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# Mapping Dutch Nationalism across the Atlantic

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# Mapping Dutch Nationalism across the Atlantic

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## Abstract

1648 witnessed the legal birth of the Dutch Republic, and Claes Jansz Visscher capitalized on Dutch nationalism by publishing maps of Dutch-controlled territories in Brazil and New Netherland. The maps presented a unified image of possession in both arenas and featured them as secure and stable locations worthy of investment amidst tensions in the Republic c. 1650. These maps contributed to shape a global and historical Dutch national consciousness at this critical moment of their so-called Golden Age.

## Résumé

En 1648, année de la proclamation légale de la République de Hollande, Claes Jansz Visscher faisait du nationalisme hollandais son fond de commerce en publiant des cartes des territoires contrôlés par la Hollande au Brésil et en Nouvelle-Néerlande. Ces cartes présentaient une image unifiée des possessions hollandaises dans ces deux pays, et les mettaient en avant comme des destinations stables et sécurisées, favorables à l'investissement, dans le contexte de tensions généralisée du milieu du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Elles concoururent en outre à façonner une conscience nationale globale et historique à ce moment critique du soi-disant « Âge d'Or » hollandais.

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The maps of Recife-Mauritsstad and New Netherland published by Claes Jansz Visscher (Fig.1 and Fig.2) tell us a lot about Dutch nationalism in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They were made in Amsterdam around 1648, the year that the Dutch Republic was recognized as a sovereign nation. These maps are especially important to examine because of what they indicate about the political and commercial concerns of the Dutch at this critical moment in world history. The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 is often cited by scholars of international relations as the birth of the modern political state, and the Dutch Republic was recognized at that meeting. The Republic's legal definition was integrally connected to the global nature of its economy. That the Dutch from this period are still known as leaders in cartography testifies to the importance of visual culture for documenting these activities.<sup>3</sup> Geographical documents like maps and travelogues were sources of information, commodities, and legal evidence. The Dutch, and later, other states, used maps as political propaganda to define themselves and their territory in Europe and abroad.<sup>4</sup> Globalization is nothing new, and the case of Dutch national identity within the global context of the 17<sup>th</sup> century needs to be considered as a complex interweaving of visual culture along with economics and politics.<sup>5</sup> The system of “graphic traffic” inherent to capitalism, where a variety of images are available and ubiquitous, helped co-construct and reinforce the power the Dutch Republic enjoyed in the 17<sup>th</sup>-

century world-system, even if their power in the Atlantic arena was actually quite tenuous.<sup>6</sup>



**Fig.1**

Claes Jansz Visscher and Cornelis de Goliath, *Map of the Olinda Pernambuco, Mauritsstad and Recife in Brazil*, 1648, engraving, 470 mm x 580 mm. Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam.



**Fig.2**

Claes Jansz Visscher, *Novi Belgii Novaeque Angliae nec non partis Virginiae tabula multis in locis emendate*, ca. 1651, Engraving and etching, 46.6 x 55.4 cm. Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, New York Public Library.

Around 1650, the West India Company's (WIC) Atlantic affairs were as fraught with problems as was the political situation in the Netherlands. However, printed maps presented a unified image of possession and control in both arenas. That image was based on Dutch pragmatic and moral

<sup>3</sup> Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 281; Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6. Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2; 18-22. Anghie suggests that modern international law and relations formed specifically in response to the colonial encounter. *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 116. See also Benjamin Schmidt, "Mapping an Empire: Cartographic and Colonial Rivalry in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and English North America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1997). Ben Schmidt identified a paradox in Dutch cartography of the latter half of the 17th century: just as Dutch maps were reaching their apex in publication and dissemination, the Dutch Republic and its corporate overseas bodies were fumbling their control of Atlantic territories. Benjamin Schmidt, "Geography Unbound: Boundaries and the Exotic World in the Early Enlightenment," in *Boundaries and Their Meanings in the History of the Netherlands*, Benjamin Kaplan, Marybeth Carlson and Laura Cruz, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 37. In fact, the continued proliferation of mapping overseas territories reinforces what social economist Immanuel Wallerstein identified as indicative of a declining hegemonic power: it has to use its "politico-ideological wiles"—art, media, visual culture—to maintain an economic extra-advantage. The cultural sphere, according to Wallerstein, is "the last redoubt of hegemonic advantage." Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy 1600-1750* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), xxiv, xxvii.

<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein and many other Marxist historians and art historians have recognized this important confluence in the world-system. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II*, xxvii. See also Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> I take the term "graphic traffic" from Richard Brettell's discussion of modern art. See Richard Brettell, *Modern Art, 1851-1928: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 105-106.

philosophies about land, law, and civilization. Maps of Dutch territories at home and abroad share a visual language that emphasized the built environment, the cultivation of land, and the strategic use of waterways. The cultivation of territories by the commercial and engineering acuity of the Dutch people was presented on maps at the same time organized development was being codified into Dutch property law. Roman law and military schema, even if imprecisely applied, provided the model by which land could be claimed, organized, and sold as a commodity.<sup>7</sup> In Roman law, ownership (*dominium*) was indicated by occupation (*occupatio*) and control (factual possession— *possessio*), and therefore implied boundaries. Maps of their hard-won territories visually asserted Dutch control at home and abroad.

In the map of Mauritsstad-Recife, the central plan clarifies the organization and boundaries of the sister cities. The grid of the city is in stark contrast to the countryside around, sparsely dotted with trees and divided by rivers. WIC Governor-general Johan Maurits' palace Vrijburg (also set in profile above the map) sits at the northernmost edge of the peninsula, facing east towards the water. The rivers Capibaribe, Beberibe, and Afogados converge between Mauritsstad and Recife. Dutch ships control the harbor. Vrijburg is flanked by Fort Ernestus and a military exercise field. Bastioned walls extend south along on the east and west sides of the peninsula. A canal outside the wall connects the moats of Fort Ernestus to Fort Frederick Henry, on the south end of the peninsula. To the north, Fort Waerdenburg provides additional defense for the cities, triangulated from Recife across the Beberibe River to the southeast. Between the forts and the rivers lies Mauritsstad's center, its plazas connected by perpendicular

streets that extend across the bridge to Recife. Vrijburg dominates above, while below, the cities are depicted in profile view, linked by a bridge that Johan Maurits had built.



**Fig.3**

Claes Jansz Visscher, *The City of Olinda in Pernambuco, Brazil, 1630*, Engraving, 97 x 118 cm. Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam.

From 1630 until 1654, the WIC fought to maintain control of northeastern Brazil. It was an area that was important for the Dutch to possess in their war against the Spanish Habsburgs, and for them to control the lucrative production and transport of sugar and dyewood. Visscher recycled in a single-sheet map the prints from Caspar Barlaeus' *Rerum per Octennium Brasilia*, an illustrated folio that documented Johan Maurits' governorship of Brazil between 1636 and 1644, published by Joan Blaeu one year earlier. Visscher had already published propagandistic news maps for the WIC and of campaigns against Spain in the 1620s and 1630s, including the news map of the conquest of Pernambuco in 1630 (Fig.3), and his maps of WIC territories abroad similarly present topographical and chorographical detail, following Ptolomaic convention.<sup>8</sup> With these maps he not

<sup>7</sup> Lauren Benton has carefully nuanced the idea that Europeans routinely applied Roman law to colonial territories. See Lauren Benton "Possessing Empire: Iberian Claims and Interpolity Law," in *Native Claims: Indigenous Law against Empire, 1500-1920*, Saliha Belmessous, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 22; Lauren Benton and Benjamin Straumann, "Acquiring Empire by Law: From Roman Doctrine to Early Modern European Practice," *Law and History Review* 28, no. 1 (2010): 1-38. Charles van den Heuvel suggests the flexibility that was integral to WIC and VOC plans for colonial cities. Charles van den Heuvel, "Multilayered Grids and Dutch Town Planning: Flexibility and Temporality in the Design of Settlements in the Low Countries and Overseas," in *Early Modern Urbanism and the Grid: Town Planning in the Low Countries in International Context*, Piet Lombaerde and Charles van den Heuvel, eds. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 27-44.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to his news maps, Visscher is well-known for his series of landscape prints and figurative maps of Amsterdam and other Netherlandish cities. See especially Alexandra Onuf, "Envisioning Netherlandish Unity: Claes Visscher's 1612 Copies of the Small Landscape Prints," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 3, no. 1 (2011) np. <http://www.jhna.org/index.php/past-issues/vol-3-1/130-envisioning-netherlandish-unity-claes-visschers> and Catherine Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994). For Visscher's niche in news maps, see for example, Kees Zandvliet, *De Grootte Waereld in 'T Kleen Geschildert: Nederlandse Kartografie Tussen De Middeleeuwen En De Industriële Revolutie* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1985).

only provided necessary military and trade information, he also projected an organized and controlled territory safe for investment and colonization.

At mid-century, the power and control of the Dutch in the Atlantic, however, was uncertain. The initial charter granted to the WIC by the States General in 1621 integrated the shared militaristic and economic goals of the government and the Company. It provided the WIC and its officials the power to make war and peace, to enter into trading contracts, and to develop colonies.<sup>9</sup> At the time these maps were published, the WIC's charter had only just been renewed after two years of deliberations, in 1647.<sup>10</sup> The WIC was almost bankrupt from combating Portuguese insurgencies in Brazil, and in 1649, colonists from New Netherland had brought a Remonstrance before the States General, complaining about the situation in New Netherland. Meanwhile, the Republic may have been recognized at Westphalia, but internally, the treaty of Münster had met resistance from the more hawkish provinces, and had difficulty getting ratified.<sup>11</sup> Adding to the troubles of the divided young Republic, the English passed the Navigation Acts in October, 1651. The Navigation Acts prevented Dutch carriers from transporting English goods, and worse, allowed for the ostensibly legal capture of Dutch ships by English vessels.

Maps however, present a different picture. These maps reflect a commercially-oriented and legalistic “period eye.”<sup>12</sup> They are visual translations of

contemporary Roman-Dutch law and engineering principles. Dutch legal theorist Hugo Grotius argued in *De Jure Bella ac Pacis* (*The Rights of War and Peace*, 1625) that only settled and cultivated land counted as owned property.<sup>13</sup> He built a case for property rights based on natural law that expanded upon the arguments he initially put forward in *Mare Liberum* in 1609. As opposed to divine law, natural law derives from a being's “natural” desire to protect himself from injury and provide for his own well-being. In other words, natural law derives from observed tendencies of self-preservation. These “natural” liberties, or rights to self-preservation, Grotius extended to the political and corporate body. When it came to Dutch interests, Grotius had an aggressive approach to the relationship between sovereign bodies and their rights to property, and one of his most innovative ideas was the possibility for divisibility of sovereignty; the VOC and WIC are cases in point.<sup>14</sup> His ideas responded to and addressed the contemporary political situation in the Northern provinces, and in Europe more broadly. The definition of European states, their relationships to each other and to trade companies, was intimately related to the European colonial encounter.<sup>15</sup> Grotius' principles about sovereignty and property could be applied to the new territories “discovered” by Europeans.

In *The Rights of War and Peace* Grotius argued that property was legally possessed by right of victors in war. Certainly, the Dutch considered their conquest of Pernambuco part of a just war for autonomy, and they projected their conquests abroad like their victories at home: pictorially, as in these earlier maps of conquest published by

<sup>9</sup> The WIC reached capitalization at seven million guilders until 1623, one million guilders of which was provided by the States General—500,000 were shares, the other half straight subsidy. Oliver A. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 64-65.

<sup>10</sup> The WIC's charter expired in 1645, but was not renewed until 1647 because of disputes among the chambers, confusing accounts, and the VOC's unwillingness to merge with the insolvent WIC. See C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil 1624-1654* (Oxford: Archon, 1973), 175, 187.

<sup>11</sup> Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: 1650: Hard-Won Unity*, trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz, (Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2004), 41-42.

<sup>12</sup> The term “period eye” is from Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2 ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Patricia Seed suggests maps were of particular importance for Dutch claims to land. Benjamin Schmidt discusses Pieter Stuyvesant specifically seeking maps to support Dutch claims to first possession of the area of New Netherland. Lauren Benton marks maps as useful to make “better” claims to possession. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World 1492-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6; 172-173; Benjamin Schmidt, “Mapping an Empire: Cartographic and Colonial Rivalry in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and English North America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1997), 551. Benton, “Possessing Empire,” 21.

<sup>13</sup> In *The Rights of War and Peace* Grotius provides specific discussion of instances applicable for municipal public and private law, as well as principles that could be applied to the new territories “discovered” by Europeans, or that could be legally possessed by right of victors in war. Grotius argued: “...if there be any waste or barren Land within our Dominions, that also is to be given to Strangers, at their Request, or may be lawfully possessed by them, because whatever remains uncultivated, is not to be esteemed a Property, only so far as concerns Jurisdiction, which always continues the Right of the sentient People ... that they commit no Crime who cultivate and manure the untitled Part of a Country.” Quoted in Hugo Grotius and Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace by Hugo Grotius*. Book II, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 448-449.

<sup>14</sup> Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, 3-5, 49-51. Grotius set a foundation for divisible sovereignty, which was crucial to his understanding of property rights and juridical rule in the Netherlands and abroad. See also Richard Tuck's introduction in *The Rights of War and Peace by Hugo Grotius*, Book I (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), xxviii-xxx.

<sup>15</sup> Anghe, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law*, 6.

Visscher under authorization by the WIC. In addition to land claimed by conquest, Grotius had also argued possession could be taken of unoccupied lands (*res nullius*). But what constituted unoccupied? In Roman law, possessed territory was formally enclosed, defendable, and occupied. If an area had never been occupied or had been abandoned, it belonged to no one. When the Portuguese fled Recife, the land, its buildings and warehouses were abandoned and they could be claimed by agents of the WIC. Dutch possession was doubly legitimated in the map of 1630 by Visscher, where the conquest is explained in text and picture, and the abandoned buildings are specifically described in text and image. Moreover, as victors, it was important to show that the WIC could properly defend, build up, and further develop the area. This exemplified an important corollary to *res nullius*—the idea of *improvement*. Land must be built upon or engineered by tools and technology in order to be rightfully owned.<sup>16</sup> Even if the reality was otherwise, presenting a picture of conquest, occupation, and development asserted the strength of Dutch possession—at least to the Dutch. It is not surprising that Dutch maps and illustrated travel accounts from the period picture Dutch improvement. This was further substantiated by the objectivity of eyewitness that maps could—and did—claim. On Visscher's 1630 map of Pernambuco (Fig.3), just below the title Visscher included "*Aldus na 't Leven op de Rede afgheteyckent anno 1630*" – "all this is from life, drawn in the year 1630." In Roman law, the testimony of eyewitness was the most powerful evidence that could be provided, seconded by depositions from eyewitness sources.<sup>17</sup>

In the profile view of Recife-Mauritsstad (Fig.1), Visscher emphasized the buildings that make it a developed city: churches, warehouses, homes, and

the bridge linking the two, each clarified by the key. Also following Roman ideas, the profile view of Vrijburg above demonstrates Johan Maurits' command of the area. The façade presents an impenetrable visual boundary that at once projects wealth and power in the profile, just as it was also meant to dominate in person. Barlaeus described how Johan Maurits followed ancient exempla by building a large palace. Roman commanders built great mansions that impressed and intimidated the enemy by their show of power.<sup>18</sup>

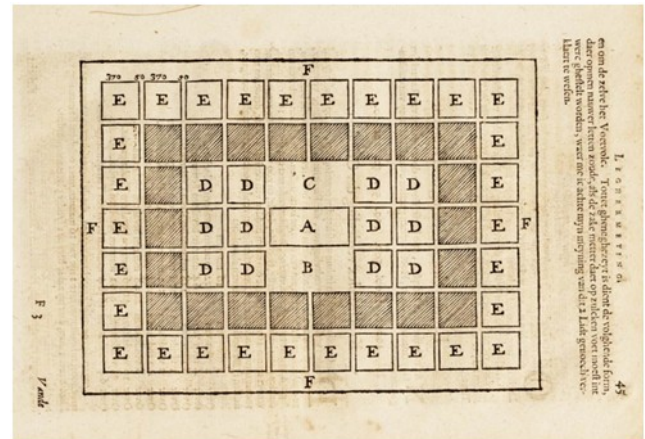


Fig.4

Simon Stevin, camp plan from *Castrametatio*, Rotterdam: Jan van Waesberghe, 1617. Dutch Royal Library, The Hague.

Certainly part of the project was to glorify Johan Maurits' role in Brazil. In the *Brasilia*, Barlaeus and Blaeu showcase Johan Maurits' military and economic developments, from forts and bridges to new tollways, the culmination of which was the planned city of Mauritsstad itself. The plan for the city of Mauritsstad in many ways followed Dutch military engineer Simon Stevin's practical designs for military camps and cities (Fig.4). Stevin innovated sluice systems to defend against enemies and the encroachment of the sea. Whereas the prince was at the center of Stevin's rectangular military camp, in his ideal city, civic buildings and plazas form the center,

<sup>16</sup> Aristotle identified cities as the apex of cultivation: man developed technology and institutions that organized individuals and their respective contributions to the community or civitas. Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 72-73. See also Anthony Pagden, "Law, Colonization, Legitimation, and the European Background," in *The Cambridge History of Law in America, Early America (1580-1815)*, Michael Grossberg and Christopher Tomlins, eds. Vol. 1, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*, 25, 27.

<sup>18</sup> "Rome had its builders, farmers who conquered the world, some of whom lived in great houses and tilled their field, while other spent their lives in army camps and forts... The magnificence of these buildings creates an impression of power for one's own citizens, for foreigners, and certainly for one's enemy... It is remarkable how these building activities shook the confidence of the Portuguese, while increasing that of our people. In their opinion it reflected the positive status of our government, which the Count had strengthened by spending his own money." Caspar van Baerle, *The History of Brazil under the Governorship of Count Johan Maurits of Nassau 1635-1644*, trans. Blanche T. Van Berckel-Ebeling Koning (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2011), 140, 143.

with streets or canals extending from the rectangular grid.<sup>19</sup> The gridded city at the juncture of rivers allowed the maritime Dutch to control imports and exports, as visually indicated by the ships in the harbor in so many maps of Dutch territories abroad.

The waterways directly connected the interior sugar plantations to Mauritsstad-Recife. At Mauritsstad-Recife, the land around the city provided the resources that were then taken into the city via central arteries, tolls and duties collected, and finally, shipped out across the Atlantic. Controlled water allowed goods to be transported in and out, and provided drainage, defense, and sanitation. They also provided checkpoints for authorities to collect tolls.<sup>20</sup> Tolls, moreover, were important for Dutch economic control. In a letter to the WIC directors, Johan Maurits wrote that “[n]othing is more profitable than the sugar trade, except for the large revenues from taxation, duties and tolls.”<sup>21</sup> In print, the plan and view suggest Mauritsstad as a civilized urban trade center controlled by Dutch military and civil engineering principles, even while in 1648 Dutch possession of the territory beyond the cities’ fortifications was insecure, and frequently under attack.<sup>22</sup>

Like the map of Mauritsstad-Recife, the map of New Netherland (Fig. 2) was published at a critical moment in the colony’s—and the Republic’s—existence. At the time of its publication around 1651, there were very few other images of New Netherland available.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> “I propose this form of a four-sided rectangle for a town, with a rectangular bastion at every corner, and its flanks next to the bastions, just as long. As for instance the flank A, B is twice as long as the flank C, D of the bastion at the corner; because in this way the front side D, E is covered by F, A half of A, B being as long as the whole flank C, D.” Stevin as translated in Charles van den Heuvel, *De Huysbou: A Reconstruction of an Unfinished Treatise on Architecture, Town Planning and Civil Engineering by Simon Stevin* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 2005), 353. See also Wim Nijenhuis, Nijenhuis, Wim. “Stevin’s Grid City and the Maurice Conspiracy,” in *Early Modern Urbanism and the Grid: Town Planning in the Low Countries in International Context*, Piet Lombaerde and Charles van den Heuvel, eds. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 45-62.

<sup>20</sup> In Stevin’s “On the ordering of towns” (*vande ordeningh der Steden*) [published posthumously by his son Hendrick in *Materiae Politicae: Burgherlijcke Stoffen* in 1649] Stevin emphasized that “The most common usage in newly discovered lands, where communities wish to settle ... one looks for a fertile piece of land, situated at the mouth of a great navigable river, coming from distant countries, because such places can have two-way traffic, one from the sea the other inland. Further for the crops and crafts of the inhabitants of such vast countries to be distributed around the world, it all has to go through this river mouth. Likewise all overseas goods that such lands need, they must obtain them all through this river mouth, resulting in great trade and relations one with the other, also great incomes from tolls and duties that the goods passing through have to pay.” Quoted in Van den Heuvel, *De Huysbou*, 351.

<sup>21</sup> Baerle, *The History of Brazil*, 302.

<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive description of events 1645-1648, see Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil 1624-1654*, 159-203.

<sup>23</sup> 1651 is most likely because Claes Janszoon Visscher, father to Nicolaes Claeszoon Visscher, died in 1652. Claes Jansz’s Latinized name appears on the map (*Nicolaes Joannis Visscher*). Hartgerszoon’s 1651 text on North America does not include information from the Visscher map, and it is certainly after 1649, when Van der

The need to picture New Netherland and New Amsterdam arose from disputes of proprietary rights of the colonists under WIC governor-general Pieter Stuyvesant, and fears about English and Swedish infringement on the land and the resources it provided.<sup>24</sup> The Dutch claimed New Netherland initially to gain access to the lucrative trade in beaver pelts and timber. By the 1640s, it was clear to WIC directors that they needed colonists to settle and cultivate farms. The WIC relied heavily on the duties from the trade goods colonists produced. Moreover, increasing pressure from English settlers made it necessary for the WIC to publicize its occupation and possession of the land and its resources. The Company did so with this map. The geographical outline provides territorial boundaries, and the view of the city—included specifically by Visscher—pictorially likens the colonial settlement to its namesake, Amsterdam.

In Visscher’s map, New Amsterdam is depicted in profile. The scene is framed by a Dutch fluyt on the far left, while three smaller boats float close to the picture plane. The land projects forward at the center of the composition. In this central position gallows and a fire-basket pole guard the small pier at the edge of the water.<sup>25</sup> Two figures point to the gallows, and a group walks on the beach. At the far left edge of the settlement is a windmill with four sails. Next to it is the earthen fort, topped by a flag staff, proudly marking “where the ships come to harbor.” Small figures busy themselves on the fort walls. The double-gabled church partially obscures the governor’s house behind it (F).<sup>26</sup> The jail (E), sits between the church and the fort. On the right side of the composition, the Company warehouse is just beyond the gallows, marked by the letter ‘I’, and on the edge of town is the city’s inn, which became the town hall in 1653. Fields bathed in dappled light extend to the horizon and edge of the composition. Timber dwellings line the beach, creating a neat row of red-roofed homes between the church and gallows. All in all, the scene depicts a small but civilized

Donck arrived in the Netherlands with a map to present to the States General.

<sup>24</sup> See especially Schmidt, “Mapping an Empire.”

<sup>25</sup> Joep de Koning, “Origins of the Visscher View of New Amsterdam, 1648.” *Mercator’s World* 5, no. July/August (2000), 8-9; and Martine Gosselink, *New York/New Amsterdam* (Den Haag: Nieuw Amsterdam Uitgeverij/Nationaal Archief, 2009), 117.

<sup>26</sup> The Protestant church and the governor’s house were built in 1642.

settlement open to cultivation and trade. The land on the right stretches beyond the composition, ready to be tilled; the neat row of homes could easily extend along an implied line to the right; and the large ship on the left denotes maritime trade at the fort.

The windmill, church, and gallows of New Amsterdam would have been immediately recognizable to anyone familiar with Amsterdam. These features were not derived from Visscher's imagination, but he did add sails to the mill, clean up the fort, and regularize the town's buildings in a neat row. We know this because a sketch, probably drawn around 1648, is extant in Vienna. The sketch has been attributed to the Bohemian surveyor Agustijn Heerman, who lived in New Amsterdam and was a co-signer the remonstrance.<sup>27</sup> The sketch shows a two-sailed mill and earthen fort corroborating the written descriptions of the dilapidated mill and fort in the published *Vertoogh van Nieuwe Nederland* (*Remonstrance of New Netherland*, 1649). According to the *Remonstrance*, the windmill, used to grind grain for the colony, lacked two sails because the structure was unable to support the extra weight.<sup>28</sup> In the watercolor sketch the fort is hardly a mound of earth from which the flag pole extends, and no ships sail in the harbor. The *Remonstrance* describes the fort as so eroded that it was unable to support artillery. Visscher had many reasons to pictorially sanitize the settlement. Certainly, as a publisher with ties to the WIC, it was not in his interest to make the Company's settlement look bad. Moreover, he could capitalize on the desires and fantasies of potential colonists to sell his map. Of course, soliciting potential settlers was precisely the point. The WIC needed to attract more colonists to occupy, cultivate, and defend its territory. In print, Visscher presents an attractive view, and simultaneously claims the area for the WIC and its future colonists.



**Fig.5**

*Amstelodamum Emporium*, from Johannes Pontanus, *Rerum et urbis Amstelodamensium historia*, Amsterdam: Jodocus Hondius, 1611. James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

This commercial presentation of colonial territory had precedent in the copious maps and views of Amsterdam. A proliferation of printed maps emphasized Amsterdam's development as a trade emporium.<sup>29</sup> Johannes Pontanus' 1611 *Rerum et urbis Amstelodamensium historia* (*History and Activities of the City of Amsterdam*) includes a ground plan of Amsterdam (Fig.5). In the plan of Amsterdam, plots of arable land, windmills, canals, ships in the port, and views of the bourse, emphasized the developed city, and the mechanisms for trade. The profile view above highlights built institutions and windmills that pumped water and ground grain. The gallows, prominent along the water, reassured merchants and citizens about the lawful city in which they conducted business. Land for agricultural production extends from, but is connected to, the city. Visscher used the same pictorial language to present those colonial outposts as secure sites of trade and development and to integrate Dutch Atlantic territories into a global, Dutch *civitas*.<sup>30</sup>

For the Dutch, the years around 1650 were anything but stable. After exhausting its coffers to try to hold

<sup>27</sup> Gosselink, *New York/New Amsterdam*, 99-100. See also Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*. Jaap Jacobs has recently questioned the attribution of the sketch to Agustijn Heerman, and its use by the colonists in their remonstrance. Jacobs deemphasizes the negative view of Amsterdam that some have said the sketch. See Bea Brommer and Henk den Heijer, *Grote Atlas Van De WIC: Oude WIC 1621-1674* (Voorburg: Asia Maior/Atlas Maior, 2011), 32. Others who have noted it as a dilapidated view by Heermann include Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money*, 225-227; Krohn and Miller, *Dutch New York from East to West*, 184-187; De Koning, "Origins of the Visscher View of New Amsterdam," 7.

<sup>28</sup> Gosselink, *New York New Amsterdam*, 114-115.

<sup>29</sup> Boudewijn Bakker, "Het imago van de stad: zelfportret als propaganda" in Boudewijn Bakker and Erik Schmitz, eds. *Het Aanzien Van Amsterdam: Panorama's, Plattegronden En Profielen Uit De Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Thoth Bussum, 2007), 56-78, and Boudewijn Bakker, "Emporium or Empire? Printed Metaphors of a Merchant Metropolis," in *Amsterdam-New York: Transatlantic Relations and Urban Identities since 1653*, George Harinck and Hans Krabbendam, eds., 31-43. (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> For the idea of an imperial-colonial *civitas* see Anthony Pagden, "Fellow Citizens and Imperial Subjects: Conquest and Sovereignty in Europe's Overseas Empires," *History and Theory* 44, no. 4 (2005): 28-46.



onto Brazil, the Dutch capitulated to the Portuguese in 1654, and New Amsterdam surrendered to the English in 1667. Maps however, projected a very different picture. The eminent scholar of Dutch Brazil, Charles Boxer, suggested that the capitulation in 1654 “came as a surprise to contemporaries, despite the pessimistic series of reports from the High Council at Recife...the strength of the fortification of Recife and Mauritsstad was a good deal overestimated in Europe, possibly because of books like Pierre Moreau’s *Historie*, which described Recife as one of the strongest places in the world.”<sup>31</sup>

It was not just text that claimed a strong Dutch hold on Brazil: maps were literally foundational to that view. In fact, Moreau’s *l’Histoire de la Dernière Guerre faite au Bresil, entre les Portugais et les Hollandois* from 1651 (*History of the Latest War in Brazil Between the Portuguese and Dutch*) was printed in Dutch in 1652, and the frontispiece shows a detail of the very same map of Mauritsstad-Recife published by Blaeu and Visscher in 1647-1648, complete with a fleet of ships in the foreground (Fig.6).

Printed Dutch maps from this period picture an organized, rational, and planned global Dutch community during a period fraught with tensions at home and abroad. The visual motifs in maps contributed to Dutch identification of themselves as a global, commercial, and civilized nation during a crucial period of national identity formation. The maps of Mauritsstad-Recife and New Amsterdam served an important role as printed propaganda for the WIC, propaganda that helped shape public opinion about its potential for military and commercial success. These maps proved possession and stability by all sorts of pictorial means, including the very nature of the space represented—a space that was claimed, built, developed, organized, and controlled.



**Fig.6**

Title page to Pierre Moreau, *Klare en waarachtige beschryving van de Ieste beroerten en afval der Portugeezen in Brasil*, Amsterdam: Jan Hendriksz & Jan Rieuwertsz, 1652, James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>31</sup> Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil 1624-1654*, 244-245.