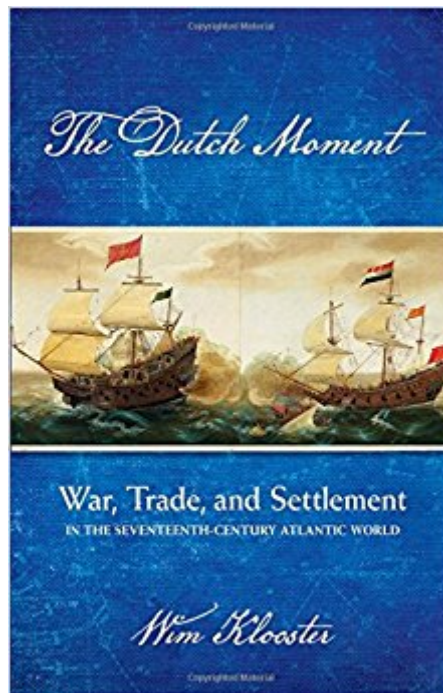




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The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, And Settlement In The Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World



Synopsis

In *The Dutch Moment*, 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. The Dutch would not have been able to achieve military victories without the native alliances they carefully cultivated. Indeed, 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 pivotal colony in the Dutch Atlantic was Brazil, half of which was conquered by the Dutch West India Company. Its brief lifespan notwithstanding, Dutch Brazil (1630–1654) had a lasting impact on the Atlantic world. The scope of Dutch warfare in Brazil is hard to overestimate—this was the largest interimperial conflict of the seventeenth-century Atlantic. Brazil launched the Dutch into the transatlantic slave trade, a business they soon dominated. At the same time, Dutch Brazil paved the way for a Jewish life in freedom in the Americas after the first American synagogues opened their doors in Recife. In the end, the entire colony eventually reverted to Portuguese rule, in part because Dutch soldiers, plagued by perennial poverty, famine, and misery, refused to take up arms. As they did elsewhere, the Dutch lost a crucial colony because of the empire's systematic neglect of the very soldiers on whom its defenses rested. After the loss of Brazil and, ten years later, New Netherland, the Dutch scaled back their political ambitions in the Atlantic world. Their American colonies barely survived wars with England and France. As the imperial dimension waned, the interimperial dimension gained strength. Dutch commerce with residents of foreign empires thrived in a process of constant adaptation to foreign settlers' needs and mercantilist obstacles.

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Customer Reviews

"The Dutch Moment is indispensable for anyone working in Atlantic history, especially those unable to access Dutch-language sources." —Jaap Jacobs, University of St Andrews, author of *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America*

The Dutch Moment is a remarkable accomplishment. It will become the definitive work on the Dutch in the Atlantic world, and it is an exemplary work in Atlantic history. It provides a much-needed history of Dutch activities in the Atlantic in the seventeenth century, and it does so based largely on an original interpretation of primary materials in several languages, remarkable sources ranging from dictionaries to cargo lists to diaries. The writing is lively and witty, and Wim Klooster has a wonderful eye for the memorable detail.

—Alison Games, Dorothy M. Brown Distinguished Professor of History, Georgetown University, author of *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in the Age of Expansion, 1560–1660*

The Dutch Moment offers a terrific history of the pivotal role of the Netherlands in the early modern Atlantic world. It provides in one volume both a masterful survey of the political, economic, and social history of the Dutch Atlantic and the sort of finely detailed archival nuggets that only an expert in the field can extract. A splendid narrative of empire and trade in an earlier era, *The Dutch Moment* is certain to become a classic in early modern Atlantic world and imperial history.

—Benjamin Schmidt, author of *Inventing Exoticism*

"Expertly researched and rich in revealing anecdotes, Wim Klooster's superb book explains the spectacular rise and fall of the Dutch empire in the Atlantic world. Like no study before, *The Dutch Moment* demonstrates how the short-lived Dutch conquest of Portuguese Brazil contributed to the transformation of the Atlantic world in the seventeenth century."

—Mark Meuwese, author of *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade*

"In *The Dutch Moment*, Wim Klooster provides an excellent overview of why the Dutch were more than just interimperial interlopers or outsiders residing offshore. Their calculated policy of aggression between 1620 and 1670 shaped a short-lived empire that transformed the geopolitical balance of power in the Western hemisphere; Klooster's account of those events is vital to understanding the Atlantic world more fully."

—Michiel van Groesen, author of *Amsterdam's Atlantic*

Wim Klooster is Professor of History at Clark University. He is the author most recently of *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* and *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795*.

Klooster is an excellent historian with a wealth of wonderful contributions to the field and this book is no exception.

The Dutch Moment is an in-depth examination of that half century from 1620-1670 during which Dutch sailors, soldiers, merchants and officials burst across the Atlantic to make their country a serious player in the contest for dominance in the Atlantic World. As an American student, I learned about Peter Stuyvesant surrendering New Amsterdam to the British who renamed it New York, but this work reveals a much broader story. It opens the curtain on a sizable colony in what is now New York state and the takeover of New Sweden in Delaware, but shows that the greatest focus of Dutch colonialism was in Brazil with involvement in the Lesser Antilles (Curacao and Bonaire and Tobago), Surinam and the African coast with settlements in Luanda, now in Angola, and Western Africa. These colonial outposts involved considerable warfare against Portugal and, to a lesser extent, England as well as both with and against natives. Dutch Privateers raided enemy shipping while merchants traded cod with Newfoundland, delivered foodstuffs to their settlers in the Americas and, most profitably, dominated the African slave trade. At the end of their Moment, Dutch adventurers turned their sights to trade with colonies of their former rivals and to Asiatic ports. Author Wim Klooster presents his subject from all aspects. He introduces readers to initiation, expansion and contraction of Dutch colonialism in the Atlantic. Klooster discusses the settlers and soldiers who established and defended the colonies as well as their sustenance. Any empire is based on trade and Chapter 5 deals with trade within the Dutch Empire, with Africans and Amerindians, the search for gold and silver and production of and trade in salt and sugar and slaves. The Dutch are described as unique in their ability to trade with English, French and Spanish America in an era when trade was frequently restricted within one's own empire. Chapter 6 explores patterns of migration and settlement, who emigrated, why, their family and occupational attachments, religion and their destinations. Tables show the European population of Dutch America of that Moment to have been predominantly centered in Brazil. With shifting control, not everyone in Dutch colonies was from The Netherlands and Chapter 6 is the story of the place of other nationals and their churches in the Dutch Atlantic. *The Dutch Moment* is a very well researched, detailed study of an otherwise obscure

age of history. One searching for a deep understanding of the saga of Dutch colonialism in the mid Seventeenth Century will be very well served by this book. I consider myself to be more of a general student of history. Some like me may view this as being too detailed for their tastes. I see it differently. Detailed though it is, it enhanced my view beyond what I learned in school. In contrast to the broad strokes of Brazil and Angola being Portuguese, the rest of South and Central America being Spanish and the Dutch holding the Big Apple when it was just a bud, I now appreciate the breadth of Dutch activity in the 17th Century Atlantic world. It has whetted my appetite to know more about this time and place in history. It can do the same for many of you. I received a free copy of this book without an obligation to post a review.

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