

gration restrictions' (p. 211). Despite seventeen bills attempting to introduce a literacy test for immigrants successfully passing through the US Senate or House from the 1890s onwards, it took until 1917 before it eventually became law. In the meantime, '17 million migrants, most from eastern and southern Europe, landed in the US' (p. 239). This was, Feys argues, to a great extent due to the efforts of the shipping lobby, which 'managed to delay far-reaching, racially inspired restrictive measures for more than two decades' (p. 321) by hiring influential lobbyists, positioning men inside congressional commissions on immigration, contributing to party funds, distributing gifts, mobilising opposition among old and new immigrant communities and influencing public opinion through the press.

The fascinating story that Feys clearly presents about shipping companies' efforts to halt, moderate and circumvent American immigration restrictions will quite rightly attract migration historians to this book. Maritime historians will find details about the formation and growing power of shipping conferences of interest, particularly how the continental lines came to dominate their British counterparts. Some problems remain. The structure of the book is odd: the two background information chapters are confusingly labelled parts 1 and 2 and are then followed by chapters 1-5. Some of the graphs (e.g. on p. 150) are difficult to read because the shipping lines are differentiated by shades rather than symbols, despite the book being in black and white. The inclusion of an index and an explanatory list of acronyms would also have helped the reader. Lastly, some of the theoretical views referred to could have been introduced earlier and might have played a more prominent role because of their relevance to Feys's arguments, most notably Gary Freeman's hypothesis (p. 250) that specific actors who benefit from immigration are more likely to influence related policies than the broad range of actors who might oppose it. Overall though, the book is a very welcome addition to the literature.

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Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman (eds), *Dutch Atlantic connections, 1680-1800. Linking empires, bridging borders*. (Leiden/Boston, BRILL, 2014) 452 p. ISBN13: 978-90-04271-32-6.

Dutch Atlantic history is a growing field, both within the Netherlands and, on a much more modest scale, internationally. The last fifteen years have seen substantial revisions on the economic significance of the Atlantic world for the Dutch Republic. Some have even suggested that in the late eighteenth century, Atlantic

trade equaled Dutch East India trade in importance. Coming over a decade after *Riches from Atlantic Commerce*, the volume that laid the foundation for this trend, this collection of essays takes the logical next step and examines the impact of Dutch connections on the wider Atlantic world. Its greatest contribution is fully breaking out of an older mold of studying Dutch connections as simply a set of bilateral relations between the Republic (mainly Holland and Zeeland) and the areas that fell under the territorial control of the Dutch. By privileging 'entanglement, connections, and interaction', the volume is much closer to the mainstream of Atlantic history as it is practiced outside the Netherlands, and also highlights themes for which the study of the Dutch is most obviously relevant. As representatives of a relatively small territorial power that simultaneously maintained major inter-imperial commercial and financial interests, Dutch Atlantic merchants seem to belong to the essential set of characters of Atlantic history.

With the exception of four valuable contributions of Aviva Ben-Ur and Jessica V. Roitman on sexual transgressions in the Dutch Jewish Atlantic, of Karel Davids on scholarly networks and Atlantic circuits of knowledge, of Benjamin Schmidt on Frans Post as a painter of Atlantic scenes for the European market, and of Gert Oostindie on imperial rivalry and Dutch decline during the 'Age of Revolutions', trade and trading networks are the center of attention for all the essays. Invariably, the authors show how much can be gained from following merchants, commodities and money across national and imperial borders. In his contribution on Paramaribo as an Atlantic nodal point, Karwan Fatah-Black argues that circumventions of mercantilist restrictions on trade with other European powers, usually considered mainly as a problem of imperial control, were actually central to the Dutch ability to establish and maintain their colonies on the Guiana coast. Most contributions in this volume trace similar patterns of co-dependence, whether it is by establishing the longevity of commercial relations between the English and the Dutch in North-America, extending beyond the existence of the colony of New Netherland, or by illustrating the significance of Dutch trading communities for French and Spanish Atlantic trade.

The editors chose to focus on the period from 1680-1800, and most contributions stick to this chronology. This helps provide greater coherence to the volume, since the nature of Dutch involvement in the Atlantic world changed significantly with the collapse of the imperial ambitions of the first WIC. However, it does reinforce the unfortunate tendency to see the most aggressive period of Dutch Atlantic expansion as merely a 'failed prelude' to a for the Dutch more 'natural' second period of trade-oriented expansion. Especially when focusing on trade, it would be worthwhile to employ the healthy suspicion of neat borders that lays at the basis of this volume to chronology as well as geography. Some of the essays

collected here already start doing so, by looking at continuities in merchant networks beyond the loss of territorial control by the WIC.

The volume thus both shows how much progress has been made in studying the nature of trade and merchant communities in the Dutch Atlantic, and points towards areas in which this progress could be fruitfully continued, or replicated when studying other elite communities like scholars or artists. However, the trade-centeredness of Dutch research also leaves some imbalances and some glaring lacunae, as is duly noted both by the editors themselves in their introduction, and by Alison Games in her concluding essay. One important imbalance concerns the role of the state in Dutch Atlantic involvement. As Oostindie and Roitman rightly point out, ‘as much as we may acknowledge that there was room for self-organization and cross- and interimperial connections, we cannot dismiss the centrality of the metropolitan state and its institutions to how the Atlantic functioned.’ The ambiguity on the role of the Dutch state partly stems from a reluctance to finally rid ourselves of the historically imprecise and in more than one respect misleading notion of Dutch expansion without empire. Clearly, Dutch merchants in the Atlantic world were willing to circumvent or even undercut imperial borders when they felt this was in their private interest, but at the same time collectively were deeply involved in shoring up state power in the small but significant territories that the Dutch were able to hold on to. While this might have made the Dutch exceptional in the eyes of a previous generation of scholars, by now we can easily detect the similarities with the behavior of their Spanish, English or French counterparts. If anything, it makes the study of the imperial dimensions of the Dutch Atlantic more relevant.

One of the most important hostages to fortune of the notions of ‘expansion without empire’, is that it produces the image of a Dutch Atlantic without rulers or ruled. The near absence of slavery – apart from some side-remarks on the slave-trade – in a volume that aims to ‘link empires’ and ‘bridge borders’ is therefore more than just an unhappy by-product of certain thematic choices. Rather, it is illustrative of a Dutch historiography that too often treats free-floating merchants as the real movers of economic and cultural growth, instead of seeing the Dutch Atlantic as, first and foremost, the world the slaves made. If, as Games boldly states in the final lines of this volume, the future of Atlantic history could be Dutch, Dutch Atlantic Studies should be less merchant-centered, and less white.

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