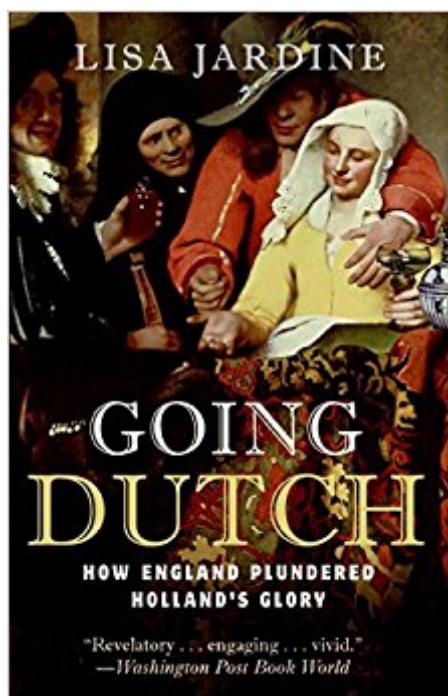


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# Going Dutch: How England Plundered Holland's Glory



## Synopsis

In Going Dutch, renowned writer Lisa Jardine tells the remarkable history of the relationship between England and Holland, two of Europe's most important colonial powers at the dawn of the modern age. Jardine, the author of *The Awful End of Prince William the Silent*, demonstrates that England's rise did not come at the expense of the Dutch as is commonly thought, but was actually a "handing on" of the baton of cultural and intellectual supremacy to a nation expanding in international power and influence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

England's almost bloodless Glorious Revolution of 1688, in which the Dutch king William of Orange overthrew James II, began as a hostile takeover but rapidly turned into a friendly merger, according to British historian Jardine (*The Awful End of Prince William the Silent*). She explores the fascinating Anglo-Dutch relationship to answer how and why two sworn foes became friends so seamlessly. Jardine focuses mainly on the subterranean intellectual, cultural and scientific intersections between the two countries and finds that contacts were continuous and mutually advantageous for decades before William's invasion. Cross-border fertilization resulted in two of the greatest painters of the age—Peter Paul Rubens and Anton van Dyck—working for English patrons while esteemed members of the Royal Society (such as Isaac Newton) corresponded with their Netherlandish counterparts (such as Christian Huygens). By looking so closely at elite opinion, however, Jardine too lightly dismisses the virility of petty nationalism lower down the scale and too easily glosses over the very real military tensions between the two powers. Nevertheless, this is a

highly original work that will appeal to fans of Simon Schama's groundbreaking *The Embarrassment of Riches*. Color and b&w illus. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Exploring the cultural interchange between England and the Netherlands in the mid-1600s, historian Jardine focuses on the royal and courtier circles that cultivated the arts and sciences blossoming in that period. Her effusively illustrated book reproduces nearly 100 contemporary images of paintings and prints, each of which leads into the text, which discusses their connective role between the two countries. Jardine also traces the connections between the House of Stuart and the House of Orange, whose political interactions culminated in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the drama of which historically overshadows their rich web of cultural relationships, Jardine's inquiry suggests. Indeed the antagonists James II and William of Orange are instantly recognizable to history readers, whereas Jardine's protagonist is hardly known. He is Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687), a Dutch diplomat and connoisseur of painting, architecture, and garden design, and father of Christian, the renowned astronomer, and Constantijn, who was William's secretary during the invasion of England. Weaving the fortunes of the Huygens clan into dynastic dynamics, Jardine richly displays the society in which Rubens and van Dyck flourished. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This was a most informative book. However the title was probably chosen to create additional interest, I did not observe any plundering; rather an intense relationship that bound Holland to England for a variety of social and economic reasons. History books mostly fail to delineate the complex relationships and shifting positions of power that is detailed so elaborately. For anyone who wishes to learn how and why a small country without a strong central government managed to rise to become a world power, this is required reading. The birth of the House of Orange, the extended asylum of various members of British royalty in Holland and the alternating periods of influence of one upon the other are quite unexpected, but carefully presented and explained. In other words a book that is quite more than its poorly chosen title infers.Piet Hein

A fascinating book for those interested in Dutch, English or 17th Century history. Of late several books have examined the impact of Holland's Golden Age on world history; this one stands proudly among them. In 1688 the Dutch invaded England with a fleet larger than the ill fated Spanish Armada a century before. The goal was to place a Protestant back on the throne of England --

Dutch prince William III, married to Mary Stuart and both nephew and son-in-law to Charles I. Jardine clears up any confusion by revealing the close connections between the Dutch and the British dating back to the beginning of the century. In fact, many of the institutions in government and finance that we think of as British came from Holland, while the free and cooperative exchange of culture, art and ideas continued even when the two nations were at war. Finally, a Dutch born prince and his Stuart wife became king and queen of England. Missing in her narrative are the economic engines that drove these two nations and the entire century forward -- herring, beaver pelts, tobacco, slavery, porcelain. But this is a social history, not an economic one. Timothy Brook's *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* would make a great companion piece on this front. Jardine amply demonstrates how freely the Dutch exchanged royal connection, culture, art, horticulture and science by following the activities of the central family in the process, the multi-talented and ever-present Huygens family, from the patriarch, poet, art connoisseur and diplomat Constantijn to the brilliant mathematician, scientist and inventor Christiaan. In the process Britain's fortunes increased as Holland's decreased, while Jardine, a British scholar, gives the Dutch their due. Lavishly illustrated, well told.

Finally, a rare and quite balanced English book about the Dutch invasion of England. It wasn't a revolution, and not gracious either (ask the Scottish and the Irish). Calling it a Glorious Revolution is plain wrong and puts a single-sided "spin" on the vital removal of a King that, together with his brother, started wars for personal gain and just about sold England's future to Louis XIV. Lots of details, at times a little dry, but with good information about the very close relationship of the Anglo-Dutch people at the time. A good read for those that are interested in this period.

This was a bit of a mixed bag, and should really have been titled "A History of the Huygens Family and how they Invented Everything". My introduction to Lisa Jardine was through various podcasts from the BBC and other sources in the UK. I love to hear her speak and her humor and life come through in everything she does. I was so looking forward to getting that in a book and I'm sad to say I did not.

It was in fact after reading Ms Jardine's obituary a couple of weeks ago which mentioned the various books that this extraordinary person had written. "Going Dutch" caught my eye. I ordered it immediately and became fascinated with the cultural and social connections between England and Holland during the 17th century. This book would make a wonderful Christmas gift.

Lisa Jardine's writing is ever so easy and wonderfully informative - had my school history books been done by her I should have loved history long before I have.

The history books describe anglo-dutch 17th century relations as consisting chiefly of rivalry. But there was much more than rivalry. Science, horticulture art. There was much cooperation. Here the story is told.

This is an awkwardly written and deceptively sub-titled book whose cover promises much more than the book delivers. The book is really about the Dutch Huygens family, their experiences and observations, especially in contacts and cultural exchanges between England and the Netherlands. But some editor or sales promoter tried to jazz up the product with a Vermeer painting on the cover, a misleading subtitle about England "plundering" Holland's glory. and lots of reproductions of Dutch art throughout the book. The text of the book makes it clear that there was no plundering at all, only sharing across the narrow sea, which is much less exciting. The writing is awkward and annoying. Overly long sentences and extended clauses make for rough going within paragraphs while the transitions between paragraphs are often strained as an attempt is made to organize the book by cultural topics (paintings, music, gardens, etc.) rather than chronologically and by turning (and returning) to various members of the Huygens family as the principal observers and reporters about each. A very disappointing book.

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