

vestigation. While oriented towards academics and professionals, especially those interested in Europe, *Urbanizing Nature* should also attract the interest of environmental activists everywhere. Both its long-term perspectives and its discourse on agency contribute to a better understanding of our increasingly urbanized planet.

Harold L. Platt, Loyola University Chicago

Dagomar Degroot, *The Frigid Golden Age. Climate Change, the Little Ice Age, and the Dutch Republic, 1560-1720* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018). 364 p. ISBN 9781108410410.

DOI: 10.18352/tseg.1131

Degroot's timely work explores the role that a changing climate played during the Dutch Golden Age. While much of the literature focusing on the Little Ice Age, especially the 'Global Crisis' of the seventeenth century, emphasizes disaster and decline, Degroot explores how the Dutch adapted to climatic variability during this period to become the model economic power in Europe by the mid-seventeenth century.

The introduction and first chapter provide a brief overview to climate change during the early modern period and walks non-climate specialists through 'natural' archives, or paleoclimatic sources utilized in reconstructing past climates. Degroot carefully avoids overstating the role of weather and climate in influencing human events, speaking in terms of probability and likelihood to create scenarios more or less likely to influence human affairs (p. 15-17). The first chapter also sets the parameters for the rest of the work by highlighting three periods of climatic variability circa 1560-1720: a colder phase of the Grindelwald Fluctuation (1560-1628), a less variable and warmer intermediate phase, and a colder and variable period during the Maunder Minimum (1645-1720).

The rest of the work is split into three parts exploring how Dutch responses to weather events and climatic variability shaped the Dutch Golden Age. The first part develops the interconnections between climatic variability, exploration, and commerce. Case studies focusing on Dutch explorations into the Arctic show how cooler temperatures and greater sea ice prevented Dutch navigators from finding a northeast passage to Asia. This failure created opportunities for significant environmental changes as the newly explored and mapped Arctic region opened to Dutch commercial expansion, like whaling. Degroot also posits that changes in wind direction decreased the amount of travel time for Dutch ships (VOC) heading to Batavia and other Dutch East Indies ports. Although, those changes benefitted

many European merchants sailing from the North Sea, the larger Dutch merchant fleet, Degroot argues, allowed them to take better advantage of favorable winds.

Part two explores the role of a changing climate in the development of the Dutch state. Here cooler temperatures and stormy weather of the Grindelwald Fluctuation was detrimental to both Dutch and Spanish forces in the early years of the Wars of Independence. A more stable climate helped the Dutch during a period of peace in the 1630s and the prevalence of easterly winds in the second and third Anglo-Dutch wars provided an advantage to Dutch mariners over their English adversaries. Easterly winds allowed Dutch vessels to control the weather gage in maritime engagements, however, it was up to a ship's captain to take advantage of those conditions. As in the first part, Degroot demonstrates how a variable climate and weather events often allowed the Dutch to utilize their marine environments in times of war to their advantage. Yet, those conditions only shaped human decisions to various degrees.

The third part of the work takes a slightly broader scope from the rest of the work as it develops the influence a variable climate had on Dutch culture and life during the Golden Age. Much of the section explores the more well-known Dutch art and Dutch print culture, but also references technological innovations and insights into life in this variable Golden Age. Yet again, the adaptability of the Dutch during this period stands out through technological innovations like ice breakers and fire control (p. 294-298).

While scholarship on the Dutch Golden Age is perhaps as abundant as the North Sea was with herring busses during this time, the extensive use of ship logs, the integration of 'natural' climate archives, and the emphasis on adaptation during a time of crisis makes this work a valuable addition to the story of the Dutch Golden Age. The numerous ways that Degroot utilizes ship logs, for instance, addresses key arguments from several separate historiographies. In addition, clear explanations of methods, sources, and findings make this an approachable work for non-specialists of climate or Dutch history. The second part of the work does have some exceptions to this where like the participants in the military engagements during the Grindelwald Fluctuation, the narrative becomes slightly bogged down with the attention to the details of specific sieges and military engagements in the development of the Dutch state. While this attention to detail is necessary for addressing arguments within Dutch historiography, the significance of some of those events may lose importance for more general readers, or at least those without a background in early modern geopolitics. In addition, since the Maunder Minimum is an integral part of Degroot's periodization, it might be more useful to highlight total solar illumination (TSI) models than sunspot observations to make an even more compelling point for periodization (p. 36). More recent TSI models would better demonstrate solar irradiance during the period of this study

than would emphasizing sunspot observations.

These quibbles aside, Degroot's work provides another important example of adaptability to climatic variability during a period known for its crises. It is an important read for those interested in Dutch history and would well serve those interested in the Little Ice Age or the methodology of climate historians.

Patrick J. Klinger, University of Kansas

Dominiek Dendooven, *De vergeten soldaten van de Eerste Wereldoorlog* (Berchem: EPO, 2019). 317 p. ISBN 9789462671607.

DOI: 10.18352/tseg.1141

Historici worstelen met de niet-westerse deelname aan de Eerste Wereldoorlog. Zowel bij publiek als historici is de belangstelling voor deze 'vergeten soldaten' enorm toegenomen. De bronnen om daadwerkelijk een geschiedenis van deze groep te schrijven, zijn echter dun gezaaid. Ook Dominiek Dendooven viel deze leemte op. Hoewel inwoners uit de frontzone tijdens de oorlog geen andere niet-Europese groepen zo vaak beschreven als de aanwezige Indiërs en Chinezen, bestond hier nauwelijks informatie over. Als onderzoeker van het In Flanders Fields Museum weet hij 'hoe minder prestigieus de historische eenheid, hoe minder historisch materieel'. Hij maakte het tot zijn missie om de Chinese en Indische aanwezigheid in de Westhoek in kaart te brengen. Dit boek vormt de neerslag van deze zoektocht. Daarbij concentreert hij zich vooral op twee groepen die wel zeer erg onder de mat geschoven zijn, namelijk het *Indian Labour Corps* en het *Chinese Labour Corps*. Deze arbeiderscompagnies werden door het Britse leger vanaf 1917 gerekruteerd uit rurale achtergestelde gebieden om het vuile werk van de oorlog op te knappen: straten herstellen, achtergelaten materialen recycleren, en slagvelden opkuisen. De motivatie voor de meeste arbeiders was economisch: ze kregen een vrij goed loon uitbetaald, maar vielen wel onder harde militaire discipline. Met dit boek ambieert Dendooven om de oorlogservaring van deze mannen zo goed als mogelijk te reconstrueren. Daarvoor gaat hij creatief te werk met een divers bronnencorpus. Zijn boek levert drie belangrijke conclusies op.

Een eerste conclusie is dat de inzet van deze Aziatische arbeiderscompagnies allesbehalve evident was. Ter plaatse gerekruteerde mannen bleken vaak ongeschikt voor het werk. Communiceren ging zeer moeilijk door de taalbarrière. In het geval van de Indische compagnies bleek zelfs onderlinge communicatie moeizaam te verlopen. Het was daarom zeer moeilijk om geschikte leidinggevendenden te vinden voor deze compagnies, die zowel de taal als cultuur van de manschap-