

Anton van der Lem, *De Opstand in de Nederlanden, 1568-1648. De Tachtigjarige Oorlog in woord en beeld* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014, 252 pp., ISBN 978 94 6004 192 1).

Protracted, complicated, violent, flaring up in fits and starts – the Dutch Revolt dragged itself out for a famous eighty years. Its narrative is no easy storyline to recount. Nor is its meaning clear. Was it a national revolt – an early example of European nationalism before the nation state? Was it a religious conflict? A political one? A civil war or a popular rebellion? And what exactly did it mean? Was it the advent of republicanism, and essentially forward looking? Or was it essentially late-medieval constitutionalism rearing its stubborn head in the era of state centralization and imperial ambitions?

More than anything else, the Dutch Revolt is tricky terrain – a set of upheavals that began in the mid sixteenth century in the Low Countries but whose tentacles spread throughout Europe, indeed throughout the world. As Geoffrey Parker wisely observed many years ago, it was one of Europe's first wars with global implications, with conflicts in the Atlantic and Pacific by the early decades of the sixteenth century sparked by the fighting in Europe. Students and general readers looking for a comprehensive and updated introduction and overview of the Revolt would do well to consult Anton van der Lem's admirable new book, a reworking and expansion of an earlier 1995 version. This is a classic narrative summary of the troubles, from the first stirrings of aristocratic dissent in the mid sixteenth century to the peace of 1648. It's a broad brush overview that also canvasses historiography and contains a very helpful, updated bibliography, maps, and a chronological list of events as appendices. Students should pair this book with the masterful website of primary and secondary sources Van der Lem maintains that remains an essential research tool for students and advanced scholars alike (www.dutchrevolt.leiden.edu). Particularly welcomed in this new version of Van der Lem's book are the beautiful, important images he has set alongside his chronological narrative of the Revolt. They are some of the best set of illustrations I have seen of the Revolt, and serve as tantalizing invitations to readers to the rich world of visual material the conflict produced – material that has recently been the subject of scholarly investigation.

Despite a wave of new scholarship on the Dutch Revolt over the last decade, it remains the most under researched of all the great political upheavals of early modern Europe. It also is one of the most complicated too, understandable because of the strong regionalism and different political and

cultural traditions of the territories of the Low Countries. All the more reason to be grateful for Anton van der Lem's authoritative and beautifully crafted single volume narrative of a conflict that still captivates readers and scholars today.

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