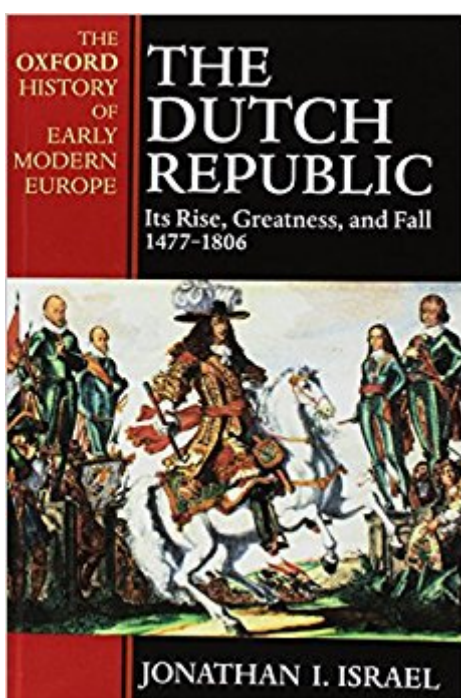


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# The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, And Fall 1477-1806 (Oxford History Of Early Modern Europe)



## Synopsis

"Jonathan Israel's 1,231-page blockbuster forms the inaugural volume of a new series, the Oxford History of Early Modern Europe, and offers a comprehensive, integrated account of the northern part of the Netherlands over almost 350 years...The Dutch Republic represents the fruit of 12 years of research, contemplation and writing, and brims over with interesting detail."--The New York Times Book Review"Israel performs the great service of charting a path through this literature and presents a coherent and comprehensive picture of the Dutch Republic.... Comprehensive in scope and yet so clearly and carefully written that it could serve as a textbook for graduate history courses. Because it is so thoroughly researched and up-to-date, it is also the kind of indispensable handbook that deserves a place on every early modernist's bookshelf."--American Historical Review

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Jonathan Israel's 1,231-page blockbuster... offers a comprehensive, integrated account of the northern part of the Netherlands over almost 350 years...[it] represents the fruit of 12 years of research, contemplation and writing, and brims over with interesting detail."--The New York Times Book Review"Those with a serious interest in the history of the Netherlands will not only have to read this book, they will enjoy it."--Sixteenth Century Journal"Israel performs the great service of charting a path through this literature and presents a coherent and comprehensive picture of the Dutch Republic...is comprehensive in scope and yet so clearly and carefully written that it could serve as a textbook for graduate history courses. Because it is so thoroughly researched and up-to-date, it is also the kind of indispensable handbook that deserves a place on every early

modernist's bookshelf."--American Historical Review

Jonathan Israel is Professor of Dutch Histories and Institutions at the University of London.

I got it in time even in Korea. The condition of the book is very nice. The price is also reasonable. I highly recommend it.

This is a comprehensive and interesting history.

the book is well written and gives a very good insight in the history, events and customs at the time

The Dutch Republic during its Golden Age played a crucial part in starting the development of the modern world. This book tells its history over a time span of more than three hundred years. For each of the various periods, there are separate chapters for political, economical, cultural and religious aspects. On the one hand this is very useful if you are mainly interested in one particular of those themes, since you can easily skip the other parts. On the other hand it makes reading more difficult, since often events are referenced which are only discussed in later chapters, forcing you to skip back and forth to understand what is going on. Still, the author does a good job explaining the interplay between those aspects, and he also embeds everything in the larger context of European history. Overall I would say it's not perfect, but it gives a comprehensive overview over a fascinating period of early modern times. Definitely worth checking out.

I enjoy the wide-spread view of history that is available in nearly every Oxford or Cambridge history publication. To be sure it takes a long time to write not only on the political events of the subject country, but also to write on the cultural and social conditions of the particular epoch which is being discussed. For example this book is over 1200 pages long and that is quite typical. Still John Lathrop Motley wrote only on political events with very little of the economic, social and cultural backgrounds of those political events and he filled three volumes in his "Rise of the Dutch Republic" (1856) and then continued with four more volumes of subsequent history--"the United Netherlands" (1860 & 1867). Having read those seven volumes I found this single volume to be much more rewarding.

Professor Israel's book is the first volume in what is clearly intended to be a new series of definitive

texts, Oxford University Press's History of Early Modern Europe. The book is certainly superbly produced (albeit a bit short of maps), and is packed with information on a fascinating subject. No doubt the Dutch achievement in the seventeenth century was amazing - after rebelling from Spain the Dutch turned themselves into a world power, became the freest and most advanced society in Europe (although Dutch freedom had its limits, as Professor Israel makes clear) and produced a galaxy of stunning artists - Rembrandt, Vermeer, Hals etc. All this based on nothing but hard work and daring, and founded on a country that Dutchmen made themselves - "God made the world, but the Dutch made Holland", as they say. So a great subject, a magnificent looking book, and a first rate scholar who really knows his stuff and who has published a number of excellent books. And yet, it doesn't quite get there...I don't agree with those who say that this book is in the same league as Simon Schama's. I am a historian, but found the book very hard going. I think one problem was the author's obsessive focus on the internal rivalries of the Dutch provinces and towns. By the time the states of Friesland and the States of Zeeland and the States of Holland and the States-General had all fallen out with themselves yet again for the umpteenth time my eyes were starting to glaze over...I'm sure it's very important to understanding Dutch history but I felt the material on internal rivalries and jealousies needed to be shortened and the issues clarified for the non-specialist. As well as being overburdened with material on internal politics other aspects of the Dutch achievement were covered very sketchily. I was surprised for such a large book to have so little on the Dutch seaborne empire - Israel is mainly interested in the VOC as a factor in Dutch internal politics. There is one chapter on the overseas empire but it is not very detailed and Israel is clearly not especially interested in it. As a citizen of a country named, after all, after a Dutch province and whose first European discoverer was a Dutchman I was disappointed to see so little on the Dutch in North America, Brazil, Ceylon, South Africa and the East Indies. The book is essentially a detailed internal political history of the Seven Provinces in 1100 pages. I also would have liked to know more about art and literature. Perhaps the book basically reflects a tendency in modern European historical writing to focus on internal politics and European affairs and to minimise and downplay the European overseas empires. For a great world seapower like the Netherlands this seems very limiting. Older works on the Dutch empire by C R Boxer and others still remain essential reading.

US history and popular culture like to promote the emergent United States as an isolated beacon of Democracy emerging out of the specialness of the colonial experience. In fact, the values and ideals upon which this country is founded were first expressed and practiced in the Dutch Republic. And indeed, those values were transported to the Dutch colony in what was later named New York

-- with basic concepts forming the underpinning of the US Constitution. If we want to understand the US, we need to understand our REAL predecessor.

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