

**Duco Hellema, Ryszard Żelichowski, Bert van der Zwan, eds**  
*Poland and The Netherlands: A Case Study of European Relations*

Dordrecht: Republic of Letters Publishing BV. 2011  
314 pp. ISBN 9789089790743

*Poland and The Netherlands: A Case Study of European Relations* is the successful result of the 2002 conference on Dutch-Polish relations organized by historian Duco Hellema and supported, among others, by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Embassy in The Hague. The editors, Hellema and historians Ryszard Żelichowski and Bert van der Zwan, have published, among others, on Dutch foreign policy and Dutch-Polish relations.<sup>1</sup> This review focuses on the texts dealing with 20<sup>th</sup> century bilateral relations and offers a few suggestions concerning future research possibilities.

The fifteen chapters mainly focus on Dutch-Polish relations during World War II, the Cold War and the post-1989 era; only the first three texts treat the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, as valuable as the purely scholarly contributions are, two texts are based on personal viewpoints: the eyewitness report on bilateral relations and the election of John Paul II by Edy Korthals Altes, former Dutch ambassador in Warsaw from 1977-1980, and reflections on (the path to) Polish NATO membership by Henryk Szlajfer, Polish policy planner from 1993 to 2008. Both authors were directly involved in the subject matter of their contributions and provide front seat reports.

First of all, during the “era of Baltic trade,” Poland and the Netherlands were destined to intense economic cooperation. The wars for the political domination of the Baltic Sea were waged for control of the Baltic trade, which would prove to be a crucial source of income for the Dutch (e.g. the supply of grain). Resulting from trade was migration, local settlements and an influential exchange of ideas (e.g. shipbuilding and credit operations). With abundant examples, Maria Bogucka describes productive cultural exchanges and healthy diplomatic relations. Interestingly, the Polish hetero-image of the “clean and

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