

The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World. Wim Klooster.

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016. 420 pp. \$35.

This important monograph on Dutch territorial empire in seventeenth-century Africa and the Americas is the intellectual progeny of Harvard's International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, established by Bernard Bailyn in 1995. For fifteen years, the seminar sponsored an annual meeting of young historians researching the circulation of goods, people, and ideas around the Atlantic Basin in the early modern period. In his 2012 *Itinerario* interview, David Armitage spoke for many other seminar participants when he called it "among the most fertile forcing-houses for historiographical innovation that I have ever been part of" (Martine van Ittersum and Jaap Jacobs, "Are We All Global Historians Now? An Interview with David Armitage," *Itinerario* 36.2 [2012]: 15). Not coincidentally, the author of *The Dutch Moment* is another seminar alumnus, who has been at the forefront of Dutch Atlantic history for many years now.

There is a slight irony in Klooster's choice of topic. Back in 1999, he still characterized the Dutch Atlantic as "expansion without empire"—meaning, of course, territorial empire (Piet Emmer and Wim Klooster, "The Dutch Atlantic, 1600–1800: Expansion without Empire," *Itinerario* 23.2 [1999]: 48–83). Since then, he has written extensively on the Dutch informal maritime empire in the early modern Americas. Yet the question of why Dutch territorial ambitions in the seventeenth-century Atlantic were so short-lived must have continued to nag him. Thankfully, *The Dutch Moment* is not a conventional national-cum-imperial history—i.e., a narrowly conceived political narrative, punctuated by battle scenes and exclusively based on source materials in the national language. Instead, the author draws on a dazzling variety of archival and printed sources in Dutch, English, and Spanish. Is *The Dutch Moment* sufficiently comparative, though?

Chapters 1–3 provide a narrative history of Dutch territorial expansion and contraction in the Atlantic, primarily focused on Dutch Brazil. The author emphasizes the close collaboration between the Dutch West India Company (WIC) and the fledgling Dutch Republic, fighting its war of independence against the king of Spain and Portugal (1568–1648). Chartered in 1621, the WIC received sovereign powers from the Dutch States General and served as the rebel state's military and maritime arm overseas. The WIC started out as a privateering outfit, targeting sugar ships plying between Brazil and Portugal, for example. Yet its ultimate goal was to control the means of production, i.e., the sugar plantations of Pernambuco, invaded in 1630. Territorial empire proved to be an expensive and disastrous adventure. Devouring men, ships, and provisions, Dutch Brazil became a financial albatross hanging round the WIC's neck. Following the Portuguese reconquest (1642–54), the WIC was almost bankrupt and unable to protect other territorial possessions in the Americas. Thus Petrus Stuyvesant, the last

governor of New Netherland, had little choice but to surrender the island of Manhattan to the English in September 1664.

The author discusses various socioeconomic aspects of imperial rise and decline in chapters 4–7, which focus on the WIC’s personnel overseas, European migration and settlement, interimperial trade, and the contributions of the non-Dutch, including natives and African slaves. Chapters 4 and 5 bring home the enormous human costs of empire, by discussing Dutch involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, for example. In chapter 7, the author builds on important work done by Mark Meeuwse (*Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch-Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595–1674* [2012]) by analyzing the interrelationship of native cooperation/opposition and Dutch territorial expansion/contraction in the Atlantic in the seventeenth century.

This splendid monograph is not without its problems. The author could have engaged more with the historiography in order to draw out the larger implications of his work. For example, should the informal, maritime empire that the Dutch enjoyed in the early modern Atlantic be seen as second best, and if so, why? What does *The Dutch Moment* have to add to Atlantic history or histories? It is unclear to the present reviewer why the author decided to structure the book as he did—i.e., three narrative chapters followed by four thematic chapters. While the monograph includes suggestions for further reading, it lacks a comprehensive bibliography. This makes it difficult for readers to locate the primary sources consulted by the author. Only experienced researchers will know that the abbreviation “NAN” used in the footnotes stands for Nationaal Archief Nederland (the Dutch National Archives, in The Hague). Finally, the text contains quite a few factual mistakes, which suggest that little time was spent on the editorial process. For example, Hugo Grotius is said to have died in 1643 on page 76, while on page 57 the years of Grotius’s birth and death are correctly stated as 1583 and 1645, respectively. Still, *The Dutch Moment* is a signal contribution to the field. I will not hesitate to assign it to my own students.

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Amsterdam’s Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil.

Michiel van Groesen.

The Early Modern Americas. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. 266 pp. \$45.

Following the revolutionary Atlantic, the red and black Atlantics, and the British, Dutch, Portuguese, French, and African ones, Michiel van Groesen’s *Amsterdam’s Atlantic* introduces yet another analytical category to the toolkit of historians of the Atlantic world as well as scholars of early modern print media: that of a “public Atlantic” (8). In the year that the Rijksmuseum’s exhibition of Frans Post’s Brazilian landscapes