

BOOK REVIEWS

Goslinga, Cornelis Ch. *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680-1791*. Assen/Maastricht and Wolfeboro, N.H., U.S.A.: Van Gorcum, 1985. xii, 712 pages, illustrations. ISBN 90 232 2049 8

Fourteen years elapsed between the time Prof. Goslinga published his first general history of the Dutch in the West Indies for the period 1580-1680 and the appearance of this sequel, which takes up the tale for the years 1680 to 1791. One glance at its closely worked text and comprehensive bibliography will explain the long interval between the two books. Put simply, Dr. Goslinga has had to absorb and synthesize a vast amount of material on what was a very complex state of affairs. The early history of the Caribbean is notoriously chaotic and bewildering, what with its ill-defined borders and boundaries, its strange alliances and its broad range of travellers: pirates, slavers, smugglers, traders, planters, and so on.

Given this confusing background, Dr. Goslinga has succeeded in producing a detailed, comprehensive general history on the Dutch role in this period. Taken together, his two volumes on the Netherlanders in the Caribbean form the best general history on the subject at present available in the English language, pushing well beyond Prof. C.R. Boxer's earlier works in the field. In short, Goslinga's study *The Dutch in the Caribbean* must be regarded as an indispensable addition to the library of any person who entertains any serious interest in the history of the Dutch maritime empire, or of maritime history in general.

Perhaps a brief word of caution might be in order for the general reader, however. Dr. Goslinga's approach is - quite naturally - that of the academic, so that his work can by no means be considered an "easy read". But taking into account the wealth of information which he has to offer, this fact must be seen as only a minor deterrent.

David Marley

Greg, Doreen. *The Reluctant Colonists*. Assen/Maastricht and Wolfeboro, N.H., U.S.A.: Van Gorcum, 1987. x, 368 pages, illustrations. ISBN 90 232 2227 x.

The sub-title for Ms. Greig's book is "Netherlanders Abroad in the 17th and 18th Centuries", and this work is indeed a historical discourse on this theme. What makes this volume unique, however, is the fact that Ms. Greig is an architect, and she approaches her subject from the particular perspective of her own specialty.

Ms. Greig's thesis, furthermore, is an interesting one: examining the spread of the Dutch maritime empire throughout the world by studying the architectural vestiges it has left behind, and contrasting them

studying the architectural vestiges it has left behind, and contrasting them with the original structures and designs found at home. After all, the Dutch traders and settlers leaving Holland in the 17th and 18th centuries already possessed an established style and taste in building design, largely predicated by the climate and social conditions at home. How would these designs be changed by life in, say, Batavia, with its radically different climate, its different building materials and different native craftsmen? It is these sorts of questions which Ms. Greig examines in considerable detail, and with most satisfactory results.

This book, then, offers a welcome supplement to any general history of the Dutch maritime empire. It begins with a survey of architectural styles and techniques extant in the Netherlands in the 17th Century, and then traces their spread throughout the globe, colony by colony. The changes and differences thus produced constitute a most interesting social history.

David Marley

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