

indispensable addition to the historiography of infanticide and forensic medicine alike.

Sara Serrano Martínez, Utrecht University

Erik Odegard, *Patronage, Patrimonialism, and Governors' Careers in the Dutch Chartered Companies, 1630-1691. Careers of Empire* (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2022). 283 pp. ISBN 9789004513266.

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In this, his third book, Erik Odegard looks at the careers of two seventeenth-century Dutch colonial governors who went far beyond what was expected of them. Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) and Rijcklof Volckertsz van Goens (1619-1682) are remembered as empire-builders: Johan Maurits in Dutch Brazil, Van Goens in Dutch Ceylon and Java. The study's purpose is not so much biographical as heuristic, using their careers to examine the workings of the two most prominent agents of the Dutch empire, the West India Company (WIC) and the East India Company (VOC).

Odegard places the colonial careers of his two protagonists squarely in the context of these two companies, through which the Dutch Republic organized its empire. For an empire it was, Odegard contends, pointing out persuasively the many connections between the ruling class of the Republic and the colonial administrators. The directors of the companies were frequently also the rulers of the cities that dominated Dutch politics. He shows that the WIC and the VOC were rather more than trading companies: to men like Johan Maurits and Van Goens, the Dutch colonial enterprise was not just about trade but about territorial rule as well. Van Goens, for example, envisioned a Ceylon completely under Dutch control; Johan Maurits clearly acted like a prince in Brazil, developing a new city and building a palace.

Odegard shows in a lucid chapter how both companies were part of a system of devolution of responsibilities, fitting in the institutional structure of the Dutch Republic: in addition to the WIC and the VOC, there were, for example, the admiralties and other forms of devolved power, in which particular interested parties were responsible for particular tasks. It worked on the whole quite effectively – but not always, as Odegard shows.

Odegard points out that the companies were more different from each other than they appear. In selecting a governor-general for Dutch Brazil, the WIC did not so much look at the example of the VOC as at the role of the stadholder. The Brazilian governor was to be a war leader like the Dutch stadholders – hence also the choice for a high-ranking nobleman with close connections to the most important of the stadholders, the Prince of Orange. The WIC was, more than the VOC, conceived as an instrument of war. However, Odegard contends persuasively that while the VOC worked on the whole effectively, the WIC was unable to balance different interests and, therefore, fraught with internal strife and often paralyzed by internal conflict.

This severely hampered Johan Maurits' ability to expand and consolidate Dutch Brazil. Moreover, he added to the confusion by antagonizing the WIC directors and going over their heads to the States General and his cousin, the Prince of Orange. Spending like a prince, he saddled the company with huge expenses. This eventually led to his dismissal. In the long run, all this internecine strife led to the loss of Brazil and the collapse of the company.

Odegard nuances the heroic image of Johan Maurits – he was not as effective a war leader as he might have been, and he had no qualms in enriching himself, among others, by engaging in legal and illegal slave trade. He used his Brazilian spoils, however, to great effect later in life, enhancing his reputation with his contemporaries and with posterity. If anything, Odegard actually makes Johan Maurits more interesting than the rather lofty reputation he has acquired over the centuries.

Van Goens was very different in background, working his way to the top as an orphan. Odegard shows convincingly how crucial patronage was in securing jobs and advancing one's career. By 1655, Van Goens was already rich enough to retire, but he used a return to the Dutch Republic to ingratiate himself with the directors of the VOC in Amsterdam – who also often happened to be the most powerful men within the Amsterdam government – and advance himself back into more powerful positions within the company. As governor, he then single-mindedly established and consolidated Dutch rule in Southern India and Ceylon, dominating as a colonial administrator who clearly had big plans.

Yet like Johan Maurits he antagonized people – in his case especially the VOC administrators in Batavia – and his stint as governor-general of the VOC was a fractious disappointment. Though Odegard shows how this development had much to do with the ever-shifting power balance

within the company once new directors arrived, I could not help but think that Van Goens's character played a role: an overbearing ruler, he seems to have been unable to conciliate antagonists and even insulted an Amsterdam burgomaster-director so much that he was denied burial in that city.

Odegard's study is rich, far-reaching, and thought-provoking, studying two exceptional but instructive cases of agents of empire with their own agendas. Unfortunately, the book seems rushed to publication. There are several typos, quite a number of missing words, and on page 144 even a garbled sentence. In a list of WIC directors, the same name is mentioned twice (p. 127). Sometimes there is redundancy: we are told several times of the sudden offensive of the king of Kandy in 1670. Calling Johan Maurits a 'minor nobleman' (p. 142) must have been a slip of the pen: 'princeling' would have been better to convey Odegard's meaning. Johan Maurits was after all no country squire but entitled to sovereignty, even if it was a tiny principality, and outranked many other noblemen.

Clearly, the book could have done with an extra round of editing. It would be insensitive, given the "publish or perish" pressures of an academic career, to lay this at the feet of the author. Series editors and publishers have in this matter also a responsibility, especially considering the high prices many academic publishers charge for their books. Odegard's insightful study deserves better than this seemingly loveless treatment.

Henk Looijesteijn, International Institute of Social History

Janna Everaert, *Macht in de metropool. Politieke elitevorming tijdens de demografische en economische bloeifase van Antwerpen (ca. 1400-1550)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023). 302 pp. ISBN 9789463726870.

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In de eerste decennia van deze eeuw stond de bestudering van politieke elites niet meer hoog op de stadshistorische onderzoeksagenda. Frederik Buylaert bracht hierin verandering met een onderzoeksproject dat vraagtekens plaatste bij de aanname dat er zich een proces van oligarchisering voltrok in de Zuid-Nederlandse steden in de late