontestable, questions remain about the colony's historical significance. Should New Netherland be evaluated solely in terms of its marginal role in the Dutch Atlantic empire? New Netherland surely was not inconsequential to the English who set out to conquer this thriving Dutch possession in 1664 in hopes of consolidating their hold on the eastern seaboard of North America. The triumph of the English endowed Anglophile scribes with the power to craft and propagate narratives that minimized New Netherland's role in American development. It is conceivable that Klooster's study could be used to validate the Anglophile claim that New Netherland was little more than a prologue to the history of British New York. Alternatively, Klooster's Atlantic approach to Dutch colonization in the Americas could stimulate students of early North America to explore the contours of the larger world inhabited by Petrus Stuyvesant and his compatriots.

What is at stake is the legacy of the men and women who came first and their progeny who stayed in a place that initially was an offshoot of a vibrant metropolitan culture and its violence-ridden colonial empire. The history of these founding European generations and the enslaved Africans who labored for them has been well documented in studies that focus on their demographic and cultural impress on New York. Headway has also been made in incorporating these Dutch founders in narratives of the American nation's origins. But how does the long-term history of what was once a Dutch place mesh with the conception of a Dutch Atlantic empire whose temporal span was confined to the seventeenth century?

The appearance of *The Dutch Moment* marks a juncture where it is appropriate to reconsider the relationship between microcosmic and macrocosmic

perspectives on the history of Dutch America. This book surely will exert a major influence on the course of scholarship on the seventeenth-century Atlantic world. I suggest that it also has the potential to spur a reevaluation of the continuing impact of the Dutch on regions around the globe. Exploring the residue of Dutch colonization in the Americas is one way to build on Wim Klooster's accomplishment. Dutch imperialism in the Atlantic was a short-lived phenomenon, but its imprint on the societies that subsequently evolved in the territories touched by the Dutch was long lasting.

Review by Cynthia Van Zandt

The Dutch moment in the Atlantic world was an innovative, messy, violent period occupying much of the seventeenth century. Wim Klooster dates its start and end points fairly precisely, from the 1620s to the 1670s. Telling your readers that the empire at the heart of your study was remarkably short lived is a somewhat audacious way to begin a book. But then, this is a bold and ambitious study. Klooster's project rests on two closely related questions. If the Dutch empire in the Atlantic should be conceived of as no more than a "moment," then what difference did the Dutch make in the Atlantic? And how important was the Dutch role in Brazil, given the fact that Dutch control of Brazil lasted only thirty years? In each case, *The Dutch Moment* sets out to delineate the contours and extent of Dutch activities in the Atlantic world during the seventeenth century. It does so admirably, providing a synthesis of research on Dutch activities in South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and North America and contributing an impressive body of new research. In the process it establishes the necessity of incorporating the Dutch into histories of the early modern Atlantic world, because Dutch actions were deeply connected to myriad other peoples throughout the Atlantic and proved central to so many crucial developments in the seventeenth century. Dutch influence in the seventeenth-century Atlantic World was extensive even after Dutch Atlantic possessions had dwindled.

The introduction and epilogue provide useful summaries of Klooster's main analytical points, and he includes two appendices listing Dutch slave ships to French and Spanish colonies respectively. The first three chapters tell the chronological story of Dutch involvement in the Atlantic, beginning after the end of the Eighty Years' War, with an emphasis on the role of the West India Company, which drove Dutch activities in the Atlantic during its heyday. The book then shifts gears, and the remaining four chapters focus more deeply on four themes of particular significance to the Dutch Atlantic

experience: inadequate financing of soldiers and sailors, the centrality of Dutch merchants and ships in interimperial trade, migration and settlement of colonists, and Dutch dealings with non-Dutch peoples in the Atlantic.

It is a somewhat unconventional structure, but one well suited for a history that did not follow the same trajectory as that of other early modern Atlantic empires. By the second chapter, Klooster notes that “the Dutch empire in the Atlantic reached its greatest extent” in 1642 (72). Given that he describes steady losses from that point on, Klooster faces a challenge to explain the significance of the Dutch Moment. It is a challenge he embraces, showing that the Dutch built trade networks with transformative effects. At mid-century, the Dutch had more investments in the Atlantic than in Asia (146).

The Dutch experiences provide particularly illuminating examples of the difficulty of attaining and holding empire in the seventeenth century and of the high costs of empire to individuals and nations alike. In some ways the Dutch were unusually inventive in meeting challenges, particularly in intelligence gathering. Information was one of the most valuable commodities in the Atlantic world; it could prove hard to get and harder to communicate it to the right people when you needed them to have it. Klooster shows the WIC devoted considerable attention to mastering information and developing pioneering techniques for acquiring it. For instance, the WIC Hydrographical Office had all journals, maps, drawings, and ships’ logs from within the WIC’s jurisdiction sent to it, to build a company database (37). Similarly, Klooster attributes Piet Heyn’s capture of the Spanish treasure fleet to many years of careful study of Spanish cargo movements (45). Outside the Dutch Republic, Dutch use of relay stations for communications (62–63) proved to be quite effective, and it also helped to convince many that the establishment of colonies would be important in improving communications throughout the Dutch Atlantic (62).

Establishing colonies might help improve imperial communications, but they also added to the expense of Dutch activities in the Atlantic. And the expense was not helped by the fact that the West India Company’s activities were intended to be in the service of war, first and foremost. Early modern wars were expensive. *The Dutch Moment* provides ample evidence of that. To be sure, the high costs were not uniquely borne by the Dutch, but the West India Company’s dual functions as an instrument of war and a trading company was unusual. The fact that the WIC limped along, financed in large measure by Portugal’s Indemnity payments is another unusual feature of the Dutch Atlantic (94). English partnerships and joint stock companies active in Atlantic privateering in the late sixteenth century and in Atlantic colonization before 1670 often struggled or failed altogether, unless they were able to rely on a staple

crop like tobacco or sugar cane. No English company in this period was sustained by regular payments from a rival and former enemy.

One wonders about the degree to which historians should use WIC and Dutch as synonyms.¹⁶ Is this really a history of the Dutch Moment, or is it a history of the heyday and fall of the West India Company? Klooster's answer is that it is both. The Dutch Atlantic was a creation of the West India Company. If many aspects of Dutch experiences in the Atlantic World mirrored those of other people, Klooster shows some that were particular to the Dutch. The most significant differences flowed from the role of the WIC. Military garrisons and missions, for instance, defined the Dutch Atlantic experience into the 1670s, by which time many of their imperial rivals had shifted to a different imperial structure.

The military rationale for Dutch expansion created another characteristic of the Dutch Atlantic, the large number of soldiers and sailors deployed. This characteristic had a couple of significant corollaries: the WIC suffered significant losses of soldiers and sailors in the Atlantic. And the number of unpaid soldiers and sailors deployed by the WIC in the Atlantic was extremely high. Also extraordinarily high were the numbers of free people in the service of the WIC who suffered privations, because the company struggled with the costs and distance of its reach.

Klooster's research is especially compelling in detailing the privations caused by the WIC's inability to keep funds and supplies flowing to its people in the Atlantic. He describes soldiers suffering from hunger and in many cases, dying of starvation. Brazil proved to be especially hazardous (p. 124, 134–135), and indeed, Klooster notes that Dutch dependence on native expertise and food supplies in Brazil extended at least into the 1630s. The high costs and difficulties of sustaining Dutch soldiers and settlers in Brazil read eerily familiar to students of the Virginia Company and the early Virginia Colony, complete with Klooster noting that Dutch soldiers in Brazil were starving, because they were afraid to venture outside their settlement to find food.

Lack of resources, and especially food shortages, in WIC-controlled areas did not affect only WIC employees. *The Dutch Moment* provides a tale of many

16 On the one hand much of Dutch activity in the Atlantic was organized, funded, and directed by the WIC, using people who were its employees. On the other hand, Dutch merchants, sailors, and adventurers not affiliated with the WIC also played significant roles. Dutch investors funded activities in North America and Africa from the 1590s, long before the founding of the WIC and certainly before it became active in North America (23, 24). And the influence of Dutch individuals and of Dutch investments continued after the end of WIC activities.

different people thrown into a nightmare of starvation. Ship masters frequently refused to stock adequate provisions to feed the people they transported as part of the slave trade. Many captives died of starvation aboard Dutch ships during the Middle Passage. Moreover, African captives who survived the Atlantic crossing often arrived in Dutch colonies that were in the midst of serious food shortages (162). In one particularly horrifying case, Klooster describes 250 people from Angola captured and sold into slavery in Brazil, only to arrive in the midst of famine. Dutch officials concluded that the colony could not support them and ordered them confined to a barren island off the coast, where they were forced to survive by eating what little they could find, which was mostly rats (163).

These accounts suggest some larger points about the pace of imperial activities in the Dutch Atlantic, and about imperial administration. WIC ventures frequently moved more quickly than the infrastructure needed to sustain them. Moreover, one of the chief problems was that it was virtually impossible for an imperial administrative center in Amsterdam, or elsewhere in Europe or the British Isles, to keep up with the rapid pace of developments in Africa, the Americas, or the Caribbean.

Klooster argues for the centrality of violence in shaping the Dutch Atlantic, and he provides an extraordinarily important compilation of documented violence in areas where Dutch soldiers, sailors, and settlers were active. Violence was certainly ubiquitous everywhere in the early modern Atlantic World; however, the role of the WIC in the Dutch Atlantic expansion unquestionably tipped the balance in favor of violent rather than peaceful actions. The directors of the WIC had the founding mission of taking the war against the Hapsburgs into the Atlantic. The fact that they also intended their war strategy to turn a profit was both optimistically ambitious and ultimately a source of tension.

But given that Dutch expansion into the Atlantic was organized primarily as a strategic push for winning their war of independence, the fact that Dutch encounters with other people in the Americas, Caribbean, and Africa were violent is not surprising. Civilians were more likely to try to use negotiation or economic cooptation and cooperation in dealing with potential threats, while military expeditions tended to assess threats and respond with force. The history of English expansion provides some interesting points of comparison. The earliest English efforts to establish colonies in North America were attempted primarily by expeditions of soldiers. The first two Roanoke expeditions had more soldiers than civilians, and early attempts at establishing a colony at Jamestown were also staffed heavily by soldiers. It is no coincidence that Roanoke and Jamestown were both planned as anti-Spanish outposts, and though

the violence at both locations was between English and Algonquians, rather than English and Spanish, it was made more likely by the fact that the two colonies were created in whole or in part with war in mind. The Dutch WIC experience was similar. What makes the Dutch Moment stand out is how much longer it lasted as a set of military endeavors. The WIC's role in the war against Spain goes far to explain the centrality of violence in the Dutch Atlantic, and Klooster's study illuminates its dimensions.

When the Atlantic became a theater of war between established Hapsburg power and the rising Dutch Lion, violence inevitably followed. *The Dutch Moment* will become an important reference for scholars seeking both synthesis and detail. The details make a strong case in support of Klooster's argument that the Dutch Atlantic was characterized by violence. During the early years of WIC efforts, which were also years of notable Dutch successes, the losses documented in *The Dutch Moment* are staggering. Battle after battle left hundreds and sometimes thousands dead. The 1624 Dutch expedition against Salvador in Brazil was followed by a Spanish retaliatory attack and reconquest in 1625, both with loss of lives (41). The 1625 Dutch attack on São Jorge da Mina lost 441 men (42). A Spanish attack on Dutch settlers on Tobago in the 1630s sent several Dutch boys into virtual slavery on Spanish colonies (59). In the first half of the 1640, Dutch suffered losses on São Tomé, in New Netherland, and in Pernambuco (71–73). If soldiers, sailors, and settlers did not die in battle, many died of disease; Boudewijn Hendricksz lost 700 men to diseases in Brazil in the 1620s (42). It is worth asking what it meant that the Dutch just kept coming, despite years of losses.

The European theater of the Hapsburg-Dutch war was also costly. Klooster notes over 3,000 Dutch ships were captured at Dunkirk over a twenty-five year period (44). In the 1639 battle of the Downs, Spain lost between 9,000 and 10,000 men (68). In the context of years of warfare, the fact that most of the Dutch incursions into the Atlantic took place during its long war against the Hapsburgs is essential for understanding WIC decisions and the degree to which violence shaped what Klooster has named the Dutch Moment in the Atlantic World.

Was it effective? The WIC certainly had notable successes. It did not, however, hold many of the colonial possessions it acquired for very long. It is that fact, more than any other, which has led scholars of other European Atlantic empires to dismiss or ignore Dutch activities. *The Dutch Moment* shows just how misguided such an approach is for two key reasons. First, Dutch activities were intertwined with the activities of countless other peoples in the Atlantic world from the 1620s into the 1670s. Second, even when WIC plans did not succeed as intended, they unquestionably changed events in the Atlantic World.

Did the WIC succeed in wresting control of New World gold and silver from the Hapsburgs? No. But in taking their war into the Atlantic and forcing the Hapsburgs to defend their possessions, the WIC repeatedly changed the balance of political and economic power in the Atlantic for at least sixty years. Those changes affected far more people than just Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese colonists and sailors.

The scope and scale of Dutch military endeavors had additional repercussions. Added to the difficulties of managing a trans-Atlantic empire, which included providing adequate food, clothing, money, and information, were the difficulties of keeping soldiers and sailors in disciplined order for long periods of time, particularly when they were often unpaid or underpaid. In one particularly evocative example, Klooster recounts Dutch sailors getting so drunk before attacking Martinique in 1674, they attacked “in epic disorder” (110).

The Dutch Moment is filled with research that suggests wide-ranging connections. Klooster notes, for instance, that initially at least, trade with Africans and Native Americans served a political purpose as well as an economic one, because it began as an anti-Iberian activity (147). Although Klooster does not extend his conclusions on this point, his research raises some interesting points of comparison. Dutch motivations mirrored a great deal of what we know about African and Native American politics. For many Native Americans and Africans, trade was a diplomatic activity with intensely political purposes, as much or more than an activity primarily about commerce. The Dutch themselves did not seem to understand this. Klooster provides evidence from Brazil suggesting that Dutch encounters with Amerindians were guided by inflexible assumptions, which are extremely interesting for future study. Dutch descriptions of natives in Brazil equated consumerism with civilization. When Amerindians in Brazil showed insufficient interest in buying Dutch goods, the Dutch responded with contempt at the natives’ lack of interest in consumption, attributing their lack of interest to barbarism (147).

Much previous scholarship has emphasized the relatively small numbers of Dutch colonists in the Dutch Atlantic. *The Dutch Moment* tackles this too. It does not argue against the view that the Dutch had relatively few settlers in its colonial Atlantic possessions. Rather, it explains low colonial Dutch populations in part by emphasizing the allure of gold and silver, contrasting Dutch focus on acquiring gold and silver with the French and English, who “soon contented themselves with trade and agriculture” (148). This is one place where Klooster allows his knowledge of how events turned out to shape his interpretation of why earlier patterns became established.

It is certainly the case that the Dutch never created permanent agriculturally based colonies of the same sort as the English did, but that was due as

much to the fortunes of war as to anything else. New Netherland was headed in that direction before the English conquered it in 1664, and Brazil held out promise of that before it was re-conquered by Portugal. And Dutch desire for the wealth brought by precious minerals was certainly not unique. Other European powers sought to replicate the extraordinary wealth Spain gained in the Atlantic world; early English ventures were guided by such a hope for decades. Several colonies ended up settling into agricultural ones, to be sure, but that was because they developed a lucrative staple crop. But even that did not end hopes of finding new sources of gold and silver or wresting control of known mines from the Spanish.¹⁷ In this the Dutch turn out to be more like other Europeans than unlike them.

Historians have long agreed that the Dutch played a significant role in the sugar revolution of the seventeenth century. *The Dutch Moment* delineates the ways in which Dutch Atlantic activities became intertwined in the trans-Atlantic sugar economy; however, Klooster firmly argues against the theory that Dutch colonists, knowledge, and capital drove the startlingly rapid transition to sugar and slavery in English Barbados. In doing so, his research supports arguments made by John McCusker and Russell Menard, and in the process, he demonstrates why historians of the seventeenth-century Atlantic World should pay more attention to Brazil.

The history of Dutch Brazil makes it clear that the Dutch could not have been the driving force behind Barbados' transformation. The Dutch were not in a position to provide expertise or men to Barbados in the 1630s and early 1640s, contrary to the narrative promoted by a number of scholars of the English colonies.¹⁸ Sugar production in Dutch Brazil was never successful. Production was below capacity, as the Dutch lacked the expertise and had to rely on Luso-Brazilians for the necessary knowledge and skill (156). It took time for Dutch settlers to acquire sufficient expertise to grow and process sugar cane at competitive levels. Nor is there evidence that Dutch ships transported large numbers of slaves to Barbados in this period. On the contrary, Klooster's research suggests that the English slave trade to Barbados was more important (169). This provides a clear example of why broad-based research is so important; lack of attention to some parts of the Atlantic world affect our

17 On the continuing lure of silver in eighteenth-century North America, see, Paul Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713–1763* (OIEAHC, University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

18 The Dutch did promote and facilitate the transition to sugar cane cultivation and sugar production in the French Caribbean possessions, and then Dutch merchants played a major role in trade with French islands until 1678. (174).

understanding of other areas. “Each colonial realm” Klooster writes, “was entangled in various ways with other empires” (2).

The significance of Brazil comes up again in Klooster’s discussion of Dutch participation in the Atlantic slave trade. The Dutch sought African colonial outposts as a way to enter into the Atlantic slave trade; the conquest of Elmina, Luanda, and São Tomé between 1637 and 1641 were all the result of WIC labor needs in Brazil (160). After the fall of Brazil, the Dutch shifted their commercial focus to the Atlantic slave trade, becoming the “leading Atlantic slave traders” by the 1650s and 1660s (164). Klooster notes 300 documented Dutch slaving voyages from 1641 to 1670, 47% of all known trans-Atlantic slave voyages in those years. And in the sixty years from 1658 to 1718, Dutch vessels shipped approximately 100,000 captives from the Bight of Benin and Luanda to Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, and Panama (182).

Enslavement of indigenous people also played a significant role in the Dutch Atlantic. In 1638 the States General said Native Americans were not to be enslaved; however, in 1641 the WIC authorized an exception, saying Amerindians who waged war against Dutch native allies could be enslaved (238–39). Slavery of indigenous peoples became widespread in much of Brazil, as well as on St. Eustatius and in Suriname (239). Recent scholarship on slavery in the seventeenth-century Atlantic shows a period of varied and somewhat flexible practice, alongside the rise of antislavery positions and groups fairly early.¹⁹ But both antislavery voices and more flexible labor practices were drowned out when settlers found a high-yield, high-value commodity to produce in the colony. In this unsettled world of Atlantic world labor, many people could find themselves ensnared in bound labor. A seemingly small point about the English conquest of New Netherland highlights the complexities of the era. Petrus Stuyvesant reported to the States General that English troops had destroyed the settlement of Swanendael on the Delaware River and sold its colonists into slavery in Virginia in 1664. Whether this was accurate or not, it tells us something about what people believed was possible in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world. Klooster gives a quite different example of the lack of limits on slavery in an example from Luanda, where he describes a Dutch WIC employee who had sex with a native woman and then, after she gave birth to their child, sold them both into slavery.

19 For recent scholarship on the English Atlantic, see, e.g., John Donoghue, *Fire Under the Ashes: An Atlantic History of the English Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), and Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, reprint 2016).

Dutch colonies did not, however, experience massive transfers of free people from the Dutch Republic to Dutch Atlantic settlements. Klooster discusses many of the factors inhibiting migration from the Dutch Republic, and they are significant. The United Provinces enjoyed high employment and a steady rise in real wages from the 1570s to the 1680s, making it one of the best places in the world for Europeans to live. Despite the low numbers of Dutch-born settlers in Dutch Atlantic possessions, Klooster discusses the transfer of Dutch culture and institutions to the colonies and describes them as “the building blocks of empire” (190). There is ample evidence of the influence and persistence of Dutch language, religion, and culture in North America and in other former Dutch colonies. However, Klooster’s research makes it clear that the Dutch had an overseas empire that could not attract Dutch people. Rather, in other chapters, he shows the building blocks of the Dutch Atlantic empire to be ships, investment capital, and thousands of young men employed as soldiers and sailors.

The Grand Design worked out by the WIC in 1622 transformed into something else in the decades to follow, during which time the Dutch gained colonial possessions in Africa, North and South America, and the Caribbean, and then lost most of them. Throughout, WIC directors and ordinary sailors, soldiers, merchants, and colonists alike demonstrated extraordinary tenacity. But during these decades when the meaning of the Dutch nation was being formed, the Atlantic experience acquired cultural as well as economic and military importance. In the Atlantic, Klooster writes, “violence would become more than a way to relate to the hereditary enemy. Instead, violence was the ultimate expression of what it meant to be Dutch in both a religious and cultural sense” (255).

Review by Willem Frijhoff

A Calvinist Empire?

Much more than a conventional study on the Dutch in the Atlantic world, Wim Klooster’s book presents a major synthesis that encompasses systematically all the aspects of life, activities and presence of the Dutch in the North and South Atlantic. In fact this study goes well beyond the traditional emphasis on war and trade, which unfortunately still marks the subtitle of the book, as Wim Klooster sets out to explain the agency of the Dutch overseas by addressing Dutch history, Dutch culture and Dutch mentality in its entirety in the Atlantic area. As such, Klooster’s aim is certainly ambitious and constitutes a tremendous achievement. While no synthesis can ever encompass all the aspects and

dimensions of such a large area with such a complicated history, Klooster's survey aptly tackles all relevant domains, from warfare, trade, religion, and slavery, to Jewish migration, postal relations and false rumors, the fine arts, and colonial science. Whereas most surveys of these themes confine themselves to general overviews of military events, quantitative data on population and immigration, or political narratives, Klooster has included the underdogs of history, not only the slaves, but also the soldiers, sailors, indentured servants, and common laborers, most of whom do not usually feature with clarity in our historical imagery. His short sketches of many of the actors involved, some occupying a high position in society, but many of a low background, undoubtedly help to flesh out the body of the anonymous men and women of whom not more than the name has survived in the historical record, and sometimes not even that. These sketches imbue his narrative with realism, taking it well beyond the bloodless and lifeless analyses of most academic social and economic history. Generally speaking, Wim Klooster displays an enviable mastery of the historiography and shows how an intelligent use of unpublished sources from the main archival deposits in the Netherlands and beyond can be employed to provide new insights, without however drowning the reader in an unstructured mass of data. Well-conceived, nicely drafted, and above all superbly documented, this book will remain a milestone in Dutch historiography on the early-modern Atlantic.

Nevertheless, after closing the book, this reviewer was left with some qualms. The illustrations, which are by no means numerous, add some visual pleasure but do not contribute much to the narrative, nor are they mined for supplementary information. The book contains a few maps but these are not very sophisticated; they just allow the reader a quick geographical scan, without offering insight into political relations or military developments. The treasure trove hidden in the 143 pages of footnotes (which amount to about one third of the book!) provides many additional names and events, but unfortunately these are not included in the index. Above all, the book regrettably does not provide the systematic overview of historiography that its wide scope warrants. A few paragraphs in the introduction and two pages with suggestions for further reading at the end of the book are no substitute for the lack of an incisive and critical assessment of the current state of scholarship on the Dutch in the Atlantic World. A small number of historiographical points are discussed in the chapters, but the overall historiographical discussion remains behind the scenes throughout much of the narrative of the book itself. One of the causes of this of course lies in the very conception of the book. As a wide-ranging assessment of totally dissimilar territories with hugely divergent fates it covers not just Dutch Brazil in the south and New Netherland in the north,

but also a range of Caribbean islands and nearby territories on the southern American continent (Surinam and its neighbors), as well as some forts, islands and colonial possessions on the west coast of Africa, from Goree through Mouree and Elmina to Luanda.

In order to achieve a semblance of unity in his narrative on such a wide and diverse geographical area, Wim Klooster employs two points of view: the Atlantic World (as in the title of the book) and the Dutch West India Company (which forms the book's core). In fact, the latter point of view limits his treatment of the first: the seventeenth-century Atlantic World referred to in the title actually is the commercial and military worlds of the Dutch West India Company, which makes this book a history of the Dutch Atlantic World, rather than a history of the Dutch *in* the Atlantic World. Klooster's perspective becomes clear from the titles of several of his chapters, such as Imperial Expansion, Imperial Decline, and Imperial Trade. 'Empire' must be taken as a metaphor here. The idea of a great empire comparable to that of the Hispano-Portuguese, and perhaps as a counterpoint to the great neighboring European empires in Germany and France, certainly featured in the minds of Willem Usselinx and his fellow merchants, and it comes to the fore in the *Groot Desseyn* (Grand Design) that formed the intellectual and political background for the founding of the West India Company in 1621. Even so, the directors of the WIC only rarely acted in accordance with such an ambitious, large-scale objective. Most of their actions were aimed at short-term regional gains, or were a much-needed local response to the imperial designs of Spain and Portugal, their 'hereditary enemies'. Lacking a national government with an active political agenda and a blueprint for worldwide colonization, the Dutch remained bound by their decentralized state structure without a single strong leader able to impose his views, such as James I in England, Richelieu or Louis XIV in France, or Gustavus Adolphus in Sweden. What they did achieve elsewhere, such as the quasi-empire of the Dutch East India Company, was much more the result of the fortunate management of a long series of casual, local or accidental successes, in part due to totally unforeseen events, than the outcome of a cleverly planned commercial or imperial policy.

This quasi-imperial character of Dutch colonization determined the fate of what Klooster has labeled – with good Dutch commercial instinct but not without some exaggeration – 'The Dutch Moment', and its subsequent decline and near-loss shapes the organization of the book. It explains the large and domineering role in this book of Dutch Brazil, where commercial interests and anti-Spanish warfare happily coincided. In Brazil the Dutch could, with apparently solid arguments and with the blessing of the directors of the Company, fully unleash their desire of violence, their ruthless cruelty, and their

total lack of civilized behavior upon the 'hereditary enemy' – in spite of governor Johan-Maurits of Nassau-Siegen's reputation for magnificence and of the very positive self-image Dutch merchants cherished. In a way, this was Holland at its worst, the dark side of a Golden Age. The present-day Dutch observer can only be seized by vicarious shame, which is to some extent tempered by the discovery that some clergymen, administrators, and merchants actually tried to achieve something better. Those who read Wim Klooster's book to its final pages will discover a dispassionate but perfectly clear passage on war, violence and slavery, in which the author shows that he has also arrived at this opinion. It provides a perfect ending, setting apart this study from so many academic exercises in which deaths, atrocities, or misfortunes of anonymous victims are heaped one upon the other without any discernible emotion.

The organization of the book around the idea of a Dutch Atlantic empire also explains the somewhat disappointing treatment of New Netherland. This North American colony was not the result of imperial extension, and admittedly it was a territory with much less military and political glory, less obvious commercial interests, and also fewer inhabitants than Brazil. Nevertheless, it was the only overseas territory of the WIC that, after some initial problems, quietly transformed into a fully-fledged European-style colony, providing solid Dutch foundations for the English to build upon after 1674. Although references to New Netherland and to different aspects of its society and life are found on many pages (and the same holds true for other minor WIC possessions), a proper perspective of the colony as a whole is lacking in Klooster's book. For such narratives one has to consult the works of historians of the territories themselves.²⁰

Because the actual parameters of this book are provided by the conquests of the WIC, those parts of Africa that at some point in time fell under its rule are included, but not included are those parts of Africa frequented by independent merchants (of which there were many, in spite of the WIC monopoly), or those that were ruled by the East India Company, such as the Cape of Good Hope.²¹ Paradoxically for a study on empire, this makes Wim Klooster's book

20 For example, Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Evan Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); and more generally: Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen, and Giles Scott-Smith (eds.), *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations 1609–2009* (Amsterdam: Boom / Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), America being in this case limited to North America.

21 Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840* (Middletown and Cape Town: Longman, 1979).

in a way rather inward-looking. The narrative pays only scant attention to, and sometimes even neglects, what happened outside the scope of the WIC's policy and the strong arm of the Dutch Republic's political efforts and military forces. In addition, Klooster tends to underestimate settler colonialism and the non-urban, non-Holland origin of many common colonists with an agricultural background who were much more attracted by New Netherland with its arable lands and European-style agriculture, than by war-trodden Brazil.²²

Klooster's inward-turned perspective makes the omission of a thorough discussion of the relations between the Dutch and the other European nations and its citizens (many of whom in fact lived and worked in the Dutch colonies) stand out even more. Other Europeans occur in the book in many places, either as partners, rivals or enemies of the Dutch, but not as historical actors in their own right. Providing some insight into their actions and motives would have provided depth and perspective to Dutch agency. Moreover, in the course of the book the parameters appear to contract even further; the geographical emphasis shifts to the Caribbean, coinciding with the rise of the slavery system that began to dominate the islands. In fact, even from the beginning of the book the northern regions of North America are neglected. New France is referred to once in passing (23), after a single paragraph on Newfoundland (Terra Nova, Terre Neuve or Terre-neuf, as the French called it), the first place the Dutch frequented, a considerable time before Hudson's 'discovery' of Manhattan. The virtual absence in this book of the French, either in nearby Québec or in Europe is surprising.²³ There are older as well as more recent studies that the author could have used, for instance those on the Rouen merchant community, with its significant number of Dutch merchants trading in the Atlantic, or on the international merchant networks in which the city was actively involved (including Antwerp, Amsterdam, Middelburg and Rotterdam, where Rouen merchants disposed of their own quays), as well as on the huge Huguenot community in that city.²⁴ This rich historiography makes clear that

22 See for instance, Janny Venema, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652–1664* (Hilversum: Verloren / Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), and *Kiliaen van Rensselaer (1586–1643): Designing a New World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).

23 See, for example, Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France, II: Le comptoir, 1603–1627* (Montréal: Fides, 1966); John A. Dickinson, "La Normandie et la construction d'une Nouvelle France", in *Annales de Normandie*, 58 (2008), 59–67; Gayle K. Brunelle, *Samuel de Champlain, Founder of New France: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012).

24 The very rich, but still largely unexplored archives of Rouen have recently been used by, among others, Jochen Hoock and Jacques Bottin. The latter prepares a new edition of

the impetus for the first Dutch voyages to North America was intricately connected with Franco-Dutch relations and rivalry, not to speak of the political implications of the long-standing French assistance of the Dutch rebels, either overt or covert. During the 'Dutch moment', Rouen played a role in France similar to the one Amsterdam played in Holland, and at the start of the seventeenth century the cities were of equal size.²⁵ From a historiographical perspective, the whole story of French-Dutch relations in the early-modern period, so vital from a political, cultural and scientific point of view, is given scant attention by scholars from both sides; among Dutch historians it suffers, moreover, from their decidedly pro-English bias. A similar remark holds true for the relations between the Dutch and Amerindians in and around New Netherland, so vital for the equilibrium and the development of the colony.²⁶ Of course, every author has to make his or her own choices. In this particular case, it would help the reader to be aware in advance what choices the author's choices are.

Wim Klooster's rich and at times provocative study gives rise to important questions, some related to the theme of the book itself, some going well

the handbook by the Bruges-born merchant, established at Rouen, Michel Van Damme, *Manière la plus industrielle, subtile et briefve qu'on pourra veoir et qui n'a encore esté imprimée a tenir iustement et parfaitement livres de casse* [etc.] (Rouen: Nicolas Dugort, 1606). This manual, in fact a copy of two years of his accounts, contains hundreds of names of merchants involved in international trade, in particular related to the Low Countries. See in particular Jacques Bottin and Jochen Hoock, "Structures et formes d'organisation du commerce à Rouen au début du 17^e siècle : le cas de Michel van Damme", in : François M. Cruzet (ed.), *Le négoce international, XIII^e-XX^e siècle* (Paris : Economica, 1989), 59–93. More generally: Gayle Brunelle, *The New World Merchants of Rouen 1559–1630* [Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, vol. XXI] (Kirksville, 1990); Jacques Bottin and Pierre Jeannin, "La place de Rouen et les réseaux d'affaires lucquois en Europe du Nord-Ouest (fin du XVI^e-début du XVII^e siècle)", in Rita Mazzei and Tommaso Fanfani (eds.), *Lucca e l'Europa degli affari, secoli XVI–XVII* (Lucca : M. Pacini Fazzi, 1990), 149–192; Bertrand Gautier, "Les négociants étrangers à Rouen à l'époque de Richelieu et de Mazarin (1625–1660)", in : *Annales de Normandie*, 55 (2005), 247–266; Jean-Pierre Chaline, *Les dynasties normandes* (Paris: Perrin, 2009). For a case-study involving an early Rouen-bound Dutch merchant family: Willem Frijhoff, "Jacob Eelkens Revisited: A Young Franco-Dutch Entrepreneur in the New World", in *De Halve Maen. Magazine of the Dutch Colonial Period in America* (New York City), 88, n° 1 (Spring 2015), 3–12.

25 Michel Mollat (ed.), *Histoire de Rouen* (Toulouse: Privat, 1979); Jean-Pierre Bardet, *Rouen aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. Les mutations d'un espace social* (Paris: SEDES, 1983), 2 vol.

26 See Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America. The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006); Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch-Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

beyond it. The book employs a descriptive rather than an analytical outlook and tends to conceal great theories behind metaphors like 'empire'. This has urged me to advance my reflections on the topic of the Dutch Atlantic beyond the author's own narrative, which in itself is testimony to the importance of his work. Allow me therefore to focus on some issues that go well beyond the scope of Wim Klooster's synthesis: first, the number of people involved, and second, the scale of violence, which is intertwined with the issue of religion.

First then, population figures. On several pages of his overview Wim Klooster informs us about the number of soldiers in the WIC territories of America and Africa – about 8,000 at most around 1640–1648 (115) – as well as of the number of people in the territories occupied by the Dutch in North and South America and the Caribbean, including some important colonies now completely forgotten by the Dutch themselves, such as Pomeroon (Guiana), Essequibo, Berbice, and Cayenne (191). The population figures are not impressive, even when taking into account that those of the native population are not reliable or, in some cases, absent. The only population size that really springs out (because it is equal to or even higher than that of the population of most of the Dutch provinces), is that of the approximately 100,000 inhabitants of Dutch Brazil about 1640; but only a small number of them were Dutch by birth or provenance. Thus far no surprise. However, readers should be struck by the hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of mostly anonymous victims of warfare, sea battles, shipwrecks, and other major accidents. Those who survived such misfortunes either continued their lives as nameless cannon-fodder on the battle fields or aboard warships, became part of the new colonial settlements, or returned home to Europe. In historical narratives, and also in visual representations (both seventeenth-century paintings and modern movies), these people appear almost without exception as the unwashed masses, collectivities bereft of character or individuality. Similarly, urban histories virtually always neglect the importance of the presence of large garrisons, even more significant as soldiers were constantly moved about. Yet the increased quality of social history of recent years yield abundance evidence that officers and soldiers, difficult to identify in archival documents because of their special judicial status and unstable abode, were nevertheless fully integrated in local society. The first conclusion here is that important parts of the colonial population often escape the attention of historians. The second is that the numbers and the status of people involved in these colonial ventures should be interpreted with much caution and verified whenever possible. I have the impression that, in this respect, Wim Klooster's book does not really go beyond the traditional approach in colonial history.

There is an underlying methodological problem here. Every historian has his or her own ideas on this issue and creates an historical narrative according

to personal preconceptions of the past, whereas virtually none of us is able or willing to articulate the underlying assumptions or verify them through primary research. In fact, this problem is caused by an absence of sufficient historical documentation focused on individual lives and is exacerbated by the professional historian's neglect of the work done by genealogists or church historians, who have compiled such documentation. Early-modern history in the global vein usually is 'serial' or quantitative: it prefers to deal with numbers and trends, not with individual lives. Individuals do play a role in the constructed narrative, but only as random examples to illustrate a particular argument, not in their social and family networks that might in themselves provide arguments or counter-arguments. This is a fatal flaw as the early-modern era was the era of social networks par excellence, in which native bonds and family structures formed the basis of individual survival. In reference to the Dutch Republic, this point has been made by a host of social historians. Luuc Kooijmans illustrated it in his remarkable study on one of the richest and most prominent families of Amsterdam, the Huydecopers, and quite recently, Geert Mak highlighted it again in a popular book on another Amsterdam merchant tribe, the Six family.²⁷ The importance of such networks on both sides of the ocean, as a connective element of the transcontinental Dutch empire, is quite evident. To take only one example from the highest strata: the mother of New Netherland director Willem Kieft was a Huydecoper, the brothers Adriaen Pauw (the grand pensionary) and Michiel Pauw (the founder of Pavonia in New Netherland) were his second cousins; his sister Lijsbeth was married to Johan van Walbeek, the first director of Curaçao, and Pieter Gerritsz van Ruytenburgh, co-founder of the Company of Rio de la Plata in 1598 (not mentioned in Klooster's book), was a cousin of Willem Kieft's mother.²⁸ Without taking into account such networks and their (admittedly often covert) ways of functioning, it is impossible to achieve a full interpretation of the course of life and the rationale behind the agency of individuals involved in the Dutch Atlantic empire.

27 Luuc Kooijmans, *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1997); Geert Mak, *De levens van Jan Six: een familiegeschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2016). Other examples are Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) and, for New Netherland, Susanah Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

28 Willem Frijhoff, "Neglected Networks: Director Willem Kieft (1602–1647) and his Dutch Relatives", in Joyce Goodfriend ed., *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America* (Leiden: Brill 2005), 147–204.

What holds true for the rich, also holds true for the poorer part – it is just more difficult to analyze for a multitude of reasons: problems of migration, provenance and family names, a dearth of data on occupation, social status and religious affiliation, and a lack of genealogical evidence. Yet, whenever possible, it will be sufficient to consult the baptismal, marriage and burial registers, records of orphan chambers, or notarial deeds, to discover to what extent the choice of godfathers and godmothers, of legal guardians and sureties, and of executors determined everybody's life in the seventeenth century, down the lowest social strata, in order to provide the basic needs of survival through a protective network, as close to the person's life and environment as possible. This pattern continued in the Dutch settlements overseas, to which Dutch legal practices were transferred almost without any adaptation, only taking into account a few local particularities.²⁹ Yet it was the poorer part of the European population overseas (soldiers, sailors, servants) that did not have any family in America on whom they could rely. They had to be satisfied with the questionable loyalty and the short-lived presence of their fellow-travelers. The same holds of course for the first settlers, whose initial choices of witnesses or surety are therefore very revealing of their social, moral, and religious inclinations.

Of course, I am not arguing in favor of a complete individualization of research aims of global history. It would make research endless and turn the historical narrative into a cumbersome read, if it were possible at all. And it is certainly not a criticism of Wim Klooster's enterprise under review here. It is, however, an appeal to Atlantic historians to move beyond abstract groups and numbers whenever possible and to zoom in on the near-anonymous actors of history, not only globally or by way of illustration, but in a structural way, using a person-oriented prism that may reveal personal marks and group loyalties of the mass of individuals who together make history.

My second set of reflections concerns the intertwined topics of violence and religion. Traditionally, religion looms large in the history of Dutch Brazil.

29 For New Netherland, in particular, such basic documents have been well conserved, and in abundance, compared to a lot of cities in the Netherlands where archives have much more suffered from neglect, loss or warfare, Amsterdam being a notable exception. Moreover, many of them have been published. See the Bibliography established by the New Netherland Institute at Albany (NY): <http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/research/new-netherland-bibliography/>. Traditionally, genealogy is flourishing among Americans of Dutch descent, but suffers in some circles at the same time from a rampant mythology about the social quality of their ancestors and sometimes from pure invention. The bulk of the first generation migrants to America came from the lower classes in Europe, or pertained to deprived social groups which suffered from economic, religious or military troubles.

The WIC presented itself as the main defender of the true Calvinist world order against the papist superstitions of the hereditary enemy, Spain. This very successful propaganda tale, crammed into the minds of soldiers and sailors, in the course of conquest justified every form of violence for the sake of truth and heaven. And it has pervaded the global historical narrative. Dutch heroes in the West are invariably depicted as staunch Calvinists, always ready to expel heathens and the heretics. Wim Klooster's book does not entirely escape this commonplace. Calvinism as the driving force behind warfare, occupation, and terror is present on many pages, and his empire has distinctly Calvinistic overtones. But does it ring true? The answer must be balanced and variegated.

Calvinism plays a triple role in Klooster's book. First, it features on the most conspicuous level, as it forms the religious motivation put forward by politicians and other authorities in the Dutch Republic in justification for a war with Spain and the conquest of Iberian colonial possessions. Calvinism served as the intellectual, spiritual, and political heart of the new Dutch empire. Whether the advocates of this vision were themselves Calvinist or not is irrelevant. Indeed, initially most of them were only very moderately Reformed by heart, if not dissenters, Lutherans, or Catholics. Significant in this imposition of Calvinism was *raison d'État*. Officially Calvinism was not the state religion, but it certainly was its distinguishing feature, the more so as the Dutch Republic was born out of the resistance of Calvinists to the Catholic authorities of the Low Countries. Any deviation of the political Calvinist imperative could be (and often was) considered as a form of high treason, regardless of the actual confession of the perpetrator. Religious confession and *raison d'État* were however not kept connected through force. Calvinists could behave as non-Calvinists (as the besieged Huguenots at La Rochelle would experience at their expense in 1625),³⁰ and non-Calvinists could defend or propagate a policy inspired by Calvinist motives. As an aside, the omnipresence of the Calvinist motivation is slightly at odds with the famous toleration for which the Dutch are also praised.

Given the savage brutality with which the Dutch treated their enemies, war casualties, and slaves, which was quite often excessive, we may well wonder how far their actual commitment to Calvinist doctrine and ethics went. Neither may we infer from all the propaganda directed by the WIC and its officials with the avowed aim of consolidation of the Reformed religious order, that they all adhered to a clear confession of faith in favor of Calvinism in the

30 Cf. Willem Frijhoff, "Les Provinces-Unies et le siège de La Rochelle", in Pieter C. Emmer, Didier Poton de Xaintrailles and François Souty (eds.), *Les Pays-Bas et l'Atlantique 1500–1800* (Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 120–121.

pure, orthodox form of the canons of Dordrecht. Many, especially those from the smaller towns and the countryside, favored a variant of Calvinism, the so-called *Nadere Reformatie* (Further Reformation), which was very popular in Zeeland and in the Bible Belt further inland, but which also surfaced in New Netherland. Above all, this variant of Calvinism represented a form of spirituality and a way of life which in many ways was not very far removed from that of the Lutherans or from Catholic spirituality, which was not always in uniformity with Catholic dogma.

All this notwithstanding, some among the directors of the WIC and their officials in the colonies, as well as among the politicians and spokesmen of commercial interest groups and the military officers, really were convinced and active Calvinists. One example is Johannes de Laet, a scholar, co-founder of patroonships and shareholder of Rensselaerswijck, and the first historian of the WIC.³¹ Another is minister's son Petrus Stuyvesant, who fostered the ambition to create a semblance of God's reign in the New Netherland territory under his command.³² A third, much more diffuse meaning of Calvinism, which was nevertheless very prominent in the popular pamphlets of the seventeenth century, is that of a virulent, but mostly symbolic opposition to the enemy, in fact against whichever enemy that could for propaganda purposes easily be labeled as Spanish and Catholic. Wim Klooster has aptly informed us of the cruelties, charged with highly symbolic meanings, enacted by such 'Dutch' and 'Calvinist' invaders (in fact mostly foreign soldiers) against the 'Spanish'. They tell the story of the eradication of a completely mythical enemy, often paying scant homage to truth in the process. During the entirety of the first half of the seventeenth century, and even beyond, until the French invasion of 1672 shifted the shape of the enemy for a long century, simple prints, pamphlets, and texts on the 'Spanish Tyranny', often taking their lead from the still very popular anti-Spanish *leyenda negra*, continued to depict foreign enemies that

31 J.A. Jacobs, "Johannes de Laet en de Nieuwe Wereld", in *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* 50 (1996), 108–130; R.H. Bremmer Jr and P. Hoftijzer (eds.), "Johannes de Laet (1581–1649): A Leiden Polymath", special issue of *Lias. Sources and Documents Relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas*, 25/2 (1998), 135–229.

32 Jaap Jacobs, "Like Father, Like Son? The Early Years of Petrus Stuyvesant," in ed. Joyce D. Goodfriend., *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 205–244; Jaap Jacobs, *Petrus Stuyvesant. Een levensschets* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2009); Jaap Jacobs, "'Hot Pestilential and Unheard-Of Fevers, Illnesses, and Torments': Days of Fasting and Prayer in New Netherland", in *New York History* vol. 96/3–4 (2015), 284–300.

were identifiable as Spanish and Jesuits (and preferably both) and therefore constituted a clear and present danger to the survival of the Dutch state.³³

Calvinism played a tricky role in all this. Everyday Calvinist faith distinguished itself by a very precise dogmatic background, of which churchgoers were regularly reminded by the synods and the ministers, who together built a façade of the Reformed Church as the public, non-denominational church.³⁴ But in its role of public church, the Reformed Church had to rely on public officials, whose personal persuasions in the multi-confessional Dutch Republic did not necessarily run along parallel lines. They generally did when issues of morality were publicly discussed, but throughout the seventeenth century those of a non-orthodox Calvinistic persuasion could use the public forum laid open by the Reformed Church in their writings, in publications or appearing in person without having to declare a formal adhesion to Calvinist doctrine. In fact, as contemporaries frequently noted, a characteristic feature of the early Dutch Republic was the presence of a sizable number of individuals, locals as well as immigrants, who, at least in the major cities, appeared to have no religious affiliation at all. They may well be considered thoroughly agnostic and may have been impervious to the imprecations of the established church when Christian morals and civic ethics were being neglected. The savagery of those 'Dutch' was not softened by a moral imperative or a regulating creed; it was just a matter of achieving material gains.

33 Koenraad W. Swart, "The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War", in eds. J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann, *Britain and the Netherlands. Papers delivered to the fifth Anglo-Dutch historical conference, vol. v, Some political mythologies* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), 36–57; Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, "Op Spaanse leest geschoeid. Het verleden van de Republiek in zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse romans", in *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 29:2 (2013), 265–282; Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, Antonio Sánchez Jiménez, and Harm den Boer (eds.), *España ante sus críticos: Claves de la leyenda negra* (Madrid: Iberoamericana / Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2015). Also: Judith Pollmann, "Brabanters do fairly resemble Spaniards after all: Memory, propaganda and identity in the Twelve Years' Truce", in eds. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer, *Public opinion and changing identities in the early modern Netherlands. Essays in honour of Alistair Duke* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 211–226.

34 See Willem Frijhoff, "Was the Dutch Republic a Calvinist Community? The State, the Confessions, and Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands", in eds. André Holenstein, Thomas Maissen and Maarten Prak, *The Republican Alternative: The Netherlands and Switzerland compared* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 99–122; Willem Frijhoff, "How Plural were the Religious Worlds in Early-Modern Europe? Critical Reflections from the Netherlandic Experience", in eds. C. Scott Dixon, Dagmar Freist and Mark Greengrass, *Living with Religious Diversity in Early-Modern Europe* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 21–51.

During the first decades of the Dutch Revolt, it was well-known of many individuals that they had not even been baptized. Of course, this does not refer to the Mennonites who practiced adult baptism and whose numbers must have been near to 15% of the Dutch population at the time of the founding of the WIC. Indeed, the Mennonites cherished a very strong and demanding sense of morality. But it certainly refers to a considerable part of the common people and to the immigrants without employment or means of subsistence – the ‘small money’ of the ‘Golden’ Age, as Arie van Deursen has called them³⁵ – who were recruited for service in the armies and manned the forts, men-of-war and merchant ships of the Dutch Republic. Their overseas actions shaped the image of the Dutch. Calvinists in the strict sense of the word they certainly were not. They were just enemies of whatever the Dutch Republic considered its enemy at the time. Scholars of historical demography usually abhor such voids in the historical record and tend to enroll the agnostics or unbaptized into one of the existing categories.

As a consequence of the early-modern Dutch solution for religious diversity and dissent, i.e. pragmatic connivance, non-Reformed and dissenters tend to disappear from the everyday sources, although they continued to fill the ships and moved to the overseas territories.³⁶ Most of them probably adapted quickly to a new situation, in which their survival necessitated a show of loyalty to public institutions that did not require an inner conviction or even a public confession. In smaller communities, such as the towns and villages of Dutch Brazil and New Netherland and the forts overseas, a few rules and regulations, mostly unwritten, discouraged religious discussions but this did not prevent individual soldiers or settlers to keep to their own creed or, more likely, to drift away from any serious involvement in religious matters, just sticking to attending common Sunday service and maintaining minimal ethics. This may apply to the Lutherans in particular, as they formed the foreign church in the

35 A.Th. van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen. Het kopergeld van de Gouden eeuw* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 1991), improperly translated as *Plain Lives in a Golden Age. Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

36 Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, eds. Jonathan Israel and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1997); Benjamin Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Willem Frijhoff, “La coexistence confessionnelle dans les Provinces-Unies : un régime de connivance à plusieurs vitesses”, in ed. Martin Dumont, *Coexistences confessionnelles en Europe à l'époque moderne. Théories et pratiques, XIe–XVIIe siècles* (Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 2016), 105–124.

Netherlands enjoying most toleration, because they virtually all of them came from Germany or belonged to Germany-born families and did not intermingle with the Dutch, who generally regarded them as despicable and uncivilized peasants. In addition to some of the important immigrant merchant families who held on to their Lutheran faith, large numbers of soldiers and sailors were recruited from Lutheran territories all along Northern Germany, Scandinavia, and the Baltic or had fled the terrible Thirty Years' War in the Holy Empire. Some travel journals show how confessional diversity persisted while a workable conviviality emerged in daily life.

Sometimes, their actions reveal their original creed. Take the case of Philippo van Hulten (1632–1692), the son of a Catholic merchant who traded with Spain and West India, and the brother of three Jesuits!³⁷ As early as 1657, at age 25, he was active in the slave trade.³⁸ Two decades later Cornelis van Aerssen appointed him to lead the Society of Surinam, probably in order to keep Spain quiet, and in 1683 he founded a sugar mill company together with the prominent and decidedly Protestant Amsterdam merchants Huydecoper, Boreel, and Sautijn. When he introduced three Catholic priests in Surinam his Catholic confession and militant intentions became notorious – and he was immediately sanctioned by the Zeeland Chamber of the WIC, which by then was the only one that kept the Calvinist flame burning.³⁹ People must have known about Philippo's Catholic background from the start because his family, originating from 's-Hertogenbosch, had not made a secret of it. Yet it only became an issue when his actions endangered the confessional privileges of some of the hardline Reformed, making it a topic of public scrutiny, attack, and dispute.

Let me round off my argument as to religion by providing another example, taken again from the Pauw-Huydecoper-Kieft network. In the first and second generation, the ancestors – burgomaster Reinier Pauw, councilor Jan Jacobsz Bal alias Huydecoper, and merchant Gerrit Willemsz Kieft – were known as strict Calvinists. After the Alteration of 1578, when Amsterdam joined the Dutch Revolt, Bal desecrated the holiest place of Amsterdam, the former Chapel of the Holy Miracle, by using it to store salt. After the Synod of

37 On Dutch Catholicism, more generally, the synthesis by Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

38 G.W. Kernkamp, "Een contract tot slavenhandel van 1657", in *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 22 (1901), 444–458.

39 G.W. van der Meiden, *Betwist bestuur. De eerste eeuw bestuurlijke ruzies in Suriname 1651–1753* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2008), 41, 45, 50, 55, 66.

Dordrecht (1618–1619), Reinier Pauw, one of the judges who pronounced the death penalty of grand pensionary Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, imposed a Calvinistic regime of true theocratic terror on his city of Amsterdam, from which he was evicted in 1622. The next generation was already anything but Calvinistic, quite the opposite. Calvinism had by this time become a religion of the middle classes, including the ministers among whom no noblemen or merchant sons could be found. Still, the Reformed Church itself, as the public church, remained under the control of wealthy and educated burghers from the top segment, often men without much piety, who were more interested in social peace than in moral imperatives. New Netherland Director Willem Kieft was strongly opposed to the intrusion of Reformed churchmen in the secular domain. Most likely, he was a convinced Remonstrant, just like two of the brothers Pauw: soft Calvinists except when social or political order was concerned. The eldest brother, the grand pensionary and intellectual author of the Peace of Westphalia, Adriaen Pauw, was a notorious agnostic. The famous three-step family model, made operational by Thomas Mann in his great novel on four generations of the Lübeck merchant family *Buddenbrooks*, may provide us with a clue for a human explanation of events and transformations that we sometimes attribute too quickly to rational politics or sheer misfortune. Did the evolution of colonies – whether political, military, merchant, or agricultural – especially those which in about three generations have given shape to Dutch hegemony in the Atlantic World, obey to the logic of a multi-generational evolution? Applying such alternative explanatory models may well provide a clearer explanation of the still rather mysterious downfall of the Dutch Moment.

Response by Wim Klooster

I would like to thank the four reviewers for their thoughtful and wide-ranging comments. It is encouraging to read these reviews, because they suggest I have succeeded in presenting the Dutch Moment as a separate period in Atlantic history, while doing justice to its many dimensions. Hopefully, the reviews will help guide future research on the Dutch Atlantic.

One element of my book that has given the reviewers cause for thought is the tremendous amount of violence on display. It makes Goodfriend wonder: “How should we square the saga of conquest and coercion presented in *The Dutch Moment* with the far more benign profile of the Dutch implanted in the prevailing image of the Dutch Golden Age? Is it possible to reconcile the fact that Vermeer and Rembrandt were gracing the Dutch Republic in the same era that soldiers were on a rampage in Brazil, smashing religious icons

and terrorizing Portuguese Catholics?" In a broader context, the French-born American essayist, critic, and literary scholar George Steiner has raised the same question. Steiner is obsessed with, as one author has put it, "the haunting fact that the Holocaust's ashes spread from high culture's Promethean fire: the civilization that produced Bach also produced Buchenwald."⁴⁰ He has noted the bitter irony that the great winter cycle of Beethoven chamber music played in Munich during the Second World War took place in the vicinity of Dachau's death factory.⁴¹ Steiner's historical canvas is much broader than the Nazi era alone, encompassing all of western civilization, which offers numerous other examples of the juxtaposition of civilization and barbarism: "a large measure of ostentatious civilization – in Periclean Athens, in the Florence of the Medicis, in sixteenth-century England, in the Versailles of the grand siècle and the Vienna of Mozart – was closely correlated with political absolutism, a firm caste system, and the surrounding presence of a subject populace."⁴² Nor was that subjugated population confined to Europe. High Western art, Steiner maintains, was connected to the "rapacities of empire," and "power relations with ... the rest of the world energized the cultural predominance of the West."⁴³ Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on the nature of this connection. To answer the question what link there was – if any – between the routine overseas violence detailed in my book and the artistic achievements of what the Dutch still call the Golden Age, we must look elsewhere.

One context that united these two phenomena was the economic prosperity that was such a conspicuous feature of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, at least up until the century's final quarter. Without the economic boom, the West India Company might never have been established, and it is unlikely that the Dutch states would have been able to finance the war effort in Brazil when the WIC no longer could. Likewise, the boom helped create a demand for (and supply of) the millions of paintings produced during this century. Of course, this does not explain the artistic brilliance of Vermeer, Rembrandt, and their contemporaries. To understand how that came about, we have to take other factors into account, such as the migration of artists from the Southern Netherlands to North. These Flemish immigrants introduced genres that were largely unknown in the Dutch Republic, such as still life and landscape, which

40 Lee Siegel, "Our George Steiner Problem – and Mine", in *New York Times*, Sunday Book Review, 12 March 2009.

41 George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes towards the Re-definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971), 54.

42 *Ibid.*, 68–69.

43 *Ibid.*, 54.

eventually developed in a typically “Dutch style.”⁴⁴ Flemish immigrants such as Usselinx and De Laet were, of course, also important for the foundation and management of the West India Company, which was ultimately responsible for much of the violence enacted by the Dutch in the New World, even if, as Frijhoff argues in his review, many of the perpetrators of this violence may not have been Calvinists at all, but Lutherans or agnostics. Despite such common backgrounds, however, I think it is impossible to reconcile immoral conduct and noteworthy cultural achievements. In contrast to Steiner, my belief is that there will always be a potential conflict between the domain of culture and the demands of morality.⁴⁵

Goodfriend believes that Johan-Maurits’s rule in Brazil, and more particularly his introduction of social and cultural models from the Dutch Republic can be interpreted as a way to solve the contradiction that she has identified. There is certainly support among historians of Brazil for the notion that the court he established was intended to symbolize the political connection between the ruler and his subjects, and induce the Portuguese settlers to engage in cooperation for the common good.⁴⁶ However, Johan-Maurits’s display of grandeur, which has captivated generations of historians, should not blind us to his shortcomings. Although Goodfriend makes it seem as if I blame Johan-Maurits for “imposing the ideals of an advanced civilization on a frontier society,” my actual critique concerns the exaggeration of his military achievements and the fact that he exacerbated the already dire financial situation in which the West India Company found itself.

Since slavery is so prominently featured in *The Dutch Moment*, it comes as a surprise to read Burnard’s remark that the book does not pay enough attention to human bondage. I have done my best to present slavery at quite some length as both a practice and an issue debated at home, and believe it would have been out of proportion to extend the treatment of this topic further. Although I firmly believe that unfree labor was one of the pillars of the Atlantic world, to claim that slavery was a phenomenon even more important than spelled out in *The Dutch Moment* would be at odds with the historical record.

44 Marten Jan Bok, “The rise of Amsterdam as a cultural centre: the market for paintings, 1580–1680”, in eds. Patrick O’Brien, Derek Keen, Marjolein ‘t Hart and Herman van der Wee, *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 186–209, herein 188–90.

45 Cf. Irving Howe, “High Mandarin”, in *Commentary Magazine*, 1 February 1972.

46 Ernst van den Boogaart, “Brasilien hofieren – Johann Moritz’ politisches Projekt sichtbar gemacht”, in eds. Gerhard Brunn and Cornelius Neutsch, *Sein Feld war die Welt: Johan Maurits von Nassau-Siegen: Von Siegen über die Niederlande und Brasilien nach Brandenburg* (Münster: Waxmann, 2008), 73–92, herein 76–77.

The Dutch may have become preeminent slave traders in the mid-seventeenth century, they were not yet the slaveholders they would be at century's end. In their chief colony of Brazil, for example, the Portuguese planters continued to own the vast majority of Africans after ending up under Dutch rule. Betraying his specialization as a historian of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, Burnard proposes to project back the indisputable centrality of slavery in New World societies in a later period onto the mid-seventeenth century. To do that would be misguided. Slavery would be paramount in Dutch America in the period after 1680, and hence subsequent to the Dutch Moment, as Gert Oostindie and I will stress in our forthcoming book.⁴⁷ In the prior period, slavery was just one of several forms of violence the Dutch used to carve out a niche for themselves in the Atlantic world. Voltaire's 1759 condemnation of the Dutch as the cruelest of slaveholders, therefore, belongs to an entirely different era.⁴⁸

While Burnard would have liked to see a more comprehensive discussion of slavery, a minor complaint of Frijhoff is what he calls "the virtual absence in this book of the French, either in nearby Québec or in Europe ... There are older as well as more recent studies that the author could have used, for instance those on the Rouen merchant community, with its significant number of Dutch merchants trading in the Atlantic, or on the international merchant networks in which the city was actively involved (including Antwerp, Amsterdam, Middelburg and Rotterdam, where Rouen merchants disposed of their own quays), as well as on the huge Huguenot community in that city." I am not unaware of the literature at which Frijhoff hints, which shows that in the years around 1600 Dutch merchants were actively involved in the trade with the area that would eventually become Canada, first to procure fish and then furs. One well-known venture was that of the *Witte Leeuw* in 1606, in which seven merchants and the ship's captain, all from Amsterdam, were interested. The captain, Hendrick Lonck, would later earn fame as the commander of the fleet that successfully invaded Brazil in 1630. The arrival of the *Witte Leeuw* alarmed the authorities in France, in part because Lonck seized two Iberian vessels off Newfoundland that a French company had apparently

47 Wim Klooster and Gert Oostindie, *The Second Dutch Atlantic, 1680–1815* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2018).

48 The actual treatment of slaves in Suriname, incidentally, did not induce Voltaire to single out the Dutch colony for criticism. The reason for his harsh judgment was that he wanted to settle scores with his Dutch publisher. The name of the cruel slaveholder Candide meets, Vanderdendur, is a garbled version of that of the publisher, Van Duren. See Gert Oostindie, "Voltaire, Stedman, and Suriname Slavery", in *Slavery & Abolition* 14:2 (1993), 1–34, herein 3.

sent there, but also because the Dutch fur trade with Indians on the Gulf of St. Lawrence was in violation of the proclaimed French monopoly of trade in the region. Undeterred by France's prosecution of this ship, other Dutch merchants tried their luck in the New France trade. On his arrival in 1610, a French colonial official found eleven "Flemish" ships trading in New France. As Frijhoff suggests, there was a link with Rouen. One native of the French port was the supercargo on board the *Witte Leeuw*, while Amsterdam merchant Arnout Vogels joined hands with two colleagues in Rouen to import furs from New France.⁴⁹

The question is: what does this have to do with the Dutch Moment? Dutch trade with New France seems to have come to a halt around 1613, when Amsterdam fur merchants shifted their operations to the area that began to be called New Netherland. It is possible that fur traders organized a few voyages after the start of the Dutch Moment, but I have not found them.⁵⁰ Dutch trade with the English fisheries off Newfoundland did continue, and I could have inserted a few paragraphs on Dutch involvement in cod transports from Newfoundland to Marseille,⁵¹ but to find intimate, intensive commercial Franco-Dutch ties in the half-century that I have studied, we have to turn not to North America but the Caribbean, where the Dutch were crucial in facilitating the take-off of the French islands' sugar "revolution." Here the Dutch manifested themselves as champions of inter-imperial trade, which was an essential element of the Dutch Moment. It is important to emphasize this point, because Frijhoff describes my book as inward-looking and focused on the Dutch Atlantic world rather than the Dutch in the Atlantic world. Frijhoff seems to have skipped

49 Simon Hart, *The Prehistory of the New Netherland Company: Amsterdam notarial records of the first Dutch voyages to the Hudson* (Amsterdam: City of Amsterdam Press, 1959), 12–17; Th. J. Kupp, "Quelques aspects de la dissolution de la Compagnie de M. de Monts, 1607", in *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 24:3 (1970), 357–374, herein 359–360; Cornelius Jaenen, "Champlain and the Dutch", in eds. Raymonde Litalien and Denis Vaugeois, *Champlain: The Birth of French America* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, September, 2004), 242.

50 Dutch links with New France's fur trade did not completely evaporate in the 1620s, but amounted to not much more than the activities of two men, one serving as a clerk in Rouen for a French company that traded with New France, and the other one as clerk for merchants in Quebec. Cornelius Jaenen, "Nederlanders en de bonthandel in Nieuw-Frankrijk", in eds. Piet Emmer, Henk den Heijer and Louis Sicking, *Atlantisch Avontuur: De Lage Landen, Frankrijk en de expansie naar het westen, 1500–1800* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2010), 101–105, herein 105.

51 Cornelius Jaenen, "De Hollanders en de Vlamingen en de Franse visserij in Noord-Amerika", in Emmer, Den Heijer and Sicking, *Atlantisch Avontuur*, 107–11.

Chapter Five, which details the Dutch inter-imperial contacts with the English, the French, and the Spanish that became especially manifold in the wake of Brazil's loss. The significance of the inter-imperial dimension is not lost on the other reviewers. Goodfriend writes: "Adept at skirting rules laid down by rival nations increasingly committed to mercantilist policies, Dutch mariners acted as intermediaries, traversing the ocean to supply manufactured goods as well as slaves to residents of other nations' colonies." Van Zandt adds that *The Dutch Moment* "establishes the necessity of incorporating the Dutch into histories of the early modern Atlantic world, because Dutch actions were deeply connected to myriad other peoples throughout the Atlantic and proved central to so many crucial developments in the seventeenth century." That is precisely what I tried to get across.

In addition to its inter-imperial side, the Dutch Atlantic was distinctly multinational, both in a social and military sense. Goodfriend addresses the large share of foreigners among the Dutch troops: "[T]he units dispatched to Brazil and New Netherland contained large numbers of individuals without a firm attachment to the nation. Klooster leaves us to ponder the consequences of incorporating foreign recruits into the Dutch army. Was Dutch military capacity compromised by the presence of so many rootless and economically marginal individuals? Was it foolhardy to think that men drawn into military service by financial incentives rather than love of country would stand strong when put to the test of battle?" The answer is that there is no evidence to suggest that the performance of soldiers – including those who were rootless and economically marginalized – was shaped by their ethnicity. If that were the case, it would have been impossible for the Dutch army at home, more than half of which was made up by foreigners, to be so successful. Likewise, to take another example from early modern Europe, the many foreigners serving in the Prussian army in the eighteenth century were not necessarily more unreliable than native sons, notwithstanding their reputation of being prone to desertion.⁵² Nor, I hasten to add, did deprivation and exploitation – so common in transatlantic Dutch garrisons and army camps – automatically cause early modern soldiers to fail in their duty. The soldiers in the Spanish army in the Netherlands, whose condition may have been worse than the overseas Dutch, may have mutinied with great frequency, they often did so *after* capturing a city or winning a battle. The case of this Spanish army also reveals that the incidence of mutiny

52 Olaf van Nimwegen, *Deser landen krijchsvolck': Het Staatse leger en de militaire revoluties (1588–1688)* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2006), 43; Michael Sikora, *Disziplin und Desertion: Strukturprobleme militärischer Organisation im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996), 297–305.

declined once it became easier for soldiers to desert. Desertion of individuals or small groups, then, functioned as a safety valve that allowed the humiliating treatment of the rank and file to persist without setting off revolts.⁵³ Mutinies by soldiers were rare in the Dutch Atlantic, although desertion was not very common either, at least in comparison to early modern Europe.⁵⁴ One reason was that it was harder to find shelter in a strange continent, far from friends and family. Defection was an option, but by no means one embraced by most runaways. Nor did sailors in Dutch transatlantic theaters frequently desert, although the exodus in which they engaged, steering the naval ships from Brazil one by one to Europe, constituted an unprecedented form of mass desertion, which could be equated with mutiny.⁵⁵ And a costly mutiny it was, since it enabled the Portuguese fleet to force the Dutch in Recife to surrender.

Although the heyday of the Dutch Atlantic world was brief, Burnard believes the Dutch Moment could have issued into a longer age. A genuine Dutch Atlantic empire could have emerged, he argues, if both Brazil and New Netherland could have been kept. That is a big “if.” Between the tenacious spirit of the Luso-Brazilian rebels, the unwillingness of the Portuguese king to give up on his prize colony in the Atlantic, and the reluctance of the Dutch provinces to keep supporting military expeditions, it was unlikely after 1645 that the Dutch would maintain themselves in Pernambuco. Besides, it was only a matter of time before New Netherland, squeezed between New England and Virginia, would fall prey to the English empire. As L.H. Roper has shown in a recent article (which I wish I had seen before completing my manuscript), the initiative did not lie with Whitehall, but Connecticut’s colonists, led by Governor John

53 Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries’ Wars*, second edition (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 169, 175; Thomas Agostini, “Deserted His Majesty’s Service”: Military Runaways, the British-American Press, and the Problem of Desertion during the Seven Years’ War”, in *Journal of Social History*, 40:4 (2007), 957–985, herein 969.

54 One in four or five French soldiers deserted in the period 1716–1763: André Corvisier, *L’armée française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul* (Paris: Université de Paris, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 1964), 736.

55 Desertion was higher in European navies in the eighteenth century. During the American Revolutionary War, it totaled 13 or 14 percent in the British navy. French losses of mariners due to desertion came to 20 percent during the Seven Years’ War, while Spain’s desertion rate amounted to more than 30 percent at several points during the eighteenth century. See Denver Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century World* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 199–200.

Winthrop, Jr.⁵⁶ What made itself felt here was demographic pressure from New England, which would have been hard for New Netherland to withstand in the long run. It is unrealistic to think, as Burnard does, that enough Germans and Scandinavians could have been persuaded to settle across the ocean in order to form a barrier against this pressure. How unlikely a resurgence of Dutch power was in the Atlantic world is also evident from the reestablishment of the West India Company in 1674 as an organization without a military arm. Nor did the Dutch states any longer organize fleets to defend Dutch interests in the Caribbean, Guiana or West Africa. Under these conditions, an extension of the Dutch Moment was impossible.

56 L.H. Roper, "The Fall of New Netherland and Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Imperial Formation, 1654–1676", in *New England Quarterly* 87:4 (2014), 666–708.