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Wim Klooster. *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016. 432 pp. Ill. $35.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8014-5045-7.

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Wim Klooster has written a thought-provoking and well-researched study about the Dutch in the Atlantic world. According to Klooster, between 1620 and 1670 "the Dutch" dominated the Atlantic world. This "Dutch moment" was violent; through war the Dutch West India Company (WIC) tried to conquer and settle essential parts of the Iberian territories. The WIC planned to take over the sugar-producing territories of Brazil, the silver-producing parts of Spanish Peru, and the major slave ports in West Africa. This planned Dutch Empire was known as the "Grand Design." Yet the planning was unrealistic and the Grand Design ended in a grand failure: after the 1670s only small parts of the Americas remained under Dutch administration; and the WIC ended in bankruptcy, to restart, according to the author, "as a new company with the same name." As Klooster states, "Dutch America came close to an extinction—but survived" (p. 4).

Even though this "Dutch moment" ended mostly in failure, Klooster argues, it was fundamental in the shaping of the early modern Atlantic world between 1620 and 1670. The Grand Design was to conquer Spanish and Portuguese territories in the Atlantic, stop their supply of silver, and replace them as the major colonizers. By 1642 this had seemingly worked. The WIC had conquered large parts of sugar-producing Brazil; managed major West African slave ports (Luanda, Elmina, and São Tomé); and had a foothold on the North America continent (New York), the Guyanas, and several Caribbean islands. The WIC had organized a major campaign against the Brazilian capital Salvador; was about to organize an expedition to conquer the silver mines of Peru; and had attacked Campeche, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Moreover, the WIC was the only one ever to capture the silver fleet sailing from New Spain bound for Spain. Given these grand ideas and their impact in the Atlantic, one might have imagined that this should have drawn the attention of historians before, yet one needs to be a multilinguist like Klooster to understand Dutch contributions.

Understanding the historiography of the Dutch moment is not an easy task since books and articles on this topic are dispersed over many languages and are either too local, too rare, or too romanticized. Apart from Charles R. Boxer's *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (1965; reprint 1990), *The Dutch in Brazil, 1624-1654* (1957), and *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686* (1952), and Cornelis Ch. Goslinga's *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast, 1580-1680* (1971), which are all long out of print, little is available in English on Dutch activities beyond specific topics on the slave trade, Dutch Brazil, New Netherlands, and Curaçao. In Portuguese, the

selection is larger but narrower in focus: Brazilian historians continue to thoroughly study Dutch Brazil. Only in Dutch can one find some publications that deal with the WIC, the slave trade, the different Dutch colonies, or the Dutch Empire in the East and West Indies together. Remarkably, in the *Dutch Moment*, Klooster was able to assemble and interpret the many publications on Dutch settlements and trade in the Atlantic. In so doing, he has demonstrated the merits of studying the Dutch Atlantic as a whole in this relatively short but crucial and fundamental moment in the formation of the Atlantic world. Unfortunately, Klooster does not provide a bibliography, just a brief "for further reading" chapter, which mostly has English-language publications. Yet the author's 173 pages of endnotes contains publications in six different languages, and documents and pamphlets from predominantly Dutch (and some Spanish and English) archives and libraries. Although the Dutch Atlantic was multinational, Klooster has mostly (but not exclusively) used Dutch critiques on the WIC's performance to make his case. The author defends this by stating that "the Dutch Atlantic was quintessentially inter-imperial, multinational, and multiracial. At the same time, it was an empire designed to benefit the United Provinces" (pp. 6-7). In sum, one needs to have a Dutch perspective—from the WIC Board, the regents who governed the United Provinces, and foremost the soldiers, sailors, and inhabitants of the Dutch Atlantic—to comprehend the magnitude of the WIC's failure.

The WIC was created to restart an all-out struggle against Spain (which then encompassed Portugal) after the expiration of a twelve-year truce (1609-21). As Dutch trade with the Iberian Peninsula was restricted and much of the Spanish finances for the war came from the Americas, the WIC was tasked to attack the overseas Iberian territories in the Atlantic, open direct commerce, and make a profit. Stage one was privateering and stage two was the capture of enemy colonies. Both were eventually successful but both were too costly. The main conquest was the Portuguese sugar-producing areas in Brazil. At first the attack was against Salvador, the capital of Brazil. After an occupation of one year (1624-25), the city was liberated by a Spanish fleet. However, after the capture of the silver fleet in Cuba, the WIC was able to finance another invasion, this time in Pernambuco (1629), and this time successful. Brazil was meant to be the centerpiece of the Dutch Atlantic Empire.

The Dutch investments were massive, especially in manpower; "nowhere in the Americas did the Dutch or any other power employ as many soldiers as in Dutch Brazil" (p. 33). Yet the profits were disappointing. Indeed, three years into the war in Brazil, the WIC had to ask for financial contributions from the Dutch government, the Estates General. Money became crucial in the WIC's failure. Through continued warfare that lasted a decade, the sugar plantations were destroyed and the soldiers' salaries had to be paid. Indeed, already in 1632, the city government of Amsterdam wanted to abandon the whole project. Little profit was to be gained from Brazil, and what was allegedly gained ended up in the pockets of the WIC directors. All further expeditions had to be paid by the Estates General or individual provinces: the WIC had run out of financial means.

Unlike many other historians, Klooster blames Governor Johan Maurits for the further deterioration of the WIC's position in Brazil. First citing Boxer, he argues that Maurits "may have been lured by the prospect of a lucrative appointment." Klooster subsequently states that "many generations of historians have exaggerated his role, following the lead of Caspar Barlaeus, his hagiographer. His military flaws have been swept under the carpet, his jealousy of [Krzysztof] Arciszewski glossed over, and his extravagant lifestyle—as a representative of a company that was already millions in arrears—trivialized. Maurits's extracurricular activities appear to have made up for his shortcomings" (p. 65). Indeed, as Klooster asserts, during Maurits's reign (he was a count, but was called "prince"), he invested in the infrastructure of Recife and the

building of Mauritsstad, sold sugar plantations and lent money to the new owners, brought many scientists and painters to the colonies, and organized two "diets" (community meetings) for the local Portuguese inhabitants and for Native Americans to state their concerns. That did cost money, and he was eventually recalled because the WIC was unable to sustain his spending. His military record was also mixed: expeditions against Angola and Maranhão were successful, but only temporarily, whereas the expedition to Chili and Salvador ended in failure. In 1645, a year after Maurits was forced to leave, the Portuguese inhabitants revolted, which left only a few fortresses and the city of Recife to suffer for another nine years.

In the second part of Klooster's book it becomes apparent that Dutch success in the Atlantic depended on others, and others depended on the Dutch. For instance, the African conquests in Elmina and Angola depended on local alliances with African leaders. Both the Dutch and the Portuguese successfully sought them and were able to defeat their opponents. In Brazil, the Dutch used some Tupi populations, as an alliance, even in their African expeditions. In the Dutch imagination, native populations of the Americas were the natural allies against the Spaniards: both were oppressed by the same people, as they read in the many Dutch-language reprints of De Las Casas's *Short History of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542). This eventually proved to be wishful thinking on some occasions, for instance, in the 1643 expedition against Potosí. In New Netherlands, the relations were complicated. However, one aspect of the Dutch made it easier. Unlike the Catholic missionaries, the Dutch Calvinists had little inkling how to convert the native populations to their version of Christianity, hence little conflict arose from trying to make the Native population Dutch, so that there were no obstacles to commercial relations.

Most colonists and soldiers were not Dutch, but came from other areas of Europe. Their loyalty depended on two issues: working conditions (soldiers and sailors) and acceptance of their differences (settlers). Finance and tolerance were indeed two seemingly positive aspects of the Dutch Republic during their golden age, yet both had their limitations. The WIC was stingy. Even after Piet Heyn's conquest of the silver fleet, sailors and soldiers rioted as the profit went to the shareholders and not to the persons who made this possible. After the revolt of the Portuguese in Dutch Brazil, two fleets and two armies were sent to liberate the besieged Recife. The two battles of Guararapes led to a massacre of the WIC troops; one reason was their lack of payment before going into battle. Fleets deserted Brazil: the sailors were hardly paid, and there was little food available. Indeed, the swift surrender of Dutch Brazil in 1654 and the non-resistance of New Netherlands a decade later were due to lack of provisions and hence a lack of will to defend the colonies. Catholic soldiers especially deserted en masse in Brazil, after the revolt of the local inhabitants, but they were not alone. Two crucial Dutch officers who had married Portuguese women and owned sugar mills switched sides and religion and surrendered their fortresses when the revolt started. Even in the Netherlands, the widows of the casualties were the hardest hit. The different provinces never fully paid the WIC what they had promised, and the WIC in turn never fully paid the widows the salaries of their deceased husbands.

The clear majority of the population in the Dutch Atlantic was not of Dutch origin. Most were not Dutch Reformed, and all had the expectation to be tolerated. However, as Klooster states, "the scope of religious freedom varied in time and space. Tolerance was never fully a given but was constantly negotiated" (p. 228). In Dutch Brazil, the Catholic Portuguese dominated the countryside. In December 1640, Portugal revolted against Spain, and most felt proud to be independent. The war continued with both Spain and Portugal, until an official truce was belatedly proclaimed in 1642. Catholics were allowed to profess their religion, but

the churches themselves had been confiscated after the conquest. Indeed, the government of Dutch Brazil saw Catholic priests as a fifth column and they were only grudgingly allowed if at all. One of the proclaimed reasons of the revolt was the lack of fulfillment of promises to the Catholic inhabitants made by Maurits. In Dutch Brazil, the largest groups of settlers were Sephardic Jews from the Netherlands. They were staunch supporters of the WIC and were protected by the Estates General in the Netherlands too. Indeed, the first synagogue in the Americas was built in Recife, but still their public profession of religion was contested by Calvinist ministers and Catholic priests alike, not only in Dutch Brazil but also in New Netherlands. Toleration had its limitations. Even in Surinam (Dutch Guyana), where the Jewish community's rights were codified in law, the governor and the governing council needed to be reminded from time to time of violated privileges.

In Klooster's view, the lack of food was one of the main problems in the Dutch Atlantic: there were many soldiers and sailors, and they could not all be sustained by food-producing settlers. Even in agrarian New Netherlands, few settlers brought to the colony had an agrarian background. In Dutch Brazil, the WIC was dependent on Portuguese settlers, in New Netherlands on English speakers, and in the Caribbean, Angola, and Maranhão on food supplies from either poorly provisioned Dutch Brazil or New Netherlands and thus, ultimately, from Europe. Also, Surinam, a Dutch plantation colony, went through a period of hunger. When war was continuing against the English, no food could be imported. After the revolt of the Portuguese inhabitants, the people left in Dutch Brazil were so hungry that they liberated their slaves so that they did not have to feed them.

Where the WIC was not involved, the Dutch Atlantic economy did well. Unlike the WIC, Dutch private merchants concentrated on privateering and trading with non-Dutch territories. Indeed, especially after the fall of Dutch Brazil, many Jewish and non-Jewish settlers returned to Dutch, English, and French territories in the Caribbean from where they brought supplies or financed sugar plantations in the French and British Caribbean. Yet, after peace with Spain (1648), the English and French became new enemies of the Dutch Republic. They threatened what was left of the Dutch Atlantic in the Caribbean and Atlantic, and almost overran it completely. The chapter concerning interimperial trade is similar to Klooster's first book on the Caribbean, ***Illicit Riches: the Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1695*** (1998), and here he carefully makes the case for the lasting effects of the Dutch moment: not the spread of sugar technology to English colonies, as some have argued, but the financing of the French—and to a lesser extent English plantations—as well as a continued spread of the Jewish populations throughout the Americas.

Klooster sees the Danes as an example of how the Dutch could have been: they were more modest and only occupied some islands. Do not conquer large already settled colonies, be realistic about commercial potential, and keep yourself to intercolonial trade. For him, the first WIC failed, not Dutch merchants. In New York, the Dutch Reformed church continued to have its influences, since Dutch settlers did not move. Throughout the Caribbean, Dutch merchants continued to trade and invest. In Surinam, Jewish and non-Jewish settlers created what they saw as a second Brazil.

Klooster's book is challenging. It provides enough material for the knowledgeable reader to think, agree, or question, and for a professional to expand her/his knowledge of the early modern Atlantic world. Klooster has made the case that the Dutch Atlantic is indeed neglected and worth studying. However, by his own admission, the Dutch Atlantic was multinational and multiethnic. This raises the question, when will Atlantic historians start moving away from the national to the cosmopolitan? That does require, this book reminds us, a multilingual and a trans-historiographic approach.

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