

Sjoerd Levelt, Esther van Raamsdonk, and Michael D. Rose (eds.), *Anglo-Dutch Connections in the Early Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2023, 358 pp., ISBN 9780367502348).

The Anglo-Dutch relationship in the early modern period is a rich vein for historians and scholars to mine. From the 1585 Treaty of Nonsuch, which brought English military intervention in the Dutch Revolt during the reign of Elizabeth I, to the ascension of Stadtholder William of Orange to the thrones of Great Britain and Ireland in 1689, the destinies of England and the Netherlands were intricately intertwined. The relationship between the two was deeply complicated due to their close geographic proximity and similarities, especially in religion (Protestantism), geopolitics (shared enmity with Spain and/or France), and commerce (expanding commercial reach and trade throughout the period). There were times when these similarities made them natural allies, such as England's intervention on behalf of the Dutch rebels against Habsburg rule, and times when it made them into enemies, as during the three naval wars they fought between 1652 and 1674. This new collection of essays explores this century-long dynamic in new and exciting ways.

All told, the collection contains twenty-three essays written by scholars from all over the world (although mostly from the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands) meant to show a 'kaleidoscopic view of early modern Anglo-Dutch relations' (1). The essays address a wide variety of topics such as print, language, literature, education, diplomacy, religion, war, and colonialism, just to name a few. There is also a wide range of methodologies and approaches employed by the various scholars such as gender, literary, and even data analysis. The central theme of the book is that England and the Netherlands 'indelibly affected each other at crucial stages of their development' (2) – a statement that, while true, is quite broad and casts the net very widely. This is quite intentional, as the volume seeks to address early modern Anglo-Dutch relations from a multiplicity of perspectives and methodologies.

However, the lack of a tight historiographical focus does not necessarily detract from the volume's value as a scholarly work. Each essay is relatively short in length, ranging from around five to ten pages. Therefore the essays are more quick introductions to a wide variety of topics and approaches to Anglo-Dutch relations in the early modern period rather than presentations of in-depth and detailed analysis. Nevertheless, the essays are all excellently researched and written and serve an important purpose in that they provide starting points and introductions to all the various ways scholars and students can approach early modern Anglo-Dutch relations.

Every essay has its own section of endnotes, making it easy for readers to find both primary and secondary sources for themselves. This collection will serve as a useful reference for anyone interested in a starting point for exploring the Anglo-Dutch relationship further, but not for readers looking for a definitive, all-encompassing work on the topic.

While it would be impossible to cover all of the essays in the collection in a short review, there are some essays that stand out for having new methodological and/or thematic approaches to the topic. For example, several of the essays make important contributions to the burgeoning field of digital humanities, including an analysis of sources relating to the Netherlands in the Stuart State Papers by Yann Ryan and Esther van Raamsdonk. This kind of data analysis would not have been possible before large archives like the State Papers were digitized, and this essay shows how digital humanities can lead to new innovations in research. In this case, the authors used digital techniques to analyze a dataset of around 177,000 letters and 29,000 correspondents to gain a better understanding of Anglo-Dutch correspondence and communication. More specifically, the study uses network science to ‘trace the flow and nature of the conversations’ crossing the English channel and North Sea (138-139). The data analysis allows the researchers to create interesting infographics as well as to ‘uncover individuals and letters that would not have been picked up through qualitative reading alone’ (142). In this way not only can the ‘darker corners of the archives’ for Anglo-Dutch correspondence be illuminated, but the digital methodologies used in the essay can be used in many other large datasets to reveal new insights.

Other innovative essays include Hanna de Lange’s ‘Print and Piracy: the Publication History of John Seldon’s *Mare Clausum*’. While both the English and Dutch were notorious for their acts of piracy on the high seas in this period, this essay explores another frequent act of piracy – the illicit printing and trading of books. As the essay shows, illicit books printed in the Low Countries were a thorn in the side of the regime of Charles I, who tried to maintain tight control of print in England. The essay shows how increased connections through trade and competition could be a check on absolutist ambitions. Another essay examines perhaps the most notorious moment of Anglo-Dutch enmity in this period, the Amboyna Massacre of 1623, through the eyes of natives who witnessed it. This chapter, by Su Fang Na, points out that although the incident has a long historiography with various interpretations of who was to blame for it, almost no attention has been given to non-European witnesses, including two Malay Ambonese sources used for this essay. The essay concludes that ‘cross-cultural relations occurred in a complex network of shifting alliances’ as opposed to the binary way (English vs Dutch) the incident has been understood to this point (77). Another essay, by Nina Lamal, explores Anglo-Dutch relations outside of the usual setting of the North Sea and the East Indies and focuses on the Mediterranean. The essay explores contestations over public events in the Italian port of Livorno,

showing the importance of public rituals in foreign settings in perpetuating tensions between the English and Dutch.

While Anglo-Dutch relations in the early modern period have already garnered a great deal of attention from historians and have a long historiographical legacy, this volume shows that there is still much yet to be discovered and analyzed. Other readers of the volume may choose to highlight different essays from the ones selected here, which is a testament to the sheer variety of topics and methodologies contained within. The collection is recommended for any researcher or student looking for short introductions to the latest research on early modern Anglo-Dutch relations, a dynamic that shaped much of seventeenth century European as well as world history.

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