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A Land of Milk and Honey: Colonial Propaganda and the City of Amsterdam, 1656-1664

Frans Blom and Henk Looijesteijn

NEW NETHERLAND, in its final decade under Dutch rule, had a strong presence in Amsterdam's wide variety of public media. The colony was depicted at large in the *Description* (1655) by Adriaen van der Donck, who had lived there. Another eyewitness, the poet Jacob Steendam, published three different verse compositions on New Netherland (1659-1662) following his return to patria. Amsterdam-based authors also discussed the American colony during this period. Franciscus van den Enden, the headmaster of the city's Latin School, published his *Kort Verhael van Nieuw Nederlant* (1662), while in the same year Pieter Ploekhoy came up with a settlement prospectus in the *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*. Moreover, New Netherland starred in the Amsterdam debates about economy and Dutch expansion in general. The De la Court brothers featured the colony in their political writings, the *Politike Discoursen*, that were reissued in Amsterdam in 1662 and 1663.

While every scholar in colonial history refers at times to all or some of these texts, they are rarely studied as a group, nor has much attention been paid to the fact that these publications all appeared in a chronologically short time period, and not a few of them can be characterized as vehicles of

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colonial propaganda. In this article we demonstrate that these texts serving to promote the image of the American colony in the Dutch Republic were closely linked to Amsterdam's growing involvement in the colony in these years, and to one particular settlement project: the Amsterdam city-colony of New Amstel.

Amsterdam and New Netherland. Amsterdam was important for New Netherland, for its involvement with the trade of New Netherland had been great from the beginning. Before 1621, Amsterdam merchants dominated commerce with the area. Therefore, with the establishment of the West India Company (WIC) in 1621, New Netherland basically fell under the oversight of the Company's Amsterdam Chamber. That chamber consisted of twenty directors chosen from the chief participants, who were required to have invested at least 6,000 guilders in the WIC. Management of New

Netherland was a task entrusted to a committee of several directors of the Amsterdam Chamber. The exact number of the directors dealing with New Netherland is unknown; usually the same names would re-occur in the signatures. These commissaries kept the correspondence with the colony and prepared decision-making of the whole chamber.¹ Both the Chamber of Amsterdam and the committee charged with the administration of New Netherland were housed in the same building, the West-Indisch Huis (West India House) on Haarlemmerstraat, near Amsterdam's harbor front and a ten-minute walk away from the political and economic heart of the city on Dam Square—the City Hall and the Bourse.²

Amsterdam's domination of New

¹ Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Boston, 2005), 39-40, 96.

² Although it had to move its headquarters in 1654 to the Westindisch Pakhuis on Rapenburg Island, which is slightly further away from the city center.



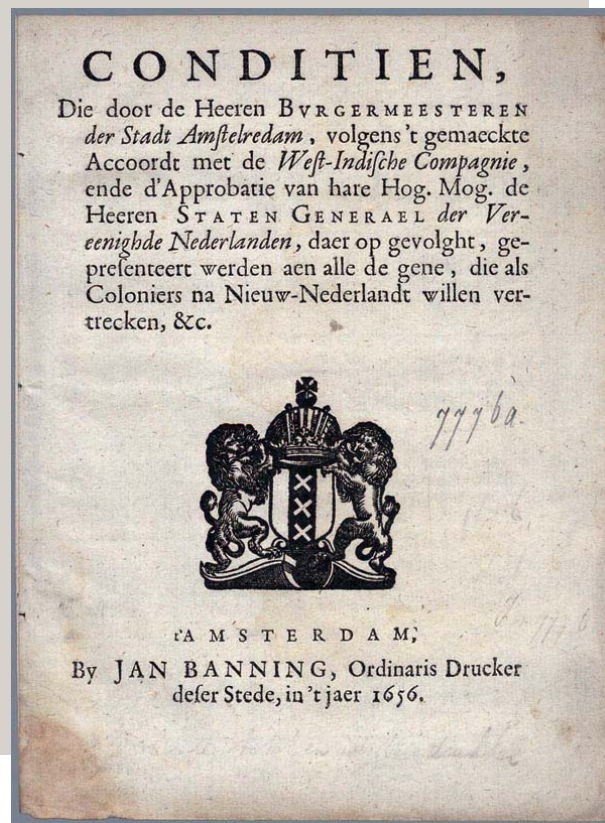
West-Indisch Huis (West India House) on Haarlemmerstraat in Amsterdam.

Netherland was not just economic and political but also in establishing its social organization: all churches controlled by the Company were essentially in the hands of the Amsterdam church council and later the Classis of Amsterdam. In the case of the North-American Dutch Reformed churches, this supervision lasted until 1772, when the Dutch Reformed Church in America gained independence.³ The Classis, which united all the consistories of the Reformed churches of Amsterdam and surrounding villages, was also located within walking distance of the West India House.

Amsterdam and its City Colony. Although ties between the city magistrates and the WIC directors were close with partly overlapping networks, and lines of communication, therefore, were conveniently short, the city's formal dealings with New Netherland only began in the 1650s. As population programs for the area, under the supervision of the Company, had failed, it was only natural that the Gentlemen Nineteen looked to the nearest power at hand—a few blocks away from their headquarters to be sure—whose interest and involvement in New Netherland was already great. Their proposal to give the city part of the lands under their suzerainty fell on fertile ground, for the Amsterdam council considered that, with the supply of timber from the north and grain from the Baltic being threatened by the Nordic War between Sweden and Denmark, the American colony might become a new major timber and grain supply. The negotiations between the Company and the city lasted for much of the year 1656.⁴ By early June 1656, New Netherland Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant was informed of the future involvement of the “Noble Worships the Lords Burgomasters” of Amsterdam in the “establishment of some colonies there” (i.e., the South River).⁵ The States General of the Dutch Republic ratified the contract for a city colony on August 16, 1656.⁶

As a new administrative body in the Amsterdam magistrate, the burgomasters appointed a committee of “commissaries and directors” who would be in daily charge of the colony.⁷ In December 1656 Stuyvesant was informed that the WIC had at last made a contract with the burgomasters, and received a copy of that together with the conditions upon which Amsterdam would allow colonists to move to the new colony. The conditions were reasonable and favorable, the Company's directors judged that soon an increase of the population could be ex-

Conditien die door de heeren burgemeesteren der Stadt Amsterdam [etc.](Amsterdam: 1656)



pected—they already had seen great throngs on account of the news, and the city and its councilors had shown great zeal for their unique project.⁸

To all appearances, Amsterdam took its new colonization project seriously, hoping it would become a strong trading partner in the future. During the eight years that the South River colony was under the city's rule, the burgomasters and commissaries did their best to make New Amstel a success, spending much effort and money—two of the commissioners, Hector Pietersz (d. 1660) and Jan Tayspil (1618-1671), responsible for collecting funds, reportedly borrowed 132,000 guilders from private investors between 1656 and 1659 alone—and forcefully furthering the migration to the colony.⁹ At the same time, the city launched a public emigration campaign, publishing the conditions on which people could migrate to the new colony.

The “Conditions” of Amsterdam (1656).

The pamphlet containing the *Conditions* in 1656 was a public display of Amsterdam's official involvement in populating New Netherland. It was published by Amsterdam's official printing house of Jan Banningh (c. 1588-1658) and marked on the title page as an official city document with Amsterdam's coat of arms, the Saint Andrew's crosses.¹⁰ The pamphlet lists thirty-five articles that guaranteed as much help and support as possible in terms of

decent transport, good lands, financial aid, temporary tax reduction, protection, and freedoms in trade.

The magistrates guaranteed the colonists, their families, and their property would be transported to New Netherland safely. Also, the city would negotiate with the skippers of American-bound ships and pay for the transportation of each, if necessary, on the understanding that the colonists would reimburse the city at a later date. Furthermore, the city promised to make sure beforehand that the colonists would be settling on fertile

³ Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 266.

⁴ S. Hart, “De Stadskolonie Nieuwer-Amstel aan de Delaware River in Noord-Amerika,” *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 38 (1951), 89-94: 90; Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 129.

⁵ NYSA, Col. Mss. 12:39 (June 14, 1656), in *Correspondence 1654-1658. New Netherland Documents Series Volume XII*, Charles T. Gehring, trans. and ed. (Syracuse 2003), 92-98, there 94.

⁶ Hart, “Stadskolonie,” 90.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁸ NYSA, Col. Mss. 12:45, *Correspondence 1654-1658*, 102-112.

⁹ C. A. Weslager, “The City of Amsterdam's Colony on the Delaware, 1656-1664: with Unpublished Dutch Notarial Abstracts,” *Delaware History* 20 (1982), 1-26: 22.

¹⁰ *Conditien die door de heeren burgemeesteren der Stadt Amsterdam [etc.]* (Amsterdam: 1656); National Library, pamphlet nr. 7776a. See for Banningh, M. M. Kleerkooper and W. P. van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam, voornamelijk in de 17e eeuw. Biographische en geschiedkundige aantekeningen* (The Hague 1914-1916), I: 33.

land—unclaimed by others—in a healthy climate and close to a river navigable by large ships. The city would also take care to surround the new settlement with a canal on the outside and a rampart on the inside, pay for and send a schoolmaster who could also read from the Bible and sing psalms. Furthermore, the city would provide the colonists with a year's worth of clothing, food, and plant seed. Within the settlement they would build a great warehouse, where all necessities were sold for the prices current in the Republic itself, and without the Company's toll.

As for the administration, the new settlement was to be governed like Amsterdam, the city sending a sheriff or "Officer" to administer justice.¹¹ The inhabitants were free to elect three burgomasters and five or seven aldermen—the latter would be selected from a list of ten to fourteen names drawn up by the citizenry, from which the city's director would elect the necessary number of aldermen. When the number of inhabitants of the settlement reached 200 families, they would be allowed to elect a council, who would replenish its numbers by itself, would nominate the persons for the position of alderman and appoint the burgomasters. The aldermen were to administer justice in civil cases worth less than 100 guilders and small criminal matters, but had to accept the tutelage of the WIC's director general and his council. The city would give as much land as one could cultivate with one's family, up to 20 or 30 morgens, on condition the land would be cultivated within two years after the grant being made; otherwise the land would be forfeited.¹² The colonists were given tax exemptions for a number of years and received the guarantee that any extracted money after the beginning of taxation would be spent on local public works.

As for the colony's trade, the burgomasters promised to have sent ships regularly in order to buy the products of the colony, even though the colonists were at liberty to send their own ships, provided they sent them to Amsterdam. The city ensured their products to be preserved in Amsterdam warehouses, and to sell them at a profit while asking only a small provision in turn. For natural resources, the colonists were allowed to take wood, for free, from the surrounding forests, unless the wood was a private property.¹³ Also, hunting and fishing in the wilderness was free to anyone. Settlers mining minerals of any sort were free from taxes for ten years.¹⁴ For further information and registration, the pamphlet referred to the

special board of directors and commissaries, consisting of both city and Company representatives: they were open for registrations on Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons in the West India House, now on the Rapenburg.

Van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge* as propaganda for New Netherland. Apart from this official city publication, the colony was also promoted through Amsterdam's widespread opinion making press in pamphlets and newspapers. Immediately after Amsterdam agreed to take over part of the South River area, the *Hollantse Mercurius* of 1656—a monthly dealing with world news—echoed the WIC directors' hope by reporting that Protestant refugees from Piedmont had already presented themselves as settlers for the new city colony. Public rumor also spread the news that there were plans to found two towns at the South River.¹⁵

Moreover, Amsterdam's aggressive book printing industry was keen to take over the city's public campaign. The young publisher and bookseller Evert Nieuwenhof (c.1631-1702), who had published Adriaen van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant* only the previous year, quickly issued a second edition of his book. The reprint was corrected and enriched by a map of the colony's territory, which also included a view of the city of New Amsterdam on Manhattan.¹⁶ The additional map, which for the first time visualized New Netherland's territory for a larger audience, was also sold separately for five stuivers.¹⁷ In order to enhance its stirring effect, the new print edition of the *Description* also contained the "Conditions for Emigration." For this addendum, the editor produced a reprint under consent of the official city publication. Parallel to the map, this new element, too, was sold separately.¹⁸

Van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge* was well suited for the purpose of propagating the city's colony, for its author had meant it to propagate emigration to New Netherland. Adriaen van der Donck (c.1618-1655) had settled in New Netherland in 1641 and developed into a spokesman for the settlers in their struggle with the West India Company, demanding a modicum of popular representation in the authoritarian-led colony. In 1649 he returned to the Netherlands to plead the settler's cause with the States General, a visit which eventually extended to late 1653, when he returned to New Netherland, to die, presumably, in the Peach Tree War of

September 1655.¹⁹ While in the Netherlands he obtained a copyright for his *Description* in July 1653, but publication was delayed until 1655—by which times Van der Donck had already returned to New Netherland. Apparently the publication process did not go smoothly. At the time of obtaining the copyright, Van der Donck was seeking cooperation with the Amsterdam publisher Joost Hartgersz (d. after 1655), but eventually he—or the West India Company to whom he signed over the copyright in February 1655—settled for the newcomer Nieuwenhoff, who published the first edition later in that year.²⁰

Van der Donck's book had a huge impact on the visibility of New Netherland in the Dutch public, as his was the first substantive description of the colony in Dutch available for a wide audience.²¹ It was also clearly the opening shot of a major emigration campaign directed at the city of Amsterdam, for Van der Donck dedicated the book to the four burgomasters of

¹¹ *Conditien*, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3. A *morgen* was presumably the land one could plough with a span of oxen in one morning, here about ca. 15 or 20 hectares; J. M. Verhoeff, *De oude Nederlandse maten en gewichten* (Amsterdam 1982), 101, 115.

¹³ *Conditien*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵ Weslager, "The City of Amsterdam's Colony," 21.

¹⁶ The view of New Amsterdam was based on a drawing, dated around 1650, which was made on the spot and brought to the Republic in order to underline the miserable state of the colony. See M. Gosselink, *Land in zicht. Vingboons tekent de wereld van de 17de eeuw* (Zwolle: 2007) 49-50. For Nieuwenhoff, see Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, 1: 524-27.

¹⁷ The separate selling of the map and its price are mentioned in the anonymous pamphlet *'t Verheerlijckte Nederland door d'herstelde zee-vaart* ([s.l]: 1659); National Library, The Hague, pamphlet nr. 8176.

¹⁸ It was published with "the consent of the City Burgomasters," according to the printer's impressum on the title page: *Conditien [etc.] t'Amsterdam, Met consent vande Ed. Hoog. Achtbare Meeren [sic], de Heeren Borgermeesteren, By Evert Nieuwenhoff Boeckverkooper op 't Ruslandt in't jaer 1656*.

¹⁹ For his life and political struggle see Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World. The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that shaped America* (New York 2004).

²⁰ Frans Blom, "Picturing New Netherland and New York. Dutch-Anglo Transfer of New World Information," in Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong, and Elmer Kolfm, eds., *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks* (Leiden/Boston, 2010), 103-126, 105. Of Hartgersz' life little is known: he was active as an Amsterdam publisher and bookseller between 1637 and 1655; Short Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN), Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, 2: 1291. Nieuwenhoff was active as a publisher between 1653 and 1663, according to STCN; see also Blom, "Picturing New Netherland," 106.

²¹ Blom, "Picturing New Netherland," 103.

Amsterdam, urging them to take up the cause of New Netherland, now that the West India Company was “in a fallen state.” For good measure he also dedicated the book to the WIC directors, in his goal to canvas as much support as possible for an active emigration policy.²² Nevertheless, it must have been clear by this ranking that Van der Donck expected more from Amsterdam’s burgomasters by then.

At the same time, Van der Donck’s book was also meant to attract prospective settlers with the inclusion of a dialogue section—a well-known rhetorical device in opinion-making publications of the time—discussing the issue of emigration. The dialogue was fictitious, featuring a Dutch patriot and a New Netherlander, the latter, in favor of emigration, coming out of the encounter as the winner, arguing that a strong population in New Netherland would ultimately benefit the Dutch Republic. In passing, the New Netherlander helpfully pointed out to the reader the numerous opportunities for private gain of the settlers.

Given this aim to attract settlers, the *Beschrijvinge* was produced as a book for a broad audience: the printing work was inexpensive, the text had a compact layout, in gothic type and without illustrations, with other words a low-cost popular printing production, fit for swift distribution amongst the middle and lower middle classes.²³ Nieuwenhoff was quick to realize the *Beschrijvinge* had renewed relevance now that Amsterdam had agreed to help settle New Netherland. In the dedication of the book the publisher explicitly stated that he had been inspired to reprint and augment Van der Donck’s work because of the interest of the burgomasters, as “fondateurs en Patroonen” [founders and Patroons] of the city colony: “it urged me, too, to reprint the Description of this land” and to add “the praiseworthy Regulations,” from which the “sensible reader” shall note “the honest affections that Their Honourables have towards the further continuation of this sublime land.” The decision of the burgomasters, reflected Nieuwenhoff, gave cause to praise and extol the magistrate’s new population policy, “to laud the praiseworthy wisdom of such Patroons and caretakers of the Land,” as the editor truly did in the final part of the paratext section.

The sonnet praises the burgomasters and extols the virtues of the new land and its *Description*, so that readers might either enjoy the description at home, or go there and see New Netherland and settle there.

By including the “Conditions,” Nieuwenhoff increased the book’s attraction to its intended readers. Though the quality of paper and print was cheaper than Banningh’s, it was still an extremely useful addition to the *Beschrijvinge* in terms of the book’s agenda.²⁴ Throughout the following decade the *Description* would remain a pivotal text for the promoters of settlement in New Netherland: at least two later publications explicitly referred to Van der Donck’s book. The anonymous tract *’t Verheerlickte Nederland*, a fictitious dialogue featuring three Dutchmen from lower social strata—a skipper, a peasant and an artisan—discussing emigration, published in 1659, specifically advertised the book, the skipper recommending going to a bookshop in town to buy “the recently published *Description* by a man called Verdonck who has lived in the colony for many years and learned a lot about life as it was there.”²⁵ A footnote—the only one in the tract—explicitates that it means Van der Donck’s book. Three years later, and apparently for the same reason, the *Kort Verhael* by Franciscus van den Enden—about which more later—also explicitly names title, author, and publisher of the *Beschrijvinge*. Both later publications thus underscored the *Description*’s status as the prime source of information about New Netherland. It had become a literary landmark of colonial representation functioning as an incentive for emigration. Evidently, Nieuwenhoff as bookseller kept the *Beschrijvinge* in print throughout these years.²⁶

Amsterdam’s colonial efforts resulted in an influx of population. The New Netherland fleet of December 1656 counted some seventy households of settlers. Additionally, many of the Waldensians exiled from Savoy found their way to the colony that year. About three hundred of them had fled to the Dutch Republic and now embarked for the New World.²⁷ Amsterdam’s efforts were greatly appreciated by the WIC. In May 1657 the directors sent a letter to Stuyvesant, urging him to do all that was possible to make sure that Amsterdam was to be encouraged in continuing the colony, considering it could not but be beneficial for the advantage of the Company and the growth of the whole of New Netherland.²⁸

Jacob Steendam’s poem *Complaint of New Netherland*. Despite Amsterdam’s positive attitude, best intentions, and efforts, the colony had a troubled start due to such unforeseen incidents as shipwreck, disease,



Jacob Steendam (1615-c.1673).

heavy rainfall, cold winters, and institutional problems such as bureaucratic wrangling between WIC and city officials and uneasy relations with the English settlers nearby. Many of the colonists proved unequal to the task and unskilled in agriculture. Moreover, they were mostly poor and destitute and thus unable to act as investors. Some turned their back on the colony again, renegeing on their debts to the city of Amsterdam, which had, at the end of 1660, given subsidies of about 150,000 guilders. For all that, Amsterdam had enough of the American adventure and even made a proposal to the WIC to sell back New Amstel. The Company, however, refused.²⁹ It did not have the finances, nor could it hope to speed up the colonization of the South River on its own. A temporary stalemate jeopardized the colony.

This is the context of the first of three poems, published in Amsterdam by the New

²² Ibid., 104.

²³ Ibid., 106.

²⁴ Ibid., 106-107.

²⁵ *’t Verheerlickte Nederland*, p. 13; see also Blom, “Picturing New Netherland,” 108.

²⁶ Blom, “Picturing New Netherland,” 108, 110. For the way in which Van der Donck resorted to a manipulative fashioning of many elements of the text see, Ibid., 110-114.

²⁷ See Arnoldus Montanus, *De nieuwe en onbekende weereld* (Amsterdam, 1671), 134.

²⁸ NYSA, Col. Mss. 12:58, *Correspondence 1654-1658*, 133-35.

²⁹ Hart, “Stadskolonie,” 91-92.

Netherland poet and advocate Jacob Steendam (ca. 1615-ca. 1673). *Complaint of New Netherland* (1659) was printed by his favorite printer Pieter Dircksz Boeteman (c. 1617-1676), “bookprinter” on the Egelantiersgracht, as a rapid stand-alone publication.³⁰

The poem features New Amsterdam as a desirable daughter, begotten by Mars, the god of war, on her mother, the city of Amsterdam, who has weaned her all too soon. New Amsterdam has had a difficult life, persecuted by Indians and suffering want, despite the good services of a wet nurse—Ceres, the grain goddess—provided by her sponsors and guardians—presumably, though this is not made explicit, a reference to the Gentlemen Nineteen.

Despite this difficult start, the abandoned child has grown into a desirable maiden in possession of a splendid, abundant garden who finds herself coveted by many suitors, who have even tried to abduct her—probably a reference to the English colonies north and south of New Netherland. With the garden obviously the island of Manhattan is meant, for it is described as situated on two streams coming from the North—the North River, or Hudson—and the East—the Long Island sound, long regarded as a river by the Dutch.

Threatened by the swine who overturn her garden—a none too flattering allusion to the English settlers no doubt—New Amsterdam now turns to her mother, in the hope that Amsterdam can help her attain her wish: “That is my wish, and that is all./ If only I might get farmers:/because my work-folk are too few.” With more men to till the soil, “I will fill my Mother’s kitchen,/with my goods and trading wares, /with my fur, tobacco, and corn.” Then, Amsterdam’s kitchen will be so much stuffed, that—and this is the last stanza—“she will spurn Prussia.” The reference to the Baltic trade in the last line is crucial for a proper understanding of this poem, as will be seen.

The poem takes the form of a complaint from New Amsterdam to her neglectful mother Amsterdam, but the true addressees of the poem are introduced in the first four lines, where New Amsterdam proclaims she is a “Close relative” of the “Gods/Who on the boards of the Amstel their commandments/Issue, to a fixed beacon:/as protectors both and avengers.” The stanza seems to refer to the real-life magistrates who issued their commands from the boards of the Amstel—the regents, and then especially the powerful burgomasters, who enjoyed an ex-

traordinary political influence far outside the city walls. Undoubtedly the poem is addressing them, and though the setting is ostensibly New Amsterdam on Manhattan, the last line, referring to Prussia, clearly reminded the burgomasters that one of the reasons for engaging in their colonial adventure had been the risky dependence on the grain from the Baltic. The grain supplies had been halted now and then ever since the start of the Nordic War in 1655, and at the time when Steendam published *Complaint*, this war was still raging. In fact, by taking New Amsterdam rather than New Amstel as the subject of his poem, Steendam effectively reminded the burgomasters that not just New Amstel, but New Netherland in its entirety could be of great value to Amsterdam.

Amsterdam’s renewed interest. Two years later, Steendam published the *Praise of New Netherland* (1661), another of his America poems.³¹ Unlike the previous *Complaint*, this majestic panegyric ode was published with a dedication. It was issued under the protection of the WIC official Cornelis van Ruyven (1630-after 1674), “the Faithful and very upright Promotor of New Netherland.” As a native from Amsterdam, Van Ruyven became secretary to the director-general and counselors of the colony in 1653 holding a key-position in the colony.³² The fact that the poem was dedicated to him, strongly suggests that he had a hand in its publication, possibly acting as the instigator and financier.

Also unlike *Complaint*, this poem exclusively sings the qualities of the colony in a structure that is fully based on the theme of Eden, using the tripartite division of space of earth, water, and sky as the structure for an exuberant catalogue of New Netherland’s flora, fauna, and natural resources.³³ In every aspect, the comparison to the motherland favors New Netherland: a benevolent climate free from pestilence, the fertile and aromatic soil which yields all sorts of grains and hides minerals—such as the universal obsession of the westerner, gold—and the abundant waters teeming with fish, and forests crawling with all sorts of animals, bursting with fruits, wood and herbs. In short, as the poem reads, New Netherland “is the land where milk and honey flow,” “a veritable Eden.” Clearly, this poem by Steendam is, more so than *Complaint*, an instrument for emigration propaganda.

The optimistic voice of the *Praise* coincided with a change of policy in the Amsterdam magistrate toward its wavering overseas

colony. After the stalemate between the city and Company in 1659, renewed negotiations pushed Amsterdam’s involvement, which ultimately, by August 1660, had convinced the magistrates to maintain the city’s colony. Moreover, they not only decided to continue the colony, but also expanded it gradually, the WIC relinquishing more territory and the city buying more land from the original inhabitants.³⁴ By the early 1660s the colony started to actually thrive, but migration to the colony was still not sufficient. Amsterdam could not hope to retain control over its colony unless it managed to populate it and deter the ever-encroaching

³⁰ A copy has been preserved in the John Carter Brown Library in Providence; we have consulted a copy of this particular poem held at the New York Public Library (signature *KVB 1659). For Boeteman, see: Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, I: 62.

There is no comprehensive study of Jacob Steendam and his poetry, although he has been written about since 1861, when Henry C. Murphy published and translated Steendam’s three poems describing and celebrating New Netherland in *Jacob Steendam, Noch Vaster. A Memoir of the First Poet in New Netherland with the poems descriptive of the Colony* (The Hague 1861). See also Murphy’s *Anthology of New Netherland; or, Translations from the early Dutch poets of New York, with memoirs of their lives* (New York (s.n.), 1865). The most extensive modern treatments of Steendam can be found in Christine van Boheemen, “Dutch-American poets of the seventeenth century,” in Rob Kroes and Henk-Otto Neuschäfer, eds., *The Dutch in North-America. Their immigration and cultural continuity* (Amsterdam 1991), 114-30.

³¹ ‘t Lof van Nuw-Nederland, daarin, kort, en grondige werd angewesen d’uytmuntende hoedanigheden, die het heeft in de suyverhey des luchts, vruchtbaarhey des aardryks, voort-teling des vees, overvloed des wilds, en visschen: met de wel-gelegenhey tot schipvaard, en koophandel. Like *Complaint* this *Praise* was printed by Pieter Dircksz Boeteman, but this time also a regular bookseller was involved, Jacobus van der Fuyk, bookseller in the Stilsteeg. The poem is also discussed in Boheemen, “Dutch-American poets,” 123.

³² Cornelis van Ruyven was baptized in Amsterdam on September 29, 1630, in the Oude Kerk, son of Laurens Jansz van Ruyven and Sara Schrijvers (spelled here as Lourens Jansz Ruiiven and Sara Schrijvers); SAA, DTB 6, p. 283. Since 1659 Van Ruyven was also one of the counselors assisting the director-general. He married a daughter of Domine Johannes Megapolensis, minister in New Amsterdam from 1648 to 1670. He thus had a vested interest in the colony—indeed he remained there for ten years after the fall of New Netherland, serving as alderman and deputy mayor. In 1674 he was estimated to be worth 18,000 guilders; See Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 65, 274. Van Ruyven seems to have returned to patria between February and June 1674; E. B. O’Callaghan, *The Register of New Netherland, 1626-1674* (Albany, 1865), 168.

³³ It may be noticed that, for that compositional reason, the abundance of animals in the *Praise* lacks any reference to snake types. And for the same reason, none of Steendam’s America representations in the *Spurring Verses* or in the *Praise*, includes any reference to the indigenous people. For depictions of New Netherland as an earthly paradise, see also Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad. The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570-1670* (Cambridge, 2001), 257-60.

³⁴ Hart, “Stadskolonie,” 91; Weslager, “The City of Amsterdam’s Colony I,” 14.

English settlers. The directors thus kept sending reinforcements, contracting with migrants from the east of the Netherlands, Germany and even Scandinavians and keeping up a steady flow of migrants to the colony. Especially in the early 1660s there are numerous references to colonists crossing the Atlantic.³⁵ Orphans in Amsterdam were encouraged to settle in the colony—a policy Amsterdam actually already had been pursuing long before it obtained its colony.³⁶

In this renewed momentum for New Netherland and Amsterdam's city-colony, public media like newspapers, too, were activated to spread the news and stir potential settlers for the South River. Calls for emigration were published by an Amsterdam-based newspaper editor, with a good reputation in official city documents: the Lieshout Company. If anything, this media strategy reflects the way that the *Conditions* were published in 1656, indicating that the Amsterdam authorities strove for a reliable, truly Amsterdam face of the South River enterprise. The newspaper layout confirmed the official status of the calls. They were headed as Notifications, which was the technical term for governmental announcements. Also, the calls were issued as news: the City Notifications were part of the news, whereas previous WIC advertisements for

New Netherland were printed in the advertisement section.³⁷ Moreover, the Amsterdam calls for migration had a confident voice, stressing that the city was in charge of the South River settlement enterprise.³⁸

Implicit propaganda: the *Politike Discoursen* of the brothers De la Court. Amsterdam not only was egged on by propagandists with a particular interest in New Netherland, such as Steendam and Van Ruyven, but the city's colonial enterprise was also lauded indirectly by two proponents of Dutch colonization in general, the brothers Johan (1622-1660) and Pieter de la Court (1618-1685), whose political writings enjoyed a great notoriety at the time. In 1662 Pieter published their *Politike Discoursen, handelende in Ses onderscheide Boeken van Steden, Landen, Oorlogen, Kerken, Regeeringen en Zeeden* in which the brothers acted as implicit propagandists of New Amstel. They insisted that the settlement of overseas colonies should be a central policy of the commercial commonwealth of Holland. This would enable cities to allow that part of the population which could not make a living in Holland, and that part of the elite which could not be elected to office, to transfer to

another territory where they would be more able to make a living or give full rein to their ambitions. Thus the brothers tried “to convince the Dutch political establishment of the necessity of erecting satellite states overseas, in which Dutch expatriates would enjoy new opportunities whilst remaining subject to the political supervision of the metropolis.” Like the commercial republic of ancient Athens, a commercial commonwealth should establish a network of colonial trading posts. The central role and initiative in such an endeavor should, in their view, not lie with the province, and certainly not with a chartered company, but with the cities, again following the ancient Athenian example. Their model of a colonizing republic is not the territorial state of the Dutch Republic, but the independent, self-contained city—and though they meant Leiden, they must have realized, as would their readers, that Amsterdam's New Amstel endeavor was precisely such a colonial project they wished to promote among the Dutch political elite.³⁹ The tracts of the brothers De la Court caused quite a stir and were widely read and discussed. Especially the Amsterdam regents—and inhabitants at large—sat close to the fire, for, after the first edition was printed in Leiden, in 1662 and 1663 further editions of the *Politike Discoursen* rolled of the printing presses in Amsterdam, so that their effective, if not explicit, recommendation of Amsterdam's colonial policy will have found its way to perceptive Amsterdam readers.⁴⁰

Spurring Verses: Jacob Steendam in Pieter Ploekhoy's colonial project. At the zenith of Amsterdam's involvement in New Netherland, individual projectors also tried to mobilize potential emigrants. One of these was Pieter Ploekhoy, who was successful; the other, Franciscus van den Enden, failed. Van den Enden, as will be seen, used some of the works already described in his own propaganda chapters; Ploekhoy instead relied on the poetic propaganda skills of

³⁵ Weslager, “The City of Amsterdam's Colony I,” 17, and part II in *Delaware History* 20 (1982), 73-97: 79, 88-90.

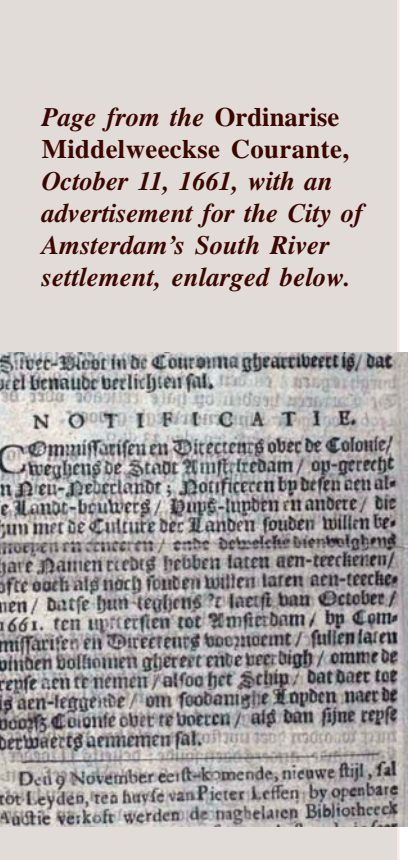
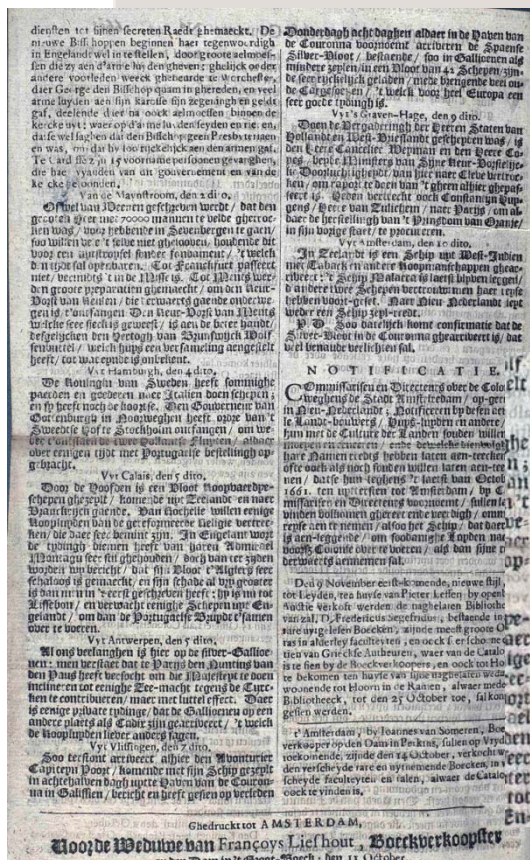
³⁶ Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 90-92.

³⁷ WIC advertisements for New Netherland in *Haerlemsche Saerdaegsche Courant* 1658 (Nov. 19th and 21st) and 1659 (March 15th).

³⁸ *Ordinarise Middelweeckse Courante* no. 41, 1661, dated October 11, 1661.

³⁹ Arthur Weststeyn, “Wise Merchants. The Brothers De la Court & the Commercial Republic in the Dutch Golden Age” (Ph.D. thesis European University Institute May 3, 2010), 186.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 307.

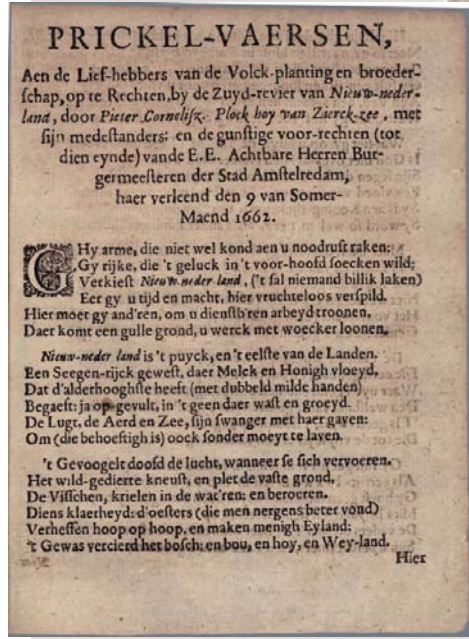


Steendam. His third American poem, the *Prickel-Vaersen* or *Spurring Verses*, was not issued separately, as were *Complaint* and *Praise*, but published as a part of the prospectus of Plockhoy's settlement, in which the latter published the contract he made with the burgomasters and his blueprint for a colonial settlement.

The burgomasters of Amsterdam, "ever inclined to the continuation of this City's Colony in New Netherland," and after having gained the consent of the council, made a contract with Pieter Cornelisz Plockhoy, a former artisan "van Zierick-Zee" and radical thinker (ca. 1620-1664?), on June 9, 1662.⁴¹ Plockhoy committed himself to present to the burgomasters twenty-four men who would found with him a "society" of in total twenty-five persons and leave for the city's colony as soon as possible, in order to settle there and earn their living by the practice of agriculture, fishery, handicraft, or other occupations, not just for themselves but also for the purpose of creating a supply for other immigrants and families. The society could choose for itself—and besides that every member for himself as well—as much unoccupied land as it could cultivate, whether on the Hoerenkil, "otherwise called Swanendal" in the margins, or elsewhere in the colony. Moreover, the society was given freedom from the tenths and all kinds of other taxes for twenty years. To each of the twenty-five members would be lent a sum of a 100 guilders, to provide for their necessities as they saw fit, which included their passage money: their wives and children would be transported on the charge of the city, as Amsterdam had promised in its *Conditions*. The society had to promise this total amount of 2,500 guilders would be paid back to the city.⁴²

Somewhere between June 9 and September 1662, when the prospective colonists were expected to be ready for departure to the New World, Plockhoy published the contract in his *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*.⁴³ Next to his blueprint of an ideal colonial settlement, the colony would function as a semi-autonomous community in which the members pooled their resources, but within the wider framework of New Amstel and of economic connectedness with Amsterdam.⁴⁴ Plockhoy did not aim just for colonists: if there is anyone who would want to entrust the departing colonists with any merchandise to be traded in New Netherland, Plockhoy promises that such a person will enjoy half of the profit over his invested capital. If anyone remaining in patria is interested

Right: title page of Pieter Plockhoy's Kort en Klaer Ontwerp (1662).



Left: Jacob Steendam's Prickel-Vaersen or "Spurring Verses," published in Plockhoy's work.

in buying a share in the company, he is likewise invited to address the colonists and come to an agreement with them.⁴⁵

The *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* was therefore clearly designed to propagandize Plockhoy's plan and attract fellow settlers and investors. Empowering the pragmatics of the prose text, it was a common feature of pamphlets at the time, to have poems like *Spurring Verses* as a complementary means of persuasion.⁴⁶

Steendam's *Prickel-Vaersen* addressed the "Lovers of the Settlement and brotherhood," which Plockhoy and his supporters intend to found on the shores of the South River.⁴⁷ The poem consists of eleven stanzas, which, as the title promises, stir the reader to migrate to the New World.⁴⁸ People, predominantly poor people, are invited to come over to "the choicest, and the most noble of the Lands/A most blissful province, where Milk and Honey flow," a land blessed by God with double mildness.⁴⁹ Again, the biblical Paradise is the metaphor. New Netherland is the living embodiment "Of Eden, and of the Land promised to Jacob's Seed."⁵⁰

However, in the context of Plockhoy's brochure, Steendam painted the colony in a slightly different color than he had done before. Now, the city colony on the borders of the South River is pictured by the poet as a place of freedom. The opening stanza, for

example, directly appealed to the great dream of freedom, stating that settlers at the South River would not be servants to any-

⁴¹ Plockhoy, *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 2. The original manuscript-contract is in SAA, Archive 5023, Groot-Memoriaal 5 (1659-1669), fol. 79-80, but does not differ from the published contract: all further references are therefore to the published contract.

⁴² *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 2-4.

⁴³ *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* was published by Ottho Baerentz Smient (1614-1689). For Smient, see Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, 1: 726-32.

⁴⁴ For the reader interested in Plockhoy's plans and religious and social thought, see Henk Looijesteijn, "'Born to the Common Welfare.' Pieter Plockhoy's Quest for a Christian Life (c.1620-1664)" (Florence 2009) and Henk Looijesteijn "Between Sin and Salvation. The Seventeenth-Century Dutch Artisan Pieter Plockhoy and his Ethics of Work," in *International Review of Social History* 56 (2011), Special Issue 19, "Global Perspectives on Work: Ethics, Norms, Valuations, Ideologies 1500-1650", 69-88.

⁴⁵ *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 15.

⁴⁶ *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* also contains a poem by Karel Verloove, a Mennonite weaver who as a poet and playwright often cooperated with Steendam. See Adriaan Plak, "Portfolio met tekeningen en prenten van Jan Luyken (1649-1712)," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen. Nieuwe Reeks* 25 (1999): 85-112, especially p. 87; Piet Visser, "De pelgrimage van Jan Luyken door de doopsgezinde boekenwereld" in *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen. Nieuwe Reeks* 25 (1999): 167-95, especially pp. 176-77.

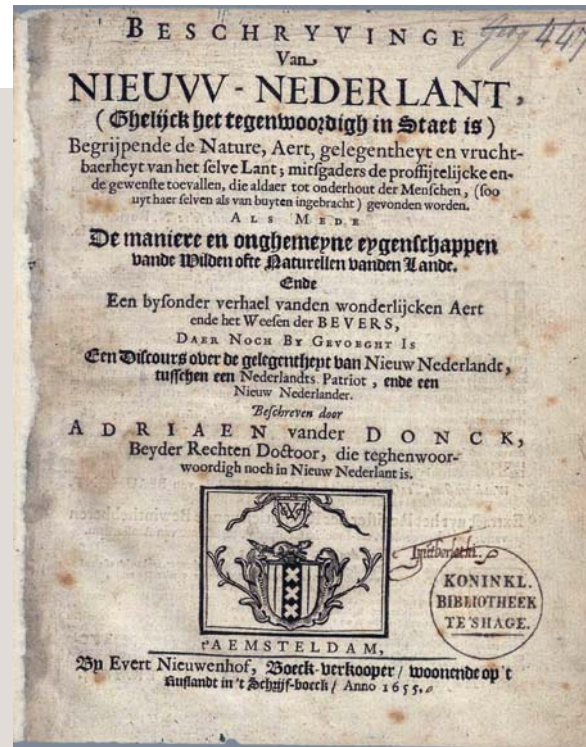
⁴⁷ *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 12.

⁴⁸ Steendam's rediscoverer Murphy actually considered the *Spurring Verses* less accomplished than his other two poems, but remarks that in the *Spurring Verses* Steendam "speaks of his personal knowledge of the country"; Murphy, *Jacob Steendam. Noch Vaster*, 15.

⁴⁹ *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

Title page of the 1655 edition of Adriaen van der Donck's *Beschrijvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant*.



one. Indeed, they would be free lords, *serv-ing* themselves by the abundance of the land. The words of “free” and “freedom” appear repeatedly in the poem. “Who would not, then, in such a community, Desire to be a freeman?” the poet wonders rhetorically. And two stanzas below: settlers at the South River’s colony do not have to fear any subjection or tyranny, because it is Amsterdam that prescribes the rules here and guarantees protection. At this point the *Spurring Verses* couldn’t be more explicit. Not Eden nor the brotherhood community was the unique selling point for Amsterdam’s South River colony: it was freedom under the protection of that champion of freedom, the City of Amsterdam. This emphasis on freedom was not new—it was also expressed in *’t Verheerlickt Nederland*, and may have developed from Van der Donck’s earlier campaign for greater liberties within the colony. As we will see, the emphasis on the promise of freedom was shared by other promoters of emigration. Moreover, the city itself and the WIC had jointly discovered the lure of freedom as early as 1659. In that year the Company advertised, in March 1659, that it would grant free passage to a fair amount of “Free people,” and that they would be granted land free of cost if they lacked the means to buy it. This emphasis on freedom had been lacking in terse advertisements the year before, which had only informed would-be-settlers they had to report to the West-India House so that their passage could be arranged.⁵¹ Steendam’s, and Plockhoy’s, emphasis on freedom did thus not come out of the blue, even it was

the first time that the freedom promised to the prospective settlers featured so prominently in the colonial propaganda.

Steendam’s *Spurring Verses* to the literary historian Christine Van Boheemen “suggests that as time went on, Steendam put his pen more and more in the service of colonial expansion.”⁵² It is perhaps not venturing too far into the realm of speculation when one assumes that it was Steendam’s reputation of an established supporter of the cause of New Netherland which induced Plockhoy to ask him to write his *Spurring verses* to accompany his tract. Moreover, Steendam’s earlier poems may have directly inspired Plockhoy into choosing New Netherland as the scene of his new commonwealth. Though *Praise* was dedicated to Cornelis van Ruyven, it may have been more effective in swaying Plockhoy from trying to change Europe into seeking a new society in the America’s.

Plockhoy’s *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* was thus clearly another installment of the ongoing propaganda campaign in Amsterdam—this time specifically focused on the City Colony itself, unlike earlier tracts. From it can also be deduced that it was clearly meant to be distributed beyond the walls of Amsterdam, as it contained a note which explained that would-be-settlers could find the colonists “in Amsterdam,” in the Brouwerstraet “in den Boomgaert van Nieuw-Nederlant” [in the Orchard of New Netherland], in the morning from eight to nine, and on the “Zee-dijck in de vergulde boot” [Sea-

dyke in the gilded boat], in the evening between six and seven.⁵³

A Glowing Description: Franciscus van den Enden. Competing with Plockhoy’s endeavor, another plan for a settlement in the city’s colony was promoted by the ex-Jesuit schoolmaster Franciscus van den Enden (1602-1674). Unlike Plockhoy, who for his propaganda relied largely on the poetic skills of Steendam, Van den Enden himself compiled and fashioned a lengthy and glowing description of New Netherland based on a variety of sources.

The *Kort Verhael* or *Short Account of New-Netherland’s Position, Virtues, Natural Privileges, and special capacity for population: with some Requests, Arguments, Deductions etc. towards that end by some Lovers at various times at the end of the year 1661 presented to the Lords Burgomasters of this City, or their Lords Commissioners etc.* was published anonymously and without mention of either a publisher or a printer, in 1662.⁵⁴ Van den Enden published under the pseudonym “Houdt Van Zaken Meest” [He who loves most of all concrete things], usually indicating his signature only by the four capital letters of this pseudonym.⁵⁵

The *Kort Verhael* is actually a collection of loosely allied texts. The main body, and the primary focus here, is a description of

⁵¹ Advertisements in Holland’s main paper, avidly read also in Amsterdam, the *Haerlemsche Courant*, November, 19, 21, 1658, and March, 15, 1659.

⁵² Boheemen, “Dutch-American poets,” 128.

⁵³ *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp*, 15.

⁵⁴ *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlants Geleentheit, Deughden, Natuerlijke Voorrechten, en byzondere bequaemheid ter bevolkingh: Mitsgaders eenige Requesten, Verdoogen, Deductien enz. ten dien einden door eenige Liefhebbers ten verscheide tijden omtrent ’t laetst van ’t Jaer 1661. gepresenteert aen de A. A. Heeren Burgermeesteren dezer Stede, of der zelve E. E. Heeren Gecommitteerde, enz.* Mertens has convincingly shown that the tract was published by Jan Rieuwerts and Pieter Arentsz; Frank Mertens, “Text and Translation of the Brief Account of New Netherland,” 2, 15. We are much indebted to him for allowing us to consult this as of yet unpublished text. We also used Frank Mertens, ed., “Online documents regarding Franciscus van den Enden” (<http://users.pandora.be/fvde/>). All references to the *Kort Verhael* refer to that document.

⁵⁵ Franciscus van den Enden, *Vrije Politieke Stellingen. Met een inleiding van Wim Klever* (Amsterdam 1992), 24. The pseudonym has so far not been satisfactorily explained. On the basis of the *Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal Online* and what is known about Van den Enden, the—rather awkward—translation we give conveys best what Van den Enden hoped to say with this pseudonym. Mertens arrives at a similar conclusion: “Introduction to the Kort Verhael,” footnote 4; see <http://users.pandora.be/fvde/>.

New Netherland, its native inhabitants, natural resources, and agricultural potential. This section is followed by five other texts which set out, and, if necessary, defend, Van den Enden's conception of a democratic colonial settlement, envisaged in the southern part of New Amstel. Apart from Van der Donck's *Description*, Van den Enden published the most elaborate propagandistic text under discussion here. The *Kort Verhael* begins with a lengthy geographical description of the province of New Netherland in which Van den Enden consequently sings its praise. For his description of New Netherland Van den Enden compiled the eyewitness reports by Van der Donck, adding parts from the travel books by David Pietersz de Vries, both mentioned and quoted repeatedly.⁵⁶ In the process of recycling his sources, Van den Enden brings in a significant manipulation. Among the general praise of New Netherland, Van den Enden structurally singles out the South River, calling it "the most excellent and choicest part of New Netherland." The author is particularly concerned with the situation at the South River, "as principally serving to our purpose," since "that same area still is not possessed nor controlled by strangers; and also because there is found the best land and climate of New Netherland." The South River earned according to Van den Enden most praise from authors writing about New Netherland, being "judged by every world-traveler and knower of rivers to be one of the most beau-

tiful and pleasant rivers, because it boasts fourteen kills draining into it, all navigable up to two or three miles, and because it flows through quite flat land."⁵⁷ The land is itself so aromatic—since full of sweet-smelling herbs—that it can be smelled before being seen when there is an offshore wind.⁵⁸ For its mild climate, Van den Enden argues the possibilities to grow grapes and produce "wines as good as in France, Germany, or elsewhere in Europe," especially on the South River.⁵⁹ Also indigo would grow better on the South than on the North River, he manipulates.⁶⁰ Van den Enden states that the South River area is "by far the most temperate climate zone and also by far the best land of New Netherland."⁶¹ Here he adds a testimony attributed to a certain Nicolaes de Ringh, who had lived in New Amstel for two years, and repeatedly recounted how "in the middle of the severest winter ever known" he raised "the choicest of lettuce" by covering his crops by night. In summer, Van den Enden claimed, a double harvest of buckwheat was possible, or on the same piece of land buckwheat first, and wheat later.⁶²

The same bias is found in the subsequent geographic survey of New Netherland, with a full focus on the South River area and the many qualities of the land's opportunities for agriculture and trade. Indeed, the South River was "a maiden desired by all," which Van den Enden amplifies by quoting earlier reports about the encroachments of the Swedes and the English in the South River

area. The only one so far to address the problem of how to populate the area sufficiently were "this praiseworthy City and Government of Amsterdam," beginning around 1656, through which for one thing the Swedish domination of the South River now was reduced. In order to preserve "this more than precious river" it should be transferred, *voce* Van den Enden, "offered completely on honour and fair conditions to a formidable power, or gathering of Free and thereto well-endowed men as right affectionate lovers," rather than disgracefully losing it to stranger, such as had happened in the north of New Netherland with the "Versche-rivier" or Fresh River.⁶³ Freedom played an important role in Van den Enden's tract, as he regarded the lure of greater liberties across the ocean as the best way to promote emigration and in the process allow the WIC to maintain its colony in the face of English encroachment. The price was a reduced role of the WIC in the colony. These ideas seem to be partly foreshadowed in *'t Verheerlickt Nederland*, in which a similarly modest role for the WIC was advocated, allowing the settlers to set up a flourishing colony.⁶⁴

Van den Enden's preoccupation with freedom also shows in his description of the native Americans. This short exposé is partly a mere instrument to quench any fears prospective colonists might have had with regard to the aboriginal population. According to Van den Enden, noble as they are, Indians hardly ever kill another human, least of all women and children, so there is nothing to fear from them even in lonely forests, and they do not



Title page of Franciscus van den Enden, Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlant (1662).

⁵⁶ Van den Enden made use of the *Description* and its predecessor, the *Vertoogh van Nieuw-Nederland, wegens de gheleghentheydt, vruchtbaerheydt, en soberen staet desselvs* (The Hague: 1650). The English translation, entitled *Remonstrance*, as published in *Narrative of New Netherland*, ed. by J. F. Jameson in 1909, is on the internet: <http://etext.teamnesbitt.com/books/etext/etext02/nwnth10.txt.html>, and De Vries, *Korte Historiæ ende Journaels aenteyckeninge van verscheyden Voyagien*, both crucially published in 1655. See for example Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 2; Van den Enden, *Vrije Politijcke Stellingen*, 33.

⁵⁷ Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 10.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7. [also in Van der Donck].

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12-13. The Fresh River was the Dutch name for the Connecticut, lost to the Dutch by virtue of continual English encroachment.

⁶⁴ *'t Verheerlickt Nederland*, 8-9.

even mind the intrusion of others in their land: “they are not miserly worried, or plagued by envy, over the approaching and settlement of all kinds of peaceful peoples.” “For them their land is open,” to come and go if they please and to settle there. Thus, Van den Enden fashions the Indians as an ideal people. In their internal organizations, moreover, he emphasizes the egalitarian and democratic character of Amerindian society, their government being described as being “Free, and wholly popular.”⁶⁵ He describes them as “naturally very free, and magnanimous by nature, whence they, as not being able to bear dominion over them, are opposed to the same,” and gives them a critical voice towards European traditions: “with regard to our respect for our government, they can’t understand that one man can be so much more than another.”⁶⁶

Van den Enden, who had not a single piece of experience with the people of New Netherland, clearly molded them as the noble and wild counterpart of Europe’s traditional and hierarchic societies, referring to them as “in all manners a most excellent, tractable and freedom-loving Nation, worthy to be invited and bred by all good ways and means to right Christians and Allies.”⁶⁷

Franciscus van den Enden’s rather enlightened ideas about settling the South River were vehicles in winning over the City of Amsterdam and its burgomasters for his campaign, in the first place.⁶⁸ Unlike Ploekhoy, however, Van den Enden failed to come to any agreement.⁶⁹ Still, he did not let it rest there, and published his ideas for a wider audience in Amsterdam, including the idealistic exposé of the South River area. The preface of publication is dated Amsterdam, October 10, 1662, four months after Ploekhoy’s *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp* had been published.⁷⁰

But this act of publication, too, failed to strengthen Van den Enden’s ambitions. Compared to Ploekhoy, this brochure was just too explosive to be convincing. It was published without identification of either author or publisher. That controversial status is confirmed by the rather unique “Warning to all honest and modest booksellers,” following the title-page, which states that this book is more than a propaganda brochure, having “more in it then will be surmised or noticed at first glance.” The subsequent preface tells that it was written specifically for the benefit of “our wise Regents of Holland,” the “Administrators of the Poor,” and “Lovers” of the foundation of a stable and profitable colony. With its ground-breaking and revolu-

tionary views on a “new” society, booksellers were requested not to promote ostensibly for any kind of persons, “because it is not written for John Everyman.”⁷¹ The explosiveness of his revolutionary ideas is manifest, also in the dedication to the reader. This brochure was meant for all those people “who are without interest in the office of preacher or any other mostly vain scholastic false learning, and refrain from any worldly dominion based on deceit and violence.” Regarding more than just a settlement in New Netherland, the author rather self-consciously proclaims that this work collected “all the most principal, most actual and most necessary grounds of a good government of Free Folk.”

A year later, in 1663, Van den Enden extended the range of his writings when he had the tract republished, with a new title page under the title *Zeekere Vrye-Voorslagen*. This may have been addressed to the States of Holland rather than the City of Amsterdam, although it is dedicated to the people of Holland as a whole rather than just the States: Van den Enden specifically addresses his tract to his “Fellow Citizens and Countrymen, Ruling as well as Ruled.”⁷² To Van den Enden the reissue not only meant to advocate his “Dutch free popular colony” but also to propagate a “free State” in general, and it was nothing less than a start of a more ambitious program of political writing.⁷³ However, the *Zeekere Vrye-Voorslagen* still bears witness to its cradle of colonial propaganda, as it was designed, according to the dedication, to “show the particular advantages of Dutch free popular colonies, and make understood how in my opinion, for Holland . . . they should be counted among the most important and worthiest endeavors of a free State.”⁷⁴

Nevertheless, by the time Van den Enden was reissuing his book, events had already taken a turn for the worse for the Dutch in New Netherland. After the fall of New Amsterdam to the English in the summer of 1664, the English sent troops to the South River area. Though New Amstel was strictly speaking outside the Duke of York’s grant, the English were obviously not planning to allow the Dutch any colonies in northern America. On October 1, 1664, New Amstel fell to the English. Throughout the next decade the ultimate fate of the area remained undecided, until in 1674 the Dutch left New Netherland to the English for good. Amsterdam does not seem to have taken a particular interest in maintaining its colony there—indeed, the city shifted its attention

largely to South America, for in the same war that the Dutch Republic lost New Netherland it gained the English colonies in Guyana. The colony of Surinam which was consequently established there in fact became very much an Amsterdam affair, the city eventually controlling two-thirds of all shares in this colony. The ambitious and far reaching social innovations of freedom and equality that had been germinated and grown steadily in the America propaganda between 1655 en 1664, and culminated in Franciscus van den Enden’s enlightened ideas and prospects of Amsterdam’s city colony at the South River in New Netherland, became somehow completely lost in the transfer. In Surinam, Amsterdam was more interested in sugar and plantations—and New Amstel became forever a fixture of the past.

⁶⁵ Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 19-21. He described their cloths as similar to the “Aal Outste-Hollanders, of Batavieren,” another hint to his association with them with the liberty-loving ancestors of the Dutch described in the so-called “Batavian myth.” Klever believes it is “without doubt” that Van den Enden’s later political theory may have been inspired partly by what he had read about Native American societies: Van den Enden, *Vrije Politieke Stellingen*, 37.

⁶⁶ Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, 19.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁸ Th. Van Tijn, “Franciscus van den Enden (1602-1674): een zelfbenoemd woordvoerder van het ‘mindere slagh’ van ingezetenen van Holland” in J. F. E. Bläsing and H. H. Vleesenbeek, eds., *Van Amsterdam naar Tilburg en toch weer terug. Opstellen aangeboden aan dr. Johan de Vries ter gelegenheid van zijn afscheid als hoogleraar economische geschiedenis aan de Katholieke Universiteit Brabant op 16 november 1992* (Leiden/Antwerp 1992), 191-201, 191. The failure of the project may have induced Van den Enden to publish the petitions as appendices to the *Kort Verhael*; Van Tijn, “Franciscus van den Enden,” 192—which might also explain the title.

⁶⁹ The reasons why his project failed and the settlement never materialized are explained in Henk Looijesteijn, “Petitioning, colonial policy, constitutional experiment and the development of Dutch political thought.” Paper for the 10th International Conference on Urban History, Ghent, September 1-5, 2010, and Henk Looijesteijn, “Settling the South River.”

⁷⁰ Van den Enden, *Kort Verhael*, VII.

⁷¹ Van Tijn, “Franciscus van den Enden,” 197, also notes the potential explosiveness of Van den Enden’s text and surmises that is why Van den Enden was reluctant to see his tract advertised too strongly.

⁷² Mertens, “Text and Translation”, 7.

⁷³ Van den Enden suggested it was the first part of a series of publications. Eventually, only two of these ever made it into print, the second of it focusing almost exclusively on his blueprint of such a “free State”; Van den Enden, *Vrije Politieke Stellingen*, 29, 125; Mertens, “Text and Translation,” 2.

⁷⁴ Mertens, “Text and Translation”, 8.