

Diplomacy, trade, culture
Dutch relations with the Ottoman Empire in the long seventeenth century

In 1612, Sultan Ahmed I granted trade capitulations to the States General of the Netherlands, initiating durable and valuable contact between the Dutch Republic and the Ottoman Empire. The long mission of the first ambassador to the Ottoman court, Cornelis Haga, opened successfully with the initiation of trade by the Dutch throughout the Levant and areas of the Mediterranean. Haga's long stay in Constantinople, from 1612-1638, formed the first chapter of official Dutch-Ottoman diplomatic contacts. The Republic retained its status as a key diplomatic partner to the Ottoman court throughout the long seventeenth century. Diplomatic relations often gave rise to cultural and commercial exchanges as well. In the slipstream of Dutch diplomats came merchants, ministers, scientists, and artists seeking merchandise, manuscripts, plants, and antiquities. The court in Istanbul expressed interest in Dutch cartography and the possibility of a mutual opposition to their common enemy, the Spanish-Hapsburg Empire, but the lucrative trade in textiles was a crucial motivating factor for contact among the parties as well.

This symposium will examine a variety of instances of Dutch-Turkish relations during the long seventeenth-century. What brought about diplomatic, commercial, and cultural contact? How and by whom was contact mediated, and what sorts of roles did interpreters, agents, and dragomans play? How did gifts and works of art function in the cultivation of diplomatic relations?

This day-long symposium is co-organized by Maartje van Gelder (UvA) and Claudia Swan (Northwestern University) with the generous support of the Amsterdam Centre for the Study of the Golden Age. Papers will be in Dutch and English.