

Capitalism and Cartography in the Dutch Golden Age. Elizabeth A. Sutton.
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There are still people who view the Dutch in their Golden Age as a small, spunky nation that stood up to absolutism, Inquisition, and servile economic relations and succeeded in establishing a society founded on new, more open, tolerant, and economically rational principles. Elizabeth Sutton is not among them. She is not so easily deceived by the self-representations generated by the young Dutch Republic and it is the purpose of this book to reveal through some of its celebrated cartographic output the origins of the capitalist oppression that is the lineal descendant of the miseries of the American late capitalism we now endure. The six chapters of *Capitalism and Cartography* open and close with theoretical reflections and political claims intended to establish links between political and economic power and cultural capital (in this case, the maps and pictorial representations of space), and between these ties in the seventeenth century and our predicament today. In between, Sutton applies her insights to a selection of Dutch cartographic works focused on representations of Amsterdam, the Beemster polder (a large land reclamation work completed in 1612), Brazil (conquered by the Dutch West India Company in 1630 and lost again by 1654), and New Amsterdam, whose fate is well known.

The cartographic works on which she relies for these analyses are drawn primarily from the output of Claes Jansz. Visscher, who was active from 1608 to his death in 1652. He worked contemporaneously with several well-known mapmakers (Willem Blaeu, his

son Joan Blaeu, Jan Janssonius, Hessel Gerritszoon, Jodocus Hondius, and Cornelis Claesz) and collaborated with or appropriated work from several of these over time. The book does little to position Visscher in his professional milieu, but he does appear as a very commercial figure, a man ready to grasp the main chance: quick to publish news maps of battles and conquests and willing to adapt existing maps to new consumer interests. In Sutton's telling Visscher is more a political figure, a Calvinist propagandist for the republic's power elite. This elite — Sutton usually emphasizes its unity rather than the many divisions of this decentralized polity — understood the power of visual images and enlisted Visscher (and the other cartographers?) in their schemes. Visscher's maps lend themselves to interpretations of this sort since they are often adorned with side panels with cartographic details and selected pictorial views. Sutton is alert to what is selected, how it is shown, and what is not shown in these side panels, and is keen to guide the reader toward the capitalist elite interests that stand behind them.

The maps of the Beemster polder are subjected to an extended theoretical interpretation. The Renaissance city-planning ideals developed by Simon Stevin seem to have guided the plotting of the farms created by this drainage project in her reading, and the appropriation by investors of a common resource (a lake on which local people could fish) for private profit through the sale and rental of the new land stands as an emblem of an emergent capitalism. The maps, meanwhile, "reinforced [capitalism's] rational logic of efficiency, regularization, and industry" (72). The propagandistic aspect of Dutch cartography in this period makes rather more sense when Sutton turns her attention to maps associated with the West India Company (WIC). This joint-stock company, unlike its prosperous Eastern pendant, was always controversial at home and vulnerable abroad, and usually in financial difficulties. Its maps provided far more than objective information and Sutton's critical eye is always alert to the confidence-building and territory-claiming motives that inspired Visscher and others in their depictions of Mauritsstad, Recife, and New Amsterdam, and in their charting of the lands it pleased the WIC to name New Holland (Brazil) and New Netherlands.

Her account of Visscher's efforts to depict New Amsterdam as seen from its waterfront, in a way that suggested an equivalence in function and stability with its namesake in Holland, is of particular interest. As New Holland was slipping from their control, the Dutch hoped to focus on New Netherlands; its potential now seemed to go far beyond serving as an outpost for the fur trade. This promise was cut short by English aggression, of course, but in the 1650s a moment of optimistic new beginnings found a cartographic community eager to represent the colony in a suitably positive light. Little did these mapmakers know that they were part of a project intent on unleashing violence, suppressing voices, and inflicting misery on untold millions.

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