

books, had long overlooked. There is a fascinatingly detailed piece on the re-editing of portions of the text for publication as *Mare liberum*, but virtually nothing else on the life of *De Iure Praedae* from the time of its composition until its 1864 publication. Also, what about the contemporary reception (if any) to the text? Another essay notes that publishing a new edition of *De Iure Praedae* poses a challenge, given its many layers of composition. Could this not also be seen as a fruitful avenue of inquiry? Students of the creation and transmission of knowledge need to take a closer look at Grotius.

The essays make clear that between the surviving manuscripts and letters, Grotius offers much material for further study. This volume will undoubtedly be a valuable reference point for future studies. But one is left wondering, will a new wave of scholarship emerge, or will older interpretive habits continue to frame how we write and think about Grotius?

EVAN HAEFELI, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Stern, Jill, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic in Word and Image, 1650-75* (Studies in Early Modern European History; Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2010, xii + 227 pp., ISBN 978 0 7190 8116 3).

When on 6 November, 1650, stadholder William II died from smallpox, many regents in Holland and elsewhere in the Dutch Republic must have breathed a sigh of relief. This was their chance to get rid of the stadholderate and they did so almost immediately. Holland led the way, but already in 1651 a majority of the provinces in the Great Assembly agreed to leave the position of stadholder vacant. The following two decades, known to historians as the First Stadholderless Era, witnessed an explosion of innovative republican political thought. These were the years in which Franciscus van den Enden wrote his *Vrije Politieke*

Stellingen, Spinoza formulated his subversive theories, and the brothers De la Court celebrated the advantages of a commercial republic without a stadholder in a stream of publications. Others, such as Radboud Scheels in his *Libertas Publica* of 1666, praised the establishment of a true republic along more traditional lines by appealing to classical antiquity. There were also those who used the rich arsenal of Dutch history to argue that the ancient rights and privileges of Dutchmen were much better protected in a state without a stadholder. A great many eminent historians have studied this wide variety of republican argument against the stadholderate. Much less attention has been paid to the arguments of those who deplored the abolition of the stadholderate during the third quarter of the seventeenth century. Although the Orangist writings of these decades have been discussed by Pieter Geyl and, more recently and in a far more sophisticated manner, by Gert Onne van de Klashorst, a comprehensive monograph on the subject was hitherto lacking. Jill Stern's study on the political language of Orangism during the First Stadholderless Era is therefore a most welcome addition to the existing scholarly literature.

The shrill and sometimes near hysterical tones in which the adherents of the States party discussed the potential dangers of the stadholderate suffice to make it clear that this was a topic of absorbing interest and great importance to contemporaries. This was especially so since under the seemingly solid edifice of 'true liberty' a most dangerous time bomb was ticking. A few days after the death of William II, his wife Mary Stuart had given birth to a son, whose claims to become stadholder grew stronger and less easy to ignore as he approached adulthood. The Orangists of the 1650s and 1660s made it their task to support the claims of William III with a rich arsenal of arguments and thereby to keep him in the public eye at all times. A particularly effective argument they deployed, and one moreover with impeccable classical roots, was the theory of mixed government. Following the political thought of

ancients such as Polybius, the Orangists rejected all pure forms of government. An aristocratic regime run by the regents alone would, in their eyes, inevitably degenerate into an oligarchy in which the people would be ruthlessly oppressed. Such a development could only be avoided by the presence of a monarchical element. Far from advocating a monarchy, the Orangists thus advanced the claims of William III by appealing to the most traditional interpretation of a stable republic available in early modern political thought. Yet they used a great many more arguments to establish the indispensability of the stadholderate. It was, they insisted, one of the few institutions capable of transcending the ingrained particularism of the Dutch Republic. The presence of a stadholder, moreover, was an absolute necessity in foreign affairs. Not only because foreign powers needed to be able to identify a Dutch head of state, but also and more importantly because the stadholder, in his function as captain- and admiral-general, was evidently necessary for the successful military defence of the Republic. To reinforce these and many other claims in favor of the stadholderate, the Orangists emphatically used the history of the first century of the Dutch Republic and extravagantly praised the historical role of the first four stadholders.

Much of this was already known to us in outline from the work of Geyl and Van de Klashorst, but Jill Stern provides more depth by skilfully discussing the Orangist pamphlet literature of these two decades in greater detail than has been done before. She moreover adds a most valuable extra dimension to the analysis of Orangism by using evidence not only from pamphlets, but also from plays and from the visual arts (although one would have liked to see more illustrations in the volume than the ten provided). With some of her wider claims, however, she seems on less certain ground. Thus it is constantly suggested that Orangism had a wide popular following, but this is never really demonstrated. The fact that substantial numbers of people came

to watch the young William III when he travelled through the Republic with his mother is certainly no conclusive proof of widespread popular Orangism, let alone, as Stern claims, a 'political act as momentous as that of later generations casting their vote in the polling booth' (51). Equally, her suggestion that the Orangists, because of their frequent appeal to experience, were the forerunners of Burkean conservatism, seems both exaggerated and anachronistic. More in general it may be observed that the book is strangely deficient in the secondary literature used. A great deal of attention, for instance, is devoted to the image of the stadholders as phoenixes rising from the ashes, but H.H. Versteegen's study of this topic, dating from 1950, is never mentioned. Similarly, in Stern's discussion of the political thought of the Dutch Revolt one would have expected a reference to Martin van Gelderen's authoritative *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt* (1991). What one misses most in this book, however, is the broader perspective. In recent decades, much has been written about the history of early modern Dutch Orangism since 1672. It would have been quite enlightening had Jill Stern compared the findings of her own study with the conclusions of this recent research on later periods. Such an exercise would have greatly helped the reader in placing the Orangism of the First Stadholderless Era in a diachronic historical perspective and would have given a substantially wider significance to this book.

WYGER R.E. VELEMA, UNIVERSITEIT VAN
AMSTERDAM

Willems, Bart, *Leven op de pof. Krediet bij de Antwerpse middenstand in de achttiende eeuw* (Studies stadsgeschiedenis 5; Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009, ISBN 978 90 5260 354 4).

Deze publicatie is de herwerkte versie van het proefschrift dat historicus Bart Willems