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OFFICERS OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY, THEIR NETWORKS, AND THEIR PERSONAL MEMORIES OF DUTCH BRAZIL*

Michiel van Groesen

Between 1630 and 1654, when the Dutch West India Company controlled Pernambuco and several adjacent provinces of northeastern Brazil, thousands of European soldiers were sent to the colony. Military personnel accounted for just under half of Dutch Brazil's population, and while most of the non-Company men, women, and children lived in or around Recife, the armed forces faced the Portuguese enemy as far north as Maranhão and as far south as Salvador de Bahia. Their colourful impressions of life in the colony helped to shape Europe's image of colonial Brazil in the seventeenth century. Since the West India Company recruited its personnel not only from the United Provinces, but also from the Holy Roman Empire, the Southern Netherlands, Scandinavia, and England, soldiers' memories of Dutch Brazil reached a large audience in the Old World. The commercial incentives of publishers ensured the wider dissemination of some of their observations. This article will analyse how officers of the West India Company communicated their personal memories of Dutch Brazil, and how the means of distributing knowledge influenced early modern Europe's impressions of Brazil.¹

* This article was written with the aid of the Dr. Ernst Crone Research Fellowship of the National Maritime Museum Amsterdam, which I held in the academic year 2007–2008.

¹ Although the literature on Dutch Brazil is abundant, there are few studies which focus on the military personnel of the Company: Wiznitzer A., "Jewish soldiers in Dutch Brazil (1630–1654)", *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 46, 1 (1956) 40–50; and Jacobs J., "Soldaten van de Compagnie: het militair personeel van de West-Indische Compagnie in Nieuw Nederland", in Ebben M.A. – Wagenaar F.P. (eds.), *De cirkel doorbroken: met nieuwe ideeën terug naar de bronnen: opstellen over de Republiek* (Leiden: 2006) 131–146, which relies partly on material from Dutch Brazil. For the Luso-Brazilian point of view, see: Cabral de Mello E., *Olinda restaurada: guerra e açúcar no nordeste, 1630–1654* (São Paulo: 1975). The emphasis in this article is on officers rather than on common soldiers for practical reasons. Since they could read and write, officers produced most of the representations of Dutch Brazil that have come down to us.

In *The Old World and the New*, John Elliott called it 'a piece of unusual good fortune that the conquest of Mexico should have thrown up two soldier-chroniclers as shrewd in their observation and as vivid in their powers of description as [Hernán] Cortés and Bernal Díaz'.² Although few of the impressions of Dutch Brazil match the narratives of the sixteenth-century conquistadors for vividness and pure bewilderment at what the New World had to offer, their number and variety allow for a more systematic understanding of soldiers' representations of an American colony. Mattheus van den Broeck from Dordrecht, for example, kept a journal describing the last eighteen months of his nine years' service in Brazil. His narrative was edited and published in 1651 in Amsterdam. Corporal Peter Hansen Hajstrup also wrote a personal account but his was intended to be read only by his closest relatives. His *Memorial und Jurenal* also includes information on his children, and his later career as a schoolmaster in Flensburg. Another officer who later turned schoolmaster, the ensign Johann Philipp Mulheiser from the Palatinate town of Bergzabern, took his *album amicorum* to Brazil. This album is now a unique source for the social network of a military officer. And finally both Lieutenant Johan Bettinck, from the Gelderland garrison town of Doesburg, and Matthias van Ceulen, one of the nineteen directors of the West India Company who commanded Dutch troops in Brazil, had an inventory made of their private possessions, including their Brazilian memorabilia. These five sources, complemented by the more official narrative of Johan Nieuhof, published after his death in 1682, permit a broad analysis of how personal memories of Brazil were presented to those who had remained at home.

Officers in Brazil: Daily Life

After an Atlantic crossing which normally lasted between seven and nine weeks, the officers got their first glimpse of Brazil before the coast of Pernambuco. The majority must have been extremely relieved when they set foot on the island of Itamaracá or the Brazilian mainland. It would have been the first oceanic voyage for most officers, and tales of horror routinely circulated. Even many years later – when monumental retrospective publications like his dominated the European book

² Elliott J.H., *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: 1970) 19.

market – Johan Nieuhof still remembered hearing the story of a Portuguese vessel south of the equator which had floated for six weeks after the crew had died of starvation.³ Once in Brazil the soldiers found that the sea was never far away as the colony rarely extended more than five miles inland. After arriving in late 1639, Johann Philipp Mulheiser first spent several months offshore. He fought the Habsburg armada of Dom Fernão de Mascarenhas, Count of Torre in January 1640, and captured Spanish slave carriers in the autumn. In periods of Dutch expansion, the troops covered longer distances by sea: the December 1633 expedition to Rio Grande which made the reputation of Matthias van Ceulen, was principally a naval affair. Van Ceulen and his soldiers travelled by boat to the fortress *Tres Reyes* – soon to be renamed Fort Ceulen in honour of the victorious commander – and only went ashore when they were within touching distance of the Portuguese stronghold.⁴

But the officers spent most of their time in Brazil on land. In times of relative quiet they patrolled the area around Recife and the main sugar estates, while being quartered in one of the forts around the city. Here they made the long days bearable by drinking heavily, sometimes to the point where tensions between the men boiled over, although not all memoirs reported such incidents. The published account of Matheus van den Broeck hardly makes a reference to infighting and mutual discontent. His edition, in this respect, is typical of published eye-witness reports of Dutch Brazil, which generally appeared at times of military conflict. Both in the 1630s, when the Dutch were in the ascendancy,

³ Nieuhof J., *Gedenkweerdige Brasiliaense zee- en lantheize* (Amsterdam: Weduwe Jacob van Meurs, 1682) 6: 'Ontrent drie jaren na mijne aenkomste op Brasil, wierdt een Portugees schip onder liny gevonden drijven, daer niet een levendigh mensch op was: maer waren alle overleden. Het had'er al zes weken gedreven, als uit de daghelix aentekening kon gezien worden' ('Some three years after my arrival in Brazil, a Portuguese ship was found floating south of the equator, which was completely empty: the whole crew had perished. It had floated around for six weeks, as could be established from the log'). Other fashionable late seventeenth-century publications, also issued by the Amsterdam publisher Jacob van Meurs, included those by Olfert Dapper and Arnoldus Montanus. Nieuhof's work on Brazil had been on the shelf for at least a decade before Van Meurs's widow finally decided to publish it: Eeghen I.H. van, "Arnoldus Montanus's book on Japan", *Quaerendo* 2 (1972) 267.

⁴ On Mulheiser's itinerary, see my article: "Van vaandrig in Brazilië tot dichter in Dordrecht: Het album amicorum van Johann Philipp Mulheiser (ca. 1603–ca. 1677)", *De zeventiende eeuw* 24, 2 (2008) 196–209. For Mulheiser's *album amicorum*: Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), The Hague, ms. 129 F 6. On Van Ceulen's expedition to Rio Grande: Laet J. de, *Historie ofte laerlijck verhael*, ed. S.P. L'Honoré Naber, 4 vols. (The Hague: 1931–1937) III 208–216.

and in the troubled years of the Portuguese revolt after 1645, such accounts tended to emphasize unity rather than friction among the soldiers. The private diary of Peter Hansen Hajstrup, however, gives a more truthful indication of daily goings-on. Hansen reported regular bust-ups among the troops, almost always as a result of intoxication, and frankly admitted his own active involvement. On one of his first days in Brazil, while standing guard at the entrance gate to the bridge which connected Recife with the island Antonio Vaz, Hansen struck Lieutenant Willem Hartstein with his rifle and had to appear before a military court the following day. Because of his inexperience, he was released with a reprimand. The West India Company could not afford to be too strict on their men, as the safety of the colony depended on them and it was difficult to recruit more orderly employees. In the nine years that followed, Hansen showed few signs of improving his conduct. No fewer than seven times during his stay in Brazil did he become involved in brawls. Four times he was arrested or locked up, one time he killed an ensign with a blow to the head, once he pulled a sword on a colleague and challenged him to a duel, and once he shot an innocent bystander in the leg while quarrelling with a fellow soldier from Schleswig-Holstein.⁵

Hansen, in his *Memorial*, was unapologetic and unashamed of his actions. He censored his diary on two occasions, the only episodes he did not consider appropriate for his readership of relatives. On both occasions, Hansen changed from German to Portuguese, a language of which he must have picked up the basics in Brazil, and on both occasions, the episodes had a sexual connotation. In the first instance, Hansen reminisced about a girlfriend who had passed away; four years later he aimed to conceal the story about a colleague whose African mistress had had a stillborn child.⁶ Whereas Hansen made a clear distinction between such personal affairs and more public scraps with his fellow soldiers, both types of mischief were conspicuously absent from more stylized travel accounts edited before publication. Hansen's misbehaviour did not form an obstacle to his rise through the ranks of the

⁵ Ibold F. – Jäger J. – Kraack D.A. (eds.), *Das Memorial und Jurenal des Peter Hansen Hajstrup (1624–1672)* (Neumünster: 1995) 68, 91–92. See also: Kraack D.A., "Flensburg, an early modern centre of trade: The autobiographical writings of Peter Hansen Hajstrup (1624–1672)" in Roding J., Heerma van Voss L. (eds.), *The North Sea and culture (1550–1800). Proceedings of the international conference held at Leiden, 21–22 April 1995* (Hilversum: 1996) 235–46.

⁶ Ibold – Jäger – Kraack, *Das Memorial und Jurenal des Peter Hansen Hajstrup* 83, 100.

West India Company. Having arrived in Brazil as a common soldier in December 1644, he was promoted to the rank of corporal two years later, and eventually became *monsterschrijver* in November 1647. A *monsterschrijver* was responsible for the administration of a company – and had to keep records of payment.⁷ Being able to write and perform simple calculations must have been two of Peter Hansen Hajstrup's more useful traits, and he remained in the colony until January 1654.

Writing, for some, even opened the doors to the highest circles in New Holland, as Dutch Brazil was officially known. Johann Philipp Mulheiser, a former theology student in Leiden who had chosen a career in the army after his hometown in the Palatinate had come under fire in the Thirty Years' War, used his *album amicorum* to record the names of well over 500 friends, most of them in high places.⁸ In August 1640, when the naval battles had been won and he finally had the time to start using his album, he attended the legislative assembly initiated by governor-general Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, often hailed as the first parliament in the history of Latin America. Within two weeks, Mulheiser shook hands with Johan Maurits himself [Fig. 1], with members of the High and Secret Council, and with the likes of the physician Willem Piso, and the minister Vicente Joachim Soler. His album reveals a particular fascination with representatives of the Dutch Reformed Church. Wherever his military duties took him, Mulheiser first approached the local ministers and missionaries requesting them to write an entry in his personal booklet. For two and a half years, Mulheiser remained in and around Recife, where in the various fortresses he encountered the highest military commanders of Dutch Brazil, such as Lieutenant Admiral Jacob Lichthart and Colonel Johann von Koin.⁹

In December 1642, when a revolt of Portuguese *moradores* had broken out in the northern *capitanía* Maranhão, the German ensign was sent

⁷ Ibid., 77, 79.

⁸ Groesen, "Van vaandrig in Brazilië tot dichter in Dordrecht". For his enrolment in Leiden: *Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV–MDCCCLXXV. Accedunt nomina curatorum et professorum per eadem saecula* (Den Haag: 1875) 212. Just under one hundred inscriptions in the album were entered in Brazil, the remainder were inscribed after Mulheiser's return to the Dutch Republic.

⁹ KB, ms. 129 F 6, fol. 7r (Johan Maurits); fol. 20r (Hamel); fol. 23r (Bas); fol. 185r (Codde van der Burgh); fol. 18r (Soler); fol. 238r (Piso); fol. 17r (Lichthart); fol. 31r (Von Koin). For the legislative assembly, see Boxer C.R., *The Dutch in Brazil 1624–1654* (Oxford: 1957) 117–120. On the ministers and missionaries in the colony, see Schalkwijk F.L., *The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil (1630–1654)* (Zoetermeer: 1998).

Fig. 1. *Inscription of Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen*, in Johann Philipp Mulheiser, *Album Amicorum*, 7 Aug. 1640. The Hague, Royal Library, KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 7r.

north. Passing through Frederikstad in Paraíba, Mulheiser and his company eventually ended up in Fort Ceulen, on the Rio Grande, where he would remain for fifteen months. The social scene here was much less vibrant than in Recife. The number of soldiers in Fort Ceulen probably did not exceed one hundred, and the period Mulheiser spent here produced as little as eleven inscriptions. A soldier's life in a desolate place far away from home inevitably also led to camaraderie. Several of Mulheiser's closest colleagues had become friends by the time they wrote their goodbyes in his album. The inscription of undistinguished soldiers or lower officers like Andries von Merheim, in Fort Ceulen, and Cornelis Coorne, after returning to the United Provinces, indicated that in Brazil – despite the regular brawls – close friendships could also be forged.¹⁰ Johann Philipp Mulheiser must by all accounts have been an educated and respected man. The entries in his album

¹⁰ KB, ms. 129 F 6, f163r (Von Merheim; 'meinen guten freundt'); f153v (Coorne; 'Ad perpetuam memoriam amico suo').

are written in a variety of languages, from Greek to Dutch, and from Portuguese to Hebrew. The ordinary inscriptions of Mulheiser's comrades further point to a use of different vernacular languages in the ranks of the West India Company, and the high number of entries in English is remarkable.

Treason

One theme in the forefront of the officers' minds was treason. In the early 1630s the Dutch had profited from the unrivalled knowledge of local conditions and terrain of the mulatto Domingos Fernandes Calabar, which had allowed them to expand their sphere of influence beyond the immediate surroundings of Recife. Several times more, the Dutch obtained sensitive information directly from the enemy. But the presence of many Portuguese sugar planters in Dutch Brazil required a permanent state of vigilance. When in 1645 the *moradores* began their long and ultimately successful revolt against the regime of the West India Company, the Dutch major Diederick van Hoogstraten proved to be just as capable of disloyalty as Calabar thirteen years earlier. As commander of the strategic Fort van der Dussen at Cape Santo Agostinho, Van Hoogstraten was promised a high post in the Portuguese army if he surrendered the bastion. After secret negotiations with the leadership in Bahia, the officer decided to take up the offer and switched sides. The fall of Cape Santo Agostinho, after a token resistance, suddenly opened the route for the Portuguese to Recife, and severely weakened the position of the Dutch. Retrospectively, Van Hoogstraten's treachery heralded the collapse of the Dutch presence in Brazil.¹¹

While Peter Hansen Hajstrup encountered plenty of double agents on his campaigns, he did not mention the surrender of Fort van der Dussen, but the two printed descriptions of Brazil did. Almost as a way of helping readers to come to terms with adversity and the eventual loss of Brazil, Matheus van den Broeck and Johan Nieuhof pointed the finger at Van Hoogstraten. Nieuhof, with the benefit of hindsight, devoted a number of pages to the Portuguese manoeuvres to test the Dutch major's loyalty. He stressed the active role of both Lisbon and

¹¹ Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil* 167–171.

Bahia in these ploys, as the Portuguese government was officially bound to the truce they had concluded with the Dutch in 1641. Perceived support in the highest political circles enabled authors like Nieuhof to lament the treacherous nature of the enemy, a type of rhetoric familiar to the readership in the United Provinces. Other examples of the enemy's unreliability – Nieuhof used the word 'tyranny' in an attempt to tap into trusted anti-Iberian sentiments – included the murder of dozens of Brazilians allied to the Dutch, even though the articles of capitulation guaranteed their safety. In short, Nieuhof and others strongly bemoaned the loss of Cape Santo Agostinho. The fortress had been supplied with many men, and the enemy, according to Nieuhof, could have had no realistic hope of surprising the defensive forces, until 'one person, made into a man by the West India Company, betrayed the fortress to the Portuguese, against his honour and vows'.¹²

The freeman Van den Broeck, who had served his time in the army since arriving in 1636 and had settled in Brazil, provided details about Van Hoogstraten's decision to defect.¹³ After the beginning of the Portuguese revolt, freemen like Van den Broeck were asked to take up arms again, and serve in separate regiments to support the Dutch cause. In 1645 his unit was located in the vicinity of Fort van der Dussen, and after he was made captive by the Portuguese in a battle for a large sugar plantation, he encountered several Dutch eye-witnesses to the betrayal. As a result, Van den Broeck could report that Van Hoogstraten had discussed the Portuguese offer with his fellow officers. Of the nine officers debating the matter, only three expressed their desire to fight until the last man. According to the loyalists, there was no shortage of men or victuals, and the battle could have been continued for quite some time. The other six, led by Van Hoogstraten, tabled their personal considerations before sacrificing the common good for their private objectives. *Ritmeester* Casper van der Ley, bearing in mind his sugar mill and the lives of his (Portuguese) wife and children, considered further resistance 'inconvenient'. Captain Albert Gerritsz Wedda was prepared to accept the enemy's conditions, since he did not want to lose his personal possessions at Cape Santo Ago-

¹² Nieuhof, *Gedenckweerdige Brasiliaense zee- en lantreise* 96–97, 121–26. Quotation on p. 126: 'In dezer voegen wiert dat fort door eenen perzoon, die by de Compagnie, tot een man gemaect was, tegen eer en eet aen de Portugesen verraden'.

¹³ For a brief biography of Van den Broeck: Balen M., *Beschryvinge der stad Dordrecht* (Dordrecht, Simon onder de Linde: 1677) 887.

stinho for the sake of the Company, which he knew would not compensate him. Lieutenant Wenzel Smit was even blunter: he was fed up with the West India Company, and just wanted to go home.¹⁴

Despite the author's subsequent, arguably more dramatic, account of his captivity and his painful journey on foot to Salvador, Gerrit van Goedesberg, the Amsterdam publisher of Van den Broeck's *Journal* [Fig. 2], opted to introduce treason as the main theme in his introduction to readers. The bookseller began by emphasizing the author's effort to meticulously describe Portuguese vices and deceit under the cloak of friendship. He stated that Van den Broeck exposed 'the gruesome nature of faithless trucebreakers, among whom the King of Portugal must be regarded as one of the most prominent' in order to warn the 'attentive Hollander' how such betrayals should be guarded against in the future.¹⁵ This, according to Van Goedesberg in 1651, had been the objective of both publisher and author when preparing the text for the press. The first words of the account proper, supposedly written by Van den Broeck but much more outspoken than the rest of the narrative, confirmed the focus of the publication:

The principles of treason in Pernambuco appear to have been clearly practised in the Bay of All Saints, and without any doubt implemented with the knowledge of the King of Portugal, with his envoys who arrived in Pernambuco as ambassadors of alliance and friendship.¹⁶

On several points, an Amsterdam bookseller thus moulded the personal memories of Van den Broeck into an attractive publication with a clear motivation, a common practice in the early modern publishing industry.¹⁷ It is conceivable that by the time Nieuhof's book appeared in 1682, the Portuguese plan to obtain Van Hoogstraten's meek surrender had become such an intricate part of the Dutch representations

¹⁴ Broeck M. van den, *Journal, ofte Historiæ Beschrijvinge van Matheus van den Broeck* (Amsterdam, Gerrit van Goedesberg: 1651) 17.

¹⁵ Ibid., fol. [*2v]: '...den gruwelijken aart der Trouweloose verbond-breekers, waar onder den Konink van Portugaal wel een van de voornaamste mag getelt worden, zeer levendig ten toon stelt, op dat zich den Wakkeren Hollander, [...] in het toekomende [...]'.
¹⁶ Ibid., 1: 'De Beginselen van de verraderye in Pharnambuco schijnen klaerlijck gepractiseert en zijn in de Bahia de Todos os Sanctos, ende sonder eenighe twijffel met kennisse van den Coninck van Portugael in 't werck gestelt, met hare gesanten die in Pharnambuco quamen als Ambassadeurs van Aliantie ende vriendtschap'.

¹⁷ For a more detailed analysis of a publisher's influence on travel accounts, see Groesen M. van, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages (1590-1634)* (Leiden-Boston: 2008).

Fig. 2. Title page of Mattheus van den Broeck, *Journael, ofte Historiaelse Beschrijvinge* (Amsterdam, Gerrit van Goedesberg: 1651). Amsterdam, Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum.

of Brazil that here, too, the episode was given further emphasis in the publisher's workshop.

Certainly the story of Van Hoogstraten's treason – whether or not coördinated by Lisbon as publishers and some authors insisted – had an influence on the public opinion of Brazil in the United Provinces, as proved by two inscriptions in Johann Philipp Mulheiser's *album amicorum*. In 1642, in New Holland, Mulheiser had collected the signature of Major Van Hoogstraten, then still a loyal employee of the West India Company. Like so many other contributors, Van Hoogstraten had written a short poem, which ironically enough warned against speaking with a double tongue. Eight years later, when the major had been exposed as a turncoat and the German officer had settled in Dordrecht, Mulheiser met the local painter Samuel van Hoogstraten who also left his name in the same album, on the opposite page. Samuel, a pupil of Rembrandt, was distantly related to Diederick, and was quick to dissociate himself from this relative. Just as Judas had been one of the apostles, but carried the reputation of a traitor, Samuel wrote, this conspirator carried the name of his own god-fearing father.¹⁸ The subject of treason in Dutch Brazil, emphasized in several published accounts, had evidently been digested by the wider public at home.

Back Home: Distributing Knowledge of Brazil

The revolt of the Portuguese planters complicated matters in the Dutch colony, and considerable reinforcements arrived in the following years. As the conflict reached a climax in 1648, the Company had some 5,000 officers and soldiers on the books, not including indigenous Tapuya allies who loathed the Portuguese and supported the Dutch regime.¹⁹ Although they outnumbered the Luso-Brazilian forces, the

¹⁸ KB, ms. 129 F 6, fol. 240r (Diederick van Hoogstraten); fol. 239v (Samuel van Hoogstraten): 'Op de naam van de volgende. Zoo Iudas als Apostel heene treet / En draagt die naam d'onsaligen Verrader / Zoo voert dees oock (oh leefdt' hij 't waar hem leet) / Den eijge naam van mijn Godvruchte Vader / Maar Iesus self, dat lieffelykste woort / Betekent wel temet een Wangeboort'. Elsewhere in Mulheiser's album, Samuel van Hoogstraten left an allegorical drawing including the Hoogstraten family crest (fol. 294v–295r).

¹⁹ On the alliance with the Tapuyas: Boogaart E. van den, "Infernal allies. The Dutch West India Company and the Tarairiu", in Boogaart E. van den, *et al.* (eds.), *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, 1604–1679: a Humanist Prince in Europe and Brazil* (The Hague: 1979) 519–538.

Company lost two decisive battles near Guararapes in the late 1640s, and by the end of the decade, more than a thousand soldiers had died from injuries or disease. Others had simply deserted or had settled as freemen in the colony, far away from the hardships of war. Of the remaining troops, almost one in eight was physically unable to fight.²⁰ Hence, for various reasons, a significant percentage of Dutch forces in Brazil would not be able to relate their experiences in the colony, making the oral and, more critically, the written accounts of those who did more vulnerable to some of the predetermined agendas at home – either for reasons of propaganda or for commerce.

The editorial adjustments made to Van den Broeck's account by an Amsterdam publisher indicate that the nature and distribution of knowledge could be conditioned by parties in both the colony and the mother country. Buying printed narratives was only one of many ways available to the interested public of obtaining information on Brazil. Letters, *corantos*, pamphlets, and stories of soldiers and others who had returned from Pernambuco must have accounted for the bulk of colonial reporting. Several towns in the Dutch Republic, like Dordrecht, hosted small expatriate communities of Europeans and their Brazilian spouses who had been forced to leave the colony after the Portuguese takeover in 1654.²¹ Claims for the compensation of lost property at the offices of the Company and the States-General continued to make the headlines for several years. Corporal Peter Hansen Hajstrup was one of numerous officers who had to travel between Amsterdam and The Hague after his return to receive payment.²²

Given the social and ethnic diversity of the Company's personnel in Brazil, oral reports on life in the colony must have reached all layers

²⁰ Jacobs, "Soldaten van de Compagnie" 134.

²¹ The best example is the former High Council Gisbert de With and his wife Anna Paes, the daughter of a Portuguese sugar planter who lived in Dordrecht and The Hague. For an analysis of the Dutch capitulation and its aftermath: Cabral de Mello E., *De Braziliaanse affaire. Portugal, de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden en Noord-Oost-Brazilië, 1641–1669* (Zutphen: 2005 [transl. of *O negócio do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: 1998)]) 120–121, and passim. Not all wedded couples left Brazil after 1654: Gonsalves de Mello J.A., *Nederlanders in Brazilië (1624–1654). De invloed van de Hollandse bezetting op het leven en de cultuur in Noord-Brazilië* (Zutphen: 2001) [transl. of *Tempo dos Flamengos* (Rio de Janeiro: 1947)] 144–45. See also: Hulsman L., "Brazilian Indians in the Dutch Republic. The remonstrances of Antonio Paraupabá to the States General in 1654 and 1656", *Itinerario* 29, 1 (2005) 51–78.

²² Ibold – Jäger – Kraack, *Das Memorial und Jurenal des Peter Hansen Hajstrup* 121.

of society inside and outside the United Provinces. It is difficult to trace what someone like Peter Hansen told his relatives in Flensburg in addition to his written *Memorial* or to recover the personal memories of a commander like Matthias van Ceulen. At least Johann Philipp Mulheiser's *album amicorum* gives an impression of the network of friends and relatives of the ensign when he returned to Europe with the fleet of Johan Maurits in the summer of 1644. Some of the contributors to his album in subsequent years – and Mulheiser continued to use it until the late 1670s – directly referred to the owner's past in the West, indicating that the ensign's personal experiences and memories of Brazil remained a subject of conversation.

The first three or four years after returning from Brazil constitute the period when Mulheiser used his album most actively, and the hundreds of contributors in the United Provinces allow for an analysis of the personal network of the officer from the Palatinate. In the first months after his return, Mulheiser visited all the major cities in Zeeland and Holland, indicating both a sense of uprootedness and an ambition to quickly reintegrate into Dutch society. Among the leading ministers of the two provinces, Mulheiser's former professors at Leiden University, and other elite connections several names stand out in relation to the distribution of knowledge about Dutch Brazil. During a four-day visit to Amsterdam in October 1644, Mulheiser made the acquaintance not only of Gerardus Vossius, professor at the city's *Athenaeum Illustre*, and his son Isaac, the promising philologist, but also of Caspar Barlaeus. Barlaeus, the other professor at the Athenaeum, was on the verge of beginning his project to describe Johan Maurits' reign in the colony, *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia*, which since its appearance in 1647 has remained one of the most important sources on the history of New Holland.²³ Mulheiser and Barlaeus must have discussed the ensign's experiences in the colony.

Cornelis Golijath, who was soon to return to Brazil and later acquired a reputation as the colony's official cartographer, supplied a Spanish inscription to Mulheiser's album in December 1644, reflecting on the

²³ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 128r (Gerardus Vossius); fol. 175v (Isaac Vossius); fol. 129r (Barlaeus). See on Barlaeus and Brazil: Harmsen A.J.E., "Barlaeus' Description of the Dutch Colony in Brazil", in Martels Z. von (ed.), *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne: 1994) 158–169.

friendship they had built in the tropics.²⁴ Regents and dignitaries in The Hague, such as the pensionary Jacob Cats, the English diplomat William Boswell, and the Swedish envoy Harald Appelboom also met the German officer, ensuring the political elite's access to first-hand reports of life in Brazil.²⁵ Mulheiser even came in touch with the exiled nobility from the Palatinate. The daughters of the Elector Palatine and Winter-King Frederick V – Elisabeth, Louise Hollandina and Henriette Marie – all signed their compatriot's album.²⁶ Another of Mulheiser's influential contacts was Constantijn L'Empereur van Opwijck, professor of theology in Leiden, and, more importantly for the ensign, counselor to Johan Maurits after his return to Europe.²⁷ When Mulheiser had settled down in Dordrecht, working at the city's Latin School, he occasionally translated pamphlets from German into Dutch. The first such pamphlet of 1649 addressed matters related to Johan Maurits, then stadtholder in Cleves, and is an indication that Brazilian connections continued to furnish a literate officer like Mulheiser with potentially interesting assignments.²⁸

How Mulheiser managed to maintain his Brazilian network while living in Holland is unclear, but his personal belongings could have played a role in sustaining his reputation as a former officer in the West. One visitor in Dordrecht, in October 1654, added to his inscription that he had been to 'the museum of this album's owner'.²⁹ Even though this reference alone does not prove the existence of a *Wunderkammer*, it

²⁴ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 244v: 'Quem en Dios espera, nunca lhe falto. Esso scrivio por onra del valentissimo senior Guan Philippo Mulheuser fue Alferes dhu Comp. d'infanteria em Brasijl, y por camarade sua. Su Dercado Amigo Cornelio Golijath'. On Golijath's map of Brazil: Zandvliet K., "Johan Maurits and the cartography of Dutch Brazil, the South-West-passage and Chile", in Boogaart *et al.*, *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen* 502.

²⁵ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 15r (Cats); fol. 13v (Boswell); fol. 10r (Appelboom).

²⁶ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 3r (Elisabeth); fol. 4r (Louise Hollandina); fol. 5r (Henriette Marie).

²⁷ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 53r; Rooden P.Th. van, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn l'Empereur (1591-1648): Professor of Hebrew and Theology at Leiden* (Leiden etc.: 1989) 210-213.

²⁸ *Kort vertoogh In plaets van een Manifest. Waerom Sijn Cheurvorst: Doorluch: tot Brandenburg, eenige plaetsen in de Vorstendommen Gulick en Bergh in te nemen, bewogen en veroorsaecht geweest is* (Dordrecht, Abraham Andriesz.: 1651); see also: Groesen, "Van vaandrig in Brazilië tot dichter in Dordrecht", 204-205; on Johan Maurits' political manoeuvrings in the late 1640s and early 1650s, see Opgenoorth E., "Johan Maurits as the stadtholder of Cleves under the Elector of Brandenburg", in Boogaart *et al.*, *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen* 39-53.

²⁹ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 219r. The contributor was a certain Isaac Oppervelt, who concluded his entry with: 'Dordrechtu in musaeo D. Possessoris'.

is not unlikely that Mulheiser had assembled some exotic memorabilia to back up his personal recollections of Brazil. American artefacts and naturalia had figured in private cabinets in the United Provinces in the early seventeenth century, and three decades of Dutch presence provided nearly unlimited access to 'archetypical' Brazilian objects. There is other evidence of the appeal of various rarities among the personnel of the Company. When Peter Hansen Hajstrup led a makeshift force of eight soldiers which successfully fended off a Portuguese attack along the Rio Grande, his captain rewarded him with a parrot – the quintessentially American bird – which Hansen took home.³⁰

During the last five years of his service in Brazil, Hansen had also acquired a young Tapuya slave, who followed his master to Europe after the West India Company had been defeated. Sadly, while accompanying the corporal on one of his travels by barge between The Hague and Amsterdam to secure Hansen's overdue Company payment, the boy wandered off and did not return, and one can only wonder about his fate.³¹ Such human reminders of Dutch domination over Brazil must have excited those who were fortunate enough to have connections with former soldiers or colonists. In Doesburg, Lieutenant Johan Bettinck also enjoyed the service of 'a black maid' who may have returned with him from Brazil.³² Although his presence in the colony is not documented, he must have served in the company of Colonel Hendrick van Hous, who suffered several defeats against the Portuguese rebels in the late 1640s. Bettinck listed the former colonel as one of his benefactors in the inventory he had drawn up in 1659, after the death of his (Portuguese or, more likely, Luso-Brazilian) wife Margarita de Malesarmes.³³

Bettinck's inventory demonstrates how tangible memories of Dutch Brazil were blended into a veteran's household. Alongside West India Company bonds, Bettinck and his wife possessed several items made of brazilwood, not necessarily the direct result of an officer's tour in Brazil, but certainly the fruits of an acquired taste. In one of the bedrooms on the first floor of the sizeable house in Doesburg, a table made of

³⁰ Ibold – Jäger – Kraack, *Das Memorial und Jurenal des Peter Hansen Hajstrup* 90.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

³² *Oud Archief Doesburg*, inv. nr. 824 ('Verbalen van de hoofdschatting + restanten 1653') nr. 185. I am grateful to Hester Dibbits for informing me about this document.

³³ Dibbits H., *Vertrouwd bezit: materiële cultuur in Doesburg en Maasshuis 1650–1800* (Nijmegen: 2001) 330–341.

brazilwood was covered by a Brazilian tablecloth. In the attic, the Bettincks had stored two hammocks and an old Brazilian straw basket, items almost certainly obtained in the New World. In the *voorhuis* or vestibule, the room which was most representative of the personal tastes of the residents, the Bettincks had found a place on the wall for a large map of Brazil alongside twelve busts of Roman emperors and four chairs of Spanish leather. This, then, was how the family liked to present itself to guests who, depending on their social status, were received here or passed through this room. The wall map was framed, according to the inventory, which gave it artistic value beside its obvious geographic application.³⁴ Visitors to the Bettinck household were no doubt impressed by the map, which presumably invited questions about life in the colony.

Matthias van Ceulen, a director of the West India Company who served four years in Brazil in two spells – the second time as member of the High and Secret Council under Johan Maurits – also left an inventory of his estate in May 1644.³⁵ Like the Bettincks, Van Ceulen presented his Brazilian credentials to visitors mostly in the *voorhuis* of his Amsterdam domicile. The walls of the vestibule in the Van Ceulen residence were adorned by two maps of Brazil, one of the area around Recife and one of the colony as a whole. In addition, there were several paintings in the *voorhuis* of which two – a large still life of West Indian fruits and a portrait of Johan Maurits – reminded visitors of the director's service in New Holland. In what is described as the large room (*groote camer*) of his house, Van Ceulen exhibited another effigy of Johan Maurits, a testimony to his loyalty to the governor-general whose relations with the nineteen directors of the Company were not always impeccable. Arguably Van Ceulen's most treasured reminder was not on public display. His private office (*comptoir*) housed a wall map of Rio Grande, the estuary he had personally secured for the Company. This could be an indication that such allusions to personal achievements in Brazil were not intended for public reverence within the civic values of the Dutch Republic, in the same way that the highly

³⁴ See Zandvliet K., *Mapping for Money: Maps, Plans and Topographic Paintings and their Role in Dutch Overseas Expansion during the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Amsterdam: 2002) 249–252 for the decorative use of maps in the Dutch Golden Age.

³⁵ Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, NAA 1598, filmnr. 1691, ff. 303–336.

personal experiences of an officer like Peter Hansen were not available in printed Dutch accounts of Brazil.³⁶

The inventories of Bettinck and Van Ceulen highlight two patterns in the distribution of knowledge of Brazil in the United Provinces. Firstly officers – and, one presumes, others who had spent time in the colony – were not reluctant to share their experiences in Brazil with a wider audience, whether in the shape of (printed) narratives, indigenous artefacts or even people they had taken home, or memorabilia produced in Europe referring to the colony such as paintings and maps. Secondly, the social position of the officers had only little bearing on the way in which their experiences were reflected at home. While both Van Ceulen and Bettinck displayed maps of Brazil in their dwellings, the Amsterdam director owned several paintings of Brazil as well. Bettinck – who did possess other paintings – had assembled more mundane souvenirs such as a tablecloth, a straw basket and two hammocks, but his intentions to memorize and communicate his experiences were no different.

Likewise Johann Philipp Mulheiser and Mattheus van den Broeck held higher ranks in the army than Peter Hansen Hajstrup – and in the case of Van den Broeck, this may have influenced the appeal of his narrative to publishers – but their experiences were to a large extent interchangeable. Van den Broeck's ordeals after falling into enemy hands, for example, were comparable to Hansen's fears when being pursued by Portuguese troops. The events of the revolt in Brazil further reduced social inequalities. The main difference, then, between the published account by Van den Broeck and the diary of Peter Hansen lies in their respective readerships. It is uncertain whether Hansen's stories of internal scraps between the soldiers would have survived the editorial regime of a publisher, who in the case of Van den Broeck's account chose to emphasize the role of the Portuguese as trucebreakers and hence stressed Major Van Hoogstraten's treason. The differences in intended audience also may have conditioned the placing of artefacts in an officer's private house. Maps and paintings of Brazil were on public display, but more simple artefacts were not, and testimonies of private achievements were available to only a few selected visitors.

³⁶ Schama S., *The Embarrassment of Riches: an Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: 1987).

Dutch interest in Brazil continued until well after the West India Company surrendered Recife to the Portuguese in 1654. The Amsterdam publisher Jacob van Meurs, active as engraver and bookseller from the early 1650s onwards, issued many luxurious works of Dutch expansion abroad, and in 1682, his widow published Johan Nieuhof's *Gedenkweerdige Brasiliaense zee- en lantreise*, a rather official chronicle of the colony in the 1640s. After diplomatic and financial matters regarding the colony had been settled with Portugal, however, the Brazilian enterprise gradually disappeared into the background.³⁷ Some veterans, like Mattheus van den Broeck and Johan Nieuhof, joined the Dutch East India Company, and both spent the longest and most illustrious parts of their careers in Asia. Others, like Peter Hansen, Johan Bettinck, and Johann Philipp Mulheiser, opted for quieter lifestyles in Europe. But occasionally the men rekindled their Brazilian past. One such day was 18 December 1670, when Van den Broeck, having returned from Asia as a successful admiral, visited Mulheiser in his house in Dordrecht. In Mulheiser's album, still in use after so many years, Van den Broeck professed that 'vigilance is the mother of good adventure'.³⁸ Despite their efforts to distribute knowledge of Brazil to armchair travelers in the Dutch Republic, this was a sentiment that only two veterans could share.

³⁷ Cabral de Mello, *De Braziliaanse affaire*, describes the diplomatic settlement of the Luso-Dutch rivalry over Brazil.

³⁸ KB ms. 129 F 6, fol. 352r: 'La vigalancia es la madre de bona vintura'.

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