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Christian J. Koot

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EMPIRE *at the Periphery*

British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade,
AND THE Development OF
THE British Atlantic, 1621–1713

CHRISTIAN J. KOOT

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Christian J. Koot : Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713 (Early American Places) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the

Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713 (Early American Places):

Throughout history the British Atlantic has often been depicted as a series of well-ordered colonial ports that functioned as nodes of Atlantic shipping, where orderliness reflected the effectiveness of the regulatory apparatus constructed to contain Atlantic commerce. Colonial ports were governable places where British vessels, and only British vessels, were to deliver English goods in exchange for colonial produce. Yet behind these sanitized depictions lay another story, one about the porousness of commercial regulation, the informality and persistent illegality of exchanges in the British Empire, and the endurance of a culture of cross-national cooperation in the Atlantic that had been forged in the first decades of European settlement and still resonated a century later. In *Empire at the Periphery*, Christian J. Koot examines the networks that connected British settlers in New York and the Caribbean and Dutch traders in the Netherlands and in the Dutch colonies in North America and the Caribbean, demonstrating that these interimperial relationships formed a core part of commercial activity in the early Atlantic World, operating alongside British trade. Koot provides unique consideration of how local circumstances shaped imperial development, reminding us that empires consisted not only of elites dictating imperial growth from world capitals, but also of ordinary settlers in far-flung colonial outposts, who often had more in common with—and a greater reliance on—people from foreign empires who shared their experiences of living at the edge of a fragile, transitional world. Part of the series *Early American Places*

"Scholars of Atlantic history, the British Empire, and maritime history should all find *Empire at the Periphery* a worthwhile read."—Noah L. Gelfand, *International Journal of Maritime History*; "Koot weaves a fascinating tale of the tensions between center and periphery during the early decades of the British Empire. The new English colonies struggled to acquire a staple crop or trade and to get the provisions and commodities they needed to continue to grow. England could not supply them adequately and the Dutch could. The resulting conflicts fueled the arguments between London and its nascent empire and shaped the ultimate form of the empire. Koot has given us a new and fresh look at English trade and empire."—Robert Ritchie, Senior Research Associate, Huntington Library; "Koot deals in a fresh and convincing manner and in an accessible style with Anglo-Dutch trade in the western Atlantic world, leaving no stone unturned."—Wim Klooster, author *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*; "Christian Koot's aim in this study is to enrich our understanding of the interrelations between English-Dutch Atlantic trade, the economic behavior of English settlers in North America, and English politics between 1621 and 1713."—Claudia Schnurmann, *EH.Net*; "Koot's book is a very useful addition to the historiography of the English Atlantic, especially as it takes the periphery, rather than the metropole, as its focus."—Sheryllynne Haggerty, *Enterprise and Society*; "Employing fascinating examples from an impressive array of sources, Koot provides compelling evidence that English colonists' economic ideologies drew in profound ways on their long-standing reliance on Dutch trade. Koot's deep understanding of both conditions on the ground and of European political theory allows readers to see the evolution of particularly colonial commercial cultures in Barbados, the Leeward Islands, and New York. He attends carefully to changes in local circumstances to argue that this history of Dutch trade was central to an eighteenth-century divergence in Caribbean and mainland theories of empire."—April Hartfield, author of *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century*