Trading Places
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The Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice

By
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Avogaria di Comun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APV</td>
<td>Archivio del Patriarcato di Venezia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>Archivio di Stato di Livorno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASV</td>
<td>Archivio di Stato di Venezia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Consiglio dei Dieci</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correr</td>
<td>Biblioteca del Museo Correr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRD</td>
<td>Collegio, Risposte di dentro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPV</td>
<td><em>Calendar of state papers and manuscripts, relating to English affairs existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of Northern Italy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLH</td>
<td>Directie van de Levantse Handel</td>
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<tr>
<td>GF</td>
<td>Giudici del Forestier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>Giudici di Petizion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marciana</td>
<td>Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Notarile, Atti</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA The Hague</td>
<td>Nationaal Archief The Hague</td>
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<tr>
<td>NotArch</td>
<td>Notarieel Archief Amsterdam</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Notarile, Testamenti</td>
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<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>Provveditori alle Biave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGP</td>
<td>Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>Stadsarchief Antwerpen</td>
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<td>SAAm</td>
<td>Stadsarchief Amsterdam</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBG</td>
<td>Senato, Banco Giro</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDB</td>
<td>Senato, Deliberazioni, Biave</td>
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<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Senato Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Senato Terra</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBA</td>
<td>Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam</td>
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**Additional Notations:**

- **b.** busta
- **c.** carta
- **f.** filza
- **fasc.** fascicolo
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

fol.     folio
m.v.    more veneto
n.p.   not paginated
r.       registro
NOTE ON DATES, NAMES, AND CURRENCY

* The Venetian calendar began the year on 1 March. Dates in the text have been converted to the Roman calendar, but dates in the notes have been left in the Venetian style to facilitate locating the documents in the Venetian archives. To avoid confusion, any dates between 1 January and 1 March in the Venetian style are followed by the abbreviation m.v., or *more veneto*. Venetian notaries usually adhered to the Roman calendar.

* The names of the Netherlanders in Venice were spelled in many different ways: first names were usually translated to Italian (‘Jan’ becoming ‘Giovanni’) or to the Venetian dialect (‘Jan’ becoming ‘Zuane’). Last names were sometimes translated, Italianized, or adapted beyond recognition. For instance, the Antwerp merchant Nicolaas Peeters was known in Venice as Nicolò Perez. In general I have chosen to give the Italian version of the first name and the variant of the last name most commonly used in Venetian documents.

* 1 Venetian ducat of account = circa 2 guilders
INTRODUCTION

A reversal of fortunes

One late afternoon in October 1649, at the end of his three-week stay in Venice, the Amsterdam tourist Arnout Hellemans Hooft finally found the marble funeral monument of his great-uncles Guglielmo and Antonio Helman in the church of Santa Maria Formosa. The Netherlandish merchants Guglielmo and Antonio, originally from Antwerp, had been operating the Helman family firm in Venice. Like many wealthy native Venetians, the great-uncles of Hellemans Hooft had made provisions during their lifetimes for the construction of a conspicuous memorial which, after their deaths, would express their identity and the identity of their family; the resulting imposing monument enveloped an entire side entrance of Santa Maria Formosa (Ill. 1). Hellemans Hooft diligently copied their epitaphs into his travel journal, where they stand out among the many impersonal inscriptions on public monuments he collected during his Grand Tour.  

1 With the words 'Netherlands' and 'Low Countries' I refer to the territory of the seventeen provinces under Habsburg rule, roughly corresponding to the current countries of Belgium, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands. During the revolt against Habsburg Spain (1568–1648) the provinces became separated, with the seven northern provinces developing into a new state, the Republic of the United Provinces or Dutch Republic. The ten southern provinces remained under Habsburg dominion and are known as the Southern or Spanish Netherlands. The term 'Netherlandish' will be used to refer to persons originally from the Low Countries before they were divided during the Dutch Revolt. In doing so, I employ the same umbrella term as in early modern Italy, where in general anyone from the Low Countries was a fiammingo, regardless of whether they came from the province of Flanders or not. This practice originated in the Middle Ages, when contacts between Italy and the Low Countries centred on Flanders, De Groof, "Natie en nationaliteit", 90 and Van Kessel, Van Fiandra naar Olanda. For a more detailed discussion of the Netherlandish merchants' provenance, see below, Chapter 4, 106–110. On the Helman family in Venice, see Brulez, "Venetaanse handelsbetrekkingen"; Brulez, "De diaspora", 303–305.

2 Until this accidental discovery, Hellemans Hooft had been searching fruitlessly for the monument in other churches: "'S naemiddaghs vond ik de grafschriften van de ooms bij geval, daer ik langh nae gesocht had in alle kerken, in de kerk van Santa Maria Formosa", Hellemans Hooft, Een naekt beeldt, 87. The manuscript of the travel journal can be found in UBA, Collectie Handschriften V J 40.
1. The Helman family monument in the church of Santa Maria Formosa.
Antonio Helman had died in 1582, and the last part of the inscription in his remembrance succinctly recalls his status as an immigrant: “Grown up among my compatriots, the Netherlanders. Dying in this city of Venice, I lie buried in this grave”.3 His brother Guglielmo’s epitaph is slightly more melancholic in tone, but also juxtaposes his Netherlandish origin to his residence in Venice: “I was Gulielmus Helmanus: Flanders mourns me; the Adriatic Sea pines for me; the poor call on me”.4 They were not the only members of their family to have settled abroad. One brother of Guglielmo and Antonio continued working in Antwerp, while the others represented the family firm’s interests in Hamburg, Paris, Seville, and Istanbul. After the death of Guglielmo in 1593, his younger brother Carlo left the Istanbul branch and took over in Venice.5

The scattering of relatives across different trading centres was not unique to the Helman family. Early modern trade required a high degree of mobility, and merchants often travelled to foreign cities or sent out representatives.6 As Europe’s economic centre of gravity gradually moved north during the first half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp began to take up a pivotal role in international commerce and its traders became more active abroad. This international orientation was reinforced when, in the second half of the century, the uncertainties arising from the revolt against Spain forced many Netherlandish traders from the southern provinces to escape to places offering greater safety, religious freedom, and economic prosperity. The large-scale migration movement or ‘Antwerp diaspora’ dispersed merchants and artisans across the trading centres of early modern Europe.7

3 The complete epitaph for Antonio reads: “Spes ego fallaces cognovi/ Antonius esse/ Exiguo vitae tempore/ factus inops,/ inter concives Belgas exort,/ in urbe/ hac Veneta moriens,/ contegor hoc tumulo”.

4 The epitaph dedicated to Guglielmo reads: “Vixi aliis dum vita fuit./ Post funera tandem/ non peri, at gelido/ in marmore vivo mihi;/ Helmanus Gulielmus eram/ me Flandria luget;/ Hadria suspirat;/ pauperiesque vocat”. Arnout Hellemans Hooft made a few errors in his transcription, cf. UBA, Collectie Handschrift en V J 40, fol. 54r. For the last wills of Antonio and Guglielmo, see Brulez (ed.), Marchands fl amands, vol. I, nos. 30 and 75. For the concession of the burial space in Santa Maria Formosa to the Helman family, ASV, NA, b. 5663, c. 531r–533v, 21 October 1602.

5 Carlo died in 1605 while on a business trip to Spain, Brulez (ed.), Marchands fl amands, vol. I, no. 1790, and was never buried in Venice.

6 Lesger, The rise of the Amsterdam market, 57–58.

7 The seminal article on this subject is still Brulez, “De diaspora”. Many migrants fled from Antwerp—which from 1585 was brought back under Spanish rule—and settled in the Northern Netherlands.
Among the many thousands who fled from their homeland in these decades was Arnout Helman, the only one of the Helman brothers who had converted to Protestantism and who settled in Hamburg. His daughter Leonora later married the Dutch poet and bailiff Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, and it was their son Arnout who searched for the funeral monument in 1649. Family ties thus proved resilient in a time of religious and political turmoil, something which the central inscription on the memorial in Santa Maria Formosa stresses. It not only extols the Helmans’ wealth, piety, and charity, but also proclaims the family’s strong cohesion despite their dispersal: the Helmans

were so united, that, even though they traded in all the realms of the world, they formed a single house (…), overtaken by an early death, [Guglielmo and Antonio] lie locked up in this grave, and the others elsewhere.

Their international scope served the Helmans well in their trade in jewellery and precious stones, which they combined with trade in commodities such as sugar and textiles.

Netherlandish merchants like the Helman brothers had become a prominent presence in Venice in the last decade of the sixteenth century. This achievement was illustrated in 1596, when the Venetian Senate, consulting the most important merchants on the foundation of a new state bank, also invited the collective of Netherlandish traders to give their opinion. Twenty-four merchants, including Carlo Helman, signed their names to the advice offered by the nazione fiamminga, the Netherlandish trading nation. Yet whereas the buildings of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi and the Fondaco dei Turchi on the Canal Grande still testify to the activities of the German and Ottoman merchants,

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8 Hellemans Hooft, Een naekt beeldt, 12. For Hooft’s own visits to Venice fifty years earlier, Hooft, Reis-heuchenis, 142–148, 212–213.
10 See Brulez (ed.), Marchands flamands, vol. I, for example, nos. 138; 968; 972; 973; 1048; 1071.
11 ASV, ST, f. 141. In 1587, the Banco della Piazza di Rialto was founded as a result of the failure of the last private bank in 1584. In 1596, the Senate discussed whether to establish a second state bank, the Banco Giro, which was eventually founded in 1619, Tucci, “Il Banco della Piazza di Rialto”, 231–250.
the Helman funeral monument is the most tangible expression of the Netherlanders’ presence in Venice.

This study will examine why traders from the Low Countries settled in Venice and how they succeeded in becoming such a strong commercial force in a city accustomed to protecting its own trade. It will do so by studying the activities of the individual Netherlandish immigrant traders as well as their communal relations. Who were these merchants and how did they combine their experience in Atlantic trade with the opportunities offered in the Mediterranean? What was the character of the nazione fi amminga? Why did they not live and trade in a fondaco, an institution used by the Venetians to control the presence and activities of other groups of immigrant merchants? How did the specific nature of the Netherlanders’ commercial activities and their mutual relations shape their interaction with Venetian society? Did the state define strict social and economic boundaries for the merchant community, or did the merchants succeed in curbing the economic policies of the state?

The arrival of the Netherlandish merchants needs to be understood as both a feature and cause of the profound changes occurring in the early modern European economy, changes which severely affected Venice. As the centre of the European economy swung to the shores of the North, southern Europe faced a long period of decline, of which Venice is often cited as the prime example. At the same time the northerners also became more involved in Mediterranean trade and shipping. In the famous words of Fernand Braudel, their vessels “swarmed into the Mediterranean like so many heavy insects crashing against the window panes”. With this rather violent metaphor Braudel heralded a new phase at the end of his study of the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II. In Braudel’s opinion, the invasion of English and, especially, Netherlandish ships in the final decade of the sixteenth century represented the definite take-over of Mediterranean maritime, commercial, and

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13 Braudel, The Mediterranean, vol. I, 634. For Braudel, the sixteenth-century Mediterranean was a world-economy, a “whole area stimulated by its trading activities”, with Venice as dominant city at its centre. After brief stages in which Antwerp and Genoa succeeded Venice as world capitals, Amsterdam became the leading city, thereby asserting once and for all the dominance of the North over the Mediterranean, Braudel, The perspective of the world, 22–38, 116–138, 175–176.
financial life by the northern European powers. Molly Greene modified Braudel’s idea of a complete northern take-over, arguing that although the Netherlanders and English did seize control over long-distance maritime commerce between the Mediterranean and northern Europe, others such as the Greeks and Ottomans continued to take part in the lucrative intra-Mediterranean carrying trade.\textsuperscript{15} Studying the settlement of Netherlandish merchants during this period of transition therefore also throws light on the impact of these changes on both Venetian trade and Venetian society.

The second half of the sixteenth century forms the natural starting point of analysis for this book. While Amsterdam rapidly developed into a leading trade centre, Venice was harshly confronted with its dependence on the Netherlanders during the severe famines of the early 1590s. Roughly fifty years after the first large-scale presence of northern merchant vessels in the Mediterranean, the war of the northern provinces of the Low Countries against Spain came to an end. The lifting of Spanish embargoes and the cessation of Dutch-Spanish hostilities inside and outside Europe signified a new phase for Amsterdam commerce and navigation.\textsuperscript{16} For Venice, on the other hand, the 1640s brought a new conflict with the Ottoman Empire over the island of Crete. The drawn-out war, which lasted from 1645 until 1669, meant the further decline of Venice’s colonial empire, once the foundation of its commercial hegemony, while the financial burden forced the state to open up the privileged patrician class to newcomers, including two Netherlandish families. The second half of the seventeenth century shows how Netherlandish immigrant merchants gained a foothold in a city-state facing a series of radical changes which affected both its commerce and social order.

\textit{The decline of Venice and the rise of Amsterdam}

The arrival of Netherlandish merchants in Venice has attracted attention from historians, but until now with little serious result. During a conference on Venice’s economic decline in 1957, the economic historian Gino Luzzatto regretted the absence of contributions discussing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Greene, “Beyond the northern invasion”, esp. 46–52.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Israel, \textit{The Dutch Republic}, 610–611.
\end{itemize}
the effect of Netherlandish trade and traders on Venetian decadence.\textsuperscript{17} Years later the Helman brothers were cited by Ugo Tucci, in his essay on the detachment of the Venetian nobility from trade, as an example of foreign merchants bringing “a new spirit to the Venetian business world”, at the expense of the old-fashioned Venetian traders who had become “slaves to routine”.\textsuperscript{18} A two-volume source edition compiled by the Belgian historians Wilfrid Brulez and Greta Devos, containing excerpts of over 4,000 Venetian notarial records, gave an indication of the Netherlanders’ activities at the Rialto market.\textsuperscript{19} However, not even the wealth of information collected by Brulez and Devos resulted in a study on the Netherlandish presence in Venice.

This can be at least partly explained by the fact that the study of Venice’s waning role in international trade, in the words of James Grubb, has been “largely moribund since the early 1970s”.\textsuperscript{20} The decline of international trade had been a long-debated subject in Venetian historiography during the previous decades, and one of the main issues discussed was the exact chronology of Venice’s commercial downfall.\textsuperscript{21} When general agreement was reached that the passage from maritime commerce to agriculture and industry was both a cause and symptom of the decline, there seemed little point in further exploration.\textsuperscript{22} In 1976, revising the traditional account of complete decay, Richard Rapp argued that Venice’s economic decline was merely relative, compared to the growth of Amsterdam and London, while the city’s industrial activity guaranteed that both population and income remained stable through-

\textsuperscript{17} Luzzatto, “Introduzione”, 5. In the collection of essays based on the conference proceedings, the general northern European perspective is discussed in Beutin, “La décadence économique”, while the English, French, and German view was given in Davis, “Influences”; Braudel et al., “Le déclin de Venise”; and Kellenbenz, “Le déclin”, respectively.

\textsuperscript{18} Tucci, “The psychology of the Venetian merchant”, 357. For a study taking a comparative approach to seventeenth-century Venetian and Amsterdam elite, including their economic activities: Burke, \textit{Venice and Amsterdam}, which, however, does not discuss relations between both cities.

\textsuperscript{19} Brulez (ed.), \textit{Marchands flamands}, vol. I; Brulez and Devos (eds.), \textit{Marchands flamands}, vol. II. These editions cover the period 1568–1621.

\textsuperscript{20} Grubb, “When myths lose power”, 62–63.

\textsuperscript{21} The most important contributions are the essays collected in Pullan (ed.), \textit{Crisis and change}; the essays in \textit{Aspetti e cause}; Sella, \textit{Commerci e industrie}; Braudel, “La vita economica”; Luzzato, “La decadenza”. Discussions of existing historiography can be found in Grubb, “When myths lose power”, 60–64, and in Quazza, \textit{La decadenza italiana}, 35–51, which also places the Venetian case in an European context.

\textsuperscript{22} Grubb, “When myths lose power”, 62–63.
out the seventeenth century. Dramatic accounts of the total collapse of Venetian commerce were replaced by the idea that the decline was partly compensated by the increased importance of regional trade and industry. As a result, historiographical attention has shifted away from maritime international commerce and towards the Terraferma industries. Because the changes in European commerce are generally accepted and a broad consensus has been reached on the timing and causes of Venetian decline, questions relating to the impact of these transformations on Venetian society no longer seemed to hold any interest.

Historians working on Netherlandish trade on the other hand, have mostly focused on the final decade of the sixteenth century, when Netherlandish vessels suddenly arrived in large numbers in Mediterranean waters. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Hermann Wätjen gave a first account of Dutch trade and shipping in the Mediterranean, based on the records of the States General and the archives of the Board of Levant Trade (Directie van den Levantschen Handel). With regard to

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24 Good examples are the essays in Lanaro (ed.), *At the centre of the Old World*; Vianello, *Seta fine*; Demo, *L’anima della città*. A useful study analysing the overall changes in early modern Venetian economy is Pezzolo, *Il fisco*, which combines two earlier contributions to the *Storia di Venezia* series.

25 In the recent volume of essays, Martin and Romano (eds.), *Venice reconsidered*, economic history is conspicuously absent. An exception to this trend form the many works dedicated to the Jewish mercantile presence in Venice, see, for example, Ravid, “An introduction to the charters”; Arbel, *Trading nations*. Late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century native Venetian traders have been given little attention. However, for a recent work on the Venetian community in Istanbul in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople*.

26 For descriptions of trade relations before the 1590s, Brulez, *De firma Della Faille*; Brulez, “L’exportation des Pays-Bas”, and the concise survey given in Stabel, “Venice and the Low Countries”. The first Netherlandish contribution referring to those early maritime trade contacts is De Jonge, *Nederland en Venetië*, 281–314. De Jonge exclusively used Dutch sources, mostly diplomatic dispatches and resolutions of the States General. For studies on the diplomatic relations between the Dutch Republic and Venice, the best works are still Blok, *Relazioni veneziane* and Geyl, *Christofforo Suriano*.

27 The *Directie*, unlike the English Levant Company and the VOC, was not a trading company, but a lobbying group promoting the interests of those doing business in the Mediterranean. It was founded in 1625, on the instigation of Cornelis Haga, the Dutch ambassador in Istanbul, and remained operative for two centuries, Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 173–183; Bijl, *De Nederlandse convooidienst*, 74–76; Van Brakel, *De Hollandsche handelscompagnieën*. For a comparison between the *Directie*
Venice, he pointed out the tension between Venetian protectionism and Dutch commercial activities after 1590. In the years following Wätjen’s work, trade with the Mediterranean would never receive as much historiographical attention as Baltic commerce, which was considered to be the foundation of Dutch trade, or the spectacular exploits of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) in the East. When historians did address this subject, they attempted to explain the characteristics of the Straatvaart—Netherlands maritime commerce (vaart) beyond the Strait (Straat) of Gibraltar—and how it first became an integral part of Dutch trade.

Whereas these contributions were exclusively based on Dutch sources and looked at the Straatvaart solely from a northern European point of view, Braudel put the Straatvaart in a Mediterranean perspective. As mentioned above, to Braudel the arrival of the Netherlanders marked the definitive end of the Mediterranean’s role as the linchpin in intercontinental trade. He saw this development as a manifestation of the ‘secular trend’, the cycle determined by the levels of population, food-supplies, and prices. At the end of the sixteenth century, the growing population of Italy placed too much strain on local agricultural output. The northerners, with their leading role in the Baltic grain trade, could meet the demand for cereals, and thus their dominance in bulk trade formed the basis for their conquest of the Mediterranean market.
In his synthesis of the rise and fall of Dutch trade in the early modern period, Jonathan Israel attacks the Braudelian view that economic history is determined by the secular trend, offering an alternative interpretation in which political and military events are vital determinants. Israel argues that Dutch commercial primacy was not connected to control over the Baltic bulk trade, but depended on its dominance of the ‘rich trades’ in high-value textiles and spices. War, wartime embargoes, and truces greatly affected trade in these items, and hence he discerns a series of consecutive phases in Dutch trade with political developments serving as turning points. Trade in the Mediterranean also found its place in this pattern of rise and fall, and while Braudel saw the Dutch as a dominant force from the 1590s onwards, Israel judges their position to be very vulnerable in the first decades after their arrival in the Mediterranean. He insists on the limited importance of the trade in Baltic grain in the Mediterranean, on the impact of the Spanish embargoes on the Straatvaart, and on the fierce competition the Dutch faced from the English, French, and even the Venetians.

the northerners’ presence in the port of Genoa, see Grendi, “I Nordici”; Bicci, “Frutti mediterranei”.

31 Israel, Dutch primacy, 3–11 and passim. Israel’s emphasis on the effect of politics on economic patterns, the importance he gives to trade in high-value goods, and his alternative periodization have provoked discussion and often disagreement from other historians working on early modern Dutch trade. See, for example, Noordegraaf, “Vooruit en achteruit”; Van Zanden, “Een fraaie synthese”, and the response, Israel, “The ‘New History’”. Traditionally, Dutch trading power has been described as expanding in the decades following the 1570s, reaching its high point in 1648, see De Vries and Van der Woude, The first modern economy, 378–412. Cf. Lindblad, “Foreign trade”.

32 Israel discerns a first phase of growth, starting in 1590, after which Dutch trade flourished during the period of the Twelve Years’ Truce (1609–1621), while suffering from Spanish embargoes when war was resumed. It reached its zenith after the peace negotiations at Münster in 1647–1648, but during the years following 1672, when the Dutch Republic came under the combined attack of France and England, decline irrevocably set in.

33 Israel, Dutch primacy, 53–59, 97–100.

34 Israel, “The phases”, passim. He discerns five phases in Dutch Mediterranean trade between 1590 and 1713, which largely correspond to those he determined for Dutch trade in general. See also his “Trade, politics and strategy”, where Israel confronts his findings with those of De Vries and Van der Woude, The first modern economy, 379–382, who accept that the resumption of Dutch-Spanish conflict after 1621 severely affected trade in the Mediterranean, but distinguish a rapid recovery in the 1630s.
Merchant communities

Israel was the first to integrate the story of mercantile communities in foreign ports into the framework of Dutch commercial primacy. In an article which covered all Dutch merchant communities between Cádiz and Istanbul, he described the successive stages of the communities’ commercial role, while also offering a glimpse of their cultural and religious character.35 In Venice, Israel states, an older and larger settlement of Flemish traders existed in the city, while a community of Dutch merchants took shape only after 1609. According to Israel, when transporting Baltic grain during the first phase of the Straatvaart, the Dutch mostly provided shipping services for Italian merchants, and had little control over trade themselves, since they produced few luxury goods which met Mediterranean demand. Only when war with Spain temporarily ceased during the Twelve Years’ Truce (1609–1621) did they develop into a commercial force to be reckoned with, and in these years the merchant communities in the Mediterranean became a specifically Dutch network under control of the Dutch Protestant state.36 This pattern fits in with Israel’s general periodization of Dutch trade, but it hinges on the distinction between two separate merchant communities, an early Flemish one and a later Dutch one after 1609.37

This distinction is problematic and to a large extent artificial, as this book will demonstrate.38 Nevertheless, by stressing the importance of communities of immigrant traders, Israel’s article fits in with a recent trend in the study of the Dutch Republic’s economic prosperity: entrepreneurial history increasingly replaces or complements the macro-economic perspective, which leaves little room for the individual. This development has resulted in a growing interest in the activities of Netherlandish merchants both at home and abroad.39 Taking up Israel’s

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35 Israel, “The Dutch merchant colonies”, passim.
36 Ibidem, 87, 89, 92.
37 Ibidem, 87, 92, 100.
38 The distinction between groups of fiamminghi and olandesi traders cannot be found in the actual Venetian source cited by Israel, cf. ASV, CSM, Risposte, r. 144, c. 163r–171r, 31 March 1618, which discusses a petition submitted by the “nattion fiamminga”. Some terminological confusion seems to have arisen, since olandesi is used only in the inventory of eighteenth-century copies of earlier records from the Cinque Savi archives, see ASV, Inventario Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, no. 224.
39 See the contributions in Lesger and Noordegraaf (eds.), Entrepreneurs, including amongst others Engels, “Dutch traders”; Mitchell, “‘It will be easy to make money’”; Voss, “A community in decline?”. In sixteenth-century Antwerp many foreign merchant