



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Shifting frameworks for understanding otherness

The Cape Khoi in pre-1652 European travelogues, an early modern Latin letter, and the South African novel Eilande (2002)

Maas, T.A.J.

Publication date

2020

Document Version

Other version

License

Other

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Maas, T. A. J. (2020). *Shifting frameworks for understanding otherness: The Cape Khoi in pre-1652 European travelogues, an early modern Latin letter, and the South African novel Eilande (2002)*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Chapter 3

Grevenbroek and the Khoi: A Latin Framework, Revisited

All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary.

Orwell (1950, 41)

In Chapter 2, I argued that Grevenbroek delivers an argument for the humanity of the Khoi that sets him apart from his contemporaries. I explored the ethnographical parameters of his argument to show how he relies on empirical observation to re-empower a traditional Christian worldview in which all peoples of the world equally share in a Noahiden lineage and a virtuous nature. The current chapter focuses on a second dominant discourse that determined the outward gaze of early modern Europe, which Grevenbroek also mentions in the introduction to his letter: the ancient world. To what extent does Greek and Roman antiquity provide a meaningful framework for appreciating ‘the Other’, how does this framework translate to early modern times (late 15th-18th century), and how does Grevenbroek engage it to frame the Khoi? From my continued analysis of the letter, it becomes apparent that Grevenbroek re-engages not one but two dominant discourses of his time to re-interpret Khoi habits and customs as more authentic than those of the European settlers.

I first observe that the introductory paragraphs of Grevenbroek’s letter, which allude to moral letters by the Roman philosopher Seneca (1st century), frame the argument as a Classical exercise. Grevenbroek finds that centuries of ‘half-truths’ about the Khoi have built an image of them that he calls ‘rumour’. He aims to bypass these ‘youthful prejudices’ by returning to Greek and Roman literature about ‘the Other’.

Secondly, I note that Grevenbroek’s manifold references and allusions to ancient literature have previously been interpreted as a learned man’s stylistic mannerisms and a form of *imitatio* of Classical models. Whilst I concede to this viewpoint, I focus on the role of these references and allusions to ancient literature in determining Grevenbroek’s view of the world and the place of the Khoi in it. The fact that Grevenbroek writes in Latin, I argue,

indicates how much he values the Classics for their knowledge: intertextual close-readings make apparent how Grevenbroek strategically advances particular aspects of Classical thought to support his argument for Khoi humanity. Taking Ethiopia as an example, I show how Classical thought to an important degree influenced early modern expectations of Africa. Referring to the ethnographic treatise about the Khoi by the Dutchman Willem ten Rhyn (1686), I further demonstrate how the re-iteration of Classical motives over the centuries contributed to establishing the dominant image of the Khoi that Grevenbroek refers to as consisting of ‘half-truths’.

Next, I analyse how Grevenbroek strategically draws on Classical nomenclature to frame the Cape. Notably, he calls the Khoi ‘barbari’, but, rather than using this term in the derogative sense that dominated early modern discourse about the Khoi, he shows that their spatial and temporal foreignness from the dominant society of judgment does not mean that they are less civil or less Christian. Similarly, his Stoic understanding that all of mankind has equal access to virtue (‘virtus’) leads him to conclude that – although society might distribute positions of power unevenly among humans – the Khoi are a race of man rather than beasts.

The two instances of ‘Hottentot’ in the letter make apparent that Grevenbroek is aware of the epistemological dimension of his renegotiation of the image of the Khoi. He does not challenge the prevailing viewpoints by merely denying or opposing its conclusion about Khoi beastliness, but he exposes the stereotype in order to turn it against itself. Drawing on Stuart Hall’s theory about stereotypes in *Representation and the Media* (2005), I argue that Grevenbroek draws on the animalist connotations of the term ‘Hottentot’ to illustrate that the word contains no inherent knowledge about the Khoi. Through careful literary play, he shows that the term is filled with the ideological power of the dominant discourse and embodies the ‘half-truths’ he seeks to oppose. Together, Grevenbroek’s Christian and Classical frameworks re-fill the tainted stereotype, thus renegotiating the established, derogatory image of the Khoi.

I conclude this chapter by reiterating that Grevenbroek’s position remains ambivalent. The shift to empirical observation as the preferred source of knowledge in the Revolution of Knowledge was slow and gradual. Grevenbroek couches empirical observations in a framework of Christian dogma and ancient worldviews. This marks Grevenbroek as a child of his time, who interprets the novel as an extension of the familiar.

At the same time, his awareness of the epistemological implications of the frameworks relied upon for interpreting the world is radical for the time, and places Africa and the Khoi at the heart of a European intellectual debate that would carry on well into the 18th century.

‘Youthful prejudices’

In the opening of his letter, Grevenbroek does not introduce the Khoi or his argument right away. Instead, the opening lines take the form of a Classical Roman salutation, after which follows an extensive *captatio benevolentiae*, the winning or capturing of (the reader’s) goodwill. This then leads up to Grevenbroek’s argument about the people that are introduced as ‘our Africans’ (‘Afris nostris’):

Admodum Revdo. Doctissimoque [Doctissimoq.] Viro
N.N. S.P.D.

Voluptatem, quam ex litteris meis te sensisse testaris, eandem et forte majorem, ex tuis in me propensae voluntatis testibus, venustate et prudentiâ plenis, quibus me dignatus percepi: quarum lectione et delectatione satiari [Satiari] nequeo, gratiasque [gratiasq.] penitissimo pectore [Pectore] Superis ago, quorum benignitate, in experimentum forsân, peculiolum aliquod mihi concessum, ut pietatis meae erga te [Te] specimen [Specimen] videant. [:] Demiror Famam, nunquam ad liquidum perductam, tantas acqui(s)visse eundo vires, fictique adeo tenacem, ut illa quae veritati affinia de Afris nostris divulgantur, etiam apud vos percrebuerint;

To the right reverend and learned gentleman.....
Greetings.

You say that you receive great pleasure from my letters; I feel the same and perhaps more from the expressions of your goodwill towards me, so full of charm and thought, with which you honour me. I can never read nor relish them enough, and from the bottom of my heart I thank the Powers above through whose kindness there has been granted me, perhaps to test me, some little share of this world's goods so that they may see a proof of my pious devotion to you. I am astonished that Rumour, never bearing a clear report, should have acquired such strength in her course and proved so tenacious of falsehood that those half-truths that are spread abroad about our Africans should have reached even your ears.¹

The opening lines signal to the reader that what awaits him is a text not just in Latin but in a Classicising, Romanising Latin. S.P.D. (‘salutem plurimam dicit’) is a Roman epistolary salutation: ‘the sender sends greetings (literally: ‘says “many greetings”’) to the addressee’.

¹ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 172). Unless otherwise stated, like in Chapter 2 I cite Latin and its English translations from the only text edition, Farrington-Schapera (1933), published as Volume 14 in the Van Riebeeck Society Series. Where discrepancies with the manuscript exist, I show amendments in square brackets. See also Appendix 1.

'N.N.' could take the place of the name of the writer, where the name was genuinely unknown or the writer wanted to remain anonymous. It is short for 'nomen nominandum' ('name hitherto unknown', literally: 'the name is yet to be announced') or 'nomen nescio' ('I do not know the name'). The *captatio benevolentiae* which follows is a rhetorical technique aimed at pleasing an audience. The speaker delivers explicit praise of the addressee's ethical qualities and emphasises his intention to win the audience's sympathy and support.² It was made famous by Roman orators who needed the favour of the public or a jury in trials, with Cicero (1st century BCE) considering it one of the pillars of oratory art.³

In the *captatio*, Grevenbroek enters into dialogue with the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca, who famously used the *captatio benevolentiae* in the opening lines of his letters to Lucilius, his assumed student. Grevenbroek's book collection at the Cape included an edition of these *Epistles* ('moral letters'), which he studied, as marginalia in his hand testify.⁴ Two extracts from *captationes* in Seneca's letters illustrate similarities in wording and content to the opening of Grevenbroek's letter:

Magnam ex epistula tua percepi voluptatem [...]

I derive great pleasure from your letter [...]⁵

Ex iis, quae mihi scribis, et ex iis, quae audio, bonam spem de te concipio: non discurras nec locorum mutationibus inquietaris. Aegri animi ista iactatio est: primum argumentum compositae mentis existimo posse consistere et secum morari.

Judging by what you write me, and by what I hear, I am forming a good opinion regarding your future. You do not run hither and thither and distract yourself by changing your abode; for such restlessness is the sign of a disordered spirit. The primary indication, to my thinking, of a well-ordered mind is a man's ability to remain in one place and linger in his own company.⁶

² Cicero, *Orator* 2.128. Lausberg (1998, 129–130, §274–275). Throughout this thesis I use English titles as per the Loeb Classical Library in reference of literature from Greek and Roman antiquity.

³ Cicero, *Orator* 2.115.

⁴ National Library of South Africa, Special Collections, D09.d.36.

⁵ Seneca, *Epistles* 59.1. Translation by me, TM. A more verbatim translation than Farrington-Schapera (1933) of Grevenbroek's opening paragraph would be: 'Pleasure, which you say you feel from my letters, - the same and perhaps a greater [pleasure] even - from your expressions of goodwill towards me, full of warmth and thought, with which I am honoured, I derive'. Unless otherwise stated, ancient Greek and Latin literature throughout this thesis is cited from the relevant editions in the Loeb Classical Library; translations from Kline (2003) unless otherwise stated.

⁶ Seneca, *Epistles* 2.1.

In their respective *captationes*, Seneca and Grevenbroek each praise their addressee as being sincere, upright, and worthy of their sympathy and advice. In the last passage from Seneca, each clause logically builds on the previous one and intertwined with this is implicit praise of Lucilius. Seneca's argument naturally follows from this structure as does his self-presentation as mentor. Although Grevenbroek's lengthier opening is built around the same motives, it could be argued that his implied role as mentor, praise of the addressee – in service of the argument –, and the introduction of the subject in the final line are less naturally and elegantly intertwined than in Seneca. Scholars have interpreted Grevenbroek's Latin accordingly, describing it as literary play, a learned gentleman's pastime, and even an unsatisfactory medium.⁷

George Pigman summarises a scholarly consensus about 17th century literature when he writes in his 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance' (1980) that 'a major characteristic of Renaissance literature is the imitation of Classical texts', with the two major tiers of engagement – already discerned at the time – being imitation (*imitatio*) and emulation (*aemulatio*).⁸ The latter was generally regarded as the loftier one, where a writer sought to match or ultimately surpass the greatness of the Classical example. As the two tiers for engagement imply, imbuing one's work with Classical Latin references in early modern times was, at least in part, an exercise in style and good taste. However, I am not concerned here with assigning Grevenbroek to any particular category per se. In my view, his main achievement consists in citing ancient Roman authors and adopting a Classical worldview for framing the Khoi in a new way, rather than in mastering a Classical Latin style of writing. My concern, consequently, is with the rhetorical or philosophical effect of Grevenbroek's engagement with the Classics, which was carefully geared to his argument about the Khoi, thereby serving a pragmatic purpose.

⁷ Van Stekelenburg (Stellenbosch University Library, Special Collections, MS381) notes that a single page (Farrington-Schaperla (1933, 295)) could boast at least eight allusions or direct citations from Martial, Plinius Minor, Cicero, Vergil, Horace and Quintilian. Van Stekelenburg (2001, n14): '[Grevenbroek's effort] to write about the Cape in a laboriously compiled Latin and an overdose of Classical references [are] so out of synch, that the effect is comical, if not irritating' (translated from the Afrikaans by me, TM). Van Stekelenburg (2003, 101): 'A peculiarly distressing feature of the style is the accumulation of masses of synonyms which add nothing to the narrative but confusion. Although the Cape knows only one genus of Lobster, Grevenbroek calls it *cammarus*, *astacus*, *pagurus*, *carabus* (184) – in one breath. The knife used at circumcision is *secespita*, *clunaculus*, *aut excisorium scalpellum* (208)'. Ibidem: 'Grevenbroek's descriptions of himself as "*studiis assertum, involutum literis, et mansuetiorum Musarum amicum*" ("dedicated to his studies, engrossed in books and a friend of the sweet Muses") is no doubt justified, yet it is no claim to good taste or creative talent'. Cf. Farrington-Schaperla (1933, 169).

⁸ Pigman (1980, 1-3).

After the opening salutation, Grevenbroek introduces his subject and argument, making clear his reason for writing the letter: he has come to understand that, in Europe, ‘rumour’ has proved so ‘tenacious’ that ‘half-truths’ about ‘our Africans’ have reached his protégé.⁹ He suggests that he would not have expected these half-truths to be so tenacious, as their source cannot be traced: ‘[Rumour] was never haunted to transparency’ (‘Numquam ad liquidum perductam’).¹⁰ Grevenbroek aims to bypass the half-truths that have been spread about the Khoi; his return *ad fontes* (to the ancient sources) is intended as a move away from the early modern image of the Khoi to a more meaningful and authentic framing. Grevenbroek’s term ‘rumour’ refers to the European copying and collating of knowledge about foreign people since antiquity, and especially since the Age of Discovery (15th-17th century). It constitutes a repertoire of stock representations of foreign peoples in which the Classical library, biblical exegesis and actual experience are intertwined.

As Ronald Meek argues in his influential book *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (1976), the trope of the ignoble savage was by far the dominant trope in early modern Europe, describing certain non-European peoples as corrupt, unprincipled and vicious. The one-dimensional image of the ‘ignoble savage’ gradually became a benchmark that defined and judged non-European people as non-Christian people. It greatly influenced public discourse about the Khoi, including what Coetzee, as discussed in Chapter 2, called ‘the echo chamber of discourse of the Cape’. The issue that Grevenbroek outlines in his opening paragraphs is how to think of ‘our Africans’, the native inhabitants of the Cape, in a way that goes beyond rumours.

Like Seneca, Grevenbroek builds his response to ethical questions around practical examples, giving advice to his reader on the basis of personal experience and reflection, in this case with regard to the Khoi:

gentem hanc [sc. Khoi] uno animo, in diem et in commune, ad naturae legem congruenter convenientem viventem, in quodcunque genus hominum hospitem, candidam, fidam, veritatis, aequitatisque amantem, nec ab omni Numinis alicujus cultu funditus expertem, et singularem illi

⁹ Van Stekelenburg (2001, 95) suggests that the letter was sent to a church minister in the Netherlands: ‘The long letter was written at the recipient’s request, as Van Grevenbroek states at the end (290)’. I propose that, as is commonly assumed for Seneca’s letters, Grevenbroek’s letter was not intended for a particular individual, but that instead the form provided a more personal and compelling medium for presenting a moral argument than the traditional dialogue or tractate. See also Maas (2017).

¹⁰ Farrington-Schapera (1933) translates this as ‘never bearing a clear report’. On Grevenbroek’s sourcework, see Chapter 2 and the next section.

inesse ad omnia naturalis ingenii dexteritatem, **ut est hominum captus, capacique ad praecepta** animo inveni, qui legume severitate, et judiciorum metu se alligari, quondam praejudiciis juvenilibus abrepta, temeraria mea Musa cecinit:

Quamvis sint homines, hominis vix nomine digni etc.

I found this people with one accord in their general daily life living in harmony with nature's law, hospitable to every race of men, open, dependable, lovers of truth and justice, not utterly unacquainted with the worship of some God, endowed, within their own limits, with a rare nimbleness of mother wit, and **having minds receptive of instruction**. My rash Muse was swept away by youthful prejudices when I formerly sang: **Though men, they scarce deserve the name of man**.¹¹

In this passage, Grevenbroek admits that the 'echo chamber' dictated his own 'youthful prejudices' about the Khoi, but a decade of first-hand experience with the Khoi at the Cape has changed his mind. The argument advanced in *An Elegant and Accurate Account* is, then, primarily a negation of extant discourse about the Khoi, presented as moral advice to the reader.¹²

The passage also makes clear that Grevenbroek's engagement with the Classics goes beyond stylistic imitation. He returns *ad fontes* to illustrate his understanding of what the half-truths about the Khoi are, and how they came into existence. The two highlighted clauses in the previous passage are taken from canonical works by Roman authors: 'ut est captus hominum' (Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 2.27.65), 'capax ad praecepta' (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.243) and 'Sive homines, vix sunt homines hoc nomine digni' (Ovid, *Tristia* 5.7.45). *Indeed*, the entire letter is an intertextual web of references to and stylistic echoes of Latin literature from the time of the Roman Empire, leading Grevenbroek's English translator Benjamin Farrington to comment that 'the Latin of Grevenbroek [...] is dictionary Latin, laboriously compiled by a man of poor taste and inaccurate though very likely wide scholarship. [It] is full of tags from Virgil, Horace, Lucretius and others'.¹³ Such a judgment, I will contend, ignores the effects of Grevenbroek's invocation of the Classics, which go beyond a gentleman's pedantic literary play.

Significantly, the above citations are not drawn from the common pool of ethnographic motifs associated with the Khoi in early modern times; they are mostly not

¹¹ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 172). Highlights in bold throughout this chapter are mine, TM.

¹² The epistolary form was also used in early modern ethnography – notably, Kolb also composed his treatise as (a series of) letters – and was said to breathe a sense of the historically unbiased observer: Huigen (2007, 43).

¹³ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 169).

found in the works of Grevenbroek's contemporaries. Also, the seamless integration of the first two references into Grevenbroek's text makes the intertextuality hardly noticeable, unless one is familiar with the sources. This would suggest that literary play and a display of eloquence were not Grevenbroek's only or primary aims.

The highlighted clause at the end of the passage is the only line in the entire letter that draws attention to itself as a citation: it is centred on the page, has an empty line before and after it in an otherwise left-aligned script that runs page-wide, and has 'etc.' at its end (notably absent in the English translation).¹⁴ The citation illustrates not only Grevenbroek's erudition or stylistic mastery, but it also shows how Classical literature informs his argument. It is a verse from Ovid's *Tristia* (circa 11), poems of sorrow and lament written after he was banned from Rome to Tomi (now Constantia, on the Romanian coast). The particular poem that Grevenbroek quotes from deals with the Getae and the Sarmatians, local peoples whose habits and livelihood, so the poet reminds the reader, had little in common with Roman civility:

sive locum specto, locus est inamabilis, et quo
esse nihil toto tristius orbe potest,
sive homines, vix sunt homines hoc nomine digni,
quamque lupi, saevae plus feritatis habent.
non metuunt leges, sed cedit viribus aequum,
victaque pugnaci iura sub ense iacent.
pellibus et laxis arcent mala frigora braxis,
oraeque sunt longis horrida tecta comis,
in paucis remanent Graecae vestigia linguae,
haec quoque iam Getico barbara facta sono.
unus in hoc nemo est populo,
qui forte Latine quaelibet e medio reddere verba queat.¹⁵

If I look at the place, the place is hateful,
and nothing could be sadder on this earth,
if at the people, they barely deserve the name,
they've more cruel savagery in them than wolves.
They fear no law: justice yields to force,
and right is overturned by the sword's aggression.
They keep off the evils of cold with pelts
and loose trousers, shaggy faces hidden in long hair.
A few still retain vestiges of the Greek language,
though even this the Getic pronunciation barbarises.
There's not a single one of the population who might
chance to utter a few words of Latin while speaking.

According to the poet, the locals are more savage than wolves, dress and do their hair like beasts, and (importantly) fear no law and speak no civil language.¹⁶ In his book *Banished Voices: Readings in Ovid's Exile Poetry* (1994), Gareth Williams remarks that 'All these details

¹⁴ Given the care and consistency with which the copyist of Grevenbroek's letter handled typographical features (underscore, typeface), I have no reason to assume that the positioning of Ovid's line is the copyist's intervention.

¹⁵ Ovid, *Tristia* 5.7.43-54.

¹⁶ The claim that the Getae spoke no Latin and only a little Greek is in all likelihood false. See Williams (1994, 154ff.).

emphasise Ovid's isolation from his fellow Tomitans while at the same time making clear their need for the civilising influences of Rome'.¹⁷

Through the reference to Ovid, Grevenbroek engages Classical discourse about foreign (non-Roman, non-civil) peoples. The reader is invited to explore the intertext and compare Ovid's 1st century description of the Getae with the 17th century 'half-truths' about the Khoi. Grevenbroek admits that there was a time when he agreed with Ovid's statement about the Getae. Formerly, then, he might have denied the Khoi their status as 'civilised men' because, like the Getae, they lived in a state of perceived primitivism and shared a 'natural' state with animals. But Ovid's assessment has now become part of what Grevenbroek considers his 'youthful prejudices'. The quotation is not affirmative but illustrates Grevenbroek's move away from 'former descriptions of the Khoi' towards a more empirical approach within a revised Classical framework.

That is not to say that a degree of stylistic or literary play is not a defining feature of Grevenbroek's letter. A learned man with an impressive (Classical) book collection amidst a predominantly agricultural community, as I argue in the next section, he must have treasured his knowledge of ancient Roman and Greek literature. Though not exclusively, in his letter he mainly quotes Roman authors from around the year 0, marking the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire. In the 19th and 20th centuries, 'Classical Latin' would identify the exceptional literary achievement of the years surrounding the birth of the Roman Empire.¹⁸ Grevenbroek's apology for the roughness of his Latin is a case in point. Like Ovid in his *Tristia*, which we know Grevenbroek had a copy of at the Cape, Grevenbroek apologises for the roughness of his Latin. Also, Grevenbroek's apology is interspersed with allusions to Classical authors.

Acknowledging the savagery of the people around him in comparison to the Romans, Ovid cannot but offer an extensive apology for his rustic Latin in the *Tristia*. Language was a defining characteristic of Roman-ness; in the next sections of this chapter, I explore a parallel between Grevenbroek's use of the word 'barbar' ('barbarus') as identifying someone who spoke a non-European language, and an ancient understanding of the term in

¹⁷ Williams (1994, 158).

¹⁸ This distinguished it from the 'silver Latin' that followed it. See Teuffel (1873) and Settis and Cameron (2006).

reference of someone who did not speak Latin (or Greek) and lived outside the Latin (or Greek) sociosphere. Ovid concludes his poem thus:

ille ego Romanus vates—ignoscite, Musae!—
Sarmatico cogor plurima more loqui.
en pudet et fateor, iam desuetudine longa
vix subeunt ipsi verba Latina mihi.
nec dubito quin sint et in hoc non pauca libello
barbara . non hominis culpa, sed ista loci.
ne tamen Ausoniae perdam commercia linguae,
et fiat patrio vox mea muta sono,
ipse loquor mecum desuetaque verba retracto,
et studii repeto signa sinistra mei.
sic animum tempusque traho, sic meque reduco
a contemplatu summoveoque mali.
carminibus quaero miserarum obliviam rerum:
praemia si studio consequar ista, sat est¹⁹

I, the Roman poet – forgive me, Muses! –
am forced to speak Sarmatian for the most part.
See, I’m ashamed to admit it, from long disuse,
now, the Latin words scarcely even occur to me.
I don’t doubt there are more than a few barbarisms
in this book: it’s not the man’s fault but this place.
Yet, lest I lose the use of the Italian language,
and my own voice be muted in its native tongue,
I speak to myself, using forgotten phrases,
and retrace the ill-fated symbols of my studies.
So I drag out my life, and time, so I retreat from
and banish the contemplation of my troubles.
I seek forgetfulness of my misery in song:
if I win that prize by my studies, it’s enough.

Grevenbroek, too, apologises for the roughness of his Latin:

pauca haec cuiquimodi sunt, profligandis tuis quaestionibus, quaequae mihi memoratu visa digna, et **Latiali sermone** scriptu facilia non aspernaberis, nec ea censoria lima laevigare, **calamistro tuo inurere**, nec **desultorio meo stylo** peregrinantibus **usitatissimo** ignoscere gravaberis.

you will not despise these few observations [about the Khoi], such as they are, in which I attempt to reply to your questions, and to record what seemed to me both worth telling and easy to express in the Latin tongue; nor will you refuse to smoothe my roughness with your critical file, to dress the unkempt locks of my poor prose, and to forgive the homely style which is all that exiles can attain.²⁰

Grevenbroek’s false modesty shows clearer in the Latin than in the English translation: his Latin style, he explains, has inevitably been roughened and made ‘homely’ by his exile. Notably, the apology takes the form of a manicured display of Latin eloquence.

‘Latialis’ (‘Latiaris’) is the adjective form of Latium, the area in which Rome was founded. The word evokes the earliest days of the eternal city. Rather than writing ‘lingua (Latina)’ or ‘sermo (Latina)’, a more unmarked way of referring to ‘the Latin language’, Grevenbroek draws on a metonym for the Latins (or: ‘Latini’), the original inhabitants of the

¹⁹ Ovid, *Tristia* 5.7.55-68. On the theme of exile in Ovid’s poetry and its reception, see, for example, Hinds (2011).

²⁰ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 290).

lands. Contrary to his claim, then, he does not follow the most 'facilium' (easy) way to express himself in the Latin tongue.

'Calamistro tuo inure' literally translates as 'heating with your curling tongs'. A rather marked way of 'dressing the unkempt locks of my prose', the phrase is also found in Cicero, the acclaimed Roman orator (106-43 BCE), who uses it as a metaphor for adding (literary) ornamentation to an otherwise 'straight' oration.²¹ In the passage, he insists that straightforward prose can still provide a wealth of material for others to draw from; it is free of embellishment, 'and as such represents one pinnacle of perfection'.²² 'The foolish', Cicero writes, 'will try to scorch the material with curling tongs. He [the writer of the material] has, however, certainly scared sane men away from writing. For there is nothing in history sweeter than pure, clear brevity'.²³ The style of Cicero's speeches, intended to be delivered before the jury in court, could hardly be more different from the detached style of Caesar's *The Gallic War* that he here praises. It is the paradox of Cicero's own work that he adumbrates: throughout history, his oratory has been cited as the greatest example of rhetorical finesse from antiquity and has been read for its polished syntax in sentences that keep unfolding with elegantly structured clauses.²⁴ Through the intertextuality with Cicero, Grevenbroek capitalises on his ability to 'curl' the letter himself, rendering the invitation to his addressee to do it for him and his apology for his roughness of his Latin instances of false modesty.

Indeed, Grevenbroek was not as circumspect as Cicero ostensibly advises about leaving his prose unembellished. 'Desultorio meo stylo peregrinantibus usitatissimo', for example, is more than a 'homely style which is all that exiles can attain'. In Classical Latin, the term 'desultor' (literally 'one who leaps off') signified a person skilled at leaping between horses, in this way riding two to four horses at the same time, sometimes with a chariot. He would vault on either of them to please crowds in the circus, or use the skill in battle to change quickly from a tired to a fresh horse. Grevenbroek's combination of the skill and sophistication of a 'desultor' and the worn connotations of 'usitatissimo' (the superlative form of something common; worn) is oxymoronic. The effect relies on the Latin

²¹ Cicero, *Brutus* 262.

²² Kraus (2005, 98).

²³ 'Ineptis illa volent calamistris inurere: sanos quidem homines a scribendo deterruit; nihil est enim in historia pura et illustri brevitate dulcius'.

²⁴ See Steel (2013).

syntax. Read from left to right, Grevenbroek first compares his skill in writing to that of a 'desultor'. Only in the second instance does he claim that his skill has become extremely common, as is typical for those that dwell in foreign lands.

It has been pointed out that there is a contradiction between Ovid's content and form: Ovid is trying to gain sympathy from his readers by claiming that the circumstances of exile are destroying him as a poet, whilst continuing to write verse of a quality that undermines his claim.²⁵ Similarly, Grevenbroek's apologies for his rustic language reference revered examples from antiquity. I consider these references as a form of literary imitation that bolsters his authority through false modesty.

It is Grevenbroek's achievement that he is able to advance literary imitation in support of his argument for the Khoi. In the remainder of his introduction to the letter, he elaborates on the second pillar of his argument for the Khoi, which is Christian theology. As shown in the previous chapter, the discrepancy between Christian virtues as practiced by the European settlers and the Khoi is fundamental to Grevenbroek's argument for the Khoi's humanity and virtue. Here, he describes how corrupted Christian ethics practiced by Dutch settlers have jumped across to the Khoi, and paints a picture of what will happen to the hypocritical Christians:

Cujus delicti veniam petens, hic palinodiam cano, dum proh dedecus! **Nostratium vitiis**, moris patrii oblitorum, in deterius mutatos, sui celantes, tectos et a nobis abstrusos explorate perspicio et cognosco, a quibus blasphemias, perjuriam, discordiam, simultates, crapulam, technas, latrocinia, furta, ingratitude, effraenatam alieni appetentiam ignota quondam eis Facinora, aliaque crimina non levis notae, et auri sacram famem traxit; en **praeclaros Christianarum vittarum Mystas!** en Divinae Veritatis assertores strenuos, die et iudicio novissimo ab his Barbaris media amphitheatri scrobe ustulandi. Haec est futuri summa favilla mali!

And for this fault [i.e. my youthful prejudice] I now seek pardon and sing a palinode; for, alas for the disgrace! it is through the **faults of our countrymen**, who have forgotten their ancestral ways, as I now plainly see and recognize, that the natives have been changed for the worse, and have become secretive, suspicious and shut away from us. From us they have learned blasphemy, perjury, strife, quarrelling, drunkenness, trickery, brigandage, theft, ingratitude, unbridled lust for {for} what is not one's own, misdeeds unknown to them before, and, among other crimes of deepest die, the accursed lust of gold. Behold **the glorious priests of the Christian mysteries!** Behold the strenuous champions of Divine Truth! On the last day at the last judgment they shall be burned in the middle ditch of the amphitheatre by these barbarians. 'This is the final spark of the woe to come.'²⁶

²⁵ Gosling (1996, 2); Williams (1994).

²⁶ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 173-174), {...} is my deletion, TM.

The description of the burning of hypocrite Christians by ‘these barbarians’ in an amphitheatre on Judgment Day provides a rather dramatic finale to the opening of the letter. Indeed, Grevenbroek has received criticism for his hyperbolic style: ‘Grevenbroek’s rhetorical exaggerations are sometimes next to hysterical’.²⁷

Yet, the drama is in line with the strident tone and message of the preceding lines. Grevenbroek sees that the faults of his countrymen (‘nostratum vitiis’) are related to the disingenuous upholding of the mysteries of Christian worship (‘Christianarum vittarum’) by ‘glorious priests’ that are, in Grevenbroek’s opinion, not glorious at all: their behaviour has turned the Khoi away from the Europeans. Also note the association of ‘our countrymen’ with ‘the Christian worship’ (both genitive case), and ‘vitium’ (sin) with ‘vitta’ (the headband worn by (Roman) priests). The implied virtuous life of the Khoi has been corrupted by the Europeans, who are associated with a series of Christian vices that recall the seven cardinal sins and the Ten Commandments: ‘blasphemy, perjury, strife, quarrelling, drunkenness, trickery, brigandage, theft, ingratitude, unbridled lust for what is not one’s own’.²⁸ Conversely, the virtues ascribed to the Khoi are based on the Christian tradition, too: ‘[they live] in harmony with nature’s law, [are] hospitable to every race of men, open, dependable, lovers of truth and justice, not utterly unacquainted with the worship of some God’. Grevenbroek challenges the dominant European early modern worldview about the Khoi by turning the image around. More than this, he argues that the settlers have betrayed their own Christianity by corrupting a pious people. This is what merits their severe punishment on Judgment Day at the hands of the Khoi (‘his Barbaris’).²⁹ Ovid’s image of the beastly nature of local peoples in a remote corner of the empire is turned around for the Cape, where the settlers corrupt the more authentically Christian life of the Khoi. The implicit argument Grevenbroek presents is that an uncritical repetition of motifs from Classical literature can lead to ‘prejudices’ about the foreign and may also produce a corrupt self-image, as the example of ‘the glorious priests of the Christian mysteries’ suggests.

The final line of the opening of Grevenbroek’s letter continues the criticism of the Europeans and the urgent tone. It alludes to a line from the *Elegies* (1.9.18) by the Roman

²⁷ Van Stekelenburg (2001, 96): ‘Merkwaardig zijn zijn retorische overdrijvingen, die soms een bijna hysterisch niveau bereiken’.

²⁸ Cf. the Lord’s Prayer.

²⁹ In the next sections of this chapter I discuss the irony of Grevenbroek’s use of the term ‘barbarus’ in reference to the Khoi against the background of the dominant 17th century discourse about them.

Propertius (1st century BCE).³⁰ They are series of poems that portray the uneven course of the poet's love affair with a woman called Cynthia. In the particular poem quoted, the poet urges his friend-poet Ponticus, who is also in love, to put away all his learned books of poetry and write his own love-elegy for his 'girl' instead:

i quaeso et tristes istos sepone libellos,
 et cane quod quaevis nosse puella velit!
 quid si non esset facilis tibi copia! nunc tu
 insanus medio flumine quaeris aquam.
 necdum etiam palles, vero nec tangeris igni:
haec est venturi prima favilla mali.
 tum magis Armenias cupies accedere tigres
 et magis infernae vincula nosse rotae,
 quam pueri totiens arcum sentire medullis
 et nihil iratae posse negare tuae.
 nullus Amor cuiquam facilis ita praebuit alas,
 ut non alterna presserit ille manu.³¹

Please, go bury those sad books
 and sing anything the girl wants to hear!
 What if this abundance were not so easily yours?
 Now, like a madman, you are standing in the middle of a
 river, asking for water.
 And you're not even pale yet. You haven't *really* felt the fire.
This is but the first spark of the suffering to come.
 Then you'd rather face Armenian tigers
 and know the bondage of hell's wheel
 than to feel so often the boy's bow in your marrow
 and be powerless to deny your angry girl a single thing.
 Love doesn't give his wings so easily
 that he does not repress with the other hand.

The river and water are common symbols for inspiration, here reworked creatively by Propertius to serve as an indication of Ponticus' failure to see the obvious: as a poet, he should not be looking in books, but should find within himself 'a wealth of material from which to draw inspiration for writing *quod quaevis nosse puella velit* [anything the girl wants to hear]'.³² What he is feeling now, according to the poet-narrator, is only the first spark: his love will deepen, and with that the need to write a love elegy (which, it is hoped, will open the girlfriend to his affection).

Grevenbroek's reworking of Propertius' elegy provides a disconcerting finale for his letter's introduction and invites a comparison of the circumstances of those addressed and described. Like Ponticus, the European settlers have failed to see the obvious: that they are among Christian brethren. In the same way that Ponticus is standing in a river, isolated, asking for water, the settlers and their Christian priests are deploring their solitude among savages, while in fact being surrounded by an unremitting flow of Christian inspiration.

³⁰ This is the only citation that is marked as such in Farrington's translation; none of the other Classical references are put in quotation marks.

³¹ Propertius, *Elegies* 1.9.13-24, translation Katz (2004). The final two lines loosely translate to: 'Love grants no one an easy passage, driving them back with either hand'.

³² On the interpretation of lines 13-16, see Yardley (1981, 324): 'The identification of the composition of love-poetry with the experience of a love affair has, of course, already been established [at the beginning of *Elegies* 1.7]'.

Instead of reading those ‘sad books’ full of half-truths and rumour, the settlers should open their eyes to the world around them – as Grevenbroek has done.

Although Grevenbroek has come around, he claims that it is too late for his fellow settlers, who fail to see their part in corrupting the Khoi and continuing the stereotype. Significantly, ‘prima’ (‘first’) in the Propertian line has been replaced by ‘summa’ (‘highest’; ‘final’), thus focusing on the last judgment on the youngest day. In contrast to Propertius’ ‘you haven’t really felt the fire,’ Grevenbroek seems to be saying that the settlers will most definitely feel it – but that the reader of his letter might still be saved, if he pays heed to Grevenbroek’s message.

Grevenbroek’s introduction thus takes the form of a complex interplay of implicit and explicit allusions to the Classical tradition and Christian dogma. However much it was en vogue among learned circles in Grevenbroek’s time to engage in literary *imitatio* or *aemulatio* of the Classical authorities, there is more at stake here than stylistic play. The allusion to Seneca’s philosophy allows for an interpretation of Grevenbroek’s letter as moral advice to the reader, the reference to Ovid’s poetry of exile make clear how Grevenbroek’s view of ‘the Other’ has changed, and Propertius’ poem is reworked creatively in support of a Christian worldview that accommodates the Khoi.

If we accept that the Classical references in the letter’s opening are too particular to be coincidental, what does this tell us about Grevenbroek’s use of the Classics in the development of his argument about the Khoi? In what follows, I focus on the value the Classical heritage had for Grevenbroek. Although it may seem that the Classics that in part inspired the half-truths about the Khoi still inform Grevenbroek’s worldview, it is crucial that he returns *ad fontes* to interpret the Classical sources rather than relying on centuries of interpretative commentaries and select reiterations. His aim is to interpret the Khoi in light of ‘authentic’ Classical Roman and Greek theory about ‘the Other’.

Half-truths, revisited

Grevenbroek is not unique in looking back at antiquity when surveying an African people. Antiquity had left Europe with accounts about foreign peoples, many encountered, but some only surmised. The latter centuries of the Middle Ages witnessed an explosion in travel writing under the influence of crusades and journeys of exploration, notably to Asia and Africa. At this time, ancient literature remained the dominant frame of reference

through which the world and its peoples were assessed. In his paper 'Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries' (1981), anthropologist Michael Ryan maintains that 'the bewildering variety of peoples and diversity of cultures did not bowl over a Europe which had cause to appreciate that variety was a fact of life'.³³ As Ryan indicates, 'Montaigne and other humanists knew this [variety and diversity of the human form] from their reading of ancient, not [medieval] travel, texts'.³⁴ Much early modern travel writing thus saw in foreign peoples the confirmation or extension of an antique supposition of a nation's existence.

The tendency to model Europe's outward gaze to ancient authorities, however, is just one side of the coin. There remained the issue that the Classical world, it was now widely realised, had been pagan during most of its history. Only in 313 CE had the Roman emperor Constantine put an end to the persecution of Christians with the Edict of Milan and converted to Christianity on his deathbed, thereby making it the new imperial faith. On this basis, many early modern observers believed there existed a real, and not simply a metaphorical, relationship between the pagan peoples of Africa and those of the antique world.

One evolutionary model explained pagan antiquity as a temporal-geographical interlude between a Christian past and an early modern Christian present. As noted in the previous chapter, the book of Genesis allows for the visualisation of the dispersal of man as a grand outward sweep from the Christian centre of the world, with each of Noah's three sons repopulating one of the then-known continents (Europe, Asia and Africa). Consequently, as Ryan observes, 'the *real* discovery was not the exoticism of the other but his ultimate similarity with peoples already assimilated into European consciousness'.³⁵ The novel was interpreted as an extension to the familiar, so that a pagan became a Christian who had temporarily erred from the faith. A careful study of the ancient Romans – the one great heathen civilisation converted Christian – would provide insight into the habits of other pagan civilisations, like those found in southern Africa, and shed light on how far they had erred from the faith, or – in other words – how close they were to conversion.³⁶ The

³³ Ryan (1981, 520).

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ryan (1981, 529).

³⁶ From this model sprang the effort of many early modern thinkers to establish a (supposed) genealogy of any exotic people with one of the Noahides.

ancient world was thus given a place in a larger Christian world. Pagan antiquity provided an authoritative frame of reference through which early modern man could meaningfully interpret the foreign.

The case of Ethiopia illustrates how the two discourses moulded together determined Grevenbroek's African horizon of expectations. Known since antiquity, Ethiopia unsurprisingly functioned as a beacon on early modern Europe's political-religious map of Africa. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the country's heartlands were purportedly inhabited by the Christian prince Prester John, whose lands were surrounded by pagan peoples. It is therefore not surprising that, in his letter, Grevenbroek situates the Cape and the Khoi in relation to Ethiopia:

Interiora regionis Aethiopiae confinia frequentibus multisque habitantur pagis, quorum amoenitate indigenae detinentur, et advenae omnium rerum copia, terraeque ubertate alliciuntur.

In the interior of the country bordering on Ethiopia are many populous districts, the charm of which detains the native inhabitants, while strangers are allured by the abundance of all things and the richness of the soil.³⁷

To a modern mind, this brief observation does scant justice to the heaps of geographical and topographical knowledge available at the time: many expeditions had been launched into the interior since the Dutch East India Company had settled at the Cape in 1652, and Grevenbroek, as secretary of its Council of Policy at the Cape, drew up many of the reports that were presented before it. Yet, his concern in his 121-page letter was with the people and the state of the Cape, and this single line sufficed to situate this concern in relation to the dominant reference point in European thought about Africa.³⁸ In its very brevity, then, it illustrates Ethiopia's role as a formative concept in Europe's understanding of Africa and its inhabitants from antiquity onwards.

The South African literary historian Malvern van Wyk Smith traces the influence of Ethiopia as one of Europe's primary organising tropes about Africa back to Homer (8th century BCE). In his *Odyssey*, the Ethiopians are 'the farthestmost of men' and are divided into two peoples, some living 'where Hyperion sets and some where he rises'.³⁹ In his

³⁷ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 212).

³⁸ As with other contemporary worldviews and theory, Grevenbroek does not mention Prester John explicitly (see Chapter 2).

³⁹ Homer, *Odyssey* 1.22-24. Hyperion ('the high-one') is a nickname of the sun, Helios.

seminal study *The First Ethiopians: The Image of Africa and Africans in the Early Mediterranean World*, Van Wyk Smith writes:

Homer's suggestion that there were two Ethiopias ensured the longevity and procreative powers of his myth and allows us to speak not merely of an Ethiopian myth but of a dialectic metaphor or discourse of Ethiopia.⁴⁰

In his *Histories*, the ancient Greek historian Herodotus (6th century BCE) similarly distinguished between the 'eastern Ethiopians [with] straight hair' and the 'western Ethiopians [who] are more woolly haired than any other people in the world'.⁴¹ He plotted their land 'where the south declines towards the setting sun [...] the country called Ethiopia, the last inhabited in that direction'.⁴²

At first a schematic geographical and ethnographic distinction, the division of Ethiopia would quickly become evaluative. In the Middle Ages, Eastern Ethiopia became known as the location of noble peoples living in an earthly paradise, a tradition which encouraged the later myth of Prester John. Many a caller who commented on the Cape's natural beauty and healing effect on sick sailors reasoned that the earthly paradise could not be far.⁴³ In opposition to Eastern Ethiopia (or simply Ethiopia), 'savage Ethiopia' oftentimes found expression in a binary of beautiful nature inhabited by uncivilised (that is, pagan) people.⁴⁴ To many in the first half of the 17th century, the habits and life of the Cape natives were a long stretch from civility – and thus from Prester John's supposed (Eastern) Ethiopia. The Englishman John Heylyn arguably recalled his 1621 passing of the Cape, when he commented in his 1652 *Cosmographie* [sic] that '[a] pity 't is so beautiful and rich a country should be inhabited by so barbarous and rude a people'.⁴⁵ A popular interpretation was that the Christian lands of Prester John were under threat from the pagan peoples that surrounded them. The supposed border between the two Ethiopias was variously placed

⁴⁰ Van Wyk Smith (2009, 6).

⁴¹ Herodotus, *Histories* 7.69-70.

⁴² Herodotus, *Histories* 3.114.

⁴³ See Chapter 1.

⁴⁴ Oliver and Fage (1973) in their history of Africa include several maps of the continent to illustrate how its heartlands were only very gradually mapped, with large swaths still 'largely unknown to Europeans around 1900' (map 11).

⁴⁵ Heylyn (1652, IV.64 *sub voce* 'Cafraria'). The exploration of the African hinterlands was slower than that of the coast, allowing the myth of Prester John to hold sway even over 18th-century maps of Africa. In the 19th century, the Voortrekkers still named Nylstroom after what they thought it was: the river Nile (cf. figure 1.1). Nylstroom, now called Modimolle, is a small town in Limpopo, South Africa's northernmost province.

across Africa. The Portuguese writer Duarte Pereira, in his *Esmeraldo de situ orbis* (circa 1506), writes the following:

At this promontory [the Cape of Good Hope] Africa comes to an end in the Ocean, and is divided from Asia; from this point the boundary of Africa runs due north following the course of the Nile, through the midst of the Ethiopias [...] to Damatia on the Sea of Egypt.⁴⁶

Although the geographical location of Christian Ethiopia provided the impetus for many expeditions into the Cape hinterlands, the concept of Ethiopia itself already testifies to the combined power of Christian and Classical discourse in shaping early modern expectations of a world not yet 'discovered'. New observations were interpreted as extensions to established expectations, rather than as a challenge to them. Pareira wrote just 30 years after the Cape was first rounded. After 1652, with every expedition undertaken from the Castle, Ethiopia was pushed back on the map but it never quite ceased to exist as a formative concept in the European imagination.

The various peoples between the Cape settlement and Ethiopia were seen as frontier peoples – fallen Ethiopians whose customs and habits could be assessed to judge their degree of civility (or, in fact, savagery) in comparison to Christian men. The full burden of this tradition is infamously summed up by John Matthews, lieutenant in the Royal Navy, in 1788:

Trace the manners of the natives, the whole extent of Africa from Cape Cantin to the Cape of Good Hope, and you find a constant and almost regular gradation in the scale of understanding, till the wretched Cafre sinks nearly below the Ouran Outang.⁴⁷

Like many other exotic peoples, the 'wretched Cafre' or Khoi, also called Hottentot, were extremely negatively interpreted in relation to the evaluative division of Ethiopia.⁴⁸

Grevenbroek's second and final mention of Ethiopia is as brief as the first, and occurs in a reference to Delagoa Bay, modern-day Maputo in Mozambique:

Sinum del Agoa Aethiopiam versus.

⁴⁶ Pereira (1506), cited by Van Wyk Smith (2009, 13).

⁴⁷ Matthews (1788, 159).

⁴⁸ Van Wyk Smith (1992, 285): 'inhabitants of the "new lands", and of the Black in particular, [were] "the other" – the strange, exotic opposite to the European norm'.

Delagoa Bay [is located] on the Ethiopian side [of Africa].⁴⁹

If the eastern side of Africa is Ethiopian, the western side is not. Indeed, after discussing the virtuous nature of natives in the eastern parts, Grevenbroek turns to the west to show

ne occiduos hujus orae incolas sua laude fraudem, paucula etiam de illis levi penicillo, à capite accersita, summaque tantum secutus fastigia rerum attingam, quo tradam qualiscunque inter **Barbaros** maximè inconditos, et agreste hoc hominum genus, possit esse virtus.

that the inhabitants of the West may not be robbed of their meed of praise, I shall now lightly sketch a few incidents of their history from memory, touching only on the main points, in order to show that virtue can exist among **savages** of any sort, even the most rude, and in the midst of this wild race of men.⁵⁰

I discussed this passage in Chapter 2 and quote it again at this place to emphasise that Grevenbroek relates to the Ethiopian division of Africa that played a dominant role in European expectations of Africa since antiquity. Yet, although here there is a ranking of degrees of savageness, I illustrated in the previous chapter that Grevenbroek discusses ‘a few incidents’ in an effort to counter popular opinion about the ‘barbari’. It is significant that ‘virtus’ provides the climax of the sentence. Grevenbroek’s main point of departure, as I have shown, is a non-evaluative division of the continent, in which all people are inspired by and have equal access to Godly virtue. In his view, the authoritative ancient Greek authors might have supported this biblical worldview.

The fact that Grevenbroek starts from an assumed similarity between the world’s people is important: the evaluative ranking of civility that follows from the temporal-geographical dimension of the early modern evolutionary theory is never mentioned in his letter. He neither denies nor confirms that the separation in time and distance from the Christian centre of the world may have covered Khoi Christianity with a rustic veneer; what is important to his argument is that the Khoi’s ‘virtus’ is more apparent from their habits and customs than from those of the European settlers.

In the next sections, I take a closer look at the place Classical heritage has in Grevenbroek’s argument. I start with arguably the most palpable aspect of his inheritance,

⁴⁹ Farrington-Schaperla (1933, 286).

⁵⁰ Farrington-Schaperla (1933, 230).

his book collection, and discuss the way in which similar titles were used by contemporaries in support of their argument about the Khoi.

Classical sourcework

Grevenbroek's private book collection at the Cape included at least 370 titles, for that is the number that was auctioned after his death, of which 91 survive in the National Library of South Africa (NLSA).⁵¹ If these books are at all representative of Grevenbroek's library, they confirm his broad knowledge of languages and primary interest in Classical literature and law. Marginalia in his hand, present in many of the books, are oftentimes in the source language and confirm that Grevenbroek mastered Dutch, French, German, English, Italian, Latin and Greek.

One of the most impressive (and costly) books in the collection is the *Lexicon philologicum* (1655), a folium-sized encyclopaedia that aimed to include all knowledge in the world. It is bound in supple, white veal leather – the most expensive binding at the time.⁵² As was the custom for such books, the *Lexicon* was written in Latin and Greek. Inevitably, it included a lemma on Ethiopia, which asserts that the country is to be found in a hot zone:

Aethiopiam ferventissimam esse indicat adustus color, & Tryglodytae, quibus subterraneae domus sunt.

First of all, the burnt colour of the people indicates that Ethiopia is very hot, and so does the need of the Troglodytae to have their homes underground.⁵³

The *Lexicon* was printed in Frankfurt in 1655, 170 years after Europeans first rounded Africa. It being a philological lexicon, material brought home from the numerous (failed) attempts at locating Ethiopia is not included. The cited line about Ethiopia, then, is a direct citation from Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* (circa 62), a work on natural philosophy. The Troglodytes were mythical cave dwellers that Greek antiquity had hypothesised inhabited part of the African continent.

Grevenbroek must have valued the rather stout *Lexicon philologicum* enough to take it with him to the Cape when he moved there in 1684. Yet, he does not make reference to

⁵¹ Van Stekelenburg (2003, 10) carried out research into Grevenbroek's book collection. A list of the extant books in the NLSA rests with me, TM.

⁵² NLSA, Dessinian Collection, D09.c.73. The *Lexicon philologicum* is one of the few books that carry Grevenbroek's full, red-wax family seal on the title page.

⁵³ Seneca, *Natural Questions* IV.47, translation TM.

Troglodytes in his letter, nor to any other part of the lemma on Ethiopia. Instead, he goes back to the Classical source and adheres to the primordial division of Ethiopia proposed by Homer. In contrast, the German Peter Kolb, writing about the Cape in 1719, did make a systematic comparison of traits he finds in the Khoi with those found, according to other sources, among the Jews and the Troglodytes.⁵⁴ Kolb's ethnographic writing is, to some extent, a familiar collation from available sources, supplemented by some observations of his own. Grevenbroek, however, considers empirical evidence and a return *ad fontes* for Christian and ancient frameworks of the utmost importance.

A closer comparison with the only other Latin ethnographic treatise of comparable size and scope from the early Cape about the Khoi makes clear how distinctive Grevenbroek's approach was in terms of a critical interpretation of his sources. In 1686, less than 10 years before Grevenbroek wrote his letter, Willem ten Rhyne published his *Schediasma de Promontorio Bonae Spei (An Account of the Cape of Good Hope)*, as I mentioned in Chapter 2. There is no proof that Ten Rhyne ever visited the Cape. As was typical for the time, he based his portrayal of the Khoi on Classical sources, contemporary academic works, and travelogues. His account exemplifies how images of the Khoi were continuously recycled and to what effect. When Ten Rhyne comments on the gluttony of the Khoi, for example, his description is partly borrowed from the Roman historian Justinus (2nd century):

Aurum & argentum non perinde ac reliqui mortales, appetunt; quippe ibidem divitiarum cupido, ubi & usus. Imo in his plus saepe proficit vitiorum ignoratio, quam in aliis virtutis cognitio. Atque ita sub molliori coelo immania posse esse ingenia, patet.

They do not covet gold or silver like other mortals; in truth the desire of riches exists only where they are in use; and ignorance of vice is often of more service among them than knowledge of virtue among other people. To sum up they afford a clear proof that even a mild climate can produce monstrous dispositions.⁵⁵

The highlighted lines are citations (with slight changes) from Justinus' *Histories*:

⁵⁴ Huigen (2007, Chapter 2) reworks Kolb's observations into a table. Kolb visited the Cape, where he had access to Grevenbroek's notes on the Khoi and supposedly also his library, before writing his own letter. This letter was based so heavily on Grevenbroek's that contemporaries accused him of plagiarism (see Chapter 2). Kolb was not known for his astute mind or workmanship and was dismissed early from his position as astronomer (Huigen (2007, 37ff.)).

⁵⁵ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 124). Bold highlights are mine, TM.

Aurum et argentum non perinde ac reliqui mortales adpetunt. Lacte et melle vescuntur. Lanae his usus ac vestium ignotus et quamquam continuis frigoribus urantur, pellibus tamen ferinis ac murinis utuntur. Haec continentia illis morum quoque iustitiam edidit, nihil alienum concupiscentibus; **quippe ibidem divitiarum cupido est, ubi et usus.** [...] **Tanto plus in illis proficit vitiorum ignoratio quam in his cognitio virtutis.**

Gold and silver they despise, as much as other men covet them. They live on milk and honey. The use of wool and clothes is unknown among them, although they are pinched by perpetual cold; they wear, however, the skins of wild animals, great and small. Such abstemiousness has caused justice to be observed among them, as they covet nothing belonging to their neighbours; **for it is only where riches are of use, that the desire of them prevails.** [...] **So much better effect has the ignorance of vice in the one people than the knowledge of virtue in the other.**⁵⁶

Justinus was known for his exhaustiveness, which made him a trusted source as a *repertorium* of the knowledge of the ancient world in later centuries. His work purportedly describes all peoples of the world, be they mythical, known first-hand or familiar from hearsay. Justinus here comments on the Scythians, a nomadic people that roamed the lands between modern-day Iran and the Black Sea. Widely known throughout the ancient world, they represented the archetype of a savage, wild people with little civil standing.⁵⁷ Ten Rhyne applied Justinus' comments about the Scythians to the Khoi. But whereas Justinus' concluding words allow for a nuanced view of the 'ignorant savage', Ten Rhyne finds no mitigating circumstance for the 'immania ingenia' ('savage minds') of the Khoi.

Besides consulting Classical authors, Ten Rhyne also derived information about the Khoi from contemporary writers. For their character, for example, he is indebted to Georgius Hornius (Georg Horn), professor of history at Leiden University in Holland. Twenty years before Ten Rhyne's treatise, Hornius wrote a history of the world featuring brief critiques of all peoples inhabiting it, in alphabetical order: *Arca Mosis, sive Historia imperiorum et regnorum condito orbe ad nostra tempora* (*Moses' ark, or: a history of the empire and rulers from the origins of the world up to our times*) (1666). About the Africans, he wrote:

Africani sanguine sicco, calido: corpora nigro, adusto, capillo crispo et lanuginoso: **leves, inconstantes, mendaces, dolosi, perfidi.**

⁵⁶ Justinus *Histories* 2.2, translation TM.

⁵⁷ Justinus copied much information from these sources (like for the Scythians from Herodotus, *Histories* 4), oftentimes with little or no referencing. His *Histories* held so much information – many passages would nowadays be regarded as digressions – that it was also called *Historiae Philippicae et Totius Mundi Origines et Terrae Situs* (*Philippic histories and the origins of the entire world and all of its lands*). See Syme (1988).

The Africans are dry, hot blooded creatures: their bodies are black, indeed blackened by the sun, their hair is frizzy and downy: **they are faithless, inconstant, lying, treacherous, and infamous.**⁵⁸

Ten Rhyne's description of the Khoi runs thus:

levitate quippe, & **inconstantia, mendaciis, fraudibus, perfidia** ac infamibus omnis libidinis curis turpissime exercentur

In faithlessness, inconstancy, lying, cheating, treachery, and infamous concern with every kind of lust they exercise their villainy.⁵⁹

Except for the replacement of 'fraudibus' with the synonym 'dolosī', this is a verbatim copy of Hornius. Notably, the Khoi are described in terms of their negation of Christian values but credited with a more 'human' character than the native Americans ('Americani'), who, Hornius' next entry shows, could apparently be described in two words: 'barbari, anthropophagi' ('barbarians, man-eaters').

Still, the Khoi were not deemed fully 'human'. The description 'capillo lanuginoso' ('woolly hair') invokes the image of sheep that was commonplace in early modern Khoi iconography (see figure 2.1 and figure 2.2). As I argued in Chapter 2, comparisons with animals were no innocent imagery but part of a general animalisation of the indigenous. Resembling beasts, the Khoi could not be on a par with European (Christian) mankind. Ten Rhyne uses another simile involving animals taken from the third popular category of sources of information on the Khoi: earlier treatises. Amongst Ten Rhyne's sources was a treatise on the Khoi written by Olfert Dapper, a fellow Dutchman, in 1668. For his description of the ornamentation ('Cieraedjen') of the Khoi, Dapper relied on a comparison with spaniels:

De mans hebben het hair verçiert met kopere plaetjes, duite, witte horentjes en grote kralen, en scheren dat op zommige plaetsen wat af, en laten dat hier en daer wat staen, byna op een zelve wijze, **gelijk hier te lande de waterhonde geschoren worden.**

⁵⁸ Hornius (1666, translation TM).

⁵⁹ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 122).

The men have their hair decorated with small copper plates, doits [Dutch copper coins], small white horns and big coral beads. From some spots they shave it off altogether, leaving patches here and there, **just like spaniels are shaven here at home.**⁶⁰

When, some 18 years later, Ten Rhyne comes to describe the clothing of the Khoi ('De Vestimentis'), he incorporates the same comparison:

Communia ornamenta sunt vel capitis, **vel quod uti nos villosos tandemus canes**, in plenilunares, semilunares, stellares &c.

They commonly wear ornaments on their head, or else, **as we do with poodles**, they **shave** their hair into full moons, crescent moons, or stars.⁶¹

The application of the same motif by both authors seems too particular to be coincidental; I have not come across it in other literature.

Together, Ten Rhyne's citations from Justinus, Hornius and Dapper illustrate the sources commonly mobilised in early modern writing about the Khoi. In an effort to meet the increasing demand for knowledge of foreign lands, writers and book sellers copied and collated information from their peers and predecessors.⁶² Although among the class of learned men in Europe an awareness had developed that not all knowledge contained in dictionaries and reference books was equally accurate, referencing was not yet expected practice.⁶³ As I illustrated in Chapter 1, for the 21st century reader, this makes it very hard to find out when and how certain images came into being or (ethnographic) motifs in descriptions of the Khoi became fixed. Grevenbroek's remark about 'half-truths' and rumour 'that can hardly be haunted to transparency' was at least partially motivated by his awareness that his personal observations did not match the existing corpus of writings about the Khoi.

⁶⁰ Dapper (1668), *Kaffrarie, of Lant der Hottentots*, edited and translated in Farrington-Schapera (1933, 50). See my discussion of the comparison of Khoi speech with that of animals in Chapter 1.

⁶¹ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 118).

⁶² See Baggerman (1993) for the famous example of the Utrecht book-seller Simon de Vries (+/- 1670).

⁶³ Grafton (1997, 192) describes the case of Pierre Bayle, who set out, in the early 1690s, to write the *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, intended as 'a dictionary of all the mistakes in other works of reference. [...] Anything the reader learned elsewhere and would now find contradicted in Bayle, would be true'. Bayle himself described the plan as 'worse than setting out to fight monsters. It's trying to wipe out the Hydra's heads: at the least it's trying to clean to Augean Stables'. The *Dictionary* appeared in December 1696 and was enlarged in 1702 before becoming 'the favorite reading matter of just about every literate European' (Grafton (1997, 194)). Grevenbroek, noting much the same problem with knowledge about the Khoi (see Chapter 3), wrote his letter a year earlier.

However, the vast majority of early modern Europeans that travelled to the Cape saw their horizon of expectations, based on book knowledge, confirmed, or at least interpreted the novel as an extension to the familiar opinion about the Khoi.⁶⁴ Consequently, the anthropologist Margaret Hodgen writes in *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1964) that, in opposing the civil European to the savage,

the accounts of Renaissance voyagers were almost unanimous. And how could they be otherwise? Sixteenth century theology and seventeenth-century rationalism, being what they were, gave little aid and comfort to a belief in the essential goodness of such examples of 'primitive', untutored humanity as were found in Africa and the Americas.⁶⁵

A decade of empirical evidence convinced Grevenbroek that the early modern network of knowledge about the Khoi was far from fact. In his letter, he returns to Christian dogma and ancient sources in an effort to bypass the 'rumours' and 'half-truths' that have come to prejudice the European impression of the Khoi. For Grevenbroek, the two discourses together provide a consistent worldview into which his rehabilitation of the Khoi can be incorporated. The key terms 'barbarus' and 'barbaritas' – which occur multiple times in the passages cited above – illustrate how Grevenbroek appropriates concepts that spring from ancient Greek and Roman discourse to appreciate the Khoi as Christian man.

A classical style Cape

A central issue in exploring uncharted territory is how to cope with unfamiliar phenomena. For early modern European society, this issue arose with particular urgency in the encounter with 'newly discovered' peoples. It was resolved by assessing otherness through the self, taken as the standard of what it meant to be cultured (civil): to speak a certain language, practice a particular faith, live a virtuous life, etc.

In Chapter 2, I showed how Grevenbroek assimilates the Khoi into the European frame of reference as Christian brethren. In this section, I maintain that in addition he not only describes the Cape and the Khoi in Latin but adapts Classical nomenclature to a local

⁶⁴ See Grafton (1992); Stagl (1995). Hodgen (1964, 354; 361-2) ponders: 'Why the persistent effort to clothe savagery with documentary significance? [...] The Church, with its distaste for the unconventional in marriage and funeral rites, not to mention the non-Christian in religion, may in this have exercised an overwhelming influence upon the explorers. Or it may be that, except for a few well-balanced minds, indelible memories of fantastic medieval ethnological lore made objective observations impossible'.

⁶⁵ Hodgen (1964, 361).

context and to the supposed Christian roots of the Khoi. Providing an ‘authentic’ alternative to the ‘half-truths’ that had come into existence since antiquity, he renegotiates the paternalistic discourse about the Khoi and their place between man and savage in the chain of being. In part, he does this by explaining how the meaning of ‘barbari’ in relation to non-European people has shifted since antiquity. The Khoi are ‘barbari’ not in the early modern sense of savages, but in the Classical sense of ‘foreign’ to the life and customs of the viewer.

‘Barbari’ is Grevenbroek’s word of choice to refer to native people in and outside of the Cape (he uses it 41 times in his letter). The Europeans are never called ‘barbari’ but most frequently ‘Europaei’ (28 times).⁶⁶ It is all too easy to interpret this opposition in the light of 21st century semantics. Indeed, Maria Boletsi and Christian Moser, in *Barbarism Revisited. New Perspectives on an Old Concept* (2015), observe that

[s]ince the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the rhetoric of ‘barbarism versus civilization’ has taken center stage in Western political and public rhetoric. [...] Barbarism reinforces the discourse of civilization by functioning as its negative offshoot and antipode.⁶⁷

They go on to write that the opposition differentiates ‘between a “good inside” and a “bad outside”, between a “we” that assures itself of its superior value by pitting itself against an “other” who is denied the achievement of civilization’.⁶⁸ The viewer is thus able to evaluate the separation between the self and the other both spatially and in terms of civility.

For the conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck, the spatial contrast has been a particularly powerful conceptual tool. In his paper ‘The Historical-Political Semantics of Asymmetric Counterconcepts’ (2004) he traces it back to Hellenistic times, where it separated the barbarian from the civil:

From the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C. the conceptual couple of Hellene and Barbarian became a universal figure of speech which included all of humanity through assignation to one of two spatially separated groups. This figure was asymmetrical [...] The name of one people – the Hellenes – became the counterconcept for all the rest, who were assembled under a collective name which was simply the negative of Hellene.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ I refer to the masculine plural Latin form; this, however, includes all derived forms, i.e. feminine forms as well as adjectives.

⁶⁷ Boletsi and Moser (2015, 11).

⁶⁸ Boletsi and Moser (2015, 14). See also Boletsi (2013).

⁶⁹ Koselleck (2004, 146).

According to Koselleck, in post-ancient times a temporal characterisation developed from the spatial definition of a barbarian. A barbarian was seen as someone still embodying customs that had no legitimacy in the present, thus living in a different time, or put out of time by his customs and habits. The theory of the Noahiden repopulation of the world lent new urgency to the ancient model and expanded it to a temporal-geographical scheme. On this basis, Ten Rhyne ranks the primitive lower than the civil because the former embodies an earlier stage.

The temporal and spatial division between self and other also underpin Grevenbroek's argument for the Khoi. Contrary to the dominant early modern understanding of the word, however, Grevenbroek saw in the Khoi clear signs of a virtuous lifestyle and of religion and law, which were major criteria in early modern ideas of civility. He argues that the Cape and its people are not aided by what his fellow Europeans may call civility. The conclusion to his letter should be interpreted in this key: 'the land is sufficient unto itself' ('*terram scias hanc suis contentam bonis*'). By virtue of their separation in time and space, the Khoi are more authentically Christian and not degraded humanity.⁷⁰

Given the temporal and spatial dimension of the concept of the barbaric and of the dominant judgment of the Khoi within a Christian framework, and given Grevenbroek's use of the term 'barbari' and the Christian argument for Khoi humanity, one is directed towards the connotations the term 'barbari' has for him. These connotations become clear from his use of the word amidst related terms. In frequency, 'barbarus' in Grevenbroek is followed by 'Afri' ('Africans', 34 counts), and 'gens' ('people', 'nation', 17 counts).⁷¹ At the time of the Roman Empire, 'Afer' (plural: 'Afri') was a common term that referred to something or someone of or connected with (the province) Africa. 'Gens' was a generic term that denoted a group of people that shared in a particular heritage, such as a nation or family.⁷² Grevenbroek seems to adopt both terms without negative connotations. Yet, notably, he uses 'Afri' and 'barbari' in conjunction with specifiers like 'hi' or 'noster' ('these', 'our'). For example, the opening of the letter first introduces its subject as 'Afris nostris' ('our

⁷⁰ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 291).

⁷¹ Other denominators all occur less than ten times. 'Cisalpini' (four times, 184; 240; 254; 270), 'Hottentotes' (three times, title page; 178; 282), 'transalpines' (two times, 256; 260), 'incola' (once, 230), 'inhabitantes' (once, 252), 'indigenae' (once, 212). Specific peoples named are: 'Magosi' (nine times, Farrington-Schapera (1933, 196; 220; 224; 236; 252; 258; 280; 282)); 'amaXhosa', 'Matimbi', 'Embi', 'Mapontes' and 'Makriggas' (all once, 222).

⁷² Glare *et alii* (2012 *sub voce* 'Afer'; *sub voce* 'gens').

Africans’). Notably, Grevenbroek exclusively uses specifiers, like pronomina in conjunction with a noun, for those living ‘in Promontorio Bonae Spei’ (‘on the Cape peninsula’). One could argue that such a use of pronomina is a merely convenient way to distinguish the Khoi from other ‘gentes Afric(an)ae’ living further afield. Yet, the semantics of the Latin pronouns, notably ‘nos’ and ‘noster’, seem to indicate otherwise.⁷³

In her paper ‘Roman Assimilations of the Other. *Humanitas* at Rome’ (1997), on encounters with ‘the Other’ in Roman antiquity, Susanna Braund finds it ‘striking’ that there is no widespread Latin word that defines the ‘us’ or ‘our’ of Roman culture. This, she surmises, ‘is presumably because it is the default, in the mouths of those who authored the texts that we read: it [*humanitas*] is ‘us’.’⁷⁴ In Classical Latin, the Mediterranean Sea is simply ‘Mare nostrum’, and the emperor Claudius (1st century), according to the historian Tacitus (*Annales* 11.24), talks about all Italy – all its ‘terrae’ and ‘gentes’ – coalescing in ‘nomen nostrum’, ‘[all bearing] our name’. Does a similarly inclusive understanding govern Grevenbroek’s use of the pronoun for Cape natives? Seeing that Grevenbroek is arguing for Khoi (Christian) civility, it would seem that ‘Afris nostris’ (‘our Africans’) share in what dominant 17th century discourse about the Khoi defined as ‘our’ European Christian customs. If this is indeed the case, what does this mean for Grevenbroek’s understanding of the term ‘barbari’?

The main focus of Grevenbroek’s letter is on describing, in detail, the customs and habits of the people introduced to the reader as ‘Afris nostris’ in the opening argument, and whom I refer to under the umbrella term Khoi.⁷⁵ As I showed in Chapter 1, already before Van Riebeeck an awareness developed among Europeans that the natives living on southern African shores were not one but in fact many peoples. Yet there existed little consensus as to how many there were, and there was even less agreement on how to tell them apart. In his 1668 treatise on the Khoi, Dapper mentions 11 different peoples by name, and Ten Rhyne, in 1686, mentions six. They have only two in common.⁷⁶ Grevenbroek, in turn, distinguishes between those living ‘in Promontorio Bonae Spei’ and those who live not on

⁷³ In Classical Latin, ‘hi’ ranks amongst the ‘most unmarked overt third person anaphors’ (Danckaert (2012, 223)).

⁷⁴ Braund (1997, 26).

⁷⁵ See A Note on Nomenclature.

⁷⁶ See Appendix 2.

the peninsula but further inland.⁷⁷ As noted in the previous section, despite making this distinction, Grevenbroek's ultimate aim was to show that 'virtue' existed among all Africans, including those of west Africa considered most savage, whom he also includes in the term 'Afris nostris'.

Although his letter concentrates on the natives living closest to the Castle, about whom most empirical evidence would have been available to him, Grevenbroek also dwells on the peoples further afield. As shown in the previous chapter, the three narratives at the letter's centre are geared to supporting Grevenbroek's argument that even the remotest people, most easily targeted by 'rumour', are virtuous. Grevenbroek collectively calls these people 'Magosi', and introduces them in the story of the wrecking of the *Stavenisse*:

Novissimè famâ accipiunt gentem, Promontorio nostro viciniorem, quotannis catervatim in Magosis (sic vocata regio in qua naufragi nostrates cum maxime hospitantur) [...] confluere.

Lastly they [the Dutch settlers] got rumour of a race, living near our Cape, who every year came in companies among the Magosi - this is the name of the people of the district in which our shipwrecked fellow-Europeans were principally entertained.⁷⁸

Grevenbroek mentions the 'Magosi' (always under this name) nine times, which is a significant number when weighed against the occurrence of other denominators. It is also significant that Grevenbroek only advances proper nouns for peoples that do not live on the Cape peninsula; for the 'natives at the Cape' he employs various denominators, many of which are more periphrastic and geographical.

Grevenbroek, being a learned man, must have been aware that there existed little consensus about distinguishing between the tribes at the Cape. In addition, making such distinctions could potentially contradict his argument that their seemingly diverging habits could be traced to a common Jewish root. Instead of distinguishing different peoples

⁷⁷ Grevenbroek recalls how the Magosi told him that 'four peoples were their neighbours, the Matimbi, Embi, Mapontes and Makriggas, the last being very warlike and living off plunder'. Farrington-Schapera (1933, 222): 'huic quattor populous confines esse, videlicet Matimbos, Embos, Mapontes, et Makriggas, hosque novissimos bellicosissimos, raptuque vivere'. Grevenbroek does not go into detail about these peoples. Dapper (1668) and Ten Rhyne (1686) include lengthier discussions about the Cape's tribes and peoples (see Farrington-Schapera (1933)).

⁷⁸ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 224). The Cape settlement did not have formal boundaries at the time. Farrington-Schapera (1933) identify the Magosi as the amaXhosa, a people that migrated into the Cape from the east, and that in Grevenbroek's time lived further inland from the Cape peninsula.

Grevenbroek uses 'barbari' to refer to the natives that he knows quite well, who inhabit the peninsula:

Notus mihi Barbarus Gauda dictus (quo nomine Latinis Dama venit)

A native I know goes by the name of Gauda (in Latin dama, or buck)⁷⁹

Occasionally, 'barbarus/-i' is spelled with a capital letter, but this does not seem to refer to a particular person or people. 'Barbari' can also refer to previously unknown people living further away, as in Grevenbroek's tale of a shipwrecked crew off the east coast of Africa in 1684:

Escendentem in terram inexploratam cum sociis, Barbari ex insidiis latebrisque inermibus assiliunt incautosque trucidant,

[But] as they disembarked upon this unknown shore, the natives sprang out of ambush, fell upon them and cut them down unarmed and off their guard.⁸⁰

In discussing Grevenbroek's use of 'barbari', it is important to note that the sole English translation of the letter does not reflect his terminology. Farrington variously renders 'barbari' as 'natives', 'savages' and 'Hottentots'. 'Afer' is translated as 'native', 'savage' or 'Hottentot', in addition to the literal 'African'. The three most common denominators in the translation are thus 'natives' (79 times), 'savages' (eight times), and 'Hottentots' (seven times), whilst Grevenbroek's most common term for the settlers ('Europaei') is duly translated as 'Europeans'.⁸¹ It seems that Farrington's terminology was

⁷⁹ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 204, translation TM). Italics as per the manuscript (MSB203).

⁸⁰ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 218). Cf. Godée Molsbergen (1932, III.87ff.) for the full account.

⁸¹ The seven instances of 'Hottentot' in Farrington-Schapera's English translation (1933) show the wide array of Latin captured in this term:

Lanam Hottentorum	literally: 'wool of the Hottentots'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 179): 'heads of the Hottentots adorned with [the] thick wool'.
nostrorum Barbarorum	'our natives'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 209): 'our Hottentots'.
Afrorum sedulam	'dedication of the Africans'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 227): 'the zealous aid of the Hottentots'.
ipsos	'they'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 239): 'the Hottentots'.
Afros	'Africans'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 241): 'the Hottentots'.
linguam Hottentoticam	'the Hottentot speech'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 283): 'the language of the Hottentots'.
Afris nostris	'our Africans'; Farrington-Schapera (1933, 287): 'our natives (i.e. the Hottentots).'

informed by a different rationale than Grevenbroek's – one expressive of the ethics of the time of translation. For readers of the 1930s, the word 'barbarian' had derogatory or pejorative connotations, which may have led Farrington to avoid it, despite the very different connotations of 'Barbarus' in Classical Greek and Latin.

Grevenbroek advances multiple other terms for 'hi Barbari in promontorio' but all of these occur less than ten times. For example, he refers to the Khoi as 'Cisalpini', 'those on this side of the mountain', a borrowing from the ancient Romans applied to the Cape context. For the Romans, the Alps served as a natural barrier between those living on 'this side' ['cis', i.e. the Roman side], and those living to their north – outside of the Italian peninsula. These peoples were collectively referred to by the Romans as the 'Transalpini', a term that Grevenbroek uses as well. This term makes clear that Grevenbroek views the Cape and its largely unexplored hinterlands in relation to the familiar, a familiar he notably puts at the Cape and not in Europe. The mountain range is in all likelihood the one of which the part closest to Cape Town is nowadays tellingly referred to as the Hottentots-Holland range (figure 3.1, next page). In the letter, Grevenbroek contrasts the 'Cisalpini Afri' with the 'remotiores Barbari', 'the more distant natives', living on the far side of the mountain:

Variosque bulbos [...] **Cisalpini Afri** reponunt: **remotiores** caveas **Barbari** effodiunt, in quibus solerter ad aliquot annos frumentum asservant.

The **natives on our side of the mountains** bestow [various bulbs] [in ditches and caves]. **The more distant natives** dig storerooms in the earth in which they skilfully preserve corn for many years.⁸²

It is worth stressing that Grevenbroek seems well-aware that a mountain ridge provides a natural barrier between people with diverging customs:

Potus **nobis vicinis** aqua at lacte, sed **extimae gentes** sitim insuper oxÿgulo, alica, zÿrho, ceriâ, aut cervisiâ levant

Our neighbours drink water and milk, but the **distant tribes** quench their thirst also with curds and various sorts of beer.⁸³

In the introduction, translator's note and footnotes, which accompany the text and translation, the Khoi are singularly referred to as 'Hottentots' – the word occurs 55 times in the footnotes. This is indicative of the discourse at the time of the translation and erases Grevenbroek's framing of the native landscape.

⁸² Farrington-Schapera (1933, 184).

⁸³ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 180).

Citimi proximè nos aderrantes, **quique montibus superfusi** vetriculariam vitam, avidamque abactores agunt, desertaque et humano cultu vacua sequuntur.

Our nearest neighbours, whose wanderings bring them quite close to us, and **those who are scattered over the mountains**, live in a hand-to-mouth existence as robbers and cattle-raiders.⁸⁴

From the above, we can draw two tentative conclusions. Firstly, although a spatial dimension aids Grevenbroek's distinction between the Magosi and the Khoi, it does not bear the evaluative connotations that Koselleck described for the ancient Greek use of 'barbaritas'. Grevenbroek's terminology does not invoke the contemporary temporal-evolutionary model that permitted a relative ranking of civility for different Africans in opposition to Europeans. His preferred terms, 'Barbari' and 'Afri', are generic and need a specifying pronomen or geographical denominator to denote a particular people. Secondly, passages comparing native tribes are relatively rare in Grevenbroek's letter, which

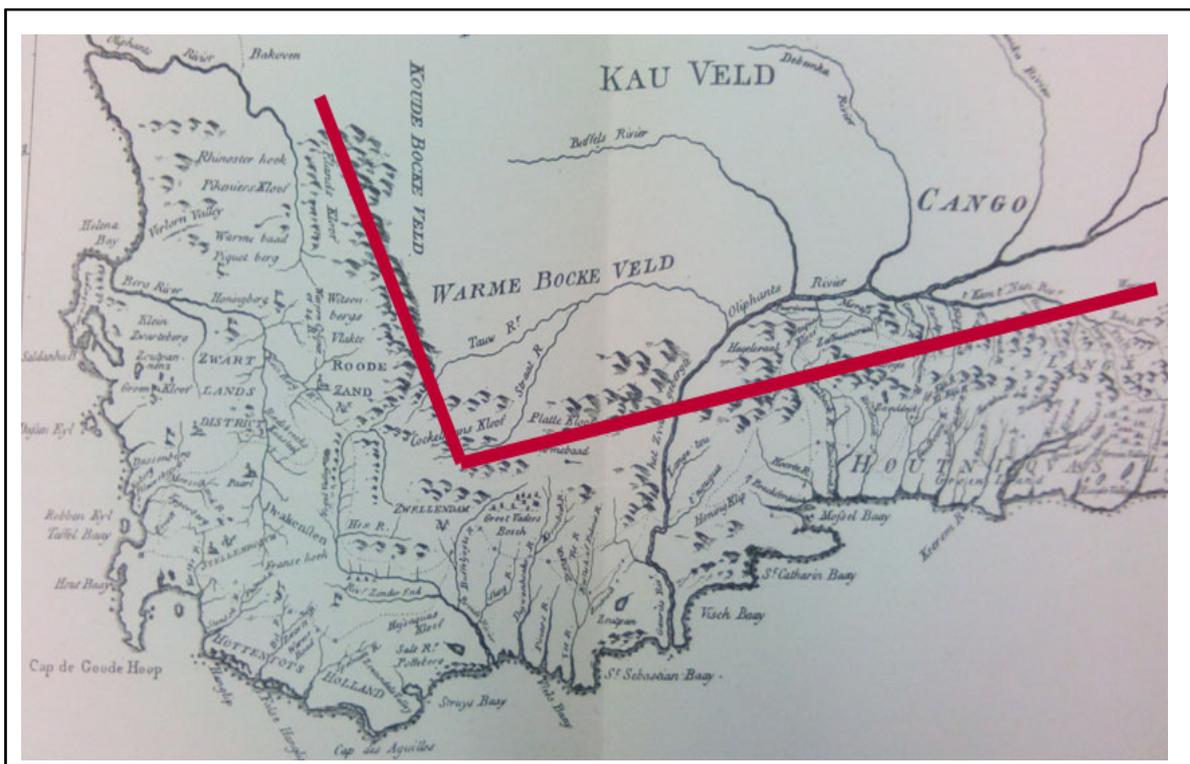


Figure 3.1 For Grevenbroek, the 'Promontorio Bonae Spei' (Cape of Good Hope peninsula) presumably extended to the Boland mountain range, indicated in red. The Hottentots-Holland area is just to the south-east of Stellenbosch – the village to which Grevenbroek retired – and some 45 kilometres from the Castle and modern-day Cape Town. The 'Transalpini' and Magosi dwelled on its far side. Map adapted from Sparrman, S. (1779), *Mappa Geographica*, [?].

⁸⁴ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 254).

concentrates on comparing Cape natives and settlers on ethical grounds and in relation to dominant ethnographical parameters of the time. His use of various terms, including 'barbari', for the same group of people appears to have no bearing on his central argument; it could be an aesthetic mannerism that, as Van Stekelenburg and Farrington argued (see previous section), showcases his eloquence or mastery of Latin.

For many ancient Roman authors, human beings existed in two forms, some living in the wild state and others, to their own advancement, in a cultured environment.⁸⁵ The Romans Latinised 'barbarus' (plural 'barbari') after the Ancient Greek 'barbaros', an onomatopoeia that supposedly resembled the sound of non-Greek languages to Greek ears. If we follow the concept through the Hellenistic world, we see that 'barbaros' (βάρβαρος) gained meaning as the antonym of 'politēs' (πολίτης), citizen (derived from 'polis' (πόλις), city-state).⁸⁶ Ancient writers have variously defined citizenship, among others in terms of education (παιδεία, 'paideia') and 'humanitas' ('humanity'), and interpreted such qualities as learned or acquired (as opposed to being innate), or have related it to the city (Athens, Rome) as opposed to the rustic countryside.⁸⁷ In what is arguably the term's widest generality, 'Οι Βάρβαροι ('hoy barbaroy', the barbarians) denoted 'all non-Greek-speaking peoples'.⁸⁸ Herodotus divided the world in those who speak Greek and the barbarians who do not.⁸⁹ The Greek-Roman philosopher Plutarch (circa 46-circa 120) claimed that those barbarians who were defeated by Alexander the Great 'would not have been civilised, had they not been vanquished'.⁹⁰ The Greek historian Strabo (+/- 0) portrayed the Greco-Roman empire as an island of civilisation in a barbarian world.⁹¹ For him, barbarism was relative, like Christianity in the early modern interpretation of foreign peoples' lives and manners: the further one proceeded to the edges of the world, away from the Mediterranean, the more barbaric its people.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 2, praefatio, 5; Cicero, *On moral Ends* 5.19.54.

⁸⁶ Greek and Roman conceptions of otherness are potentially enormous subjects which have been discussed quite extensively. See, for example, Rieks (1967, 14-23) for a useful overview of earlier scholarship on 'barbaritas'.

⁸⁷ Braund (1997, 21ff.) provides a useful overview of the term 'humanitas' in Classical literature.

⁸⁸ Liddell, Scott, and Jones (2002, *sub voce* βάρβαρος).

⁸⁹ Herodotus, *Histories* 4.16-32 (on the Scythians.) Herodotus reflects the vast spectrum of what was seen to constitute barbarity in ancient times. He scrutinises, for example, two 'barbarian' cultures on opposite ends of the spectrum of perceived civility, the Scythians and the Egyptians. Besides concluding that peoples from the east are more effeminate than those from the west, he does not impose any negative evaluations. Indeed, the objective of his *Historiai* was 'to record the astonishing achievements both of Greeks and non-Greek peoples'.

⁹⁰ Plutarch, *Moralia* 328F (on the Fortune or Virtue of Alexander).

⁹¹ Strabo, *Geography*, Conclusion.

The concept of the barbarian, then, distinguished one people from another both geographically and in terms of manners and customs, but was not part of a definite ranking of bestiality, common in many early modern evolutionary models.⁹² When Koselleck observes that, in ancient Greece, the barbarian was the asymmetrical counter-concept of the Hellene, he does not suggest that the void created by the absence of the qualities that define the self is filled by an alternative or definite set of ethnographic parameters. Indeed, the qualities attributed to the barbarians throughout antiquity were always changing: to the Greeks, being effeminate was barbarian, but Caesar described the barbaric Gallic nations as dangerous, masculine, warriors.⁹³ Similarly, Braund concludes that the Romans did not have a well-defined idea of ‘humanitas’, other than that it was the ‘Romanitas’ that distinguished Romans from non-Romans. Grevenbroek’s use of the term ‘barbarus’ has connotations of unpolishedness in relation to the (European) self, but does not imply a ‘negative offshoot and antipode’, or a ‘bad outside’ in opposition to a ‘good inside’ (Boletsi and Moser, cited above). In that sense, he adapts aspects also found in ancient uses of the term to a Cape context and to his argument for the Khoi, thereby defying the dominant 17th century understanding of the term in relation to a non-European people.

In one telling example, Grevenbroek uses the term to refer to fellow settlers who served as informants for his letter. Although he does not explain what their ‘barbara lingua’ exactly entails, the settlers are said to be of little wit (‘cum nihil intelligant’):

quippe multa elutriata in hebetes quarti imo quinti interpretis aures, et effutita audaci, temeraria et **barbara linguâ**, credentium se narrate apprimè intelligere, cum nihil intelligant,

Many statements have been filtered through the dull ears of four or five interpreters, and then poured forth in a bold, rash, and **barbarous style** by men who believed they understood what was told them, though they really understood nothing.⁹⁴

Here, Grevenbroek uses ‘barbara’ not to exclude the men from civilisation altogether, but to mock them as ignorant, in order to underline his main argument that the Khoi are more authentically Christian – and more civilised – than the settlers.

⁹² Rubel (2016, 43-53).

⁹³ Caesar, *The Gallic War* 1.1. The Roman author Tacitus (1st-2nd century), in his *Germania*, used the barbaric Germans as a mirror to his fellow Romans: they were surely wild, but at least they were courageous and chaste and practiced virtues that the Roman had forgotten – arguably an ancient antecedent to the early modern noble savage (see Chapter 2).

⁹⁴ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 298).

Elsewhere in the letter, Grevenbroek refers to the language of the Magosi as 'barbarorum':

[L]inguaeque barbarorum peritus, multa de origine, legibus, moribusque hujus gentis, eamque Magoses appellari, aliaque scitu digna, discit.

Being now skilled in the **native tongue** he learned much of their origin, laws, and customs, and, together with much else worth knowing, that they were called Magosi.⁹⁵

Farrington's translation of 'lingua barbarorum' as 'native tongue' is apt, as no negative judgment of the language is implied, only its belonging to 'the Other'. The Magosi language can be learned and is capable of conveying important information. Grevenbroek's comment implicitly repeats his argument for first-hand empirical evidence as a privileged foundation for knowledge of the other, who is placed outside the dominant European culture but not considered unhuman, unpolished or uncivilised.

This is underlined by Grevenbroek's account of the rescued sailors in one of the framed narratives, where 'Barbaris' is used in the early modern sense of savages only for that sense to be refuted:

Solus Laurentius Matthei F. vulgò Laurens Thijs, faber lignarius moribundus ab Afris, natione magis quam ratione Barbaris, reperitur [...]

Only Laurens, son of Matthew, commonly known as Laurens Thijs, a carpenter, survived to be discovered in a dying state by the Africans, savages in name but not in nature [...]⁹⁶

In translating 'Barbaris' as 'savages', Farrington indicates that this was how the Africans were commonly seen. In Grevenbroek's view, however, Laurens survived because the natives were not savages at all. Rather, they had preserved a more authentic Christian 'nature' ('ratione') than the settlers.

Elsewhere, too, Grevenbroek presents examples of Christian values that he finds in the habits of the so-called 'barbari'. For example, he expresses his amazement that natives, after a day's work at the Castle, share their wages (bread, tobacco, etc.) with the entire tribe. 'A Barbaris certare beneficiis Christiani discant', he comments: 'Let the Christians learn

⁹⁵ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 220). The 'he' is a Dutch boy who grew up with the natives. Farrington-Schapera (1933, 220) suggests that Grevenbroek derived much of his information from this boy.

⁹⁶ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 232).

from the natives to vie with another in well-doing'.⁹⁷ The contrast he makes with Christians is significant, as Christian (civil) man constituted the benchmark against which other peoples' civility was assessed. Grevenbroek here triggers reflection upon the set of norms and values that has come to define European life and customs. In the comparison of European jewellery with the Khoi hanging entrails around their neck to cure diseases (see Chapter 2), too, this set of norms and values is depicted as empty, un-pragmatic, and vain, with the barbari showing themselves to be truer Christians.

In another example, Grevenbroek tells of a European boy brought up in a native tribe after losing track of his friends. The tribal King's son set the boy up for punishment, but Grevenbroek reports that the king found out about his son's wickedness. His conclusion again engages contemporary discourse about the Khoi only to reverse it:

'Alteri non faciendum quod sibi factum nolit. Adoptatitium hunc filium fraterno amore, omnibus officiis, studio, humanitate benevolentiaque sibi complectendum discat'. [...] Barbarus nomine [dixit], sed re multis Christianis humanior.

*'Do not do to others what you would not they should do to you. Keep the laws of hospitality inviolate. Learn to regard this adopted son of mine with a brotherly love, and treat him with all duty, zeal, kindness and goodwill'. [...] [Said] He, who was in name a savage but in fact more humane than many Christians.'*⁹⁸

Grevenbroek indicates that humane judgment is something not typically expected from 'barbari' in the early modern sense of the word, and explicitly states that the tribal King is 'humanior' ('more humane') than their Christian assessors. In the Cape context Grevenbroek endows the Roman term in reference of the self, 'humanitas', with Christian connotations: adopted children should be treated 'with brotherly love' ('fraterno amore'). Through the empirical evidence of the story of the humane King who endorses Christian values, Grevenbroek argues that to describe the Khoi as 'barbarus' in the early modern sense is to deny their apparent virtue. Thus, he not only re-interprets and re-assesses Khoi culture, but also turns the European benchmark for assessing the seemingly non-Christian into a measure of the Europeans themselves, to which the Cape settlers cannot live up.

This example also illustrates that Grevenbroek's concept of 'barbarus' is consistent with the spatial dimension that Koselleck associates with its use in Classical Greek times, as

⁹⁷ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 272).

⁹⁸ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 220).

well as with the temporal dimension characteristic of its post-antique use: the Khoi are located at a physical distance from European culture, and have been so for considerable time. Yet, in contrast with what the dominant discourse of Grevenbroek's time about the Khoi suggested, to him this is a good thing, as it means that the Khoi have preserved the Christian roots more authentically and purely.

As in the concept of 'barbarus', Classical heritage and a Christian understanding also converge in Grevenbroek's use of the term 'virtus'. In the previous chapter, I already showed how the letters of the Stoic philosopher Seneca occupy a central place in Grevenbroek's framing of his letter. The following passage from one of the three framed narratives discussed in Chapter 2 allows for an illustration of the way in which Grevenbroek's view of society engages a Stoic understanding of 'virtus': 'virtue can exist among savages of any sort, even the most rude, and in the midst of this wild race of men' ('tradam qualiscunque inter Barbaros maximè inconditos, et agreste hoc hominum genus, possit esse virtus').⁹⁹ The final word in the Latin is highlighted by its position: 'virtus'. Originally bearing on male ('vir') qualities in early Roman times, 'virtus' became a key term in Stoic doctrine in the first century. Within the cosmos (the world around mankind), virtue was a faculty that had been bestowed upon the human species, just as animals, in their turn, were equipped with the instincts necessary to their survival. By making the word 'virtus' a defining trait of 'barbaros maxime inconditos', Grevenbroek underlines his point that the Khoi, though seemingly 'the rudest savages', are not beasts but men. In the terms of Seneca's philosophy, this put the Khoi on a par with the European settlers in terms of their place in the cosmos.

In reading Seneca's famous letter on slavery (47), the modern reader is surprised to find that Stoic philosophy had no problem with it from an ethical point of view. In his paper 'Humanitas: Romans and Non-Romans' (1993), Paul Veyne maintains that the Stoics were aware that 'barbarians and slaves were two-legged creatures without feathers who belonged to the human race'.¹⁰⁰ Barbarians, like slaves, are no less human than the people in other social classes, for all are driven by an innate virtue. In the famous simile of the stone arch, Seneca articulates his argument for the commonality of humankind: the arch

⁹⁹ Farrington-Schaper (1933, 230).

¹⁰⁰ Veyne (1993, 346).

would collapse if the stones did not mutually support each other.¹⁰¹ This image makes clear that mankind is one, and must act for the benefit of all, because, as Veyne puts it, virtue alone 'made possible the mode of existence that natural determinism had foreseen for the human species'.¹⁰² In Grevenbroek's letter, Christianity and Stoic philosophy outline a similar model for mankind: the Khoi chiefs, the natives who saved Laurens, and ultimately also the settlers all have engrained in them a tendency to act virtuously and humane.

The Stoics remarked (as did many early modern Europeans) that mankind holds a different place in the cosmos from animals, and they also observed that individuals have unequal capacities. Already in antiquity, the problem was to decide which was more important: mankind's common nature or the differences? In early modern times, newly discovered peoples lent renewed urgency to these questions. As I argued in Chapters 1 and 2, the issue of how to deal with a growing number of greatly divergent peoples found expression in the hierarchical separation of heavenly creatures, men, animals and dead matter in the chain of being, and in the inclusion of additional tiers between men and animals.

Although Grevenbroek concedes that there are differences in customs between the cis- and transalpines, like Seneca with his image of the stone arch, he emphasises similarity over difference. According to Michel Foucault, similarity rather than difference was the principal mode of organisation in early modern Europe; in his study *Les Mots et les Choses* (*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*) (1966), he maintains that starting in the 16th century, principles of analogy allowed researchers to uncover 'underlying' equivalences and resemblances between a familiar and an unfamiliar subject.¹⁰³ Indeed, analogies were necessary devices for understanding 'pagan' peoples, who were positioned as having spent extended periods of time outside Ethiopia and away from the Christian centre of the world. As I explained above, the possibility of assimilating the pagan to the Christian was assumed through the analogy with the ancients. Acosta exemplifies this when he summarises his impression of the peoples of the New World:

¹⁰¹ *Epistles* 95.52-53.

¹⁰² Veyne (1993, 348).

¹⁰³ Foucault (1966, Chapter 3).

And if any one wonder at some fashions and customs of the Indies, and will scorn them as fooles or abhorre them as devilish and inhumane people, let him remember that the same things, yea worse, have been seen among the Greeks and the Romans, who commanded the whole world[.]¹⁰⁴

Both Acosta and Grevenbroek base their appreciative judgment of foreign peoples on the example of the ancients, who not only ruled the world, but also, in the case of the Romans, were the one great pagan people that came to embrace Christianity.

Grevenbroek's main concern was with establishing the Christian lineage of the Khoi, which ensured their inclusion in the Godly 'virtus'. The more practical consequences of his observations about the order of man he leaves for others to discuss. Thus, when he has made his point about the native languages having links to Hebrew, he does not engage in an exhaustive discussion of the native languages, but moves to another topic:

[in Magosis quam hic apud Afros nostros] discrimen pateat, liceatque aliquando (si libet) alteri cuidam Bochardo, exoticarum linguarum perito, eorundem originem indigare, videlicet.

The difference between the [Magosi and our Africans] will be obvious, and we may, if you please, leave to some future Bochar, skilled in strange tongues, the task of tracing out their origin.¹⁰⁵

Grevenbroek, like the Stoics and many Church fathers before him, provides an outline of what he believes to be the organising principles of mankind, including Khoi, settlers, and indeed any people in the world. His concern was, in Stoic terms, with the order of the cosmos – in Veyne's words, 'the natural theatre of all peoples, Greek or barbarians' – in which his combined Christian and ancient frameworks allowed him to also include the Khoi.¹⁰⁶ Grevenbroek's 'barbarus' embodies Classical connotations: the Khoi may seem foreign to the European settlers but they are no less human. Although Christian and ancient thought may appear as separate fields in the majority of 21st century scholarship, for Grevenbroek they were part of a continuous history of Christianity, together providing the alpha and omega in interpreting the world, and the place of the Khoi in it.

Exposing 'Hottentot'

I cannot close my discussion of Grevenbroek's nomenclature for the Khoi without elaborating on that contested word encountered so often in the works of his

¹⁰⁴ Acosta (1590, II.306), quoted from Ryan (1981, 150).

¹⁰⁵ Farrington-Schaperera (1933, 280).

¹⁰⁶ Veyne (1993, 349).

contemporaries, which also features in the title of the letter: the Cape natives, ‘commonly called Hottentots’ (‘Vulgo Hottentotten nuncupatae’). The term ‘Hottentot’ has its origins the 16th century and reflects the perceived inferior position of the Khoi race: it is believed to be an onomatopoeia for the clucking of a brood hen.¹⁰⁷ In the letter proper, Grevenbroek only uses the word twice. I have argued elsewhere that the title page was added by someone other than Grevenbroek and that the title itself is misleading, insofar as the use of a word from the dominant discourse about the Khoi creates false expectations about the letter’s tone and aim.¹⁰⁸ The two occurrences of the word ‘Hottentot’ in the letter proper therefore stand out and warrant further analysis. In both cases, it appears that Grevenbroek plays on the term’s animalistic connotations to mock the Dutch. Implicitly, he is able to show that the word reflects no knowledge of the Khoi, and he suggests that the ‘echo chamber of discourse’ has filled the term with animalist half-truths. Grevenbroek exposes the emptiness of the word ‘Hottentot’ and of much early modern discourse about the Khoi, thereby underlining his argument for a revised framework to appreciate their humanity.

The first instance of the word occurs several pages into the letter, when Grevenbroek has already introduced the Cape natives to the reader as ‘Afri’ (‘Africans’), ‘Barbari’ (‘natives’), and ‘qui Promontorio nostro proximi’ (‘those who live closest to this peninsula’). So far, Grevenbroek has praised qualities of the Khoi. Their eyesight, for example, he has claimed to exceed that of ‘that Sicilian, who, if we may believe Strabo [an ancient Greek geographer and historian, circa 0], did from the Lilybaean promontory count the vessels of the Carthaginian fleet’. He next turns to Khoi feeding habits, writing:

Lanam quam Hottentorum ovibus spissam natura negavit, hanc (res miratu digna!) pro capillitio eis datam, ovesque musimones, aut capillatas dicerem: quarum femura docto quorundam delicatulum nostratium summique fastidii palato, non aequae ac Europaeorum vervecum armi, salivam detestabili fastu movent.¹⁰⁹

Dense wool, like that [hair] of the Hottentots, nature denies to the sheep, which (it’s worthy of marvel!) they [the Hottentots] have been gifted with for hair, and the sheep I should call wild sheep, or hairy sheep: sheep thighs move the saliva on the learned palate of our countrymen because of the

¹⁰⁷ See my remarks about the animalisation of the Khoi and their ‘natural state’ in Chapter 1.

¹⁰⁸ Maas (2017). It is important to reiterate here that Grevenbroek’s use of the term ‘Hottentot’ is more restricted than Farrington-Schaper’s translation (1933) of his letter suggests.

¹⁰⁹ The Roman author Pliny (1st century) in his *Natural History* (8.199) refers to a unique and particularly hairy type of sheep or mountain goat as ‘musmo’.

loathsome disapproval of some delicacies and [items] of the highest taste, that are not quite like the European beef shoulders.¹¹⁰

In comparison to surrounding passages, the Latin is confused. The single sentence covers two topics – Khoi hair and Khoi taste – by relying on one term of comparison: sheep. Indeed, the animalisation of the Khoi in the opening clause, which compares their hair with sheep’s wool, echoes through the remainder of the sentence and invokes the image of the uncouth, wild, hairy native that dominated early modern thinking about the Khoi.¹¹¹ In fact, Grevenbroek claims that Khoi hair is frizzier than the sheep’s, before transferring the image of hairiness and uncivility back onto the sheep, which he calls wild (‘musimones’) and hairy (‘capillatas’). One could argue that Grevenbroek needs the reference to what is known (sheep) to describe the unknown (Khoi hair) to a presumed European audience, yet the animalisation is essential to the mockery that follows.

In the next clause, Grevenbroek transitions to discussing food. The relative pronoun ‘quarum’ draws in the sheep and the image of their hairiness. Indeed, the assertion that the sheep are hairy and uncouth now creates a meaningful contrast: the mutton (‘quarum femura’) is opposed with the ‘learned palate of our countrymen’ (‘nostratium [...] docto [...] palato’). When a European is exposed to mutton, saliva does not flow in appreciation of it, but, it is implied, in disapproval, which Grevenbroek qualifies as ‘loathsome’. Here, it becomes clear that the passage is in fact not a criticism of Khoi habits but of Europeans’ acquired taste and lack of appreciation for native food. Khoi food is disapproved of (‘detestabili’) by the Europeans but this disapproval in itself is considered loathsome (‘fastu’), as items such as sheep’s thighs are ‘delicacies and items of the highest taste’ (‘quorundam delicatulum nostratium summique fastidii’). Note that in the text the ‘docto ... palato’ ‘embraces’ the morsels: a learned European palate, Grevenbroek seems to imply, should appreciate such delicacies. Yet, the settlers apparently reject the mutton because it does not taste like beef shoulder. Grevenbroek thus mocks the settlers by playing with a key

¹¹⁰ Farrington-Schaper (1933, 178). Translation TM. Farrington’s translation renders the Latin quite freely: ‘It is a notable fact that nature has adorned the heads of the Hottentots with the thick wool she has denied to their sheep. The sheep I should describe as *musimones*, or hairy. A leg of the local mutton does not, owing to their hateful gourmandise, tempt the nice palate of our dainty countrymen so powerfully as a shoulder of European lamb.’ Also, the manuscript has ‘Hottentorum’ for ‘Hottentorum’. Farrington (1933, 169) asserts that he has purged the text of errors, but the the 17th century Dutch *Hottento* is the older (and original) form of *Hottentot*. Cf. Den Besten (2007, 45n49).

¹¹¹ Herodotus (*Histories* 3.114; 7.69-70), cited above, also referred to the western Ethiopians as woolly-haired.

image in the European animalisation of the Khoi, which is also part of the name 'Hottentots'. An opposition of the 'Europaei' with 'Barbari', for example, would not have had the desired effect, as it is the term Hottentot that embodies the animalist imagery and prejudices ('half-truths') that Grevenbroek seeks to challenge.

At this point, I want to return to the letter's comparison of European jewellery with the sheep's intestines hung around Khoi necks. There, too, the Khoi are, seemingly conventionally, brought together with animality (through the mention of sheep), only to enable Grevenbroek to show up the Europeans, who fail to acknowledge that the intestines are part of Khoi medicine, while the Khoi astutely note that European jewellery serves no such practical purpose. In this way, Grevenbroek makes clear that Europeans interpret such 'empty luxury' (vanity) as a sign of civility, whilst in fact it is less authentic (and less Christian) than the Khoi custom, which the Europeans reject, blinded by a wrongful sense of superiority.

Yet, Grevenbroek's engagement with the Hottentot image is more than a way to mock European attitudes. By explicitly alluding to the animalist grounding of the term, he breaks open the stereotype, exposing it to scrutiny and renegotiation. In his documentary film *Representation and the Media* (2005), Stuart Hall observes that a stereotype entails closure in representation: '[a stereotype] naturalizes the representation to the point where you cannot see that anybody ever produced it'.¹¹² Hall points out that one purpose of language is to (re)establish meaning through (re)interpretation, thus allowing for meaningful knowledge production about the world around us. However, the effect of ideology, which Hall describes as 'power that intervenes in language', is 'to close language, to close meaning, to stop the flow'.¹¹³ Ideology freezes the world and how we see it represented. Ideology precribes an image rather than producing knowledge. For Hall, stereotyping is 'an attempt to fix' through such an image. A stereotype, then, is 'empty' because knowledge production has ceased and because it contains no inherent knowledge of the subject that it defines. In Grevenbroek's time, 'Hottentots' embodied such a stereotype, sustained by the power of the ideology of the superior European self.

The possibilities to contest a stereotype are few. According to Hall, there is 'a problem in attempts to *reverse* stereotypes' by representing the negative group in a more

¹¹² Hall (2005, 21).

¹¹³ Hall (2005, 19).

positive way, by negating, as it were, the negative.¹¹⁴ Besides the obvious stalemate that oppositional discourse can lead to, there is also the issue that the positive image exists by virtue of the negative one, and as such, is equally 'empty' as the negative stereotype.¹¹⁵ For Hall, the best way to contest a stereotype is 'to occupy the very terrain which has been saturated by fixed and close representation and to try to use the stereotypes and turn the stereotypes in a sense against themselves'.¹¹⁶ By opening up the practice of representation, the emptiness of the image comes to the fore, and the stereotype can be made to turn against itself.

In his letter, Grevenbroek engages the stereotype to precisely this epistemological effect. Like many contemporaries, he uses the stereotype, or 'half-truth that has never been haunted to transparency', in the animalist context that has saturated it. Yet, he draws attention to the term's connotations and the knowledge that it seemingly imparts on the subject by using it for the first time in his letter in this particular context, moreover transferring notions of beastliness and uncivility back from the Khoi to their beasts and the food, and ultimately to the European settlers. This transfer of imagery exposes the emptiness of the term 'Hottentot', which is shown not to generate any knowledge or meaningful understanding of the Khoi – quite the opposite. Throughout the letter, Grevenbroek tries to revivify or unfix the image of the Khoi by arguing for their humanity. He moves away from the early modern ideological discourse about the Khoi that has empowered a stereotypical image, showcasing a thorough understanding of the stereotype's ideological power, and creates a new image by strategically drawing on Christian and Classical frameworks.

The second instance of 'Hottentot' in the letter also serves this aim. Again, Grevenbroek invokes an archetypal animalist connotation of the term by building on the premise it reflects the guttural sounds and clicks in the Khoi languages, which seemed incomprehensible to European ears, warranting a ranking of its speakers with the beasts, or between beasts and man. In the passage in question, Grevenbroek advances 'Hottentot' in

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, emphasis in text.

¹¹⁵ Rosello (1998, 26) similarly argues that it is 'useless and even dangerous' to assume that 'the opposition between positive images and negative images can function equivalently to the opposition between stereotypes and more truthful representations'.

¹¹⁶ Hall (2005, 21).

an opposition with the settlers in order to mock the European mentality and once more expose the term's emptiness:

Mea sententia **nostrates** hic citius expeditiusque **Hottentoticam** addiscent **linguam**, quam **Barbari Belgico** commodè loqui **sermone** scient: more proh dedecus! praepostero, cum merito Belgas non latere deberet, quam firmum sit unionis vinculum linguae commercium, illudque esse ingens adminiculum populis in officio et quiete continendis: exemplo veterum Romanorum in suis provinciis, et cum maximè Hispanorum Lusitanorumque in utraque tam orientali quam occidentali India probatissimo; sed pudet scribere nostros plurimum ad opes et luxuriam magis, quam ad commodum utilitatemque publicam spectare, qui quum merito omnes curas, vigiliis cogitationesque suas in Provinciae hujus salute configerent[.]

In my opinion the **Dutch** here will more quickly and expeditiously learn the **language of the Hottentots**, than the **natives** will acquire a good speaking **knowledge of Dutch**. This, alas, is the reverse of what ought to obtain. The Dutch ought to be aware how firm a bond of union a common language is, and how powerful a means it is of keeping peoples loyal and peaceful. We have the authoritative precedent of the ancient Romans, and more especially of the Spaniards and Portuguese in the Indias, east and west. But, I am ashamed to say, our countrymen for the most part pay more heed to gain-getting and soft living than to the public advantage and good. They ought to devote all their cares, all their thoughts, all their working hours to the well-being of this province[.]¹¹⁷

As in the passage on Khoi hair and food, the paragraph on language consists of a single Latin sentence, but here the ethnographic topic at stake is communicated immediately, as well as Grevenbroek's position. In the first part of the sentence, 'nostrates' ('the Dutch', literally: 'our people') is contrasted with 'Hottentoticam [...] linguam' ('the language of the Hottentots', literally: 'the Hottentot(ic) language'). In the second part of the sentence the two peoples to be compared ('barbari' and the settlers that speak the 'belgico [...] sermone' ('the Netherdutch language') are repeated in a chiasmus. This inverted parallelism is the first step in the mockery that follows: by 1695, history has already shown that the Khoi sooner acquire a speaking knowledge of Dutch than the other way around, but Grevenbroek claims that the opposite will be the case. Next, Grevenbroek provides examples from history in which the native population learned the settler's language and was thereby kept peacefully in its place ('in officio et quiete'). Grevenbroek ranks the Dutch among the authoritative Romans and the successful Spanish and Portuguese colonisers. Yet there is one fundamental difference between the Dutch and their predecessors, Grevenbroek suggests: the Dutch are too focused on making 'a quick buck' for themselves to create a 'bond of union' through language with the natives. As a consequence of this attitude, the Dutch will

¹¹⁷ Farrington-Schapera (1933, 282).

find themselves speaking 'Hottentotic' before the natives will master the 'civil' language. The truthfulness of his claim is beside the point: what Grevenbroek wants to convey is that the Dutch approach to colonisation will see them assimilated into what they consider the negation of their civility.

The English translation, I want to contend, underplays Grevenbroek's mockery. Farrington, quoted above, interprets the passage as entailing a criticism of Dutch ignorance and gain-getting, but as still keeping Grevenbroek on the side of the Dutch subjugation of the Khoi. Significantly, in the Latin text, 'nostrates' and 'Belgico sermone' embrace the 'Hottentoticam linguam' of the 'barbari'. One could argue that Grevenbroek thus underlines the urgency of a Dutch effort to make the Khoi learn Dutch, which would aid the settlement's success as a refreshment station. Yet, Grevenbroek is not concerned with the comparative difficulty of the languages or the language-learning abilities of the Dutch or the natives and he does not seek to rank the languages with respect to their degree of civility, as would be the aim of most ethnographic treatises of his time. Also, his concern is not with the VOC's success. The Khoi, he argues in his letter, are more authentically Christian than the Dutch settlers, and their language must therefore also be more authentically Christian than the Dutch language – this he proves elsewhere through correspondences with Hebrew, as I discussed in Chapter 2. Consequently, against the 'Hottentot' stereotype, it will not harm the Dutch if they adopt the Khoi language, as it would bring them closer to their Christian roots. The language and this Christian insight is what the Dutch ought to 'devote all their cares, all their thoughts, all their working hours to'. Indeed, this would be to the benefit of the province as a whole ('Provinciae hujus salutate').

Grevenbroek needs the stereotyped term to expose the ignorance; 'Hottentot' is literally a beastly onomatopoeia. He shows that the term 'Hottentot' is short-sighted insofar as it conveys no actual knowledge of the Khoi language, or of the course of history. He exploits this ignorance by turning around a fact from recent history: it has already been proven that the Khoi have mastered the Dutch language. Grevenbroek reopens the framing of the Khoi by implicitly bringing to the fore the Christian roots of their language. The chiasmus and Grevenbroek's play on historical ignorance show the stereotype to be 'empty', and point out its ideological power. To adopt Hall's terminology, Grevenbroek turns the 'Hottentot' stereotype against itself. This allows him to refill the term from a Christian

understanding of the history of the world and evolution of the world's peoples, and renegotiate its connotations.

Both occurrences of the word 'Hottentot', then, turn the term's ideological power against the 'echo chamber of the discourse of the Cape' it is an icon of. An educated man like Grevenbroek could not let the word go unmentioned in a treatise that seeks to break with 'half-truths that were never haunted to transparency'. Without providing a definition or direct critique of the term 'Hottentot' (or any other term) and without fleshing out the precise 'rumours' or 'half-truths' about the Cape he is challenging, he illustrates that the term contains no inherent knowledge of the topic under discussion by advancing it in the contexts it supposedly sprang from: those of animalist sounds and beastly feeding habits. Thus relying on empirical evidence, a Christian framework, and ancient worldviews, Grevenbroek in his letter renegotiates the dominant early modern European image of the Khoi. He reinterprets the 'Hottentot' as an authentic 'barbarus' and therefore embodies a leap forward in the Revolution of Knowledge.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that Grevenbroek's letter presents a significant break with the half-truths he seeks to counter and, as such, with the writings of centuries of European travellers and philosophers who reported on civilisation in the southern hemisphere. Firstly, Grevenbroek benefited from a uniquely long posting at the Cape as secretary to the Council of Policy. He could put his trust in a decade's worth of empirical observation, which convinced him that his experiences with the Khoi *in situ* did not line up with much of the extant body of literature about them. His personal understanding of the Khoi is the starting point for his claim in the letter's introduction that his 'rash Muse was swept away by youthful prejudices about the Khoi'.

Being a learned man, it is not surprising that Grevenbroek, for his reinterpretation of the Khoi as having virtue, relies not only on empirical observation but also on Classical sources and Christian dogma. The idea of a common origin of mankind provided a crucial foundation for Grevenbroek's argument for Khoi humanity, allowing him to argue that the Khoi have preserved a purer and more authentic Christianity than the settlers.

In this chapter I have shown that there is an epistemological dimension to Grevenbroek's literary play and intertextuality with the Classics that belies their

interpretation as mere 'pedantic' stylistic mannerisms. Most notably, Grevenbroek strategically renegotiates aspects from Classical frameworks designed to deal with otherness to the Cape circumstance. Although 'barbaric' in Grevenbroek's adopted Classical sense bears connotations of being unpolished, foreign and outside the 'civil' self of the judging society, this does not exclude the Khoi from the rank of man. Grevenbroek's recourse to the Classical 'barbarus' allows him to offer a fundamentally different interpretation of the Khoi from major authors of his time such as Ten Rhyne, Dapper and Kolb.

The two occurrences of the term 'Hottentot' in the letter make apparent Grevenbroek's genuine concern with producing truthful knowledge about the Khoi. He does not deny or oppose stereotypes directly, but through examples makes apparent that 'rumours' cannot be traced to their source, carry no inherent knowledge about the topic, and are sustained only by the ideological power of the 'echo chamber' about the Cape. By employing the stereotypes and turning them against themselves, Grevenbroek exposes their 'emptiness', thus problematising the very process by which the European framing of the Khoi had taken shape. His ancient and Christian frameworks enable him to meaningfully renegotiate the image of the Khoi. The dominant frameworks of the time are thus not replaced but centuries of re-interpretation of Classical and Christian texts is bypassed. In this way, Grevenbroek's letter represents a major step forward in the Revolution of Knowledge. He may revert to the Christian and ancient library, but uses its knowledge, in combination with his personally acquired, empirical observation, to develop a new image of the Khoi that challenges the discourse of his time from an epistemological concern with the nature of knowledge. It makes apparent the conflict between those who sought to continue to interpret the world in the line of tradition and those who championed empirical research that would continue until well into the 18th century. In the next chapter, I discuss the (re)interpretation of Grevenbroek's letter and life in the postcolonial context of the 21st century in Dan Sleight's Afrikaans historical novel *Eilande* (2002) which was published in English as *Islands* (2004).