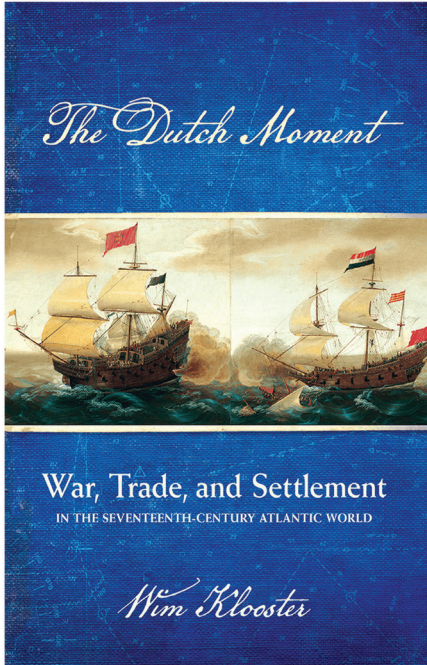


Note

Wim Klooster. *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World*, Leiden, Leiden University Press, 2016. 376 pp. ISBN 978-9-087-28261-5.



Atlantic history is booming, and historians have increasingly given attention to the role of the Dutch within this history. This is a relatively new phenomenon, as scholars have traditionally focused on the Dutch East India Company (voc). Historians working on Dutch history have joined the Atlantic current at the beginning of this century, however, with volumes such as Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven's *Riches from Atlantic Commerce* (2001). In these and later volumes the emphasis of research has mostly been on the Dutch merchants who connected various Atlantic empires, not in the least in Gert Oostindie and Jessica Roitman's 2014 volume *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800*.

Although there has been a surge of publications on Dutch Atlantic activities, Wim Klooster's book is the first monograph on the history of the Dutch Atlantic in the seventeenth century. His scope is ambitious, as he provides a wide-ranging rise and fall narrative centered on the "Dutch Moment"

in Atlantic history. He defines this moment as 'the middle decades of the seventeenth century, when the Dutch left their mark on the wider Atlantic world like never before or afterward' (p. 2). According to Klooster, the Dutch greatly influenced the way the Atlantic world transformed in the seventeenth century.

Klooster demonstrates that during the Dutch Moment, the Dutch were more than just merchants and middlemen. The opening chapters focus on the establishment and territorial expansion and decline of the Dutch West India Company (wic). He gives most attention to the Dutch attempts to conquer the Portuguese colony of Brazil and the years

following the company's takeover of a part of Brazil in 1630. Indeed, if anything, the Dutch Brazil years are the years that enabled and defined the Dutch moment. Only after the loss of Dutch Brazil in 1654 did the Dutch territorial presence and geopolitical importance in the Atlantic dwindle, as they transitioned from colonizers to merchant middlemen. In the following chapters Klooster focuses on the people who shaped the Dutch Moment and who were themselves shaped by (Dutch) warfare, trade, and settlement. He closes with a chapter on the non-Dutch: other Europeans as well as indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans.

While Klooster emphasizes the multi-ethnic character of the Dutch Atlantic, discussing the Dutch trade in enslaved Africans and conflicts and cooperation with indigenous peoples, he pays special attention to the role of various Europeans. Within that framework, he does not tell a traditional story, as he writes about those marginalized and exploited laborers who only managed to scrape by on a minimal wic salary. His fourth chapter on wic soldiers and sailors in particular insightfully analyses the plight of those who did not occupy the high positions within the Company. Soldiers and sailors had to work under hard circumstances, with minimum victuals and little prospect of advancement. Especially because these marginalized Europeans receive well-deserved attention, it stands out that enslaved Africans play a much smaller part in Klooster's narrative. This is particularly striking given that the Dutch slave trade took off during the "Dutch Moment", not in the least because of the wic occupation of a part of Brazil made the Dutch wish for enslaved labor urgent. Klooster rightly points out that in the mid-seventeenth century, 'the Dutch became the leading Atlantic slave traders' (p. 164). However, the trade in and labor of enslaved Africans still only play a minor role in the book.

The thematic structure of the book makes for a coherent and compelling narrative, although this might disappoint those readers who are simultaneously looking for a reference work on the Dutch Atlantic. Various events occur in more than one chapter, and to get a picture of the event from the variety of perspectives that Klooster offers, a thorough read of the book is necessary. While as a whole the book will serve as a leading work of scholarship, a chronological list of events would have helped those less familiar with the Dutch activities in the Atlantic to navigate this narrative. Klooster's strength is in his detailed analysis of a wide array of printed and archival sources in various languages. His book includes a large number of anecdotes to tell his broader story.

The Dutch Moment demonstrates the brutality of life in the Dutch Atlantic for people who were not in power, with an emphasis on European soldiers and sailors. The book is valuable through its combination of a broad narrative of earlier scholarship and a new analyses of original source material. This makes the *Dutch Moment* highly relevant for anyone studying, teaching or researching Atlantic history, but also those interested in Dutch colonial endeavors in general. Within Dutch historiography, the role of the Dutch in the Atlantic can no longer be denied or diminished. By emphasizing the multi-ethnic character of this Atlantic empire, the book moreover challenges historians to think about ways to overcome the national perspective.