

economisch leven. Engelsen werden veel minder dan Nederlanders geconfronteerd met soldaten van vreemde bodem, wrijvingen met vreemde soldaten die het niet zo nauw namen met de discipline waren hier geen uitzondering. In Engeland was de eigen identiteit markanter gevormd; in de Nederlanden waren gedrukte informatie, propaganda en debat sterker ontwikkeld. We herkennen enkele elementen die zouden terugkeren in de opstand, niettemin lijkt de oorlogvoering te hebben bijgedragen aan een versterking van de positie van de heerser in deze voorafgaande periode.

Het informatiegehalte van dit boek is zeer hoog, de deskundigheid van de auteurs onomstreden. Zij lardeerden de tekst bovendien met kleurrijke details die de leesbaarheid vergroten. De ordening van dit dappere initiatief kon mij desondanks niet steeds overtuigen. Een vergelijking maakt het noodzakelijk te springen tussen de hoofdvorbbeelden. Zijn deze voorbeelden erg talrijk (zoals bij de Engelse steden), of blijft de uitwerking van deelthema's kort en fragmentarisch (vooral in de laatste twee delen), dan wordt het voor de lezer moeilijker de hoofdlijn vast te houden. De keuze voor een veelheid van thema's over de gehele breedte van de samenleving maakte het overzicht er niet gemakkelijker op, en leidde soms tot herhalingen.

De kracht van de auteurs ligt in hun solide greep op de materie. Zij bieden daarmee een overtuigende onderbouwing van de link tussen staatsvorming en oorlogvoering, maar ontdoen deze tegelijkertijd van allerlei onjuiste veronderstellingen. Daarmee is een volgende stap in het debat over oorlog en staatsvorming gezet die in brede kring aandacht verdient.

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#### NIEUWE GESCHIEDENIS

Bochove, Chr. van, *The Economic Consequences of the Dutch. Economic Integration around the North Sea, 1500-1800* (Dissertatie Universiteit van Amsterdam 2008; *Close Encounters with the Dutch*; Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008, €29,90, ISBN 978 90 5260 291 2); Brand, H., Müller, L. (eds.), *The Dynamics of Economic Culture in the North Sea- and Baltic Region in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*; Hilversum: Verloren, 2007, 254 blz., €30,-, ISBN 978 90 6550 882 9).

Somehow and for reasons historians still struggle with the provinces of the northwestern Low Countries countered many major trends of European history from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century. The uniqueness of the Dutch 'Golden Age' made fine fodder for nationalist historians pointing to the economic, political and naval accomplishments most especially of the seventeenth century 'Golden Age'. While extolling the virtues of Dutch society may have waned, in the last half century other facets of the role of the Republic in early modern Europe have proven to be a constant source of

productive work for historians. Two major long term projects, one centred at the University of Groningen and the other at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam with cooperation from the University of Utrecht, are devoted to establishing what that Dutch success meant to other parts of northern Europe. The scholars involved find themselves working in the shadow of extensive study of the years of Dutch prominence and of the rising interest in globalization and its effects. They also work with the advantage of cooperation among historians in different countries and an increasingly easy exchange of knowledge across national boundaries. The results are impressive and promise more of the same for the future.

Christiaan van Bochove's dissertation explores the results of Dutch economic success in the coastal regions around the North Sea from the mid sixteenth through to the end of the eighteenth century. The book is in two parts, the first taking up traffic in goods, then labour and finally capital, and the second offering a closer examination of one critical trade and industry in the region, that is sawmilling. The latter is to be an apposite example of the more general phenomena covered in the former. Underlying the systematic discussion of economic contact is the effort to measure the impact of the Dutch economy in Britain, Denmark-Norway and to a much lesser extent Germany, Sweden and the Baltic. The discussion of goods continues a well-established body of work on price convergence in Europe, the typical measure for economic integration. Starting with 1600 he finds little evidence for markets becoming more closely tied in the following 200 years though he admits that the process may well have been underway before the 'Golden Age'. With labour while he finds that the significant immigration into the Netherlands of workers seeking higher wages had an impact on the Dutch economy, the flow had little effect on the economies of other countries in the region. There other factors were at work which lessened the impact of migration as for example in Norway where there was extensive under-employment. The flow of capital on the other hand van Bochove found to be sizeable and important especially in the eighteenth century. He adds new data on lending to Denmark-Norway, showing that Dutch capital was as important to the economy there as was the much better known lending to Britain. Theoretically growing international trade should lead to common factor prices in the markets involved but that was not the case in the region in the period with the exception, to a certain degree, of the price of capital. Real world considerations in each case mitigated against uniformity in what producers paid for resources.

The discussion of sawmilling introduces the additional complication of technical change. Dutch millwrights in the late sixteenth century developed a wind-powered sawing machine that could do more accurate work faster and with much less labour than was possible with traditional hand sawing methods. Powered mills were not new and in Norway a simpler water-powered device was in use even before the Dutch development. Establishing the costs of capital and labour for the alternative methods of milling Van Bochove is able to demonstrate why hand sawing persisted in England while cruder methods of power sawing continued in Norway down into the nineteenth century and

why relatively low capital costs, high labour costs and an extensive trading network with well developed markets that supplied the right kinds of wood to feed the more sophisticated machines allowed the Dutch to specialize in more productive methods. The greater efficiency of Dutch milling made it possible for producers in the Republic to dominate the more expensive portions of the market. The estimates for factor costs are of course subject to question because of the limited sources but the effort is a major contribution to understanding a critical industry of the period and certainly the analysis here will prove the basis for all future discussion.

Van Bochove and his co-worker in the project at the International Institute of Social History, Jelle van Lottum, were logical contributors to the collection of essays on economic culture in the same region in the same period. Much of what is in their two essays can be found in Van Bochove's book where he covers many of the same issues in the same way and where his discussion of labour mobility leans extensively on the work of Van Lottum. The collection contains fourteen essays in total and though scholars come from around the North Sea the perspective is Dutch. The editors propose a concept of a common unifying economic culture which was the product of economic integration in early modern northern Europe. They see that economic culture as promoting the continuing exchange of goods, ideas, practices, techniques and values (8). While the first of three sections takes a long term perspective with three contributions, the rest of the book is split between papers covering the years up to about 1550 and papers dealing with topics down into the mid nineteenth century. Not all are as successful at fitting into the overarching theme and most seem to cut short discussion, limiting their scope and the evidence they present which lessens any addition to the total. Jan Glete in the first essay calls forcefully for the integration of political and economic studies and some of the papers do that, for example Philip Kelsall when taking up Dutch-Danish relations in the late seventeenth century from a somewhat Danish perspective and Michiel de Jong when talking about Dutch lending to foreign states during the Thirty Years' War. There is new information, for example in Bo Poulson's examination of long term shifts in the herring trade and in Mike Burkhardt's discussion of late medieval Hanseatic trade through the English port of Boston. The questions posed are varied, some narrow as in the case of Hanno Brand exploring Hanse diplomacy during a Sound crisis in 1632 and some wider as with Louis Sicking dealing with the emerging policy on seafaring of the government of the Low Countries in the mid sixteenth century.

The collection includes new information, mostly by young scholars. The essays typically fit into their own established trajectories of study and so the short pieces become small parts of larger projects with background or context not always explicit. Analysis is often apt as with Poulson's discussion of the impact of environmental factors on the fisheries but there can be confusion for example in Kelsall's heroic effort to sort out carrying capacity and the tonnage rating of a ship, a critical matter when it came to paying tolls. The book lacks an index and bibliography, limiting its usefulness. The University of Groningen Language Centre, given the job of expunging errors of language, was not fully

successful. The individual works set out connections and cases of interdependent events in the region over a long period but they in sum only make a start at describing an economic culture if it did exist. Sven Lilja in the most theoretical of the essays uses urbanization as an index of power in the region from 1500 to 1820 without explaining effectively the connection. He complements the discussion with a number of figures which add little to a weak argument and which in some cases are poorly labelled. That problem also plagues Van Bochove's book to a limited degree as does the assumption he seems to share with Lilja that the idea of a 'core' in the region is a widely understood and acceptable concept that has some explanatory effect. An effort to make the idea operative would have enhanced in Van Bochove's case what is already an extremely valuable contribution.

Van Bochove offers an excellent up-to-date bibliography and careful extensive citation reflecting the quality of the research represented in the book. He brings to bear new material culled from Amsterdam notarial records as well as Danish and Norwegian archives. His use of econometrics is light and careful, enough to support his argument but not so much as to obscure it. His insistence on laying out precisely what he plans on doing and then what he has done in the opening and closing of each chapter as well, though convenient for the inattentive reader, can be grating. The practice makes his conclusion a restatement of what has already been laid out, missing an opportunity to explore more the implications of the research. His claim that transport costs did not fall in the seventeenth and eighteenth century is a contentious one and despite his confidence remains unproven even in the face of the varied data he produces to press the point. His use of the rise of merchant shipping tonnage and of the number of sailors as proxies for changes in shipping services are equally suspect. He, as with the authors in the collection of Brand and Müller, use national labels which may not apply as much as they would like them to, the early modern state still emerging in much of the period they all discuss. Still they do often show that politics and economics, especially when it came to lending, were at times connected.

Those working within the larger projects on the North Sea region would agree with Van Bochove that in the years from 1550 to 1800 a coherent spatial economy developed. There is still much to be said about what that might exactly mean and what the implications were for shared culture in the broadest sense of the term. The exchange of ideas and ways of doing things certainly flourished and the connections and networks which promoted the flow of goods, people and ideas in the region had an economic foundation. The 'Golden Age' was the last time the Dutch dominated the political, economic, and cultural lives of the peoples of northern Europe and, for that matter, other parts of the world so in that sense the search for the roots of that influence around the North Sea and into the Baltic in the period is a continuation of the Dutch nationalist history which extolled the virtues of the Republic. That in no way diminishes its contribution to an understanding of the what happened in the Low Countries or, more important, in all those lands around the seas of

northern Europe.

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Bos, D., Ebben, M., Velde, H. te (eds.), *Harmonie in Holland. Het poldermodel van 1500 tot nu* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007, 267 blz., €19,95, ISBN 978 90 351 3149 1).

In het najaar van 2006 verzorgden de leden van de recent nogal in samenstelling gewijzigde sectie vaderlandse geschiedenis van de Universiteit Leiden, op initiatief van de nieuw benoemde hoogleraar in dat vak Henk te Velde, gezamenlijk een collegereeks. Als uitgangspunt kozen zij de discussie over het poldermodel als internationaal succesnummer van Nederland. Zij beoogden na te gaan of zoiets als dat poldermodel beschouwd zou kunnen worden als een historische constante en een uniek kenmerk van de Nederlandse geschiedenis sedert de middeleeuwen. In journalistieke uiteenzettingen en bijvoorbeeld ook in voor een groot publiek bedoelde bijdragen van Herman Pleij is dat met grote stelligheid beweerd. De colleges werden bewerkt tot artikelen en uitgegeven onder de allitererende titel *Harmonie in Holland*. Het is een zeer geslaagde bundeling van artikelen, die elk voor zich het lezen zeer waard zijn, hier en daar ook vruchten van nieuw onderzoek bevatten, in ieder geval blijk geven van goede doordenking van de stof en bovendien ruim voldoende thematische eenheid hebben om het boek ook als geheel te lezen en te waarderen.

Niet verbazingwekkend blijkt uit al die artikelen – Te Velde constateert het ook in zijn inleidende stuk – dat de *sweeping generalisation* zoals hierboven geformuleerd, geen stand houdt tegen serieus onderzoek en grondiger doordenking. Het poldermodel van de late twintigste eeuw en de organisatie van het polderbestuur in de Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen en de vroege nieuwe tijd hebben eigenlijk niets met elkaar van doen, blijkt al meteen in het eerste artikel van Arjan Nobel. Alleen als men zich in verregaande abstractie begeeft, zou men kunnen volhouden dat de Nederlandse geschiedenis zich als geheel kenmerkt door nogal wat pogingen tegengestelde belangen, machtsstrijd en conflicten op niet gewelddadige wijze op te lossen door dikwijls voor alle betrokkenen onbevredigende en ondoorzichtige compromissen, die niettemin voor enige tijd voldoen om die gevreesde gewapende strijd te voorkomen. Maar zo ruim geformuleerd is geen sprake meer van een uniek Nederlands kenmerk. Het komt overal en in alle tijden voor. Weg dus – is mijn conclusie; de bundel spreekt het niet zo scherp uit – met deze pogingen een nationale identiteit te funderen in generalisaties die geen stand houden tegen historisch onderzoek.

Zoals altijd bij publicaties die de moeite waard zijn valt er ook wel wat op of aan te merken. Ten eerste hanteren de auteurs met bewonderenswaardige discipline alle een vooraf door Te Velde gegeven definitie van poldermodel, waarin het woord *consensus* centraal staat (dat werkt op indirecte wijze ook