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ARTICLE

Anglo-Dutch Imperial Experiments

Elizabeth Hines

SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, USA
Email: ehines@jhu.edu

Abstract

This article investigates the nature of Dutch and English empire in the early modern period through the variety of joint Anglo-Dutch imperial ventures Dutch and English people founded. The article uses seven case studies of sets of imperial projects that included different elements of Anglo-Dutch cooperation to show that Dutch and English people pursued these collaborations largely because they sought profit and wanted to frame their efforts around the Protestant cause, rather than national glory. The article contributes to scholarship on early modern transimperial cooperation, proposing that the Anglo-Dutch case deserves particular attention due to the large number of ventures involved and the range of formality and legality they spanned. The article also argues that Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration was of particular importance to the growing English empire. It finds that almost every English imperial project in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century contained Anglo-Dutch elements. It therefore suggests that the early English empire was, in many ways, an Anglo-Dutch empire.

Keywords: Empire; England; Dutch Republic; Colonies; Trading companies

Introduction

In 1619, diplomats from the Dutch Republic and England signed a treaty asserting that employees of their East India Companies would now render "all aid, friendship and reciprocal correspondence, all necessary offices and duties between friends and neighbours so closely allied."[1] They declared "oblivion and amnesty of all excesses, offences and misunderstandings" between their members.[2] When they acquired new forts "by the industry and communal forces of the two companies," they would be "equally possessed, guarded, and maintained jointly with the garrisons of one and the other company, which shall be in equal number, or else they shall be shared equally between the two companies."[3] For most of their trade, "the Company of England will enjoy a third part of all the traffic... and those of the United Provinces will have the other two."[4] The treaty created a partnership and a cartel between two companies usually thought of as separate concerns.

[1] Origineel Tractaet nevens een Copie Authentijcq vanden, tusschen Commissarissen van Sijne Co. Maj. van Engelant en du van Oostind Engelsche Comp. ter eere en du van Nederlantsche Oostind Comp. ter andere sijde binnen Londen geslooten en gets opden 7 July 1619, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag (NL-HaNA) 1.01.02/12589.33, article 2.

[2] Ibid., article 1.

[3] Ibid., article 25.

[4] Ibid., article 8.

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This article investigates imperial projects, such as the 1619 treaty, that provide a new angle on the Dutch and English empires during the early period of European exploration. Although the empires would become enormously powerful in the following centuries, to the point where the statement that "the sun never sets on the British Empire" became commonplace, these empires began in more experimental forms. Different adventurers and projectors proposed imperial projects to the Dutch and English governments, raised money through sometimes private, sometimes public means, and founded a wide variety of companies that traded and claimed territory in different ways around the world. What was the relationship between the Dutch and the English empires in this period, and what was their nature? Why did Dutch and English people pursue collaborative imperial ventures?

Most work addressing these questions frames itself around trade competition between the Dutch and English empires. Historians of Anglo-Dutch relations tell a story of increasing economic rivalry throughout the seventeenth century.[5] Many works on the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and Dutch West India Company (WIC) share themes of competition between the Dutch and the English in imperial settings around the world.[6] On the English side, historians who mention Dutch involvement in English imperial ventures tend to conclude that it was not important to the overall development of the English empire.[7] However, some historians have taken the Anglo-Dutch relationship seriously in the story of imperial development. Several recent works emphasize the importance of Anglo-Dutch collaboration to specific parts of the English and the Dutch empires.[8] Michiel van Groesen goes the furthest, arguing that "the Dutch and English perspectives on the West Indies were inextricably intertwined, and cannot be properly understood in imperial isolation."[9] This article builds on the work of these scholars, as well as calls by scholars such as Cátia Antunes and Kate Ekama for historians of early Dutch expansion to integrate the histories of empire in the east and west.[10] It suggests that bringing together the stories of a variety of Anglo-Dutch trading companies and regions can extend these conclusions further.

[5] George Edmundson, *Anglo-Dutch Rivalry during the First Half of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911); Charles Wilson, *Profit and Power: A Study of England and the Dutch Wars* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957); K. H. D. Haley, *The British and the Dutch: Political and Cultural Relations through the Ages* (London: George Philip, 1988); Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman, *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

[6] C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1965); Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth Century America* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); D. L. Noorlander, *Heaven's Wrath: The Protestant Reformation and the Dutch West India Company in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019).

[7] W.R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720*, 2 vol. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910-2); Paul E. Kopperman, "Ambivalent Allies: Anglo-Dutch Relations and the Struggle against the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean, 1621-1641," *Journal of Caribbean History* 21, no. 1 (1987); John C. Appleby, "An association for the West Indies? English plans for a West India Company 1621–29," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 15, no. 3 (1987); Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Philip J. Stern, *Empire, Incorporated: The Corporations That Built British Colonialism* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2023).

[8] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York: NYU Press, 2011); Rupali Mishra, *A Business of State: Commerce, Politics, and the Birth of the East India Company* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Joris van den Tol, *Lobbying in Company: Economic Interests and Political Decision Making in the History of Dutch Brazil, 1621-1656* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

[9] Michiel van Groesen, "The Anglo-Dutch lake? Johannes de Laet and the ideological origins of the Dutch and English West Indies," *International Journal of Maritime History* 34, no. 4 (2022), 566.

[10] Cátia Antunes, "From Binary Narratives to Diversified Tales: Changing the Paradigm in the Study of Dutch Colonial Participation," *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 131, no. 3 (2018), 396-7; Kate Ekama, *Courting Conflict: Managing*

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Figure 1. Locations of Anglo-Dutch Imperial Ventures around the World.

The article finds that the early days of imperial expansion were full of Anglo-Dutch ventures, so much so that a full accounting of the beginnings of European empire requires their inclusion. The article tells the story through seven case studies of imperial projects, beginning with the first years of Dutch and English expansion in the late sixteenth century and ending with the absorption of one joint Anglo-Dutch venture into the English East India Company (EIC) just before the outbreak of the First Anglo-Dutch War. First, Anglo-Dutch cooperation in the Amazon region in the last decades of the sixteenth century led to a venture in 1616 in which Englishmen partnered with the Dutch mayor of Vlissingen to found a new colony in Guiana. Second, a group of relatives living in the Dutch Republic and England formed a new Anglo-Dutch trading company in 1606. It pursued ventures in places as far-flung as Barbados, Madagascar, and China, and eventually clashed with both the Dutch and English East India Companies. Third, assorted entrepreneurs proposed new Anglo-Dutch West India Companies to the English crown at least six times, including in 1618, 1620, 1623, 1625, 1637, and 1641. Fourth, the Dutch Republic and England signed the 1619 treaty forming a cartel between their East India Companies. Fifth, Dutch adventurers brought proposals for different Anglo-Dutch or Scottish-Dutch East India Companies to the English crown in both 1618 and 1638. Sixth, the English Providence Island Company solicited Dutch investment and Dutch settlers in the early 1630s. The company negotiated to sell its entire colony to the Dutch West India Company in 1639. Finally, the English Adventurers for Irish Land turned to Dutch partners in 1644. Figure 1 shows each venture marked as a dot in one of its central locations.

The map shows how the efforts spanned the globe. These collaborative ventures do not feature as heavily in traditional histories of empire as the later triumphs of the Dutch and English East India Companies, but they are part of the same story.

Dutch East and West India Company disputes in the Dutch Republic (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leiden, 2018), 17-8.

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Recent scholarship has used the theme of collaboration to evaluate the nature of empire in the early modern period. Historians have explored the role of transnational or cosmopolitan figures who crossed boundaries between empires including the Dutch and English, arguing that these figures show that the concept of empire was a porous one.[11] A number of recent works have studied imperial entanglements more broadly, including individuals serving foreign crowns and the relationship between foreign companies and states.[12] Scholarship on figures such as the Finnish adventurer Hendrik Caerloff, who changed affiliations and worked for a multitude of different powers over the course of his life, shows the flexibility of these relationships.[13] Other books have addressed the transimperial elements of the trade in enslaved people, often involving the Spanish asiento.[14] In addition to the works mentioned earlier that engage with Anglo-Dutch imperial cooperation in specific parts of the empires, several recent publications have addressed the importance of Dutch entanglement with the Scandinavian, Iberian, and French empires in the early modern period.[15] Fredrik Hyrum Svensli writes that "the Dutch and Danish

[11] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Cynthia J. Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations: The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Kimberly Ronda Todt, *Countries with Borders - Markets with Opportunities: Dutch Trading Networks in Early North America, 1624-1750* (unpublished PhD thesis, Cornell University, 2012); Melissa Morris, *Cultivating Colonies: Tobacco and the Upstart Empires, 1580-1640* (unpublished PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2017); Marian Leech, *Wampum, Furs, and the Making of Possession in the Dutch Atlantic World, 1590–1713* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2027).

[12] Henk den Heijer, *De Geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen: Walburg Press, 2002); Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman, ed., *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Cátia Antunes and Jos Gommans, ed., *Exploring the Dutch Empire: Agents, Networks, and Institutions, 1600-2000* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016); Cátia Antunes, Susana Münch Miranda, and João Paulo Salvado, "The Resources of Others: Dutch Exploitation of European Expansion and Empires, 1570-1800," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 131, no. 3 (2018); Cátia A. P. Antunes and Amelia Polónia, ed., *Beyond Empires: Global, Self-Organizing, Cross-Imperial Networks, 1500-1800* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018); Elodie Peyrol-Kleiber, L. H. Roper, Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, and Agnès Delahaye, ed., *Agents of European Overseas Empires: Private Colonisers, 1450-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024).

[13] Henk den Heijer, "Een dienaar van vele heren. De Atlantische carrière van Hendrick Caerloff," in J. Thomas Lindblad and Alicia Schrikker, ed., *Het Verre Gezicht. Politieke en culturele relaties tussen Nederland en Azië, Afrika en Amerika. Opstellen aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. Leonard Blussé* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2011); Fredrik Hyrum Svensli, "Evil Disposed Netherlanders": The Dutch West India Company's Opposition to Danish Activity on the Gold Coast, 1657–1662," *Itinerario* 42, no. 3 (2018).

[14] Giorgio-Giòrs Tosco, *In pursuit of the world's trade: Tuscan and Genoese attempts to enter trans-oceanic trade in the seventeenth century* (unpublished PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2020); Julie Mo Svalastog, *Mastering the Worst of Trades: England's Early Africa Companies and Their Traders, 1618–1672* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Karwan Fatah-Black, Lauren Lauret, and Joris van den Tol, *Geketend voor Hollands Glorie: Slavernij in de geschiedenis van de provincie Zuid-Holland* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2023); BJ Lillis, *A Valley Between Worlds: Slavery, Dispossession, and the Creation of a Settler Colonial Society in the Hudson Valley, 1674-1766* (unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2024).

[15] Scandinavian: Magdalena Naum and Jonas M. Nordin, ed., *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena* (New York: Springer, 2013); Kaarle Wirta, *Early Modern Overseas Trade and Entrepreneurship: Nordic Trading Companies in the Seventeenth Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021). Iberian: Cátia Antunes, Susana Münch Miranda, and João Paulo Salvado, "De Bruijn & Cloots of Lisbon: Insights into a Dutch Firm in the Exploitation of the South Atlantic, 1713–1727," *Journal of Early American History* 14 (2024); Silvia Z. Mitchell and Erica Heinsen-Roach, ed., *Ibero-Dutch Entanglements in the Seventeenth Century: Geopolitical Shifts in Global Perspective* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024); Ramona Negrón, *Dutch entrepreneurship in the Spanish Americas, 1580-1700* (unpublished PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2025). French: Éric Roulet, *La Compagnie des îles de l'Amérique (1635-1651): une entreprise coloniale au XVIIe siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017); Elisabeth Heijmans, *The Agency of Empire: Connections and Strategies in French Overseas Expansion (1686-1746)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

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maritime empires developed as a result of inter-imperial entanglements and continuous processes of negotiation and bargaining."[16] Wim Klooster writes of the empires of Portugal, Spain, and the Dutch Republic that on "four continents - Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas - the three powers mutually constituted each other."[17] These claims can be expanded as historians continue to excavate the records of trading companies and colonies.

The Anglo-Dutch story is part of this larger story of inter-European transimperial cooperation, but this article proposes that it deserves particular attention. More scholarship has addressed the transimperial elements of Dutch expansion than of English expansion. Some scholarship has addressed the deep financial entanglement between the Dutch Republic and England in this period, with Dutch financiers serving as one of the most important financial resources for the Stuart kings.[18] This article shows that Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration in the first half of the seventeenth century was intertwined with Anglo-Dutch financial collaboration, and that it was extremely widespread and intensive. It included a large number of ventures, spanning the entire globe, and it involved a proportionally large fraction of the great Dutch and English trading companies. It also included ventures on every level of formality and legality. Studying the full range of these planned and actualized ventures produces an answer to the question of why Dutch and English people pursued collaborative empire.

This article argues that they did so largely because they sought profit and wanted to frame their efforts around the Protestant cause, rather than national glory. Profit was a recurring theme in the planning documents for the ventures. The 1619 treaty discussed sharing the "common profit" in conjunction with the "common expense," using the term's arithmetic meaning.[19] A 1637 proposal for a new West India Company with Dutch collaboration included in its title "with demonstration of the profits and benefits, which his said royal Majesty hath to expect by the said company," potentially including a broader definition of profits. Most of the ventures explicitly discussed the money they would make for their investors. These goals were not separate, as money could be used to support the Protestant cause, either in practice or in suggestion. Many Dutch and English people at the time saw fighting Catholics, particularly Catholic Spain, as an important part of the Protestant cause, and it was common for them to talk about each other as Protestant neighbours and allies in this mission. Plans to capture Spanish trade in imperial settings around the world could contribute both financially and symbolically. Dutch and English people pursuing profit through imperial ventures could brag about aiding the Protestant cause by partnering with each other and framing their projects around these objectives.

It is important to note that the seven case studies in this article are ones for which records remain. It is not only possible but likely that Dutch and English people proposed other collaborative imperial ventures for which historians do not currently have evidence. The records for some of the case studies are fragmentary, particularly those for the assorted Guiana ventures. Many of the other records are mediated through the East India Companies, which provide a specific institutional perspective. Others are scattered throughout collections of petitions, draft proposals in British archives, and the notarial collections of Dutch

[16] Svensli, "Evil Disposed Netherlanders," 341.

[17] Wim Klooster, "Afterword: The Mutual Constitution of the Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish Empires in the Long Seventeenth Century," *Ibero-Dutch Entanglements in the Seventeenth Century,* 331.

[18] John Christopher Grayson, *From Protectorate to Partnership: Anglo Dutch Relations 1598-1625* (unpublished PhD thesis, University College London, 1978); Simon Groenveld, *Verlopend getij. De Nederlandse Republiek en de Engelse burgeroorlog 1640-1646* (Dieren: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1984); Hugh Dunthorne, *Britain and the Dutch Revolt 1560-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[19] Origineel Tractaet, 7 July 1619, NL-HaNA 1.01.02/12589.33, Article 19.

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cities. More traditional sources, such as the colonial document collections at the Dutch Nationaal Archief and the British National Archives and the diplomatic correspondence of the English ambassador in The Hague, also contribute records. The article uses all of these to piece together the Anglo-Dutch elements of these ventures.

It is also important to state that while the article examines several instances of collaboration, not all Dutch and English imperial actors wanted to work together. Dutch and English people argued and competed all around the world at the same time as they worked to cooperate. In fact, disagreements between the groups filled the registers of the trading companies. Since complaints about neighbours are some of the most common materials in correspondence the world over, these records may have contributed to older histories' emphasis on Anglo-Dutch competition. An important implication of these findings is that early modern English and Dutch ideas of empire were expansive, including both competition and collaboration. The article emphasizes the strength and the variety of the cooperation, but that does not negate the simultaneous competition around the world. The seven case studies will show the range of Anglo-Dutch collaborative imperial ventures that coexisted with Anglo-Dutch competition.

Guiana Ventures

The first case study shows that Dutch and English people were already collaborating on imperial ventures for profit by the late sixteenth century. A range of attempts at trade and settlement on what the Dutch called the Wild Coast, some more successful than others, involved different elements of Anglo-Dutch cooperation. The English adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh pursued several of these projects, beginning with two in 1595 and 1596. Raleigh repeatedly promoted imperial ventures to the Americas as ways to capture the source of Spain's wealth. A document Raleigh drafted to propose a later venture to Guiana argued that King Henry VII of England should have taken Christopher Columbus up on his offer to explore on England's behalf in the fifteenth century. Had Columbus come to Henry VII with as much experience as Raleigh had by the 1610s, Raleigh argued, Henry would have agreed, and "I assure myself that the Castilians had never been lord and monarchs of the West Indies."[20] Raleigh described the riches the Potosí silver mines had brought the Spanish crown. He pointed out that had the mines held gold instead of silver, they would have brought them ten times as much wealth.[21] For this reason, he proposed further expeditions to Guiana, which was said to hold gold in the interior.

Many imperial projects in Guiana included Anglo-Dutch elements through relationships with Raleigh. One of his closest associates was Lawrence Keymis, a Flemish adventurer originally from Ghent.[22] Keymis participated in Raleigh's 1596 venture to Guiana. After a later expedition, Raleigh wrote to his wife that Keymis had found a gold mine in the interior, but he had chosen not to pursue it. One of the reasons Keymis gave was that "it were a folly to discover it, for the Spaniard."[23] He did not want to open a mine with English resources, only to have Spanish forces later take it over and use it to benefit the Spanish empire. Another expedition with a connection to Raleigh set out in late 1597. The founder, Nicolaes de Haen, hired Abraham Cabiljau as the clerk for the voyage.[24] Cabiljau's family was

[20] Raleigh, An estimate of the chardge, dated in catalog "after mid 1613, probably after March 29, 1614," Folger Shakespeare Library (FSL) G.b.10, f. 111.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Lodewijk Augustinus Henri Christiaan Huslman, *Nederlands Amazonia: Handel met indianen tussen 1580 en 1680* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2009), 23n19.

[23] Copy of Sir Walter Raleigh's letter to his wife and apologia on the failure of his Guiana expedition, 22 March (year not identified), The National Archives at Kew (TNA) C 115/101/7632.

[24] Hulsman, *Nederlands Amazonia*, 25.

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originally Flemish, and he would later become involved in Dutch-Swedish imperial collaboration, but when he moved to Amsterdam in 1591 he reported that he came from England.[25] Cabiljau wrote a famous account of the voyage, in which he said that the expedition followed instructions from Raleigh to try to find gold mines.[26] A decade later, the English diplomat Thomas Roe led a venture with partial funding from Raleigh that set out in 1610 and established a new colony on the Amazon.[27] Joyce Lorimer has speculated about how and when Roe's effort started to incorporate Dutch elements.[28] A description in 1614 said that Roe had returned twice in the meantime and that some twenty men remained, and a friend wrote to Roe in 1618 that some of Roe's men had just returned successfully in a Dutch ship and sold tobacco in the Dutch Republic and in England.[29] Dutch and English people partnered with each other in different ways throughout these voyages.

Dutch merchants had been trading to Guiana independently as well since the late sixteenth century. Their ventures picked up in the 1610s, many led by merchants from Zeeland.[30] The merchant Jan de Moor, who served sixteen terms as mayor of Vlissingen, had funded earlier efforts to Guiana. He petitioned the Admiralty of Zeeland in 1614 for a new project.[31] De Moor's partners in his trading company included Engel Leunissen; Arend Jacobsz. van Lodensteijn; and Pieter Courten and Pieter Boudaen Courten, of the Anglo-Dutch Courten family. I will discuss the Courtens in greater depth in the next section of the article. All these men were leading merchants in Zeeland. In 1616, they launched the new Anglo-Dutch project from the city of Vlissingen, which the English government had just returned after holding it and the other "cautionary towns" as security for loans to the States General during the Dutch Revolt. Many of the former garrison members joined the new venture to Guiana rather than returning to England, and others joined them.

The new Anglo-Dutch colonists set out in two groups. Pieter Adriaensz. Ita, who would later gain fame for capturing Spanish ships in 1628, led one from Vlissingen, while Aert Adriaensz. Groenewegen led the second from Walcheren.[32] Groenewegen, who had previously served the Spanish in South America, had then worked for the Courten trading family, and Pieter Courten's brother William contributed to setting out Groenewegen's ship.[33] The English adventurer John Scott wrote about how this was the sixth attempt at permanent European settlement in Guiana, but the first to last because of "the good liking of the natives, whose humours" Groenewegen "perfectly understood."[34] Scott's narrative

[25] Kaarle Wirta, Katja Tikka, and Jaakko Björklund, "Administering Empire. Business Diplomacy in Early Modern Sweden: The Cases of Abraham Cabiljau and the Gothenburg Company," *Legatio* 5 (2021); Hulsman, *Nederlands Amazonia*, 26.

[26] Abraham Cabiljau, Verclaringe van de onbekende ende onbeseylde voiage van America, beginnende van de Riviere Amasoms tot het Eylant van de Trinidad toe, 3 February 1599, transcribed in Hulsman, *Nederlands Amazonia*, 260.

[27] Commonplace Book of Sir Stephen Powle, 16 February 1609 [1610], Bodleian Tanner MS 168, iv.

[28] Joyce Lorimer, ed., *English and Irish Settlement on the River Amazon, 1550-1646* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), 44-52.

[29] Edmund Howes, *Annales, or, a Generall Chronicle of England. Begun by John Stow* (London: Richard Meighen, 1631), 1022; Carew to Roe, 18 January 1618, SP 14/95, f. 45.

[30] 10 September 1611, Stadsarchief Amsterdam (SAA) 5075/210, ff. 121-2; 26 April 1612, SAA 5075/253, ff. 466v-467v; 15 November 1613, SAA 5075/197, ff. 703v-704; 28 February 1614, SAA 5075/134, ff. 225-226v; 4 September 1614, SAA 5075/138, ff. 7-7v; 6 April 1616, SAA 5075/143, ff. 125-6.

[31] 22 March 1614, Resolutien, NL-HaNA 1.01.46/2453, cited in Ivo van Loo, "'Tot uyterste ruïne ende verderf van de Coninck van Hispanien'. Een ambitieus aanvalsplan tot aantasting van de Spaanse hegemonie in West-Indië van Jan de Moor," *Archief: Mededelingen van het Koninklijk Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen* (2004).

[32] Van Loo, "'Tot uyterste ruïne ende verderf van de Coninck van Hispanien'", 80.

[33] Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast, 1580-1680* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1971), 79, 81.

[34] John Scott, The Discription of Guyana, British Library (BL) Sloane MS 3662, f. 37v.

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of Guiana settlements is one of the most commonly used sources for descriptions of these ventures. However, he was writing half a century later, so readers use his account with caution. He recorded that the colony grew large amounts of tobacco and other valuable crops: supposedly, the first ship of goods the Anglo-Dutch settlers sent back to Europe sold for £60,000.[35] Portuguese forces forced the settlers out in 1623, but Dutch settlers returned soon after under the auspices of the WIC.

Guiana continued to be a site of cooperation between Dutch groups and those from the British Isles in the following years. The WIC employed both English and Irish sailors for future efforts, including those who had previously served in Thomas Roe's Guiana venture.[36] The Irishman Bernard O'Brien wrote that the Zeeland chamber of the WIC had commissioned him in 1629 to lead "a company of Irish, English, French and Dutch soldiers" out to Guiana.[37] Jan de Moor himself became a director of the WIC, and he would go on to work closely with Kiliaen van Rensselaer, the famous New Netherland patroon; his rights to trade in the area eventually reverted to the WIC.[38] In this case, as in most of the others, collaboration coexisted with intermittent Anglo-Dutch tension. In 1635, King Charles I of England received reports of the WIC supporting a group of Irish rebels who set themselves up in South America. The reports said that the leader was "like to bring... quarrel and bloodshed both between the nations and among ourselves... their intent is to raise unto themselves a plantation there exempt from English government and maintained against it by the Dutch."[39] However, the threatened anti-English project did not take off.

Early Dutch and English ventures on the Wild Coast frequently included collaborative Anglo-Dutch elements. The founders of the ventures promoted Guiana as a place to potentially trade, find gold, and steal from Spanish America, all goals to which Anglo-Dutch cooperation could contribute. This section has described five different examples of collaborative ventures, most of which were small in scope. The 1616 settlement stands out as particularly noteworthy: it featured English adventurers working with a Dutch company, while many other examples in this article will feature Dutch adventurers working with English companies. While all five ventures proposed and pursued in this section focused on South America as a promising region for imperial expansion, the next section will turn to an even more geographically extensive project.

The Courten Association

The second case study is the trading company which became the Courten Association, a company that practiced Anglo-Dutch collaboration from Europe to the West Indies and from the East Indies to Africa.[40] Beginning in 1606, three Dutchmen, William Courten, Sr., his brother Pieter Courten, and their brother-in-law John de Moncy, traded between

[35] Scott's History and Description of the River of Amazones, Bodleian Rawlinson MS A175, f. 370v.

[36] Lorimer, *English and Irish Settlement on the River Amazon*, 91.

[37] Thomas G. Mathews, ed., "Memorial Autobiografico de Bernardo O'Brian," *Caribbean Studies* 10, no. 1 (1970), 94.

[38] Van Loo, "'Tot uyterste ruïne ende verderf van de Coninck van Hispanien,'" 84, 100; Van den Tol, *Lobbying in Company*, 98.

[39] Reasons for the staye of Willm Gayner an Irishman & his associats from pceading in their psage out of Holland to the river of Amazons and pts thereabout, TNA CO 1/8, f. 228; Reasons to stay Wm Gainer for proceeding to Guiana, 1635, TNA CO 1/8, f. 228v.

[40] This article chooses to spell the name as "Courten," rather than the "Courteen" frequently seen in English government documents. The family was originally Dutch, and the name was always spelled "Courten" in notarial documents in the Dutch Republic, while the English records were inconsistent. Of the few books that discuss the organization in depth, Nicholas Jackson uses the spelling "Courteen Association," while Rupali Mishra uses "Courten Association." Nicholas D. Jackson, *The First British Trade Expedition to China: Captain Weddell and the Courteen Fleet in Asia and Late Ming Canton* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2022); Mishra, *A Business of State*.

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England, the Dutch Republic, and the Mediterranean, and then branched out to the West Indies. William and Pieter had both been involved in the 1616 Guiana venture described in the previous section. They later added John's stepson, and William and Pieter's nephew, Pieter Boudaen Courten. William Courten was a particularly important Anglo-Dutch figure because of his work as a financier. His loans to the English crown over the years totalled over a hundred thousand pounds.[41] For scale, the sum would have compared to a large fraction of annual tax revenue in this period. John de Moncy was also a lender to the crown, as was Pieter Courten.[42] These men were part of a much larger trend, in which Charles granted imperial trading privileges in lieu of repaying his debts. William Courten served the English crown not just through loans and through his trading companies, but also as a drainage investor. He coordinated the financing for Dutch investment in the fen drainage at Hatfield Chase.[43] Of forty-five investors in the project, forty-three were Dutch and two were English.[44] In coordinating the investments, Courten combined multiple forms of what people at the time called projecting.[45] Paul Slack has written about the focus on projecting and improvement in the seventeenth century, which included agrarian improvement, such as fen drainage, as well as concepts of colonization as improvement.[46] Vera Keller has also written about colonial interloping as projecting.[47] The Courten ventures included a variety of far-flung imperial projects, with different levels of sponsorship from the English crown.

One of the Courten group's first imperial ventures was to the Caribbean, where they funded a colony in Barbados in 1627. While primary sources from Courten trading companies and business ventures are scarce, records from the EIC and later court cases about inheritance provide some information about their projects. A later description dating to the inheritance dispute recounted of the Barbados venture's inception that William was "informed by Sir Peter Courten his brother, and other his correspondents in Zeeland; that some of their men of war sent out upon private commissions against the Spaniards in the West-Indies, had discovered an island not inhabited by any nation, of a good soil, and very fit for a plantation."[48] Like Raleigh's, some of the Courtens' ventures were framed around stealing from the Spanish in the Americas. Their representatives claimed Barbados in partnership with the Powell family and in the name of the Earl of Pembroke, but the Earl of

[41] Grant to Wm. Curteen, 4 August 1613, in Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1611-18* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1858), 197; Ley to Conway, 26 July 1625, TNA SP 16/4, f. 190; Letters patent concerning loan by Sir William Courten to James I, 29 July 1625, Huntington Library (HL) EL 6971, ff. 1-2; Discharge to Wm. Curteen, 30 July 1620, in Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: James I, 1619-23* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1858), 170; Letter of warrant to the Lord Treasurer, 11 June 1625, Appendix, in John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1625-26* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1858), 540; List of Privy Seals sent down to be drawn up at the Signet, 12 August 1628, TNA SP 16/112, f. 90; Grant to Sir William Courteen, 17 October 1628, in John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1628-29* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1859), 354; Termino pasche 6 Caroli R, 13 March 1631, TNA SP 16/186, f. 126v; Nethersole to Windebank, 5 June 1633, TNA SP 16/240, f. 91; Windebank to Charles I, 7 June 1633, TNA SP 16/240, f. 103.

[42] Mervyn to Lords of the Admiralty, 12 September 1629, TNA SP 16/149, f. 58; Plumleigh to Dorchester, 17 September 1629, TNA SP 16/149, f. 76; Peter Courteen to Dorchester, September 1629, TNA SP 16/149, f. 78; Nicholas to Dorchester, 19 September 1629, TNA SP 16/149, f. 86.

[43] 13 January 1645, Gedrukte resoluties van de Staten van Holland, Tweede Serie, NA 3.01.04.01/5077, p. 5.

[44] Piet van Cruyningen, "Dutch investors and the drainage of Hatfield Chase, 1626 to 1656," *Agricultural Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (2016), 28.

[45] Koji Yamamoto, *Taming Capitalism before its Triumph: Public Service, Distrust and 'Projecting' in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[46] Paul Slack, *The Invention of Improvement: Information & Material Progress in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[47] Vera Keller, *The Interlopers: Early Stuart Projects and the Undisciplining of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023).

[48] A true State of the Case between the Heires and Assignes of Sir William Courten, HL EL 7970.

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Carlisle, a previous favourite of James I's, claimed the same territory.[49] After multiple excursions to the island and an extended dispute, Carlisle held the patent.[50] The Courten heirs estimated decades later that by losing Barbados, the family had lost £60,000.[51] While still attempting to fight the loss legally, they expanded their trade to the East Indies; a later estimate calculated that William invested £150,000 in the East Indies venture.[52] William Courten died in 1636 and left everything to his son, also named William Courten. William Courten, Jr. had also loaned money to the crown, and he put all his hopes into the East Indies trade.

William, Jr. reorganized the company as the Courten Association, retaining its Anglo-Dutch nature. Charles I invested £10,000 in the Courten Association, in exchange for which he received 10% of the proceeds, while Courten and company invested £120,000.[53] The official patent for the Courten Association stated that "His Majesty finding in his royal wisdom and observation a decay of trade in the present East India Company, was pleased to hearken to a proposition" by an alternate venture.[54] It went on to clarify that "in case the East India Company should fail, this will be an overture of a fair and profitable trade, wherein diverse ships may be employed, much of His Majesty's commodities of the kingdom vended, and His Majesty's customs continued."[55] The emphasis on profit was explicit in this case. The investors included many of the most prominent Dutch merchant strangers in England, such as Nicolas Corcellis, Dirick Hoste, and Adam Lawreyns.[56] Another major investor was Paul Pindar, the great government financier, who partnered with Dutch merchant strangers in London on a variety of projects.[57] William also collaborated with Englishmen on the Courten Association, including Endymion Porter, Thomas Kynaston, Samuel Bonnell, John Weddell, and Nathaniel Mountney.[58] The company's leadership and investors were both Dutch and English.

Both the English and the Dutch East India Companies saw the Courten Association as a competitor. EIC ships seized Courten Association ships near the Red Sea in 1637.[59] Shortly after, the VOC did the same thing, seizing and impounding two of the association's ships and goods estimated at £140,000.[60] The financial blow led the association to consider selling the entire company to the EIC.[61] When the Courten Association sent out new ships in 1641, the VOC seized them again.[62] The VOC ships took the Courten ships to Batavia and

[49] John Scott, The Discription of Barbados, BL Sloane MS 3662, unfoliated pages.

[50] Gary Puckrein, "Did Sir William Courteen Really Own Barbados?" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1981), 135-49.

[51] A true State of the Case between the Heires and Assignes of Sir William Courten, HL EL 7970.

[52] *Strange news from th' Indies, or, East-India passages further discovered* (London: Stephen Bowtel, 1652), 5.

[53] Nicholas to Porter, 30 July 1636, TNA CO 77/6, f. 49; Reasons to move his Majesty to be graciously pleased to confirme under the Greate Seale the Comission passed to Captaine Weddell, undated but placed between documents dated May 1637 and 1 June 1637, TNA CO 77/6, f. 129.

[54] Reasons to move his Majesty, TNA CO 77/6, f. 128.

[55] Ibid., f. 129.

[56] The Grant to Courteen's Association, 1 June 1637, in Ethel Bruce Sainsbury, ed., *A Calendar of the Court Minutes, Etc. of the East India Company, 1635-1639* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 275; Ole Peter Grell, "Godly charity or political aid? Irish protestants and international Calvinism, 1641–1645," *The Historical Journal* 39, no. 3 (1996), 748; Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 175.

[57] George Carew, *Fraud and oppression detected and arraigned. Or An appeal to the Parliament of England* (1676), 2.

[58] The Grant to Courteen's Association, 1 June 1637, *A Calendar of the Court Minutes, Etc. of the East India Company,* p. 275.

[59] Journal of a voyage begun with the ships the Dragon, the Sun, the Katherine, the Planter, the Ann, and the Discovery, for East India, set forth by Sir William Courteen and others, adventurers, 28 March 1637, TNA SP 16/351, ff. 56-63v.

[60] *Strange news from th' Indies*, 5-7.

[61] Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies*, 115.

[62] Decimo septimo Septembris Anno Dni 1644, NL-HaNA 1.01.02/12576.78, unfoliated.

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confiscated all their goods. The EIC then seized another Courten Association ship in 1644 and impounded the bullion it was carrying. Courten and his heirs argued about the money they had lost for decades, and the family is now best known for its protracted legal struggles.[63] A tribunal in the Dutch Republic finally addressed their case in 1650, but it did not settle the claims.[64] Courten's grandson was still trying to sue in the 1670s.

The Courten Association is an example of a fully realized Anglo-Dutch imperial venture, showing both the expansive possibilities and the limits of an Anglo-Dutch trading company. Despite its financial difficulties, it survived with the support of Charles I, who continued to back the Association even when the EIC asked him to stop. He wanted to earn his 10% of its profits, and he wanted to have another successful trading company in his pocket when he was struggling with the leaders of the EIC. The Courten Association continued to trade throughout the 1640s, restructuring as the Assada Company under investor Maurice Thompson's leadership. The company participated in colonization attempts on Madagascar in the 1640s which Alison Games has described in detail.[65] After much negotiation, the company eventually merged with the EIC.[66] This means that the EIC's later triumphs built on the Courten Association's Anglo-Dutch foundations as well as solely English ones - and as well as the further Anglo-Dutch East India Company collaboration the fourth section will describe. The Courten Association is also a prominent example of Dutch people partnering with the English crown for imperial ventures. The next sections will show that this would turn out to be one of the most prevalent forms of Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration.

Anglo-Dutch West India Company Proposals

The third case study shows the range of Anglo-Dutch projects adventurers brought to the English crown for sponsorship in the Atlantic. Throughout the early seventeenth century, various groups tried to found new West India Companies. John Appleby has written about how some of the efforts in the late 1610s and 1620s were solely English, but others, including in 1618, 1620, 1623, and 1625, hoped to collaborate with Dutch forces.[67] The Englishman Robert Heath submitted a petition for a joint Anglo-Dutch West India Company the year he became Attorney General, in 1625. His petition suggested that the English adventurers "join with the Hollanders, to join their forces and take their fortunes with them" in the West Indies.[68] Heath had several interests in common with William Courten, including an interest in projecting. He would be one of the main partners in the Great Level, a larger fen drainage project in the mid-seventeenth century.[69] He also proposed improvement projects for other aspects of the countryside, petitioning in 1641 for a commission to make the river Darwent in Darbyshire navigable.[70] His suggestion for Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration was similarly ambitious. Joint West India Companies were a popular topic among the English privy

[63] The humble peticon of William Courteene Esquier, March 19, 1645 [1646], Parliamentary Archives (PA) HL/PO/JO/10/1/202; The humble peticon of Wm. Courten Esq., 17 February 1646 [1647], PA HL/PO/JO/10/1/225; The humble peticon of Wm. Courten Esq., 5 March 1646 [1647], PA HL/PO/JO/10/1/227; The humble petition of William Courteene Esq., 1 April 1646 [1647], PA HL/PO/JO/10/1/229.

[64] Tribunal, 17 May 1650, NL-HaNA 1.01.02/12576.78, no. 5; 8 May 1662, SAA 5075/3051, pp. 49-52; The Case breifly stated between the king the States Generall and the Administrators of Sir William Courten, 1662, BL Add MS 28937, f. 116v.

[65] Games, *The Web of Empire,* 181-217.

[66] Svalastog, *Mastering the Worst of Trades*, 128.

[67] Appleby, "An association for the West Indies?", 216.

[68] Heath, document beginning "The West Indys, have been for many yeers, the support of the house of Austria," dated in pencil April 1625, TNA CO 1/3, f. 186.

[69] Greate Levell: Commissioners of Sweres, by the greate, and duchy seales, undated, Bodleian Bankes 46, f. 3.

[70] Heath to Bankes, 14 August 1638, Bodleian Bankes 65/1, f. 51.

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council in the 1620s. In 1623 or 1624, Edward Conway suggested in a document that "the merchants and country of England" should "join with the States of Holland in their West India voyage" for a "feasible enterprise."[71] He was proposing a more formal collaboration.

A decade later, his son, the second Viscount Conway and Killulta, became one of the members proposed for a committee to discuss yet another English West India Company plan. Conway and Killulta wrote to John Coke, one of the Secretaries of State, that "I heard much talk of a West India company to be erected in England" and that "there is not anything I should have a better affection to if it be well directed."[72] The other potential members included Lord Maltravers, the diplomat Thomas Roe, Dudley Diggs, John Wolstenholme, and John Pennington.[73] Two other proponents were the Earl of Arundel, Maltravers's father, and the Earl of Pembroke, both known for their investment in early colonial projects. Thomas Roe completed a great deal of the planning work, but he referred to Arundel as "the principal mover" of the project.[74] Roe wrote to Charles Louis, the Prince Elector Palatine, that "my Lord Marshal and Chamberlain [the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke]... laid the charge upon me, to make a frame" for the English West India Company project, "and promised to employ their best power, and credit to advance it."[75] Charles Louis would appear in multiple attempts at Anglo-Dutch West India Companies, both as a potential leader and as a symbolic figure. After Spanish allies seized the Palatinate, his family's hereditary territory in Germany, in the Thirty Years' War, Dutch and English people often centred efforts against Spain and for the Protestant cause on the Palatinate's restitution. Such efforts included anti-Spanish West India Company plans.

The group wanted to model the 1637 plan on the Dutch WIC. Roe asked Charles Louis "by your authority with the Prince of Orange, to procure me a brief model of the form, and government, and relations of that Company in Holland."[76] Charles Louis told his mother, Elizabeth of Bohemia, that the king "desired me to get the form of the founding of the West India Company here [in the Dutch Republic], how continued and how governed at this present."[77] Roe wrote to Arundel two months later that he had successfully "gotten from Holland a copy of the first octroy [charter], of the several additions, privileges, and proceedings of the Society of the United Provinces, which I have set to translate, and from which we shall take much light for the distribution, and home direction of this intended company."[78] He and his colleagues conceived the project in anti-Spanish terms, which included potentially collaborating with Dutch forces in the West Indies. Roe wrote about his hopes for joint war against Spain with the Dutch, saying that they wanted "a resolution, to make, either alone, or united with the Hollanders, a force, able to fight with the [West] Indian fleets, for that must be done."[79] His original planning document started with the sentence "there is no other way, advantageous, and profitable, to make a war upon the King of Spain, but in the West Indies."[80] It predicted that "the falling off of the Indies, and cutting the liver vein, that supplies the body of Spain with such immense sums of money, will humble them, and

[71] Conway, untitled document beginning "I wolde humbly propownd," undated within the 1623 volume but with "1624" written on the back in pencil, TNA SP 14/157, f. 122.

[72] Conway and Kilulta to Coke, 3 July 1637, BL Add MS 64915, f. 62.

[73] Propositions for a West Indya Company, 18 September 1637, TNA CO 1/9, f. 147v.

[74] Roe to Arundel, 20 September 1637, TNA SP 16/364, f. 162.

[75] Roe to Charles Louis, 29 July 1637, TNA SP 16/364, f. 165v.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Charles Louis to Elizabeth of Bohemia, 27 August 1637, in Nadine Akkerman, ed., *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 629.

[78] Roe to Arundel, 20 September 1637, TNA SP 16/364, f. 162v.

[79] Thomas Roe to Charles Louis, 29 July 1637, TNA SP 16/364, f. 166.

[80] Propositions for a West Indya Company, 18 September 1637, TNA CO 1/9, f. 146.

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give a general peace, and security, so much longed for, to all Christendom."[81] For Roe, the two goals, profit and harm to Spain, were intertwined.

The new West India Company idea was tied up in the Anglo-Franco-Dutch treaty negotiations of 1637, and in the end, the company did not come to fruition because their anti-Spanish treaty did not. Roe had written during the planning of the company that "if the treaty succeed not, all will fall to ground; and this company, and a war of subjects cannot stand, with a peace continued between the crowns" of England and Spain.[82] Planning paused, but it resumed a few years later under the aegis of Johannes de Laet, a WIC director and New Netherland patroon. When Charles Louis wrote to Elizabeth of Bohemia about looking into the model of the WIC, he wrote that the information "I doubt not will be best got at Leiden of Monsieur de Laet."[83] De Laet had mentioned his hopes for further colonization when he dedicated the 1633 edition of his history of the West Indies to Charles I.[84] De Laet wrote to Roe in late 1640 that he was pleased Roe had been elected to Parliament, "so that you can best expound this proposition of mine" to the other members.[85] The proposition was another company, to which he referred in his frequent letters as "the American Company." De Laet wrote to Boswell that the company would be "in the name of" the Prince Elector Palatine.[86] This time, Charles Louis would be the official leader of the company.

The American Company was even more explicitly anti-Spanish than the 1637 effort had been. In the parliamentary debate on the subject, "it was voted both lawful and honorable to invade the King of Spain in his territories in the West Indies."[87] The main organizers were Richard Cave, the Earl of Warwick, and Thomas Roe.[88] The Anglo-Dutch financier Philip Burlamachi invited Frederik Hendrik, the Prince of Orange, to join them. He wrote to François van Aerssen, Frederik Hendrik's secretary, that "Parliament pushes hard to set up a society for these quarters [the West Indies] there in this kingdom. If it would be of consequence, His Excellency can in his prudence consider it."[89] Financial considerations combined with efforts for the Protestant cause in Frederik Hendrik and Charles's decision to marry their children to each other in 1641. The American Company idea depended on both the Orange-Stuart marriage and the idea of joint war against Spain.

In the end, the 1637 and 1641 efforts failed just as the 1618, 1620, 1623, and 1625 efforts had. All six were proposals for English trading companies that would fight the Spanish in the Caribbean in collaboration with Dutch forces. The recurring popularity of this vision shows that many English and Dutch people saw the others as natural partners in anti-Spanish ventures, sometimes connected to the cause of the Palatinate. It was common for adventurers at this time to frame proposals in terms of helping the Palatine cause. In 1637, the Earl of Arundel and Endymion Porter, one of the leaders of the Courten Association, were part of plans for a colony in Madagascar under the leadership of Charles Louis's brother Rupert.[90] In 1638, one of Elizabeth of Bohemia's secretaries, Theobald Maurice, addressed a petition to Charles I saying that he had invented a new method for preserving salmon: could Charles

[81] Ibid.

[82] Thomas Roe to Charles Louis, 29 July 1637, TNA SP 16/364, f. 166.

[83] Charles Louis to Elizabeth of Bohemia, 27 August 1637, *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart*, 629.

[84] Ioanne de Laet, *Novus Orbis seu descriptionis Indiae Occidentalis Libri XVIII. Novis Talulis Geographicis et Variis Animantium, Plantarum Fructuumque Iconibus illustrati* (Lugd. Batav. apud Elzevirios, 1633), *4. He published the first edition of his history in Dutch in 1625 and the third edition in Latin in 1633. Only the 1633 edition was dedicated to Charles I.

[85] De Laet to Roe, 29 December 1640, TNA SP 84/156, f. 218.

[86] De Laet to Boswell, 18 June 1641, BL Add MS 6395, f. 120.

[87] Rossingham to Scudamore, 7 September 1641, BL Add MS 11045, f. 142v.

[88] De Laet to Boswell, 18 June 1641, BL Add MS 6395, f. 120.

[89] Burlamachi to Van Aerssen, 16 July 1641, in G. Groen van Prinsterer, ed., *Archives ou Correspondance Inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, Deuxième Série, Tome III, 1625-1642 (Utrecht: Kemink et Fils, 1859), 482.

[90] W. Foster, "An English Settlement in Madagascar in 1645-6," *The English Historical Review* 27, no. 106 (1912), 240.

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please grant him a patent on his method so that he could invest the profits from it in a new colony in the West Indies in Charles Louis's name?[91] The Prince Elector Palatine and his brothers were popular figures for these ventures not only because they represented the Protestant cause symbolically, but also because they were perpetually in need of money. A successful colonial venture could supply their family and various armies in their name with reliable funds. However, a successful Anglo-Dutch West India Company, potentially led by a Dutch entrepreneur, would bring much-desired profits to England in general. As the fifth case study will show, Dutch adventurers would not only propose Anglo-Dutch West India Companies, but also a variety of Anglo-Dutch East India Companies, covering all parts of the globe with the plans for their projects.

The 1619 Treaty

While many joint Anglo-Dutch imperial ventures, as above, never left the planning stage, the fourth case study shows the most official and highest-level instance of implemented Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration. In the early seventeenth century, England and the Dutch Republic held a series of conferences to try to settle their differences and collaborate on trade in the East Indies. Their ambassadors met in 1613-4, 1615, and 1618-9 to discuss colluding and to some degree merging their East India Companies. Merging competing trading companies into one monopolistic company was a proven strategy: as mentioned earlier, the Assada Company eventually merged with the EIC, and the English Levant Company had formed from a merger of the earlier Turkey Company and Venice Company. The most famous example is the case of the voorcompagnieën that were brought together to create the VOC. However, Kate Ekama has described how the merger of the voorcompagnieën was less smooth and less complete than some histories claim.[92] A later attempt to merge the VOC and WIC in 1644-5 similarly ran into difficulties.[93] In 1619, the English ambassadors were initially hesitant to consider merging to any degree with the VOC, producing lists of objections such as "the difficulty and impossibility to make an estimation" of the two companies' current financial positions.[94] However, they noted that the Dutch representatives' response was that the new arrangement would make so much money, none of these problems would matter.[95] A memorandum that the Dutch ambassadors drew up later did in fact make an estimate: it thought that uniting the two companies' coffers would create a starting fund of somewhere between £120,000 and £150,000 for the next voyages.[96] Initial investment in the VOC had been over six million guilders, or £600,000, but initial investment in the EIC had been only £70,000. The proposed fund for the next voyages was larger than that with which the EIC had started in 1600.

An important element of all the discussions was fighting the Spanish and Portuguese (combined at the time under the Iberian Union) forces in the East Indies. Writings from the Anglo-Dutch negotiations centred around the Spanish and Portuguese threat, despite the ongoing Twelve Years' Truce between Spain and the Dutch Republic. A Dutch memorandum from 1615 suggested that they seize Portuguese ships in order to "fight them with their own

[91] Petition of Theobald Maurice, 1638, TNA SP 16/408, f. 289.

[92] Ekama, *Courting Conflict,* 57-61, 70-89.

[93] Henk den Heijer, "Plannen Voor Samenvoeging van VOC en WIC," *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis*, no. 2 (1994).

[94] Document beginning "The Directors of the companie of lowe Contry marchants tradinge into the Indies," 1615, LPL MS 930, no. 146, f. 1.

[95] Document beginning "And the directors of the said Company of lowe countrie marchants having more neerely considered all the foresaid reasons," 1615, LPL MS 930, no. 146, f. 2v.

[96] Memoire des commoditéz de l'union et incommoditéz de la diversité des compaignies traffiquants aux Indes orientales, 1615, NL-HaNA 1.10.35.02/40, f. 137.

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means if they continue to make war on us... against the articles of the truce."[97] Fighting the Iberian powers also strengthened the Dutch Republic and England's claims to being the protectors of the Protestant cause. A letter from the States General to the Dutch ambassadors in England during the 1613 negotiations mentioned that "the common good of the countries is not only directed to the preservation of their reputation, but also for the security, service and benefit of the same."[98] While some members of the EIC felt as strongly as their Dutch equivalents about fighting Spain, King James I of England did not. The instructions to the English ambassadors in 1614 specified that they "be very careful not to assent or agree to any thing propounded, or offered unto you, that shall be prejudicial to the treaty of peace made with our brother the King of Spain."[99] A list of important questions the English ambassadors asked of the Dutch included "whether it be likely that a trade could be maintained in the Indies without defending the islanders against the Spaniard."[100] Some in England did not want to get pulled into a war with Spain by bellicose Dutch merchants. In all the Anglo-Dutch ventures in this article, one or multiple parties framed their efforts in terms of the Protestant cause, often including fighting Spain. In this case, certain members of both negotiating groups did so.

Of the conferences, the 1618-9 one was the most productive: by the end, the Dutch Republic and England had signed a treaty that essentially formed a cartel between their East India Companies. Not only did they declare that "commerce and traffic shall be free in the East Indies, both for the Company of England and for that of the United Provinces," but they "shall try to reduce by common effort in the Indies all merchandise to a reasonable price."[101] Back in Europe, they would sell the goods that they had bought so cheaply at "a certain price below which it will not be lawful for some or others to sell them."[102] These sentences in the treaty served as a textbook definition of collusion, through which they could maximize their profits. An important element of the treaty was that they would share expenses and profits: England would invest and earn one third, while the Dutch Republic would invest and earn two thirds.[103] They also agreed on mutual exclusion of outsiders, which included English and Dutch interlopers, specifying that the King of England and the States General should not "authorize the erection of any other society to interfere with the traffic and navigation of the said Indies, during the term of this treaty."[104] They would establish a Common Council of Defence, made up of four Dutch representatives and four English, to coordinate military efforts.[105] The diplomats in Europe who negotiated the terms felt optimistic about Anglo-Dutch cooperation and the implementation of the treaty.

However, representatives of the companies in the East Indies did not feel the same Anglo-Dutch unity. They had spent the years of the negotiations competing, clashing, and sending complaints about each other to Europe. The Director-General and then Governor-General of the VOC, Jan Pietersz. Coen, wrote home regularly about his frustrations that the less established EIC took advantage of the VOC's accomplishments. In 1615, he wrote to the Delft and Amsterdam Chambers of the VOC that "it is to be feared that we will have to watch with great sorrow as the English pursue the fruits of our labour, done at Your Excellencies'

[97] Ibid., f. 138.

[98] States General to De Caron, 23 March 1613, NL-HaNA 1.10.35.02/40, f. 136.

[99] A Coppie of the Instructions, 29 November 1614, BL Harley MS 147, f. 3.

[100] Section beginning "Heatherto you have had free access and open Trade into a good patch of the Indies," 8 February 1614 [1615], BL Harley MS 147, f. 33.

[101] Origineel Tractaet, 7 July 1619, NL-HaNA 1.01.02/12589.33, articles 3 and 5.

[102] Article 4.

[103] Share expenses: articles 7 and 10; share profits: articles 8 and 9.

[104] Article 18.

[105] Articles 11-16, 20-22.

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expense."[106] He complained about the behaviour of the EIC merchants, repeating in almost every letter that the English "have committed various insolences against us."[107] The English made similar claims about the Dutch. The diplomat Thomas Roe wrote home to the EIC directors that the Dutch "wrong you in all parts and grow to insufferable insolencies... You must speedily look to this maggot; else, we talk of the Portugal, but these will eat a worm in your sides."[108] The English complaints also reflected the Dutch strength in the region in comparison to the English. A group of EIC representatives wrote that they "already found [the Dutch], so far as their means doth extend, busy intenders unto all parts and places of our trade and commerce."[109] One factor wrote home that "these butterboxes are grown so insolent that if they be suffered but a whit longer, they will make claim to the whole Indies, so that no man shall trade but themselves or by their leave; but I hope to see their pride take a fall."[110] Representatives in the East Indies knew that negotiations between the companies were ongoing in Europe, but they continued to send home their complaints.

Even after they received news about the signing of the treaty, the companies' employees, particularly those of the VOC, hesitated to trust their new partners. One letter from the head of the VOC's regional office at Sangora complained about the Englishmen's "shameless lies" as well as their "audacity and clumsy arrogance," even though later in the letter the author was "pleased to understand the praiseworthy peace between both companies."[111] Coen and his fellow administrators tried to understand the decision to sign the treaty, writing that "it is obvious to us how much the state of the United Netherlands values the good friendship, correspondence, and association of the crown of England. But Your Excellencies have been overly hasty."[112] A few months later, Coen and other colleagues reiterated that "it was high time, as Your Excellencies very well said, that agreement was found with the English nation, but to give therefore a third of all the trade in the Moluccas, Amboyna and Banda, seems rather a lot to us."[113] They felt that the EIC had received more advantages than the VOC had in the treaty. In Batavia, Coen and the local EIC president signed an agreement that "neither of us, ourselves nor anyone for us, shall buy or cause to [be] bought or procure any pepper to any of our Company at or above the rate of 8 rials, eight per picul."[114] They were trying to administer the specific details of the cartel arrangement the treaty laid out. However, they struggled with implementation, and they had to sign another agreement a year later to better regulate the trade and "to ward off all confusion and misunderstandings."[115] The two companies also created a joint Fleet of Defence. Coen reported on the accomplishments and travails of the fleet's first few voyages, but he expressed frustration when "the English

[106] Coen to the Delft and Amsterdam Chambers, 3 March 1615, NL-HaNA 1.04.02/1057, f. 189v.

[107] Coen to the Amsterdam Chamber, 10 October 1616, NL-HaNA 1.04.02/1061, f. 14v.

[108] Roe to the EIC, 14 February 1618, in William Foster, ed., *The English Factories in India, 1618-21* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 17.

[109] Thomas Kerridge, Thomas Rastell, and Giles James to the factors at Masulipatnam, 8 March 1619, BL Egerton MS 2122, f. 52.

[110] Matthew Duke to the EIC, 9 December 1618, *The English Factories in India, 1618-21*, 48-9.

[111] Jan van Hasell to Coen, 4 October 1620, in W. Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Jan Pietersz. Coen. Bescheiden omtrent Zijn Bedrijf in Indië*, vol. 7 ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 640, 641.

[112] Coen, De Carpentier, Jansz, and Dedel to the bewindhebbers of the VOC, 11 May 1620, NL-HaNA 1.04.02/1071, ff. 6-6v.

[113] Coen, De Carpentier, Dedel, and Sonck to the bewindhebbers, 31 July 1620, NL-HaNA 1.04/02/1071, f. 83.

[114] A consulltacion off agreemeut maghe in Jambe the 24th Julio 1620 on the behallffe off the two Companyes: our honorable jmployers off England and the Netherlands tradinge the East Indias, etc., in *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1907), 157.

[115] Articulen geraemt ende geaccordeert tusschen de gedeputeerde van de Engellsche ende Nederlandersche Compagnien in Jamby, 25 October 1621, in *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum,* 174.

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failed to furnish the full number of ships of defence."[116] As he asked earlier in the letter, "how shall we deal with such people?"[117] The implementation of the treaty's articles proved more difficult on the ground than the diplomats in Europe had expected.

The attempted implementation of the treaty slowed and then stopped after the event in 1623 that became known as the Amboina Massacre. To simplify a complex story, representatives of the VOC accused representatives of the EIC of conspiring with Japanese soldiers.[118] After interrogations under torture and trials, they executed ten Englishmen, ten Japanese men, and one man who was described as Portuguese, but was likely of mixed heritage.[119] Alison Games has argued that attempts to implement the 1619 treaty's provisions contributed to the tensions that led up to the Amboina Massacre, particularly the choice in 1621 to require Dutch and English traders to cohabitate in Cambello, Hitu, and Luhu.[120] Her work emphasizes that while people reacted strongly to the Amboina Massacre when they learned about it in 1623 and 1624, the event's symbolic importance only grew stronger over the following thirty years.[121] As the previous sections of this article showed, Anglo-Dutch competition and cooperation coexisted throughout the early seventeenth century. After 1623, Englishmen struggling with Dutch trade competition and other violence could call back to the Amboina Massacre when they wanted to underscore English victimhood and Dutch cruelty.

However, despite the breakdown in Anglo-Dutch relations in the East Indies after the Amboina Massacre in 1623, some kept hold of the idea of cooperation based on the 1619 treaty. A letter to the English Attorney General in late 1624, so months after the news of the massacre reached England, discussed building new forts in the East Indies "according to the treaty."[122] It was not just people at home in Europe who thought in these terms. VOC administrators described discussions with EIC representatives about housing in 1624 in which both groups justified their positions by reference to different articles of the treaty.[123] Officers of the EIC wrote in 1625 that despite their troubles, "it is our meanings to proceed... for a firm and constant agreement: that hereafter all the business of India may be managed by a joint consent, for the mutual good of the respective companies."[124] Although the practice of the companies' trade in the East Indies had separated again after the Amboina Massacre, the 1619 treaty left a legacy out of proportion to its actual degree of implementation. It became the foundation for decades of Anglo-Dutch imperial cooperation. One of the terms of the treaty was that it would last for twenty years, meaning that it officially expired in 1639. However, figures proposing Anglo-Dutch ventures would continue to call back to it even after its supposed expiration date, often in the context of fighting Spanish forces together. The next section of this article will show how others used the treaty to pursue different imperial aims.

[116] Coen, De Carpentier, Lam, and Van Antsen to the bewindhebbers, 16 November 1621, NL-HaNA 1.04/02/1074, f. 14v.

[117] Ibid., f. 14.

[118] For detailed accounts of the events on Amboina and their background, see Adam Clulow, *Amboina, 1623: Fear and Conspiracy on the Edge of Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019) and Alison Games, *Inventing the English Massacre: Amboyna in History and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[119] Clulow, *Amboina, 1623,* 219n3-5.

[120] Games, *Inventing the English Massacre*, 34-5.

[121] Ibid., 76-147.

[122] Conway to Coventry, 6 December 1624, TNA CO 1/1, f. 75v.

[123] De Carpentier, Dedel, Sonck, Specx, and Van Gorcum to the Heren XVII, 4 March 1624, in W. Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, vol. 1 ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 150.

[124] Henrie Hawley, Joseph Cockram, Richard Bix, and George Muschamp to the EIC, 3 August 1625, BL IOR E/3/11, f. 42v.

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Anglo-Dutch East India Company Proposals

The fifth case study provides three further examples of proposed Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration in the East Indies. In 1618, the Dutchman Isaac le Maire brought new Anglo-Dutch proposals to the English government. Le Maire was an inveterate schemer who proposed new trading companies throughout the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth. He had been one of the founders of the Brabant Company in 1599, and he became one of the largest original shareholders in the VOC when the voorcompagnieën combined in 1602. However, he had to step down as a director in 1605 after accusations of fraud, including accusations that he had falsified expense accounts.[125] In 1607 and 1609, he collaborated with King Henri IV of France on plans for a French East India Company. He was also involved in a business venture that engaged in short selling of shares in advance of the ten-year accounting of the VOC.[126] Le Maire founded the Austraalsche Compagnie, or Australian Company, in 1614. He claimed that the company was not an interloper on the VOC's monopoly because its ships would travel around Cape Horn rather than the Cape of Good Hope. At one point, the VOC directors petitioned the States of Holland about the Australian Company, arguing that granting Le Maire a patent for it would impede the ongoing negotiations for the union of the VOC and the EIC that would culminate in the 1619 treaty.[127] The Australian Company sent out a first voyage, led by Isaac le Maire's son Jacob, but the representatives of the VOC stopped its ships when they arrived in the East Indies and claimed them for itself.

Le Maire travelled to England in 1618 and proposed a new Anglo-Dutch East India Company to King James I of England and his privy council. He suggested that the company pursue the Cape Horn route to the East Indies, as opposed to the classic route around the Cape of Good Hope.[128] He also proposed a union with James Cunningham's Scottish East India Company.[129] The Scottish East India Company was itself a partially Anglo-Dutch venture. The writer Samuel Purchas described it as "a new Company commixt of English, Scottish and Zeelanders," which struggled to get off the ground as Englishmen and other Dutchmen from Zeeland were fighting over Greenland at the same time.[130] Joseph Wagner has written about the Dutch elements of the company, identifying Lucas Corcellis as the company's treasurer.[131] Wagner suggests that there may have been more Dutch investment in the Scottish East India Company than previously thought. Edmond Smith has written about how James I was impressed by Le Maire's propositions, but instead of hiring le Maire, he requested that the merchant Thomas Smith act on them instead.[132] The English privy council was not interested in hiring Le Maire in 1618, but a similarly adventurous Dutchman proposed something similar two decades later.

[125] J. G. van Dillen, "Isaac le Maire en de handel in actiën der Oost-Indische Compagnie," *Economisch Historisch Jaarboek* 16 (1930), 2-5; Ekama, *Courting Conflict,* 80.

[126] 9 October 1614, SAA 5075/377B, f. 376.

[127] Rekest van de bewindhebbers van de V.O.C. aan de Staten van Holland en West-Friesland van 8 augustus 1618, NL-HaNA 3.01.14/3130, unfoliated page.

[128] 20 March 1617 [1618], BL IOR B/6, f. 154.

[129] 20 March 1617 [1618], BL IOR B/6, f. 155.

[130] Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes in Five Bookes* (London: Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), 468.

[131] Joseph Wagner, "The Scottish East India Company of 1617: Patronage, Commercial Rivalry, and the Union of the Crowns," *Journal of British Studies* 59, no. 3 (2020), 593; Grell, *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London*, 260. The antiquarians Bannerman and Clarke found that Lucas was likely the uncle of Nicholas Corcellis, the Courten Association investor. W. Bruce Bannerman and A. W. Hughes Clarke, ed., *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, vol. 1 (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1916), 19.

[132] Edmond Smith, *Merchants: The Community That Shaped England's Trade and Empire, 1550-1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 158-9.

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Anthony van den Heuvel petitioned in 1638 to create an Anglo-Dutch East India Company, promising that if hired by the English crown, he could obtain a payout from the VOC for depredations against the English in the East Indies. The idea of the new company was to earn profit to make up for these past losses. The phrasing of the petition was cautious: it suggested that "if they cannot procure Englishmen to underwrite for so much [£160,000 or £200,000] within three months then to admit aliens into their society," most likely Dutch investors.[133] As in the previous ventures, Charles I was giving trading privileges to those who had loaned him money. The financier Philip Burlamachi was part of the negotiations, and early on, the planners met "to consider how Mr. Courten may be joined to the said company without prejudice or discouragement to him or his adventurers."[134] This venture was another venue to repay the lenders who kept the crown financially solvent during the Personal Rule.

The financial struggles of the EIC in this period prompted this new effort. Burlamachi wrote that he had heard that the EIC was thinking of wrapping up its current joint stock and starting another, but he expected "difficulty in raising such capital as is needed for the continuation of the trade."[135] He suggested that "it would not be bad to tell Sr. Van den Heuvel that he should not lose heart in his first design," given these difficulties.[136] In a later letter, Burlamachi relayed Van den Heuvel's argument that if the EIC were to give up its trade in the East Indies, its privileges should be given to a new company according to the description in the proposition he had submitted.[137] Van den Heuvel had specified that he could raise investments from "His Majesty's subjects, his friends, and others," including members of the old EIC.[138] The "others" could include his previous suggestion that "aliens," or Dutchmen, could contribute to the company. Van den Heuvel stressed that it was "more than time" that the EIC decided what to do."[139] If they did not set out new ships, "the Hollanders having alone in their hands all the traffic will make themselves masters of it."[140] The gap left in the East Indies by the absence of the EIC's annual ventures could provide an opportunity for an Anglo-Dutch company, but if they waited too long to found it, they could find themselves locked out of the East Indies trade. Like the 1619 treaty, this proposal sought to counter Anglo-Dutch imperial competition with a new plan for cooperation.

The venture also connected to an ongoing effort to quantify the damage the VOC had done to English trade in the East Indies since the old treaties. Charles assigned the problem to William Boswell, the English ambassador in The Hague, along with Van den Heuvel. In trying to address this issue, they framed it in terms of acting on the 1619 treaty. In discussion with EIC leaders, Charles said that he would "vouchsafe to take up and renew the former treaty with the Hollanders, upon the same foot and conditions as formerly... according to the intentions and agreement anno 1619."[141] Although that treaty expired in 1639, they continued to talk about it as though it were indefinite. Burlamachi wrote in 1639 that "the accord with the Dutch Company is necessary, not only for the restitution that is claimed, but principally for a settlement that must be put in place in the future, according to roughly

[133] Proposicons for a new Company into the East Indies and other parts of Asia and Africa, June 1638, TNA CO 77/6, f. 173.

[134] Burlamachi to unnamed recipient, 26 January 1638 [1639], TNA CO 77/6, f. 186; At Whitehall, May 1638, TNA CO 77/6, f. 171v.

[135] Burlamachi to unnamed recipient, 26 January 1638 [1639], TNA CO 77/6, f. 186.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Burlamachi to unnamed recipient, 24 October 1639, TNA CO 77/6, f. 206v.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., f. 206.

[140] Ibid.

[141] At the Court at Oatlands the second of September 1638, TNA CO 77/6, f. 176v.

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what was agreed in the years 1619, 1622 and 1623."[142] He specified that "the originals of these treaties he [van den Heuvel] desires to take to Holland, in order to show the States how the Company has abused them."[143] By this point, the English spent much more time talking about the 1619 treaty than the Dutch did.

The English ambassador Boswell wrote dozens of letters promoting Van den Heuvel's experience with the VOC and potential value to the English crown for a new imperial venture. However, Van den Heuvel's true motivation for coming to England may have been to avoid the scandal he had left behind in the Dutch Republic. He had earned a reputation as "'a nefarious scoundrel'" in the East Indies.[144] Furthermore, he had achieved the position of Governor of Ambon in 1633 by falsely accusing his predecessor of financial misconduct.[145] A report said diplomatically that Van den Heuvel was "subject to 'many human weaknesses.'"[146] Most famously, he was involved in the harsh and extremely unpopular punishment of Pieter Cortenhoeff and Sara Specx. Sara was the mixed-race daughter of Jan Pietersz. Coen, and she was only twelve years old. When she was caught having relations with Pieter, who was fifteen, Coen had her flogged and Pieter beheaded. Many criticized Van den Heuvel for his complicity.[147] For all these reasons, he faced sanctions from the VOC when he returned to the Dutch Republic. Partway through the Anglo-Dutch East India Company planning process, Charles I had to write to the Prince of Orange and the States General on Van den Heuvel's behalf. In the end, neither the hoped-for VOC payment nor the new trading company came to fruition.

The Anglo-Dutch East India Company plans provide two more examples of Dutchmen turning to the English crown for sponsorship of new colonial ventures, both partly because of their unsavoury reputations in the Dutch Republic. James I and Charles I of England were interested in both projects as ways to combat competition between the Dutch and English East India Companies and thereby profit more. The efforts for joint East India Companies also connected to the efforts for joint West India Companies. In a letter to Van Aerssen in 1641, Burlamachi wrote that if the negotiations Boswell and Van den Heuvel had started for restitution in the East Indies concluded successfully, it would facilitate the American Company project as well.[148] The next case study will return to the West Indies to address further Anglo-Dutch collaboration there.

The Providence Island Company and the Dutch West India Company

The sixth case study started as an English colony and turned to Dutch support when it ran into financial trouble, another example of profit driving Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration. A group of men in England who shared strong Calvinist values founded the Providence Island Company (PIC) with goals that aligned closely with those of the New England colonies, in which several of them also participated. William Jessop, the secretary of the company, wrote to a sailor that "I hope that those in your island have pious and sincere ends to direct their actions and conduct... so they may so build up with both hands a frame for religious government."[149] Lord Saye and Sele, one of the directors, described an ideal governor for the island as "a godly and able man" who would "establish religion and

[142] Burlamachi to unnamed recipient, 24 October 1639, TNA CO 77/6, f. 207.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ambon, 28 May 1634, *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum*, 262n3.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid., 262.
[147] W. Ph. Coolhaas, "Gegevens over Antonio van Diemen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 103, vol. 3/4 (1946), 497.
[148] Burlamachi to Van Aerssen, 16 July 1641, *Archives ou Correspondance Inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, 482.
[149] Jessop to Fitch, 12 August 1634, BL Add MS 63854 B, f. 50.

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justice."[150] Dutch people participated in the venture from the beginning, both as original investors and as settlers. One of the original investors was Abraham Corcellis, brother of Nicolas Corcellis.[151] The project would only become more Anglo-Dutch over time.

During the early years of the colony, the members also shared one of its islands with Dutch people: they called the island Association, but the Dutch knew it as Tortuga. The island changed hands several times over the course of the 1630s, but Dutch and English people, mostly privateers, continued to live there regardless. The PIC noted that Tortuga was "a mixed plantation consisting of English Dutch and French."[152] In 1635, David Pietersz. de Vries, an idiosyncratic WIC explorer, rescued fifty English refugees fleeing Tortuga after a Spanish attack.[153] The Englishmen on the island had previously written to the PIC that if they could not get protection from them, "they would put themselves under the protection of the Dutch."[154] De Vries eventually brought the refugees back to Tortuga, where they reunited with their Dutch neighbours, and asked them "whether they did not again want to occupy the island."[155] The turnover of the island shows how impermanent Caribbean settlements could be, and also shows how informal Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration could be there.

As the PIC developed, its leaders tried to expand their Dutch collaborations. The directors stated that they wanted "to encourage other Adventurers to join with us," by which they indicated Dutch as well as English groups.[156] They hoped that Dutch allies could help with the company's financial situation, writing that "the planters find not themselves able to maintain so great a charge: but may be able with the king's leave to put it of ~~the Hollan~~ to some others."[157] They crossed out "the Hollanders" before writing the full phrase, but it was their first thought. When in financial difficulties, they hoped to open up to further Dutch collaboration.

While the PIC opened to Dutch trade, the Dutch WIC was opening its trade as well. The WIC's original charter in 1621 had given it a monopoly on Atlantic trade. In the years that followed, a rivalry between proponents of two imperial visions - broadly, settlement versus trade - kept open the question of freedom of trade.[158] In 1629, the States General ratified New Netherland's Freedoms and Exemptions, which set up the patroonship system of proprietary colonies and opened up the WIC's monopoly on the fur trade in locations without WIC agents.[159] Jaap Jacobs has written about the similarities between this document and the Conditions and Articles the Zeeland chamber of the WIC granted to Abraham van Pere in 1627 for a patroonship in Berbice, as well as the Freedoms and Exemptions the same chamber granted in 1628 for patroonships more broadly on the Wild Coast.[160] In 1630, the Heren XIX declared that all Dutchmen could trade on the coast of Brazil, subject to certain regulations.[161] In 1635 the WIC opened up the Caribbean to trade by Dutchmen, but its

[150] 1 February 1635 [1636], TNA CO 124/2, f. 242.

[151] Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 364.

[152] 19 March 1635, TNA CO 124/2, f. 209.

[153] David Pietersz de Vries, *Voyages from Holland to America, A.D. 1632 to 1644*, trans. Henry C. Murphy (New York: New York Historical Society, 1857), 212-5.

[154] 19 March 1635, TNA CO 124/2, f. 209.

[155] De Vries, *Voyages from Holland to America,* 215-6.

[156] A Declaration made the 21th of December 1635, TNA CO 1/8, f. 210v.

[157] Memorial concerning the Isle of Providence, December 1635, TNA CO 1/8, f. 214-16v.

[158] Van Cleaf Bachman, *Peltries or Plantations: The Economic Policies of the Dutch West India Company in New Netherland, 1623-1639* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).

[159] *Vryheden By de Vergaderinghe van de Negenthiene* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1630).

[160] Jaap Jacobs, "Dutch Proprietary Manors in America: The Patroonships in New Netherland," in L. H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke, ed., *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500–1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 307-8.

[161] Van den Tol, *Lobbying in Company*, 91.

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proclamation also said "but they will not for any reasons be able to sail to the coast of Africa nor to New Netherland," and it reserved areas where the company was actively trading.[162] Joris van den Tol has written about how this effectively reinstated the WIC's monopoly in Brazil, in the context of the ongoing debates on the subject of Brazilian trade between the different chambers of the WIC.[163] The pace of pronouncements did not slow from there.

The States General officially reinstated the WIC's monopoly in December 1636, setting off months of intensive lobbying both within the Dutch Republic and from Brazil.[164] A 1638 pamphlet advocated free (private) trade within WIC charter limits, especially Brazil.[165] A year and a half later, the debate concluded with the decision to reserve the trade in certain goods to the WIC, but to allow all WIC shareholders to trade freely in Brazil, and even to allow them to license others for the trade.[166] The States General, concerned about under-population of New Netherland, passed a resolution in 1638 to "invite all good inhabitants of these Netherlands," not just those affiliated with the WIC, to settle there.[167] Between 1638 and 1640 the WIC debated relinquishing its monopoly on the fur trade, opening up the rest of the New Netherland trade not only to patroons, but also to all colonists.[168] Johannes de Laet, of the American Company, contributed to the drafting of the 1640 Freedoms and Exemptions in his role as a member of the Heren XIX.[169] English settlers then earned the right to trade at will in New Netherland in 1641.[170] Figure 2 shows this progress over time, marked by year.

In both the Dutch and the English cases, financial pressure prompted these changes. The PIC struggled financially for its entire existence, and this was a particularly challenging period for the WIC as well. As they opened their trade, both the WIC and the PIC moved in the direction of privateering, particularly against Spanish forces.

When the PIC continued to struggle financially, its leaders took a step further toward their Dutch partners and proposed selling the entire company. Edmund Moundeford, one of the directors, wrote to Simon D'Ewes, a fellow director, that "we finding our strength too weak, longer to support so great a burden, the company were resolved to sell it to the States of Holland."[171] In 1637, the notes of the general court recorded that the Earl of Holland was negotiating a treaty with "the Hollanders," including with the Dutch ambassador in England.[172] His correspondents later offered the sum of £70,000.[173] Two and a half years later, the general court recorded "some propositions having been made to the Company about the sale of Providence to the West India Company of Holland."[174] The Earl of Warwick,

[162] Nader Ordre en Reglementen, 6 January 1635, in Cornelis Cau, ed., *Groot Placaet-Boeck* ('s-Gravenhage: De Weduwe, ende Erfgenamen van wylen Hillebrandt Iacobsz van Wouw, 1658), 607.

[163] Van den Tol, *Lobbying in Company,* 93-9.

[164] Ibid., 99-135.

[165] H. Gr. Gron, *Consideratien als dat de Negotie op Brasil Behoort open gestelt te worden, onder Articulen hier na beschreven* (1638).

[166] Reglement, by de West-Indische Compagnie, 29 April 1638, *Groot Placaet-Boeck*, 609.

[167] Resolution of the States General urging the Colonization of New Netherland, 26 April 1638, in E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, vol. 1 (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1856), 106.

[168] Proposed Articles for the Colonization and Trade of New Netherland, 30 August 1638, ibid., 110-4; Resolution of the States General, on the Preceding Articles and Conditions, 2 September 1638, ibid., 115; Resolution of the States General on a New Draft of Freedoms and Exemptions, 19 July 1640, ibid., 118; Proposed Freedoms and Exemptions for New Netherland, 19 July 1640, ibid., 119-23.

[169] Jacobs, "Dutch Proprietary Manors in America," 313.

[170] Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 153-4.

[171] Edmund Moundeford to Simon D'Ewes, undated, BL Harley MS 287, f. 265.

[172] 9 February 1636 [1637], TNA CO 124/2, 290.

[173] Edmund Moundeford to Simon D'Ewes, undated, BL Harley MS 287, f. 265.

[174] 9 December 1639, TNA CO 124/2, 367.

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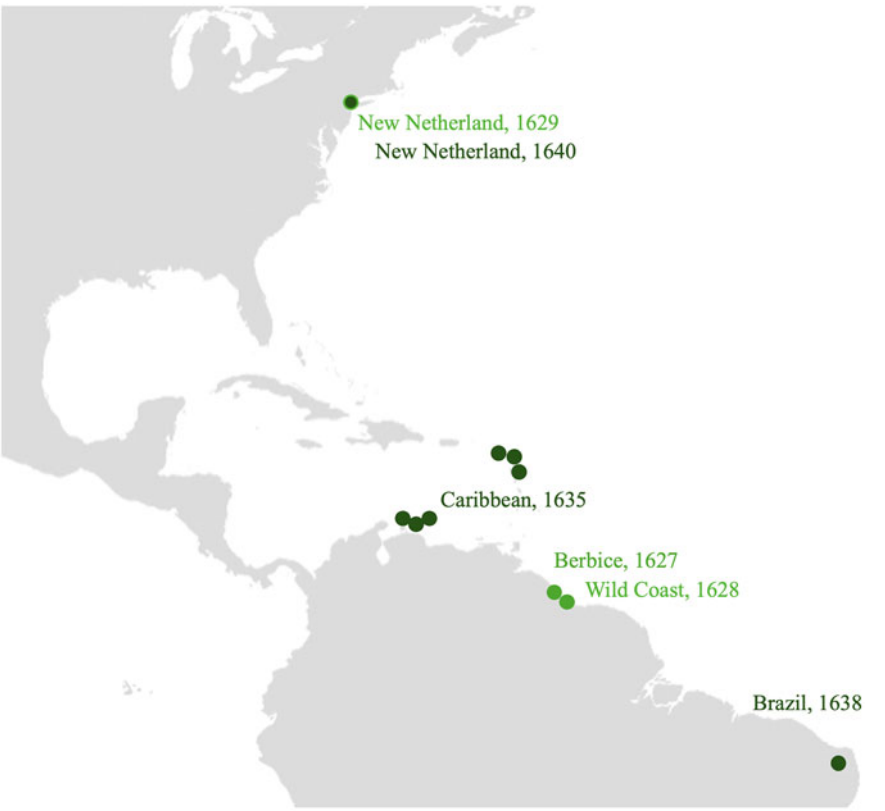


Figure 2. Colonial Locations Where the Dutch West India Company Lifted Elements of Its Monopoly, 1629-40. The lighter shaded dots indicate permission for patroonships, while the darker shaded dots indicate declarations of whole or partial free trade.

another of the PIC directors who was both a strong Calvinist and a close collaborator of the king's, wrote to the company's agent in the Dutch Republic that "we are content to hearken unto [the proposition] if the terms may be proportionable."[175] Holly Brewer has discovered deeper connections between the PIC and the Stuart crown that help explain why the directors were prevented from selling the colony in these years.[176] However, the PIC directors did consider various Dutch institutions to be appropriate potential inheritors of the company they had built.

Like the early English ventures in Guiana, this early English venture in the Caribbean cultivated close relationships with Dutch forces. Many English colonies in North America also relied on Dutch support, particularly in the tobacco trade, but the Providence Island Company took it a step further when it considered selling an entire colony. The negotiations for the potential sale built on preexisting Anglo-Dutch financial relationships. The PIC's agent in the Dutch Republic was John Webster, an English merchant who was an active member of the business community in Amsterdam. His brother Henry was a member of the English Merchant Adventurers at Rotterdam, and the two of them collaborated on business

[175] Warwick to Webster, December 9, 1639, TNA CO 124/1, f. 154v.

[176] Holly Brewer, *The King's Slaves: The British Empire and the Origins of American Slavery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 2026).

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ventures, sometimes involving the VOC.[177] Webster had also worked with Robert Hunt, one of the governors of Providence Island, on Anglo-Dutch moneylending projects in 1633.[178] The Earl of Warwick wrote to Webster about "all your courteous respects and favours formerly shown."[179] When the directors considered selling the company, they asked for his "friendly advice and assistance as in your discretion you shall think most conducing to the good of this Company."[180] The following section will dive further into the connections between Anglo-Dutch financial and imperial ventures.

The Adventurers for Irish Land

The final case study shows that Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration framed around profit and the Protestant cause occurred not only in the East and West Indies, but also in Europe. By the mid-seventeenth century, Englishmen had been pursuing projects they saw as imperial in Ireland for years: the Ulster plantation project began planning in 1609, and James I chartered it in 1613. Paul Slack has described how these projects fit into broader themes of improvement just as colonial projects overseas did, and in fact could seem more appealing to investors than improvement further abroad.[181] A new project began in 1642. The Adventurers for Irish Land raised money to defeat the Irish rebellion, which had begun in 1641, and to seize the land of Irish Catholics as their reward. Most of the members of the project were English, with some Dutch merchant strangers included.[182] David Otger and Nicolas Corcellis were two such Dutchman in the company.[183] The Adventurers wanted the company to be Anglo-Dutch, inviting Dutch investments both in their initial fund and in an ordinance in early 1643, but only Dutchmen in London invested at first.[184] The venture would not become truly Anglo-Dutch until 1643.

When the Adventurers ran into difficulties raising as much money as they had hoped for, they turned to Dutch partners. Dutch people had been following the Irish rebellion from the beginning, and the Dutch pamphlet literature recorded widespread antipathy to the Irish Catholics.[185] The Adventurers for Irish Land took advantage of shared Anglo-Dutch ideas of the Protestant cause to raise support for their venture in the Dutch Republic. The company's membership overlapped heavily with the membership of the Providence Island Company, the leaders of which were now among the leaders of the parliamentary forces fighting the king in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Parliament commissioned three Dutch merchant strangers, along with the Englishman Maurice Thompson, to procure from the Dutch Republic "money, victuals, arms, and ammunition, upon loans and contributions, transporting of them to any parts and places in Ireland."[186] The three Dutchmen were Nicolas Corcellis, Dirick Hoste, and Adam Lawreyns; all three, as well as Maurice Thompson, were investors in the Courten Association.

Dutchmen in the States General, the States of Holland, and the States of Zeeland agreed to hear their petitions, saying that they did so because of their concern for their fellow

[177] 20 September 1639, SAA 5075/1609, pp. 155-7; 15 February 1648, Stadsarchief Rotterdam (SAR) 18/356, f. 308.
[178] 2 August 1633, SAR 18/144, ff. 538-9; 10 August 1633, SAR 18/144, ff. 542-3.
[179] Warwick to Jan Webster, 9 December 1639, TNA CO 124/1, f. 154v.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Paul Slack, *The Invention of Improvement*, 26, 66-7, 97-8.
[182] David Brown, *Empire and enterprise: Money, power and the Adventurers for Irish land during the British Civil Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 77n62, 92n59.
[183] Ibid., 77n62, 92n59.
[184] Ibid., 122.
[185] Two famous examples are G.L.V., *Den Britannischen Blixem* (1643), A3v, 55; *Den Brittannischen Donderslach* (1643), A4.
[186] Ordinance for Mr. Thompson and Mr. Cursellis, 29 July 1643, *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. 6, 158.

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Protestants in Ireland. The States of Holland showed their sympathy for "the wretched and deplorable condition" of their "poor afflicted religion-relatives" in Ireland, and the States of Zeeland were also concerned about the "distressed Protestants."[187] The States of Zeeland delegated their collaboration to Pieter Boudaen Courten, Jeronimo Willemsz. Aschman, Jan de Dorper Coorne, and John van Borne, four merchants from Middelburg. Pieter Boudaen Courten was William Courten's cousin, with whom he was still disputing questions of inheritance. The States of Holland delegated their collaboration to Jonas Abeels, Charles Looten, William Watson, and Thomas Cave, two Dutchmen and two Englishmen living in Amsterdam. Watson had worked with John Webster, the Providence Island Company's agent in the Dutch Republic.[188] This fundraising paralleled another Anglo-Dutch fundraising project in the Dutch Republic connected to John Webster's brother Henry, one of the Merchant Adventurers. Thomas Leng has written about how the Company of Merchant Adventurers was the largest single lender to Parliament in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.[189] Notably, the Merchants Adventurers' support for Parliament contrasted with that of many other groups in the Dutch Republic, whose support for the English royalists Helmer Helmers has documented in detail.[190] The fundraising effort for the Adventurers for Irish Land sidestepped some of these political divisions by focusing on the Protestant cause.

The effort for the Irish Protestants was a financial success. The Amsterdam delegates reported in August 1644 that they had loaded seven ships to Ireland with grain and other foodstuffs.[191] In September, they reported chartering a ship to "Jockhal in Ireland," as well as one to Cork.[192] In December, they chartered one to Duncannon.[193] They tracked the cargo of each ship, including items like rye, oats, peas, barley, cheese, salt, butter, and wheat.[194] Parliament later estimated the total contribution from all over the Dutch Republic at £31,218.[195] Parliament expressed its gratitude for their contributions, declaring that they made "acknowledgement of their pious and charitable sense of the miserable condition of their distressed brethren in Ireland, in their benevolence for the relief of those Protestants, who had so highly suffered through the most horrid cruelties of those bloody rebels."[196] As the project had worn on, the imperial element had faded somewhat. There is no evidence of any of the Dutch donors receiving title to land in Ireland. However, donating to the cause did give them influence on the current government of England. The pursuit of profit loomed large alongside the Protestant cause in this case, as in all the others.

Conclusion

The seven sections of this article show the range of possibilities of Anglo-Dutch imperial experiments in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. While Dutch and English people competed and expressed frustrations with each other in colonial locations

[187] Collecte voor de arme Leedemaaten en Religions-Verwanten in Yrland, 17 October 1643, *Resolutien van de Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende Westvrieslandt*, vol. 37, 381; Collecte voor de verarmde Protestanten in Yerlant, 13 November 1643, *Notulen van de Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten van Zeelant, d'Anno 1643*, 358.

[188] 28 January 1639, SAA 5075/696, pp. 408-9

[189] Thomas Leng, *Fellowship and Freedom: The Merchant Adventurers and the Restructuring of English Commerce, 1582-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 229.

[190] Helmer Helmers, *The Royalist Republic: Literature, Politics, and Religion in the Anglo-Dutch Public Sphere, 1639-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[191] 3 August 1644, SAA 5075/848, ff. 807-9

[192] 21 September 1644, SAA 5075/848, ff. 953-4

[193] 16 December 1644, SAA 5075/848, ff. 1067-8.

[194] September 1644, SAA 5075/848, ff. 949-50.

[195] Declaration concerning the Netherland Contribution, 18 August 1648, *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. 10, 445.

[196] Ibid.

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around the world, this competition always coexisted with Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration. Each of the seven case studies shows that the leaders of the collaborative projects conceived of them as ways to pursue profit. Many of them also framed their projects in terms of the Protestant cause, which could encompass the fight against the Catholics in Ireland, the restitution of the Palatinate in Germany, and war against Spain all over the world. Some saw the Protestant cause as a shared Anglo-Dutch mission. These Anglo-Dutch ventures join the growing field of study of transimperial ventures in the early modern period. Among the field, the Anglo-Dutch case stands out for the number and range of joint imperial projects involved. The case also included ventures varying across the spectrum of formality. Diplomats for the Dutch Republic and England themselves, as states, signed the 1619 treaty, making it one of the most official instances of transimperial cooperation among the European empires of the period. At the other end of the spectrum were the Dutch and English privateers who shared the island of Tortuga in loose affiliation with the Providence Island Company. In the middle was the Courten Association's charter from the English crown, along with the Dutch adventurers who proposed other imperial projects to the Stuart kings. An incredible diversity of imperial projects contained Anglo-Dutch elements.

While all seven case studies took steps toward Anglo-Dutch imperial collaboration, only five took physical form. Why did so many planned projects, nine in this article, fail to materialize? The answer is that a large fraction of imperial ventures in general never left the planning phase in this period. The records of the States General and of the English privy council are full of adventurers proposing companies, many of which only appear once. Even among companies that did get off the ground, many failed after a shorter or longer time in business. However, the same men were willing to try again after multiple failures. This underlines the point that Dutch and English people were constantly experimenting with different imperial projects. Another question is why so many of these projects involved trade in the Americas, including the frequent attempts at a joint Anglo-Dutch West India Company as well as the Guiana ventures, the Providence Island Company, and earlier iterations of the Courten Association. Anglo-Dutch merchants saw the Americas as ripe for new projects, as there were a patchwork of smaller companies trading there but nothing as dominant as the large companies in the East Indies. There was also a stronger thread of Anglo-Dutch tension in the East Indies due to clashes between the East India Companies.

Although the projects discussed in this article varied in longevity, the money their founders invested shows how seriously they took them. Figure 3 shows the initial or proposed initial investment in each of the joint Anglo-Dutch ventures for which I have found numbers.[197]

The graph shows that many of the projects were funded on a larger scale than the initial investment in the EIC, which had been only £70,000. It demonstrates that the size of the initial investment did not determine the level of success of the companies. The EIC officially lasted until 1874, and its structures in India which the British government took over lasted even longer. However, at the time, none of the Dutch and English people founding imperial ventures knew which would last and which would not, and on multiple occasions they began with larger investments than the EIC had. The graph also emphasizes how much more money was initially invested in the VOC and the WIC than in any of the other ventures. The disparity reflects the wealth of the Dutch Republic and of Dutch merchants in the early seventeenth century, a wealth of which the English figures described in the article were well aware. Dutch wealth helps explain why, in general, collaborative Anglo-Dutch

[197] The graph uses the approximation of 10 Dutch guilders to an English pound in the early seventeenth century. When a document lists a range, such as "160,000 to 200,000" pounds for Anthony van den Heuvel's joint East India Company, I have graphed the lower bound. Many of these companies also continued collecting funds for their initial fund in the years that followed the announcement of these numbers.

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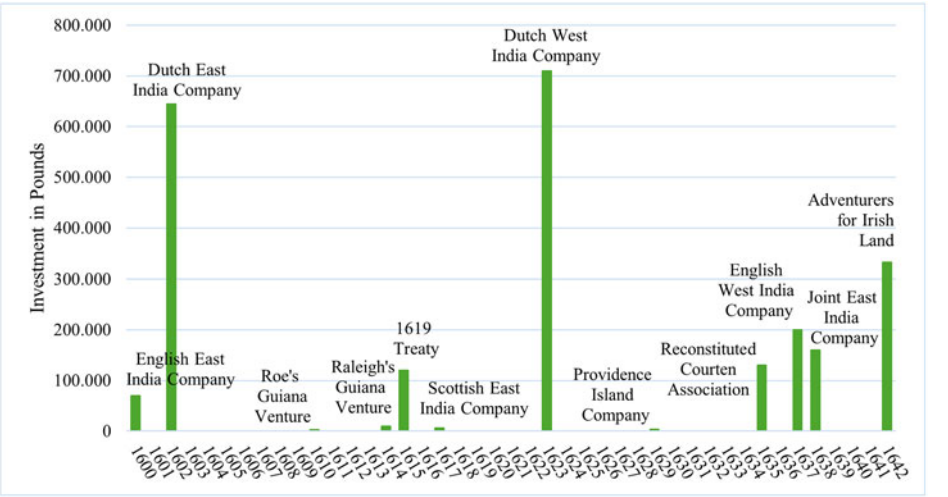


Figure 3. Initial or Proposed Investment in Dutch, English, and Joint Imperial Ventures, 1600-42. Sources: Commonplace Book of Sir Stephen Powle, 16 February 1609 [1610], Bodleian Tanner MS 168, iv; Raleigh, An estimate of the chardge, FSL G.b.10, f. 112; Memoire des commoditéz de l'union, 1615, NL-HaNA 1.10.35.02/40, f. 137; Wagner, "The Scottish East India Company of 1617," 583; Kupperman, Providence Island, 295; Nicholas to Porter, 30 July 1636, TNA CO 77/6, f. 49; Reasons to move his Majesty, undated within 1637, TNA CO 77/6, f. 129; Propositions for a West Indya Company, 18 September 1637, TNA CO 1/9, f. 146v; Proposicons for a new Company, June 1638, TNA CO 77/6, f. 173; Brown, Empire and enterprise, 8, 87.

imperial projects were more closely associated with the English government than with the Dutch. Several of the examples in the article, particularly the cases of the Providence Island Company and the Adventurers for Irish Land, began as English projects and sought out Dutch collaboration when they needed more money. The EIC was particularly interested in forming a cartel with the VOC because the VOC was larger in 1619, and it traded in more locations. Dutch entrepreneurship also contributes to this trend, as many of the planned East and West India Company projects featured Dutch adventurers bringing a proposal to the English crown.

These findings suggest a new perspective on the early English empire. Recent scholarship has debated the nature of the English empire in its formative years. Many point to the distance early English ventures kept from the crown, and their leadership by small groups of men, to differentiate them from projects like the British Raj in India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, considering the multitude of transimperial Anglo-Dutch ventures in the early seventeenth century points to a different distinction. Both companies closely affiliated with the English crown and those with more independent leadership chose to collaborate with Dutch forces. As one studies them, such projects begin to outnumber the imperial projects that appear to be solely English. Further scholarship on Dutch contributions to English imperial projects in Guinea, Plymouth, and Barbados only strengthens this conclusion.[198] In the end, almost every English imperial project in the late sixteenth

[198] R. Porter, "The Crispe Family and the African Trade in the Seventeenth Century," *The Journal of African History* 9, no. 1 (1968); Cynthia J. van Zandt, "The Dutch Connection: Isaac Allerton and the Dynamics of English Cultural Anxiety in the *Gouden Eeuw*," in in Rosemarijn Hoefte and Johanna C. Kardux, eds., *Connecting Cultures: The Netherlands in Five Centuries of Transatlantic Exchange* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994); Yda Schreuder, Amsterdam's Sephardic Merchants and the Atlantic Sugar Trade in the Seventeenth Century (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Alison Games, "Plymouth's Global Origins: A Preliminary Foray," Early American Studies 24, no. 1 (2026).

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and early seventeenth century contained Anglo-Dutch elements. This article finds that the early English empire was, in many ways, an Anglo-Dutch empire.

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Elizabeth Hines is an Ax:son Johnson Institute for Statecraft and Diplomacy Postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies.

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