

# H-Net Reviews

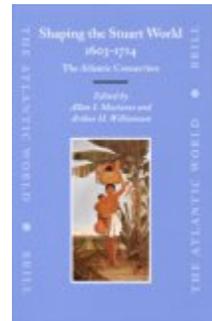
in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Allan I. Macinnes, Arthur H. Williamson, eds. *Shaping the Stuart World, 1603-1714: The Atlantic Connection*. Leiden: Brill, 2006. xiv + 389 pp. \$129.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-04-14711-9.

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## A Caledonian Fairytale

This edited volume examines mental worlds that developed opposing notions of modernity and competing paths toward conceptualizations of modernity that encompassed not just capitalism but also pluralism and the Enlightenment. The starting point of the volume, as explained by Allan I. Macinnes in the introduction, is rooted in the intrinsic values of the Scottish Enlightenment with its skepticism, common sense, and open intellectual inquiry into the nature of humanity. In this book, Scotland is the center of the Stuart world, including the British Atlantic world. For Macinnes and Arthur H. Williamson, Scotland not only connected the British and Dutch cultures, but also linked the Baltic to the Caribbean and made Atlantic connections an everyday reality for the Stuart world.

The volume is divided into four sections. The first theme, “Civilising Society, Reconfiguring Politics,” sets the scene for the movement from considerations of salvation and civility to that of political economy in the Stuart world, a movement that features spiritual as well as commercial adventuring. The contributions of Williamson, who argues that the British reconfiguration from integration to federation at the time of regal union emerged from a Scottish civic tradition, and Shona Vance on the British visionary Patrick Copland and his Scottish origins focus on Protestant reformers. Steve Pincus’s essay on the Revolution of 1688, on the other hand, offers a counterpoint, arguing for the continuing influence of Roman Catholicism on the Stuarts.

The volume’s second section, “Transferring Texts and Traditions,” reflects the increasing impact of and interaction between literary criticism and history, with an emphasis on exchanges in both directions across the Atlantic Ocean. The Puritan challenge, spiritually and structurally, to the Anglican establishment in both England and New England, is its theme. It opens with Kevin Sharpe’s inquiries into the reading of the Book of Revelation in England, Scotland, and New England. Helen Wilcox looks into the inspirational role of George Herbert’s spiritual poetry and the creation of New England Puritan identity. And, Reiner Smolinski’s analysis of Cotton Mather, a minister of Boston’s Old North Church, responds to Benedict Baruch Spinoza’s ideas.

On a more material level is the third section, “The Dutch Connection.” Using Brazil as a case study, Ernst Pijning advocates that the Dutch concentrated more on commerce than on founding plantations, primarily by default rather than by design. Their Atlantic world was an expansion without empire. Esther Mijers looks at the transoceanic commercial opportunities for Scots who regarded the Dutch Republic in general and the province of Zeeland in particular as among their country’s closest trading partners. A succession of Anglo-Dutch wars created new opportunities for the Scots, who played both sides against each other in the Americas. As Wim Klooster demonstrates, on the other hand, war did not necessarily result in the relentless pursuit of economic warfare in the New World. Indeed, covert collaboration rather than overt hostility was usually the prevailing

working practice of commercial networks.

In the fourth and final section, "Power and Settlement," exotic and colonial societies prevail. Jane Stevenson analyzes Richard Ligon's *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (1657) from a literary point of view. In her view, Ligon's standpoint was undoubtedly that of a sojourner rather than that of a settler. The commercial growth of Boston within the American colonies is the subject of Mark Peterson's chapter, while Chris Storrs examines Sweden and Scotland's penetration of the Spanish empire. Habsburg Spain not only saw off Swedish endeavors to expand westward as well as eastwards, but also curtailed the Scottish incursion at Darien on the Isthmus of Panama.

The volume concludes with Peter Mancall's epilogue, "Becoming Atlantic." He argues that one way to make sense of the varied changes that took place over the course of the seventeenth century would be to adopt the perspective of a macroeconomist. He contends, however, that such an approach can provide no explanation for the transatlantic appeal of, for instance, George Herbert, the educational endurance of Patrick Copland, or the Mathers' engagement with leading British and continental theologians. In this volume, each of the essays pivots on the actions of individuals and contingent mo-

ments.

Considering the promise of its title, this edited volume depicts a rather one-dimensional or perhaps colorblind image of the Atlantic world. The editors propose the British Isles, and especially Scotland, as a bridge between Europe and the Americas across which ideas, no less than people and goods, moved back and forth. But surprisingly, Africa, the third Atlantic continent, is nowhere to be seen. Peterson's essay alone makes the issue of slavery a thematic concern. No other authors, for instance, examine why the many British colonists who were part of the Stuart world sought to enslave Africans and Amerindians even though a major argument in Atlantic world scholarship suggests that there was no obvious economic need for it. In addition, commercial motives connected with Africa were one of the driving forces behind the first major international conflict after the Stuart Restoration of 1660, the Second Anglo-Dutch War, when slavery and trade in enslaved Africans became more and more important in the overseas Stuart world. In contrast, the main purpose of the present book is to argue that the center of the Atlantic Stuart world was Scotland, and as such, it is not very Atlantic in its scope. Given that, it might have been more appropriate to publish the volume in Brill's Northern World Series, instead of the Atlantic World Series.

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