Albert Eckhout was one of the earliest trained European artists in the Americas. For seven years (1637–1644) he was a painter at the colonial court of governor-general Johan Maurits von Nassau-Siegen in Dutch Brazil, which was established by the Dutch West India Company (WIC) in 1630. Eckhout’s Brazilian paintings and drawings include still lifes, oil studies of indigenous plants and animals, and a remarkable ethnographic series, that features fantastic Africanos, and the fine paintings of people of mixed racial background.

Dr. Brienen answers the critical need for a new, book-length treatment of Eckhout’s oeuvre with this richly illustrated text, which provides an up-to-date and in-depth analysis of the artist and his Brazilian works. In this book, the author pays special attention to the iconographic traditions that inform Eckhout’s paintings and further explores the function of this works within the colonial context.

This book will not only be of interest to academics and scholars of seventeenth-century Dutch art, but it will also be an important resource for those interested in visual anthropology, art and exploration, and the history of the WIC.

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VISIONS OF SAVAGE PARADISE
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In memory of Mary Lynn Parker  
(1937–1986)
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FIG. 1 – Albert Eckhout, *Mameluca*, 1641, oil on canvas, 271 x 170 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen. See also colour plate 9.
WHAT WERE ALBERT ECKHOUT’S FIRST IMPRESSIONS of colonial Dutch Brazil when he landed in the port city of Recife on 23 January 1637? One can imagine that after three dull and sometimes dangerous months at sea, he was grateful to reach dry land and finally begin his work as a painter of portraits, still lifes, and natural curiosities for the colony’s new governor general, the German count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen. A young, unknown painter from Groningen, a northern province of the Dutch Republic, and most recently an inhabitant of Amsterdam, Eckhout had never before travelled outside the borders of his country. Although he may have consulted any number of popular illustrated accounts of the New World available in Dutch, little would have prepared Eckhout for the sensual overload of his first encounter with the Brazilian landscape and its unfamiliar smells, flavours, textures, and sounds. The people who came to meet the ship, perhaps hoping to catch a glimpse of their new governor, would have presented a cross-section of the colonial population. Merchants, employees of the Dutch West India Company (WIC), Portuguese planters, members of the Jewish community, African slaves, free people of mixed ethnic background, and representatives of local indigenous groups, surely created a colourful social and ethnic mixture of local humanity. As Eckhout and other members of the Count’s entourage, including the Haarlem landscape painter Frans Post, slowly made their way from the ship to their new quarters, flocks of green parrots may have passed overhead, harshly squawking their greeting. The spikey beauty of a passion flower may have presented itself for the painter’s admiration, and Eckhout may have stopped to touch the oblong fruits of a papaya tree, his fingers itching to capture its colours and form in paint. During the seven years that he lived in Brazil as court painter to Johan Maurits, Eckhout was given ample opportunity to explore, record, and create visions on canvas of the plants, animals, and especially the people of his new colonial home,
a strange and ‘wilde’ (savage) paradise. For Eckhout and Johan Maurits, Brazil was a beautiful, exciting, and dangerous frontierland in which the threat of a largely unexplored and untamed interior remained ever present. It was also a place where an artist and his patron could test their abilities and, quite literally, create a stage for their ambitions.

**Dutch Brazil**

Described as the ‘tempo dos flamengos’ in the title to José Antonio Gonsalves de Mello’s seminal work on the subject, the occupation of northeastern Portuguese Brazil by the Dutch between 1624 and 1654 was largely the initiative of the WIC.¹ The wealthy merchant Willem Usselincx (1567–1647) was one of the most important early supporters for the establishment of a Dutch trading company for the West Indies and Africa.² Usselincx, a strict, god-fearing Calvinist, imagined an organization whose primary function was the creation of colonies in the New World, especially Brazil, which could usurp the political and religious dominance of Spain and Portugal in this region and provide raw materials to the Dutch Republic. The revolt of the Dutch against the Spanish empire had begun in 1568; accordingly, the challenge to the Iberian presence in the New World could be justified as part of the war effort.³ When the WIC was finally created in 1621, nearly twenty years after its highly successful sister company the VOC (Dutch East India Company), its charter emphasized trade and conquest in the Americas and Africa over Usselincx’s ideal of colonization. One of its first major military undertakings was, nonetheless, a bid for Portuguese Brazil’s rich plantations and natural resources. The cultivation of sugar, a crop introduced from the Canary Islands, had brought great wealth to the European colonists and traders in northeastern Brazil, and the Directors of the WIC hoped to enjoy similar profits. After a series of failed attempts, the Dutch were able to take firm control of the northern captaincies (provinces) along the eastern coast with the occupation of Recife in 1630. In 1636, the Directors of the WIC named the German Count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen the first governor-general of the colony (hereafter Dutch Brazil), and he sailed to Brazil on October 25 of that same year.⁴

The 32-year-old Count was a well-known figure in the Dutch Republic; he was an officer in the Dutch army and a frequent visitor in The Hague at the court of his cousin, the Dutch stadholder Prince Frederik Hendrik.⁵ With this appointment, the Directors of the WIC hoped that Johan Maurits would provide the strong leadership that the young colony so obviously needed. Upon his arrival, Johan Maurits set about expanding the Dutch holdings in Brazil through the occupation of Portuguese forts and plantations. He also secured the slaves needed to labour on the colony’s sugar
plantations by directing the conquest of Portuguese trading posts along the West African coast. Johan Maurits’s interests were not, however, limited to trade, agriculture, and military conquest. His ambitions extended to the physical appearance of the colony, whose capital at Recife he wanted to transform based on his experience with cities in Germany and the Dutch Republic.

As part of this project, he founded Mauritsstad, which became the new capital of the colony, and commissioned a series of rather costly building projects to create order and apply a European model of civilization to the rough coastal settlement. Among the projects completed we find public parks, botanical and pleasure gardens, a bridge, and two palaces, of which only images and descriptions have survived. Fortunately, like many of his princely contemporaries in Europe, whose practices he clearly wished to emulate, Johan Maurits was also very interested in natural history, an area of investigation which then included the description and representation of animals and plants as well as human beings. The scholarly and artistic works related to natural history that were produced at his Brazilian court are generally considered the most significant cultural legacy of his governorship.6

Art and Natural History at the Colonial Court

While little came of the WIC’s goal of establishing a Brazilian empire based on the cultivation and export of sugar, the short period of Johan Maurits’s government of the colony resulted in the first European artistic and scientific studies of Brazil. The Dutch painters Albert Eckhout (ca.1607-ca.1666) and Frans Post (1612-1680), the German natural historian Georg Marcgraf (1610-ca. 1644), and the Dutch physician Willem Piso (1611-1678) are the most important members of the group of talented artists and scientists attracted to the Brazilian court of Johan Maurits. Eckhout and Post probably traveled with the Count to Brazil in the fall of 1636, while Piso and Marcgraf did not leave for Recife until the following year. Collectively their accomplishments in Brazil include illustrations and written descriptions of the colony’s flora and fauna, representations of the various ethnic groups present in Brazil, and still-life and landscape paintings. In a 1678 letter offering his Brazilian collection to King Louis XIV of France, Johan Maurits asserted that the works made at his court in Brazil created a ‘portrait’ of that country’s peoples, animals, birds, fish, and fruits.7 The body of work – both visual and written – that Eckhout, Marcgraf, Piso, and Post produced for Johan Maurits in Dutch Brazil constitutes one of the richest and most important resources documenting the encounter with and colonization of the New World during the seventeenth century. As noted by Rüdger Jopprien in an influential essay on Johan Maurits and his artists, it would not be until the voyages of Captain
James Cook in the eighteenth century that a similarly extensive pictorial record would be made of non-European lands and their peoples. 8

Before leaving the Dutch Republic, the Count engaged the services of both Post and Eckhout. Unlike many earlier (and later) colonial artists, their sole function appears to have been the creation of works of art for the Count in Brazil. Post specialized in landscapes, and his paintings from Brazil, as well as the engravings published in 1647 after his drawings, include panoramic views of the Brazilian countryside. Eckhout was the figure and still-life painter at Johan Maurits’s court, but his work is far more compelling than this description suggests. In addition to traditional portraits of the Count and other officials in Brazil (all lost), he made life studies and paintings of the ethnic groups encountered in Brazil, including Africans, Indians, and people of mixed racial background (fig. 1; plates 1–9). He furthermore created hundreds of drawings and oil studies of indigenous flora and fauna during his seven years in Brazil (figs. 2–4, 62; plates 13–15, 17). Some of these, such as the skilful chalk drawing of manioc reproduced here, formed the basis for Eckhout’s still-life paintings, which highlight the fruits and vegetables that grew in the colony.

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*fig. 2 – Albert Eckhout, Monkeypot Fruit, oil on paper, 46 x 32.5 cm, Theatrum vol. III, f. 37, Libri picturati A34. Courtesy of the Jagiellon University Library, Kraków.*
Post and Eckhout were not the only European artists present in the Dutch colony. In 1678 Johan Maurits claimed that six artists had worked for him in Brazil, ‘dont chacun a curieusement peint à quoy il estoit le plus capable’. Today only Eckhout, Post, and Georg Marcgraf can be firmly identified as numbering among this group. Marcgraf, a naturalist-illustrator, was a student of medicine at Leiden University when he was recruited for a Brazilian adventure with the WIC. He arrived in Recife in 1638, probably sailing on the same ship as Piso, who became the Count’s personal physician. In all likelihood, Marcgraf was originally hired to be Piso’s assistant in Brazil. Nonetheless, Marcgraf’s extensive knowledge of natural history and astronomy, in addition to his artistic abilities, soon made him an indispensable, and independent, member of the Count’s court.

To complement his patronage of Post and Eckhout, the Count sponsored Marcgraf and Piso’s investigations in zoology and botany, which would eventually result in the publication of the Historia naturalis Brasiliae (1648), the first natural history of Brazil. The engraved frontispiece to this work, which borrows heavily from Eckhout’s paintings and drawings, displays a friendly, even amorous, Indian couple posed against an orderly but lush tropical landscape (fig. 5). The main figures’ youth-
ful and healthy nude bodies, the heavy swag of fruit that stretches between the trees behind them, and the multitude of exotic animals in the trees and along the ground create the impression that Brazil is a New World paradise. Any whisper of cannibalism, which had been associated with America from the beginning of the sixteenth century, is absent from this doorway into Brazil. The function of this image is not, however, simply to welcome the reader; its more essential role is to excite his curiosity about the secrets that will be revealed in the pages that follow.

As mentioned above, natural history in the seventeenth century was broadly defined to include the investigation and representation of plants and animals as well as human beings. The first half of the *Historia* was authored by Piso, who addresses tropical botany and the medicinal uses of Brazilian plants; the second half was written by Marcgraf, who provides detailed, and occasionally quite anecdotal, descriptions of Brazilian animals. A short appendix to this work (added by the editor, Johannes de Laet) discusses indigenous groups, including the Tupinamba and ‘Tapuya’, and illustrates them with woodcuts after Eckhout’s paintings. Of the remaining woodcuts, which number over 300, the vast majority are based on the natural history drawings of Eckhout and Marcgraf, demonstrating how difficult (and artificial) it is to separate the practice of art from science in Dutch Brazil, because both were part of the same colonial project (fig. 6).

From the very beginning, European accounts of travel, trade, and colonization in the Americas emphasized descriptions of plants, animals, and people, such as those found in Piso and Marcgraf’s *Historia*. As Mary Louise Pratt, Nicholas Thomas, Peter Hulme, and Anthony Pagden, among others, have demonstrated, scientific investigation of non-European people in addition to exotic flora and fauna have been intrinsically linked to European imperialism throughout the world since the early modern period. In the case of the Americas, many of the earliest reports by Europeans (such as those attributed to Amerigo Vespucci) described the Indians as godless savages and cannibals, which justified conquest and the forced introduction of Christianity. While the quest for gold remained an important motivation for exploration, the encounter with and study of the New World’s other natural resources also encouraged trade, which was quickly followed by settlement and expansion. As colonies developed, rulers and administrators commissioned studies of indigenous populations, which addressed their appearance as well as their languages and customs. This type of ethnographic information, which occurred in visual as well as verbal form, facilitated rule in a number of ways, not the least of which was the way it made the people living under colonial rule more visible and open to scrutiny.

Unlike the scholars mentioned above, who are largely concerned with textual sources, this study instead highlights the vital role played by images in colonial discourse by focusing on the paintings and drawings produced at the court of Johan
Maurits van Nassau-Siegen in seventeenth-century Dutch Brazil. At this juncture, I would like to emphasize that I am an art historian, not an anthropologist or a natural historian, for whom Eckhout’s visual material has a very different status as evidence. In this study I do not include an analysis of the types of species Eckhout depicted, nor am I interested in using Eckhout’s figural works to reconstruct the lifeways of particular ethnic groups. In this volume I address questions related to style and representation, patronage, and the intended function of these images, including how and where they may have been displayed in the seventeenth century. Although the commission and collection of natural history illustration clearly allied the Count with other princely patrons in Europe in the seventeenth century, the focus here is squarely upon Brazil and the role of these images, especially Eckhout’s figural works, within the colonial context. Throughout this book I argue that the creation, use, and display of Eckhout’s images of the colony’s human and natural resources demonstrated Johan Maurits’s position as a colonial and cultural leader in Brazil and supported the WIC’s claim to this territory.

This study begins with a biography of Albert Eckhout, which also functions as a general introduction to the artistic climate of the Dutch Republic in the third decade of the seventeenth century. Despite his provincial origins, Eckhout was not an artistic outsider; this chapter addresses his connection to a prominent circle of classicizing artists, including Paulus Bor and Jacob van Campen. Although the focus of my study is Eckhout’s career in Brazil, his pre- and post-Brazilian periods are discussed here as well. In chapter 2, I address Eckhout’s chalk drawings and extraordinary oil studies on paper of Brazilian flora and fauna, which are now in the collection of the Jagiellon University Library in Kraków. These works, which have received very little attention from art historians, include images that are equal to, and in some cases rival, his paintings on canvas with respect to quality and versimilitude. Here I also address the slippery status of ‘scientific illustration’ in the seventeenth century through a careful analysis of the differences in pictorial modes and style adopted by Eckhout and Marcgraf in their images of Brazilian nature.

Chapter 3 addresses sixteenth- and seventeenth-century representations of Indians and the status of early modern ethnographic representation more generally in order to frame the rest of the book, which is primarily concerned with Eckhout’s figural works. His extant paintings, all of which are in the ethnographic collection of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, include twelve still lifes of fruits and vegetables and eight life-size images of Africans, Indians (‘Tapuya’ and Tupinamba), and people of mixed racial background, including the earliest known paintings of a mulatto and a mameluca (European/Tupinamba). Beginning with Eckhout’s representations of Brazilian Indians, chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate the artificiality and constructed quality of Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits, which are informed by the pictorial conventions
of costume book and travel account illustration as well as traditional portraiture. Eckhout’s figural works, while based on first-hand knowledge of the groups in question, were also shaped by contemporary stereotypes about non-European peoples. The mameluca, for example, is an especially fascinating work that visualizes European assumptions about the sexual availability and desirability of women of mixed racial background in colonial environments.

In the final chapter I take up the question of display: were Eckhout’s figural paintings and still lifes intended for European export or were they part of the Count’s visualization of rule during his governorship of Brazil? This chapter focuses on two possibilities: display in a Kunst und Wunderkammer in Europe or Brazil or public exhibition in Vrijburg Palace, the Count’s primary residence in Dutch Brazil. Regardless of their intended venue, the still lifes can be interpreted as a visual demonstration of the fecundity of the colony, while Eckhout’s images of the colony’s subject peoples offered an ordered and stable view of Dutch Brazil.

It is important to note that Eckhout’s taxonomic approach to colonial humanity anticipated the independent development of the casta painting genre in colonial Mexico and Peru in the early eighteenth century. As in Eckhout’s work, casta paintings showcase the varieties of people found in a colonial empire and visually demonstrate the higher social and economic status enjoyed by Europeans, in this case the Spanish. Eckhout’s figural works predate the earliest images in the casta genre by more than fifty years, and these later paintings from New Spain demonstrate a much more obsessive and pseudo-scientific tendency by giving each human variety of mixed race its own title and definition. The existence of Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits nonetheless demonstrates that as early as the first decades of the seventeenth century, the process of creating visual racial types within a framework of established social hierarchies had already been set in motion.

The European Vision of the New World before Eckhout

The first trained artists from Europe did not arrive in the Americas until the second half of the sixteenth century. Already in 1535, however, the Spaniard Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo had called for the leading artists of the Italian Renaissance to document the new Spanish possessions. Oviedo’s recognition of the need for trained European artists, but his inability to find any in the Americas, is demonstrated by the rather naïve woodcuts that illustrate his La Historia general de las Indias, a text that is both a natural history and one of the earliest accounts of the Spanish conquest. His advice went largely unheeded until King Philip II of Spain ordered a complete visual inventory of Mexican nature in 1571, which was completed circa 1575 by a number of
artists (including indigenous artists) under the direction of the learned physician Francisco Hernández (1515-87). This accumulation of knowledge in an attempt to understand and control a colonial possession also included Hernández's study of the Nahua, an ethnic group in central Mexico, as well as his thoughtful investigation of indigenous medical traditions. Given the Spanish Crown's financial insolvency, Hernández's book was never published. Furthermore, little can be said about the ten volumes of illustrations of plants, animals, and minerals that his artists produced. Although a handful were published as woodcuts in the seventeenth century, the originals were seen by relatively few visitors and are believed to have been destroyed in the 1671 fire in El Escorial.

Northern Europeans were the first trained artists in the Americas whose images became accessible to a large European public. The Englishman John White is among the most important of these early artists, not only for the quality of his watercolour drawings, but also for the simple fact that his images survived long enough to be copied and reproduced in printed form. White's drawings, created while he lived in the English settlement on Roanoke Island (called ‘Virginia’ by contemporaries, but now part of North Carolina), provide a fascinating introduction to North American plants and animals. Some of his images are supplemented by descriptions written by White himself, in which he gives the size of the specimen and sometimes compares it to a European variety. Nonetheless, White is most famous for his compelling images of the Carolina Algonquins, which highlight their customs as well as appearance. It is a curious fact that White was also colonial governor for part of his time in North America, an experience that undoubtedly made him aware of the importance of gathering information and images about the new land and its peoples. While the majority of White's natural history images remained unpublished, his figural drawings were used to illustrate Theodor de Bry's 1590 edition of Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (Fig. 7). In this image of a young Indian woman 'of good parentage', White treats her like a specimen by displaying her from the back and front, paying special attention to her hairstyle, jewellery, and body decoration. As Paul Hulton notes is typical of de Bry's approach, her face and body have been homogenized in the translation from drawing to engraving, making them correspond more closely than the original image to European ideals of female beauty.

Like the images of the Americas made by artists working for the French, Spanish, and English, the first representations of Brazil were created by and for those involved in early attempts at conquest, trade, and colonization. During the second half of the sixteenth century, three separate illustrated accounts of Brazil and its Indians were published in Europe. These books, which vary widely in style and tone, include German Lutheran Hans Staden's *Wahrhaftige Historia und Beschreibung eyner Landschaft der Wilden* (1557), French Catholic André Thevet's *Les singularitez de la
France Antarctique (1558), and French Calvinist Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la Terre du Bresil* (1578). The images of Indians, identified as Tupinamba, in these sixteenth-century books generally highlight their well-formed bodies and external ornamentation (fig. 8). As such they established the first iconography for the Tupinamba man—naked, clean shaven, feathered, and generally cannibalistic—drawing in varying degrees on the stereotype already established for South American Indians by the earliest publications on the New World. Brazilian flora and fauna are represented by only a few specimens in the books of Staden, Thevét, and Léry. Although their works are illustrated, the woodcuts are few in number and are often quite rudimentary in execution. Based on drawings by amateurs, like Hans Staden, or produced after written descriptions by European artists who had no direct experience with the peoples or practices they were representing, the black-and-white prints in these books are generally subordinate to the text. Although Theodor de Bry’s engravings after Staden, which were reproduced in Part III (1592) of his *Grands Voyages* series on travel to the Americas, are an improvement with respect to artistic quality, they are far removed from the originals in their visual emphasis on cannibalism.
Fig. 8 – Tupinamba Family, woodcut. Reproduced in Jean de Léry, *Historie d’un voyage* (1578).
Courtesy of the Annenburg Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
and female sexuality. It was not until Johan Maurits arrived in Brazil with his entourage in 1636 that skilled European artists were able to experience, record, and create their own representations of Brazil first hand.

**Possessing Brazil**

In 1500 Brazil was first encountered by Europeans, most famously Pedro Álvarez Cabral, and by the end of the sixteenth century, Portuguese settlements had taken root along the northeastern coast. Nonetheless, no attempt was made to create a visual inventory of Brazil’s peoples or natural wonders until the arrival of Johan Maurits and his artists and scientists in the 1630s. It was only with the painted and drawn representations created by Albert Eckhout that the rich colour and startling variety of Brazil’s plants and animals and the beauty and ‘exoticism’ of its peoples could be preserved, studied, and eventually possessed by those on the other side of the Atlantic. Upon the Count’s return to Europe in 1644, the naturalistic appearance and life-like colour of Eckhout’s drawings and paintings made clear claims about the artist and patron’s privileged access to the real person or thing represented. Unlike Oviedo or Léry, both of whom lamented the impossibility of capturing the New World and its peoples in pictures, Johan Maurits expressed an admiration for the verisimilitude achieved by his artists in Brazil. Indeed, the drawings and paintings by Eckhout testify to Johan Maurits’ keen desire for images that could stand in for the originals.

The complex history of the images created by Eckhout for Count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen demonstrates the connections between the patronage of science, colonization, and the practice of collecting as a means of asserting power and status among an influential and ambitious aristocratic elite during the seventeenth century. The paintings, verbal descriptions, and artifacts assembled by Johan Maurits during his governorship in Brazil became the objects of an elite gift exchange upon his return to Europe in 1644. As such, they provided him with the cultural and social capital necessary to raise his position to the vanguard of the European elite. The fact that the images produced by Eckhout, Marcgraf, and Post ended up in the curiosity cabinets of King Frederik III of Denmark, the Elector of Brandenburg, and King Louis XIV of France indicates both the ambition of Johan Maurits and the value that seventeenth-century nobility placed on natural history and ethnographic illustration.
CHAPTER 1

Albert Eckhout (ca. 1607-1665/6)
Portrait and Still-life Painter at Johan Maurits’s Brazilian Court

The Dutch painter and Groningen native Albert Eckhout was Count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen’s primary court artist in Dutch Brazil, where he produced still lifes, portraits, and images of natural curiosities. Despite Eckhout’s central role in Mauritsstad, evidence of his activities is limited to a few documents, his drawings, and his signed, dated paintings. We do not know how or why he was chosen to accompany the Count to Brazil, and we lack any kind of definitive information on his training. There is no contract for his service with Johan Maurits; he left no letters behind; he is mentioned only twice in the papers of the WIC in the ARA (Dutch State Archives, The Hague); he is not named in Rerum per octennium in Brasilia (1647), Caspar Barlaeus’s history of Dutch Brazil; and his name occurs only rarely in Johan Maurits’s extant personal papers. It is nonetheless useful to review what is known (as well as what has been assumed) about this artist’s life, making a few educated guesses in order to fill in the narrative. Although my study is chiefly concerned with his work in Brazil, this biographical sketch will cover his pre- as well as his post-Brazilian periods.
Groningen, Amersfoort, and Amsterdam, ca. 1607-1636

In H.E. van Gelder’s pioneering biographical essay on Eckhout, he gave an overview of the artist’s Groningen origins and his subsequent activities. Van Gelder’s essay was supported by research in a number of Dutch archives, but it was published the same year that he died, which apparently resulted in the omission of his sources. This has made the verification of the important information he provided a time-consuming and occasionally frustrating task. My investigation of Eckhout’s life, along with Florike Egmond and Peter Mason’s recently published biographical essay, have confirmed, augmented, and challenged a number of Van Gelder’s assumptions.

The narrative begins with the official betrothal of the man and woman whom Van Gelder assumed were the parents of Albert Eckhout. Church records in Groningen state that Alberdtg (Albert) Eeckholdt and Marryen Roeleffs registered their intent to be married (ondertrouw) on 4 October 1606 and married on 16 November 1606. Because research in the archives has not resulted in the identification of another, more suitable, couple for Eckhout’s parents, I have retained Van Gelder’s identification. It is important to note that spelling in seventeenth-century Dutch is rarely consistent, and archival evidence demonstrates that individuals frequently used a variety of spellings for their own surnames. Eeckholdt is a less common variant of Eeckholt or Eckholt; Eeckhout is also fairly common, and Eckhout is not a surprising alternative. I have chosen here to retain Eckhout as the preferred form, primarily because it is the traditional spelling of the artist’s name (based on how he signed his paintings) but also in order to distinguish him from his father (Eeckholt, Eeckholdt, or Eeckhout).

Parish baptismal records are not extant for Groningen before 1640, so Van Gelder established the date of Eckhout’s birth as ca. 1610 based on two factors. First, he argued that Albert Eckhout must have been older than Frans Post, because Eckhout is named before Post (b. 1612) on the April 1643 list of those entitled to free board at the Count’s court in Brazil. Second, given the November 1606 marriage of his probable parents Marryen and Albert, Van Gelder suggested that the first possible year of birth for Albert Eckhout was 1607. Therefore, he posited ca. 1610 as an ‘average’ date between 1612 and 1607. Nonetheless, using Post’s date of birth to establish Eckhout’s age is illogical. Eckhout’s name came before Post’s on the list not because he was older but because he was most likely the favoured artist of the two. The 1643 list of those entitled to free board in Brazil clearly represents a hierarchy of importance, beginning with Johan Maurits and ending with washer women and other minor servants. As such, it is clear that ca. 1607 is an equally valid choice, which I have adopted following the example of Rüdger Joppien.

Unlike the Eeckholts, the Roeloffs family had a large presence in Groningen, and it counted bakers, boat-builders, and at least one artist among its members. In a
document dated 1620, Albert Eeckholt is referred to as ‘deser stat makelaer’ (this city’s broker), although it is not known how long he held this position or what other jobs he may have had. Marryen and Albert senior may have had other children in addition to Albert. The marriage records in Groningen show that Jantien Eeckholt married Johan Geerts on 1 January 1639; this document also mentions Jantien’s brother, Rabbivius Eeckholt. Because the name Eeckholt occurs quite infrequently in documents from Groningen during this period, a family connection is unavoidable. By 1639 Albert Eckhout was in Brazil and both Marryen and Albert senior were already dead, so it makes sense that none of them is mentioned as a witness to his sister or perhaps cousin’s wedding.

Until 1621, Marryen is mentioned in the records as ‘Eeckholt’s wife’, but Albert senior’s marriage to Lysbet Jansen Lessynck on 1 January 1626 points to Marryen’s death sometime between 1621 and 1625. I believe that this marriage document concerns Albert senior, because on 3 July 1629, Lysbet, now called ‘Albert Eeckholt’s widow’, remarried. A death date for Albert senior around 1628 appears probable; this is also the last year he is mentioned in the legal and debtor’s archives for Groningen. The numerous legal documents relating to Albert and Marryen’s debts before their deaths not only give us an insight into the family’s financial hardships, they also provide us with the only clues about their son’s artistic training.

Primarily between 1619 and 1621, but continuing to 1628, Albert senior was in continuous financial trouble. In 1619, Albert and Marryen Eeckholt borrowed money from her brother, Gheert Roeloffs, whose profession is given as ‘schilder’ (painter). Van Gelder has suggested that Roeloffs, if he was indeed a ‘kunstschilder’ (fine painter), might have been Eckhout’s first teacher. New research in the archives did not, however, uncover any other documents mentioning Roeloffs or his work as one of the small number of painters in Groningen during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. If Eckhout was born earlier than 1610, as I have suggested, paying for his training could have been a factor in his parents’ financial troubles, which coincide with the period of his apprenticeship. It is probable that Eckhout’s training began between his twelfth and sixteenth year (ca. 1619-1623) and continued for at least two to three years (ca. 1621-1626), the minimum training period established by the guilds. In his study of apprenticeship contracts in the northern Netherlands in the seventeenth century, Ronald de Jager has noted that apprenticeships varied from one to seven years, with some older students continuing their training with a new master, making it possible that Eckhout was still an apprentice in the second half of the 1620s. Nonetheless, given the probable loss of both parents between 1621 and 1629, Eckhout needed to support himself financially. He probably became a master before 1628, perhaps working in another artist’s studio rather than setting himself up as an independent painter, a possibility that I will address in greater detail below.
In addition to Roeloffs, the important painter and architect Jacob van Campen (1595–1657) is frequently put forward as a possible teacher and later collaborator for Eckhout. Van Campen, one of the leading artists of Dutch Classicism, was deeply embedded in the cultural life of a number of Dutch cities, including his home town of Haarlem in addition to Amsterdam, Leiden, Utrecht, and Amersfoort, where he lived on the estate Randenbroek beginning around 1630. Early evidence of a connection to Van Campen and his circle exists in the form of Eckhout’s chalk sketch of a classically inspired group of female nudes (fig. 9), which he may have taken with him to Brazil. (In addition to these figures, the sketch also includes a drawing of castor oil leaves, which are presumably a later addition.) This figural composition also points to a familiarity with Dutch artists working in an Italianate style, such as Utrecht painter Cornelis van Poelenburch. Eckhout’s female figures in this sketch are strikingly similar to the goddesses in Poelenburch’s *Feast of the Gods*, ca. 1623, in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT. Although Eckhout’s Brazilian paintings and drawings lack classical references and demonstrate little interest in the ideal nude, the bodies of the men and women in his ethnographic series display the same solid monumentality found in the figures of both Van Campen and Paulus Bor (ca. 1601–1669), a painter who worked with Van Campen after his move to Amersfoort. Compare, for example, Eckhout’s *Mameluca* or his Tupinamba/Brasilien woman with Bor’s *Cydippe and the Apple from Acontius*, ca. 1640–45 in the Rijksmuseum. Given these stylistic similarities, it is quite possible that Eckhout could have lived in Amersfoort in the late 1620s or 1630s and worked there (perhaps even in Van Campen’s studio as a draughtsman) before departing for Brazil.

As first noted by Van Gelder, Eckhout may have had relatives in this city. New research on the Amersfoort Eckhout family suggests that they would have provided better social connections and a more sophisticated cultural milieu than young Albert had known in Groningen. An early connection to Amersfoort makes it possible that Eckhout’s, as yet hypothetical, pre-Brazilian work may include images currently attributed to Van Campen, such as *Woman at her Toilet* at the Bredius Museum in The Hague. Additional evidence connecting Van Campen and Eckhout comes from his post-Brazilian period between 1648 and 1652, when both men were living in Amersfoort. This will be addressed later in this chapter.

**Eckhout and Johan Maurits**

How Eckhout, a young painter from Groningen and perhaps also Amersfoort, became acquainted with a German count in The Hague remains something of a mystery. If we favor a connection to Van Campen, then he could have introduced the Count to
Eckhout and recommended that the newly appointed governor-general of Dutch Brazil bring an artist to South America with him. Van Campen, it should be noted, was the primary architect for the Mauritshuis, Johan Maurits’s small but well-appointed palace in The Hague. An alternate solution is suggested by Eckhout’s presence in Amsterdam sometime in the 1630s, during which time he may have come into contact with the painter Frans Post, a native of the nearby city of Haarlem. As suggested by new archival evidence, Eckhout lived in Amsterdam – apparently long enough to establish himself as a parishoner at one of the local Reformed churches – in the period directly before he went to Brazil; he could have moved there from Amersfoort.20 Fran’s brother, Pieter Post, was also one of the Count’s architects for the Mauritshuis, and both Frans Post and Eckhout would eventually accompany Johan Maurits to Brazil as his court artists. New archival evidence now points to Pieter’s presence in the Brazilian colony as well, which makes it possible that he could have participated in the planning and construction of the Vrijburg Palace.21 Van Campen was also active in Amsterdam around 1633, when he was busy designing the new courtyard for the Amsterdam Burgerweehuis (orphanage).22

R.E.O. Ekkart recently posited an interesting alternative to the two possible outcomes outlined above. Instead of Van Campen or Post (Frans or Pieter) providing the necessary introduction to Johan Maurits, Ekkart has instead suggested that Eckhout may have been involved in the production of drawings for printed illustrations in natural history books before he was drafted into the Count’s service.23 Such work was in demand in Amsterdam, because this city was a European leader in the publication of travel accounts and scientific texts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, inheriting this position from Antwerp. In this respect it is not insignificant that Marcgraf and Piso’s Historia naturalis Brasiliae (1648), the publication of which was underwritten by the Count, includes a large number of illustrations drawn directly from Eckhout’s work. Johan Maurits may have specifically sought out a painter skilled in the representation of the natural world to accompany him to Brazil. It is furthermore possible that making such images was an easy way to earn money for Eckhout, who may have had difficulty securing patronage as a young painter in the highly competitive art market in Amsterdam. Travel accounts, an especially popular form of literature in the Dutch Republic, were frequently illustrated with images of non-European people, flora, and fauna.

Evidence for the existence of artists working in this specialized area comes from WIC Director Johannes de Laet, the man who would eventually edit Piso and Marcgraf’s notes for the Historia. In discussing images of fishes from the Maranhão (Brazil) in his L’histoire du nouveau monde (1640), de Laet notes the receipt of three images from a ‘certain young man from our country, rather expert in the art of painting’.24 Although this work was published in 1640, it is a revised version of his 1625 book on
the New World. In the 1620s and 1630s, de Laet commissioned artists, like the ‘young man’ cited above, to create illustrations for his publications on America. Johannes de Laet is generally regarded as the most probable link between the German naturalist-illustrator Georg Marcgraf and Johan Maurits, and it is possible that he brought Eckhout to the Count’s attention as well. Nonetheless, as with the other explanations for why Johan Maurits decided to make Eckhout one of his court artists, there is as yet no solid evidence to support it.

Regardless of the identity of his teacher(s) or the location(s) of his apprenticeship, by 1636 Eckhout had received training in still life, landscape painting, portraiture, and drawing the nude figure after life.25 Today there are no signed paintings before 1641 known by Eckhout, nor have any been attributed to him. Although some have argued that Johan Maurits would not have taken an untested artist with him, his other artists and scientists – Post, Piso, and Marcgraf – had little to recommend them beyond their enthusiasm for travelling to the New World. Johan Maurits may have put more emphasis on availability, youth, and desire for adventure than on maturity or clearly demonstrated talent.

Eckhout in Brazil, 1637-1644

Although Piso probably arrived in Recife with Marcgraf around the beginning of 1638, Post and Eckhout travelled earlier. They most likely were part of the Count’s entourage, leaving the Dutch Republic on 25 October 1636 and arriving in Brazil on 23 January 1637. The two Dutch painters may have travelled with their ‘jongens’, who were either male servants or apprentices, or these may have been provided for them upon arrival in Brazil. No contract describing Post’s or Eckhout’s required duties in Brazil exists, but based on the extant works of art from this period, Eckhout was commissioned to paint portraits and still lifes, while Post’s commissions were limited to landscapes and topographical studies.26 To assume that both artists were primarily employed as ‘recorders’ seems far too limited to explain the range of images they produced.27

There is, nonetheless, a documentary aspect to Eckhout’s work, which includes hundreds of drawings, primarily chalk and oil studies on paper, of Brazilian flora and fauna. Most of these works on paper, which are addressed in detail in chapter 2, were given to the Elector of Brandenburg in 1652 and are now in the collection of the Jagiellon University Library in Kraków. These images demonstrate that in addition to his formal commissions, Eckhout filled the role of the colonial, exploratory painter, who recorded the new and unusual for and through European eyes, as demonstrated by this extraordinary image of a green lizard (Plate 13). In this manner, his function
was like that of Dirk Valkenburg in Surinam in the early-eighteenth century, who painted New World slaves, large still lifes of exotic fruit, and landscape paintings for Amsterdam patrician Jonas Witsen, the absentee owner of three sugar plantations.

Frans Post made a large number of landscape drawings, but finished only a handful of paintings while in Brazil, his greatest output occurring in the post-Brazilian period.\textsuperscript{28} It has been suggested that Post’s duties in Brazil included drawing forts and fortifications, thus giving his work a military significance.\textsuperscript{29} His landscape drawings were later used to illustrate Barlaeus’s history of Dutch Brazil (\textit{Rerum per octennium in Brasilia...} Amsterdam, 1647), a book-length history and celebration of Johan Maurits’s governorship of Dutch Brazil and detailed description of the colony. Except for some of his plants, tiny birds, and the infrequent animal, Post’s images made in Brazil are not good sources for the study of Brazilian natural history.\textsuperscript{30} Post does not seem to have played an active role in either the Count’s scientific pretensions or in the interior decoration of the Count’s buildings in Brazil. Eckhout was the primary artist for these areas of Johan Maurits’s artistic patronage.

Eckhout’s paintings and drawings are descriptive and naturalistic in a way that is characteristic of the work of many seventeenth-century Netherlandish still-life painters, from the vigorous and crowded animal paintings of Frans Snyder to the isolated representations of fruit and vegetables by Adriaen Coorte. Moreover, Eckhout’s natural history drawings, primarily in oil on paper, suggest a professional involvement with Georg Marcgraf and Willem Piso and their work as ‘nature describers’ in Brazil. As suggested above, Eckhout may have been chosen by Johan Maurits because he already had experience making drawings for scientific illustrations and could thus function (as one aspect of his duties) as a ‘documentary’ painter for the Count. During the early modern period, support for natural history was far more common at Italian and German courts than in aristocratic circles in the Dutch Republic. Nor would it become common practice throughout Europe to bring artists on exploratory voyages until the eighteenth century. By enlisting the services of Piso and Marcgraf and supporting their scientific investigations, Johan Maurits was unique among his contemporaries in making the study of Brazilian natural history a central part of his official role as governor of the Dutch colony. Given this interest, it is logical that he would have employed an artist whose visual work would parallel and complement the written investigations of Piso and Marcgraf. Eckhout was not simply a courtly painter of portraits or still lifes; he was the artist of a patron whose interests extended to exploration and natural history, and thus wanted to have the wonders, as well as the assets, of the New World reproduced for him.

Regardless of whether or not he accompanied them into the field, Eckhout was clearly aware of the work done by the scientists in Brazil. Eckhout and/or his assistants made copies in oils of a number of Marcgraf’s tiny watercolours; Eckhout even
borrowed Marcgraf’s image of a guinea pig (Handbook I, f. 26) as an animal attribute for the mameluca in his painting. As addressed in chapter 2, we also have pictorial evidence that Marcgraf and Eckhout worked side by side, making images of the same specimens. Finally, it should not be forgotten that when they were in Mauritsstad (Recife), Post, Eckhout, and Marcgraf ate together at the same table twice daily, joined by Piso only in the evenings. This sort of repeated social contact may have fostered professional relationships.

On the other hand, much in the same way that Post made sketches in Brazil that became his primary source of artistic inspiration upon his return to the Dutch Republic, Eckhout was also busy sketching in oil and chalk for future reference. In a letter written in 1653, Johan Maurits mentions that Eckhout will bring sketches (lost) made in Brazil with him to Dresden. In addition, there are the tapestries Johan Maurits commissioned based on Brazilian themes upon his return to Europe. While in Brazil it seems likely he mentioned this future project to Eckhout. The Brazilian tapestries, which include those made by Maximiliaan van der Gucht in Delft (1667), as well as the later Anciennes Indes (first made in 1687) and Nouvelles Indes (first made in 1740) produced by Gobelins in Paris, are based on cartoons after Eckhout’s drawings and paintings and Marcgraf’s watercolours. One can imagine that Eckhout was also busy filling his sketchbooks with this project in mind. Finally, Eckhout’s drawings were, of course, also used as studies for the paintings he made in Brazil. A number of the sketches of fruits and vegetables, namely those in chalk, form the basis for Eckhout’s series of twelve Brazilian still lifes in Copenhagen. These drawings are all in Kraków; other sketches related to the ethnographic portraits and the Tapuya Dance are in Berlin and Kraków.

Although it is not certain what Eckhout was working on from 1637 to 1640, by 1641 he had completed sketches for a number of paintings that may have been intended to form the primary program of interior decoration for Vrijburg, Johan Maurits’s new palace. Based on the dates recorded on the figural works, completing these life-size and over-life-size oils on canvas kept him busy from 1641 to 1643. Eckhout may also have designed a separate decorative program for Johan Maurits’s pleasure house, Boa Vista, completed in 1643. As discussed in chapter 6, the paintings that were probably displayed in Vrijburg’s central ‘princely hall’ include the ethnographic portraits, the still lifes, the lost portrait of Johan Maurits with Brazilians, and the Tapuya Dance. During this period, Eckhout was also commissioned by Johan Maurits to make the occasional portrait, even sending him into Portuguese Brazil to do so. This is demonstrated by a letter sent to Johan Maurits from Salvador (Bahia) requesting a copy of the 1641 portrait of Dom Jorge de Mascarenhas, the viceroy of Portuguese Brazil, which had been made by the Count’s ‘painter’. That the artist in question was Eckhout is suggested not only by the content of his existing work, but also by Post’s
lack of interest (or demonstrable skill) in painting the human figure. Finally, we have evidence, based on Wagener’s ca. 1641 copies of Eckhout’s work, that Eckhout was already busy creating natural history studies during his first three years in Brazil.

In addition to his work in Mauritsstad for the governor, some scholars have suggested that Eckhout took part in Hendrik Brower’s 1643 expedition to Chile and perhaps even made a voyage to Africa in 1637 or 1641. Given his activities listed above, it is nonetheless highly doubtful that he joined any scientific expeditions between 1641 and 1643. As Whitehead and Boeseman note, Brower’s expedition is particularly unlikely, because they were gone for nearly all of 1643 (12 January to 28 December). In 1643 Eckhout was working on paintings, including the ethnographic portrait of the Tupinamba/Brasilian man. Given the 1643 date of this work, he could not have spent an entire year minus two weeks away from his studio. So-called evidence for Eckhout’s participation on these foreign trips includes the images of Chilean and African peoples, flora, and fauna among his sketches and studies. Joppien, Whitehead, and Boeseman agree that the drawing of a Chilean man with a pipe (Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae, III, f.17) was created by Eckhout based on direct observation. But because the style of this sketch is much softer and more fluid than is typical for the artist, it is not clear that this image should in fact be attributed to him. In addition, two rather awkward images of llamas in this small corpus of ‘Chilean’ images also appear to have been painted by someone other than Eckhout. A number of other artists, including Eckhout’s as yet unidentified assistant, made images for the Count, and it is possible that one of them created these studies as a member of Brower’s expedition. Dutch explorers from this period were not, however, above bringing back human souvenirs of their journeys; Eckhout or his assistant need not have left Brazil in order to have made these representations. As addressed in detail in chapter 2, Johan Maurits’s botanical and zoological gardens were well supplied with animals from Brazil, Africa, and possibly other parts of South America. The representations of an African date palm, an Angolan fat-tailed sheep, or the Chilean animals that appear among Eckhout’s works are therefore not surprising and would not have required him to travel abroad. Not only were Africans present in Brazil, but African artifacts, costumes, and even African flora and fauna could be found in the governor-general’s private botanical and ethnographic collections.

Directly before leaving Brazil in May 1644, Johan Maurits appears to have commissioned a portrait of himself, most likely from Eckhout, his court portraitist. This life-size image of the Count, dated 1644, has since been lost, but in 1654 it formed part of his gift of Brazilian paintings to his cousin King Frederik III of Denmark. At the time of the commission, it is possible that Johan Maurits already knew he was leaving Brazil, and therefore decided to order one last painting of himself immortalized as the governor-general of the Dutch colony. Although it could have
been painted after his return to the Dutch Republic, Johan Maurits claimed that all of the paintings included in the Danish gift were painted after life in Brazil. This is supported by the eighteenth-century inventory of the Danish royal Kunstkammer, which suggests that the date and place of creation (‘Brasil’) was written on the canvas itself.

**Made in Brazil or the Dutch Republic?**

Although Eckhout’s figural works from Brazil are signed and dated, and we have additional evidence for their presence in Brazil in the form of Wagener’s ca. 1641 copies, a handful of researchers have argued that the ethnographic portraits and still lifes were painted in the Netherlands after 1644. These scholars have asserted that the signatures, dates, and even word ‘Brasil’ are later additions to the canvases. Technical examination has determined that all of the signatures were written with the same thin brown paint, each indicating that ‘A. Eckhout’ was the artist. Painters in the seventeenth century did not always sign their works, but it is possible that the artist nonetheless felt the need to do so upon his return to the Dutch Republic, in order to clarify their ‘naer het leven’, documentary status for a European audience. Thus, the signatures, dates, and location ‘Brasil’ could be later additions to the ethnographic portraits in order to give them greater credibility as documents. The fact that the canvases specifically state that ‘Brasil’ was the place of their creation (something that Johan Maurits repeatedly emphasized to friends and patrons upon his return to Europe) undoubtedly also made them worth more. In any event, the time frame between painting the works and adding the signatures could not have been too great, given the fact that no layers of varnish or dirt appear between the signature layer of paint and that of the work itself.

The theory that the signatures are complete fabrications, added by someone other than the original artist, is far more problematic. For example, why date the paintings 1641 and 1643, but not some other year between 1637 and 1644? Furthermore, if the idea behind the signatures was to provide false proof that all of the paintings were created in Brazil, then why did this later writer fail to sign, date, and give a Brazilian ‘provenance’ to the painting of the mulatto man and the still lifes? The mulatto man’s legs appear unfinished, just like some of the cashews in the painting of the mameluca – yet that painting is signed and dated.

It is worth noting that the artist’s name on the canvases is written as Eckhout, rather than Eckhout or Eeckholt; the former spelling occurs in the extant documentary record only a few times. It is nonetheless clear from study of the tiny data set (3) of Eckhout autograph signatures (excluding the paintings) that the artist favoured a number of different spellings for his own name: Eckhout, Eijkhout, Eeyckhout, with
Regardless of when the signatures were added or by whom, one cannot expect Eckhout’s autograph signature on paper to match the signature on the Brazilian canvases because of the differences in writing media and the fluidity of Dutch spelling in the seventeenth century. A slightly different scenario for the signatures is suggested by studies carried out by the conservation staff at the Nationalmuseet in Denmark, who have determined that all of the ethnographic portraits used to be larger and were perhaps cut down during their first restoration in Denmark around 1656. As a result of this trimming, it may have been necessary to reproduce Eckhout’s signatures – perhaps in a more consistent form than the originals. As Egmond and Mason have noted, the ‘incorrect’ writing of Eckhout with one ‘e’ may reflect a more Germanic or Danish manner of spelling, suggesting that the seventeenth-century Danish restorer Lazarus Baratta may have added the signatures to the paintings as descriptions ‘for administrative purposes’. While I certainly agree that the signatures may be a later addition, I am not yet persuaded that these images were made in Europe rather than Brazil.

Scientific examination of the paintings has provided no evidence that they were not produced in Brazil, and no one has come up with a plausible location for their exhibition as a group in Europe, although there are several different possibilities regarding their display as a decorative cycle in Brazil (addressed in chapter 6). Technical analysis by Danish conservator Mads Christensen of Eckhout’s figural paintings in comparison to Frans Post’s 1637 View of Itamaracá (whose creation in Brazil has never been called into question) has furthermore demonstrated a ‘remarkable similarity’ in terms of both canvas preparation and composition of the ground. Finally, the iconographic program of Eckhout’s ethnographic images and still lifes strongly suggests that these images played an important part in projecting an idealized view of the Count’s power and control over the local population in Brazil.

Eckhout’s Post-Brazilian Period

Although we lack the documentation to confirm it, Eckhout probably left Brazil with Johan Maurits on 22 May 1644, arriving several months later in The Hague. As first suggested by Thomsen, Eckhout likely remained in the Count’s service after his return. In addition to making cartoons for the Brazilian tapestries mentioned above, he may have painted Brazilian birds on the ceiling of a room in the Mauritshuis, the existence of which is attested to by Jacob van Campen. Other images that may have kept Eckhout busy include the seven ethnographic paintings and the nine window pieces given in 1652 by Johan Maurits to Wilhelm Fredreich, the Elector of Brandenburg. The degree to which Eckhout was involved in creating the wall paintings
– possibly frescos – that decorated the main stairway in the Mauritshuis will probably never be determined. A description of them made before they were destroyed by fire suggests that this decorative program included images of Brazilian Indians, Africans, people from the East Indies, and views of cities around the world.49

In The Hague on 30 October 1644, Albert Eickhout (Eckhout) made a substantial loan of 3,000 guilders to Christoffer Lindenov of Lindersvold (ca. 1612-1679), who was named Johan Maurits’s ‘stalmeester’ and an agent of the Danish East India Company.50 This loan demonstrates that Eckhout had profited during his years abroad. Only a few years later, Lindenov would play an important role in negotiating Johan Maurits’s gift of twenty-six paintings, most of which were by Eckhout, to King Frederik III of Denmark. By 15 March 1645, the date of this document, Eckhout was said to be ‘living in Groningen’.

**Groningen (1645-1646) and Amersfoort (1646-1653)**

By 1645 Eckhout was back in his hometown of Groningen; he married Annetgan Jansen Wigboldi, also a native of Groningen, before the middle of 1646.51 As noted by Van Gelder, the Groningen marriage records are missing from 1640-1646, which suggests that Eckhout married during this period. On 4 July 1646, Eckhout registered as a member of the Reformed church in Amersfoort, where in 1648 his wife gave birth to their first child, Maria Mauritia (baptized 25 June 1648).52 Maria was followed by Albert (baptized 19 August 1649), Johannes (baptized 25 October 1650) and Geertruyd (baptized 17 October 1652); most of these children did not survive to adulthood.53 As mentioned above, it is during this period that collaboration with Jacob van Campen seems most likely.

Evidence of contact between the two painters may be found in the interior decoration of Het Hoogerhuis in Amersfoort. Nine still-life panels from this house, dating from around 1650 and originally forming a continuous frieze, are now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, but are currently on loan to the Flehite Museum in Amersfoort (fig. 10). The panels include still lifes in niches featuring Brazilian and African baskets filled with fruit, niches with traditional vanitas still lifes, and grisaille figural representations of events from the life of Hercules.54 For many years it was believed that Van Campen had lived in Hoogerhuis (Beekhoven) and was thus also responsible for its design and the decorative program of its interior. In 1981 Van Hoorn demonstrated that Van Campen had never lived in Hoogerhuis, bringing its design and the attribution of the paintings into question.55

Although most scholars still endorse Van Campen’s authorship of the cycle, in 1960 Van Gelder had already noted certain borrowings from Eckhout’s works.56
The baskets in the still lifes closely resemble those held by the African woman and the Tupinamba/Brasiliaen woman in Eckhout’s paintings.\(^5\) Furthermore, tropical fruits and flowers displayed in and near the basket in the central panel match those depicted in Eckhout’s oil sketches in the *Theatrum* and his still lifes with Brazilian fruits in Copenhagen.\(^5\) One of the vanitas still lifes in this series features an owl, books, a celestial globe, and sheets of music. This owl resembles an oil sketch of an owl by Eckhout.\(^5\)

Many scholars now accept the possibility that Eckhout and Van Campen worked together on this project, suggesting that the exotic still lifes are the work of Eckhout with the rest of the images by Van Campen.\(^6\) As collaboration was common and both artists lived in Amersfoort during this period, such an arrangement would have been practical. A large number of the fruits and flowers in the still lifes have been copied directly from Eckhout’s Brazilian paintings or from his sketches. For example, the passion flower in the Flehite still life with the Tupi basket reproduced here looks like the passion flowers represented in Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits of the *Tapuya* woman and the mameluca. It is also possible that Van Campen did not require Eckhout’s direct involvement, because Brazilian images (paintings or drawings) were in his possession as early as 1646, as noted in the travel diary of Wilhelm VI, who would later become landgrave of Hesse-Kassel.\(^6\) This evidence is further corroborated in the

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**Fig. 10** – Attributed to Jacob van Campen, *Still Life with Brazilian Fruits*, ca. 1650, oil on panel, 104 x 166 cm. Courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (on loan to the Flehite Museum, Amersfoort).
diary of Willem Frederik of Nassau-Dietz, stadholder of Friesland, Groningen, and Drente, who noted that on 25 September 1647, during a visit to Amersfoort, he saw ‘paintings that Count Maurits had made from everything that is in the West Indies, from which to make tapestries’. Quintin Buelot has suggested that these images refer to tapestry cartoons made by Eckhout for Johan Maurits, although they could just as easily have been Eckhout’s original drawings or his actual paintings.

Whether or not the Brazilian motifs in the Hoogerhuis paintings were painted by Eckhout in collaboration with Van Campen, or simply demonstrate the latter’s abilities as a copiest, the colours, technique and overall naturalistic style of these Amersfoort still lifes appear to be consistent with Eckhout’s paintings and drawings in Copenhagen and Kraków. Attribution to Van Campen is unproblematic with respect to the figural works in this series. The well-muscled but surprisingly short and stocky figures and smooth manner of painting are typical of this artist, as demonstrated in his Mercurius, Argus and Io (ca. 1640) or his paintings in the Oranjezaal. As Buelot notes, given these stylistic peculiarities, which also show up in the completed tapestry series, it is clear that Van Campen had a share in creating the modelli.

Contact with Eckhout and/or his drawings appears to have spurred Van Campen’s interest in exotic imagery. Evidence that Van Campen was familiar with other Brazilian paintings and drawings by Eckhout may also be found in works produced immediately following the completion of the Hogerhuis frieze. For example, in Van Campen’s Triumphal Procession with Treasures from the East and West Indies (ca. 1650-51) in the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch, the main figure resembles Eckhout’s Mameluca (1641) and bends her right arm in the same way. Van Campen’s figure also holds two African baskets that are modeled on the one held by the main figure in Eckhout’s African Woman (1641), a motif that is also repeated in one of the Hogerhuis still lifes. However, close examination suggests that the baskets in the Oranjezaal painting were not painted by Eckhout. In Van Campen’s Apollo and Aurora in Huis ten Bosch, there is also a scarlet ibis that echoes one depicted in Eckhout’s Hoflössnitz ceiling paintings (ca. 1653-1663). Eckhout did not paint the ibis into any of his paintings made in Brazil; this is additional evidence that Van Campen was familiar with Eckhout’s sketches as well as his paintings. Van Campen was not the only painter of the Oranjezaal familiar with Eckhout’s works or the objects Johan Maurits brought back with him from Brazil. In Cesar van Everdingen’s Allegory of the Birth of Frederik Hendrik (ca. 1650), two African baskets held aloft by putti are present in the upper left side of the canvas, and one of these closely resembles the basket held by the African woman in Eckhout’s painting. As with Van Campen’s Triumphal Procession, these African baskets do not appear to have been painted by Eckhout himself.

Lost works from Eckhout’s Amersfoort period may include two half-life-size paintings from 1650. One image represented Tapuyas with some pots and fruit, and
the other displayed Africans, ‘savage people’, animals, and a view of Recife. These paintings, all of which were signed and dated, ended up in the possession of the Dutch sea captain Thomas Tobias; were viewed by Jacob Cohen, the Count’s personal financial agent, in 1679; and were valued at the very expensive price of 1000 guilders. The cluttered compositions of these works suggest that they may have been designs for tapestries. Documents also mention three other works possibly by Eckhout that could date to this post-Brazilian period. They include a painting of ‘dancing Tapuyas’ and a life-size fruit still life with a watermelon, both of which were in the possession of Willem Piso’s widow in 1678. A second ‘dans van wilde tapoijers’ (dance of the wild Tapuyas) was mentioned in Haarlem in 1653. While there is no written evidence that connects these three paintings to Eckhout, the subject matter fits closely with the rest of his oeuvre. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that Piso had paintings by Eckhout in his possession.

1653-1663, Dresden, Court Painter to Johann Georg II

In 1653 Johan Maurits recommended Eckhout to the future Elector of Saxony, Johan Georg II, for the position of court artist, and that same year the painter, his wife, and their only surviving child, Geertruyd, left Amersfoort for Dresden. The letters from Johan Maurits negotiating this position make it clear that Eckhout was a professional and respected artist, and the details of his contract show that he was taken seriously as such. As court artist in Dresden, Eckhout had a salary of 400 Reichshaler per year, a house to live in and free board, free paint and canvas, and other advantages that he would also have enjoyed during his time working for Johan Maurits in Brazil. In Dresden his contracted duties included the painting of ‘counterfeits [portraits], history paintings, [and] landscapes’. The ability to paint in a variety of different genres, based on the whims of one’s patron, was common among court artists in Germany. Within two years of Eckhout’s departure for Dresden, Johan Maurits seems to have missed his Brazilian painter. On 29 August 1655, Johan Maurits wrote a letter to Johann Georg, in which he asked if the prince was satisfied with Eckhout and, more importantly, if Eckhout could return to his service. Johan Maurits needed Eckhout to make new Brazilian paintings for King Frederik III of Denmark; apparently Johan Maurits wanted to add to his 1654 gift. No sources suggest that Eckhout returned at this time; in fact, he was not officially released from the Elector’s service until 1663.

Despite a stay of ten years at the German court, the only extant works from this period that one can attribute to Eckhout are the eighty ceiling paintings of Brazilian birds at Hoflößnitz (1648-50), the Elector’s country palace and hunting lodge outside of Dresden. These paintings give an idea of what the similarly decorated room in
the Mauritshuis must have looked like (fig. 11). The images here match birds in Eckhout’s Kraków drawings and the Copenhagen paintings. We know that Eckhout brought sketches with him to Dresden; in his 1653 letter to Johann Georg, Johan Maurits stated that Eckhout would take all of the Brazilian images still in his possession with him to Dresden. These images were independent of, but included copies of, the drawings by Eckhout in Johan Maurits’s personal collection, which had been given away to the Elector of Brandenburg in 1652. Although the letter does not explain this statement, perhaps the Elector had wanted Eckhout precisely because of the Brazilian connection. The sketches were insurance that the Elector would receive authentic and unique images of New World flora and fauna.

The ceiling paintings at Hoflössnitz were first attributed to Eckhout by Hans Beschorner in 1904. Thomsen seconded the attribution in 1938, although scholars are now more cautious. Joppien pointed out the wooden quality of some of the images, and Whitehead and Boeseman suggested that they were instead painted by an assistant using Eckhout’s sketches. Whitehead, who was able to examine the images after they had been removed from their frames during the most recent restoration, further noted that the canvases include thinly painted local landscapes along the bottom. This juxtaposition of Brazilian birds and Saxon landscapes suggests collaboration, and it remains a distinct possibility that Eckhout was directly involved in their execution. The variable condition of the works, which have been restored, repaired, and over-

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image11.png}
\caption{Albert Eckhout, \textit{Brazilian Birds}, ca. 1655, oil on canvas, 100 x 78 cm. Radebeul, Stiftung Weingutmuseum, Hoflössnitz.}
\end{figure}
painted during their 350-year existence, most recently around 1981, has no doubt contributed to the uncertainties about attribution. Canvases for the ceiling, which are always seen from a distance, do not require the precision of images displayed on a wall; this may also explain the cruder appearance of some of these paintings.

Thomsen and later authors have put forth a number of additional works that could have been produced by Eckhout during this German period. These suggestions range from the impossible to the improbable, and I will not address those already rejected by scholarly consensus. Among the more plausible attributions were the paintings of exotic peoples, including Indians, Asians, and Africans, which first decorated Castle Pretsch, but were later installed in Schwedt Castle. Unfortunately, these paintings were destroyed during WWII, when the castle burned down; all that remains are the black and white photographs made before their destruction. Later scholars have been highly critical of this attribution, although they have hesitated over the one painting of Brazilian Indians, which borrows figures and motifs directly from Eckhout’s paintings and natural history drawings.

Although it is difficult to speak of technique when looking at photographs of paintings, these works simply do not look like they were painted by Eckhout. In comparison to Eckhout’s extant works, these images are crowded and tend to generalize details, the specificity of which is a characteristic of Eckhout’s best work. The Schwerdt paintings are intentionally exotic, piling together people, plants, and animals from disparate parts of the world, with little attention to the distinctions between them. The painting of Indians here is no more authentically Eckhoutian than the pastiche of Brazilian Indians reproduced by Joan Nieuhof in his *Gedenkwaerdige Zee en Lantreize* (1682), in which the figures are borrowed from Eckhout, or perhaps an intermediate source, but are certainly not by him. Both Joppien and Lüdwig Döry mention that some of the paintings in the Schwerdt series borrow from illustrations in late seventeenth-century books, and thus could not have dated to Eckhout’s period as a court painter in Dresden, although Joppien is reluctant to exclude Eckhout’s influence completely. A consistency of style suggests that the paintings were completed by the same artist or group of artists in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries. The Brazilian birds and animals in the painting with Indians appear to be copied from Eckhout’s sketches, suggesting that the drawings he brought with him to Dresden in 1653 remained in the Elector’s hands after his departure or were copied and subsequently used by a later artist in creating this painting.

Suspicious of the paucity of work attributable to Eckhout from this ten-year period in Dresden, Van Gelder went so far as to hypothesize that from 1660, Eckhout was actually in the service of the Great Elector in Berlin. Here he suggested that Eckhout assisted the Elector’s physician Christian Mentzel in his collation of the *Theatrum rerum Brasiliae*, which includes the images by Eckhout and others given by
Johan Maurits to the Elector in 1652. This is not only extremely unlikely, the extra images made for Mentzel, including the title pages for the four books on the *Theatrum*, are clearly not by Eckhout. Eckhout’s Dresden period still requires a significant amount of work. New research in this area should think beyond Brazilian motifs and more towards the kind of artistic training that Eckhout had received as an apprentice, possibly in Van Campen’s studio. Given his connection to Dutch Classicism and Italianate painters during his stay in Amersfoort, it seems possible that some of the portraits and allegorical figures that were also part of the pictorial program for the Hoflößnitz were painted by Eckhout. As Whitehead and Boeseman already noted in 1989, it would be extremely helpful if someone would go through the archival documents of Elector Johann Georg II in Dresden and see if they mention specific works commissioned from Eckhout while he was court artist.

1664–1666, Eckhout’s Final Years in Groningen

Records show that one daughter was born to Eckhout in Dresden, Anna Leonora, who married in Groningen on 19 October 1695. Unfortunately, neither parent lived to see her wedding. Eckhout was released from the Elector’s service in 1663 and returned to his home city of Groningen, re-registering as a citizen of the city on 18 June 1664. According to the city accounts for 1664, Eckhout was given citizenship without having to pay a fee, because he was the son of a citizen and had been in a foreign country. Obviously expecting to work, Eckhout also paid nine guilders to join the painter’s guild, although no paintings have been identified from this period. When he and his wife registered themselves as members of the Reformed church in June 1664, they were noted as coming from Amersfoort, the last Dutch city in which they were church members before they left for the city of Dresden, where the court was dominated by Lutherans.

After reestablishing himself in Groningen, Eckhout had less than two years to enjoy his return to the Dutch Republic; Van Gelder notes that on 20 April 1666 the family grave was made over to his widow Anneke Jansen. She did not follow him until 1684. Eckhout died between late 1665 and early 1666, although the precise date is not known. It was a sad and quiet ending for a remarkable painter, whose works of art speak a vivid, descriptive language, which allows us to reconstruct the European vision of seventeenth-century colonial Brazil.
CHAPTER 2

‘To Reproduce Nature Itself as Perfectly as Possible’

The Brazilian Natural History Drawings of Albert Eckhout

Behold herein the pictures of the things that Nature hath produced, nourished and nurtured, formed in their own original habitat and painted in exact colours after life [ad vivum], in order to reproduce nature itself as perfectly as possible. (Christian Mentzel, preface to the Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae, 1664)

Between 1637 and 1644, artists at Johan Maurits’s Brazilian court created hundreds of unsigned natural history drawings and oil studies on paper, many of which may now be found in the collection of the Jagiellon University Library in Kraków. In Brazil, these drawings recorded the contents of the Count’s menagerie, botanic gardens, and his cabinet of curiosities, as well as the natural resources around Mauritsstad, providing a corpus of visual material for both scientific study and artistic inspiration. In Europe, the drawings and oil studies were prized not only for their rarity and exotic subject matter, but also for their perceived ‘perfection’, which allowed them, by extension, to stand in for the plant or animal
depicted. Given the limited methods of preservation available in the seventeenth cent-
tury and the high mortality rate of exotic plants and animals shipped to Europe, Eckhout’s works on paper and canvas, from this vivid drawing of a green lizard to this realistic oil study of a Brazilian plant and its fruit, mediated the earliest comprehen-
sive encounter with Brazilian nature (plate 13, fig. 12). As signaled by the quote circa 1668 from German physician Christopher Mentzel at the beginning of this chapter, and a constant thread in other seventeenth-century descriptions, the value and authoritative status of these drawings of Brazilian nature were based on the fact that they were produced from an in situ encounter with the plant or animal depicted.

Despite the fact that Thomas Thomsen attributed drawings from the Kraków collection (then in Berlin) to Eckhout in his book of 1938, there have been few studies by art historians that address these works on paper. Even the recent Eckhout exhibitions in Brazil (2002), Denmark (2002), and The Hague (2004) failed to adequately address this important visual corpus, which not only includes a large number of high quality, unique images, but far outweighs the artist’s contributions on canvas in terms of sheer numbers. Given the recent scholarly debate about where Eckhout’s still lifes and ethnographic portraits were actually painted, it is additionally surprising that so little attention has been paid to the drawings, whose creation in Brazil is undisputed. Part of the scholarly neglect results from the fact that the drawings do not travel and were relatively inaccessible from 1943 to 1989 because of their location in Poland. Lack of interest in the Brazilian natural history drawings can, however, also be attributed to the historical bias among art historians against scientific illustration and other types of ‘documentary’ visual materials because of their apparent lack of originality and artistic invention as well as their informational function. As noted by Claudia Swan, ‘The perpetuation of a canon of fine art has long depended on the Kantian notion that interest or utility precludes the aesthetic’. Although art historians have conducted research on the relationship between the drawings and the ‘high art’ tapestries of Brazilian themes produced by Gobelins in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the liter-
ature on these works on paper has nonetheless been dominated by botanists, zoologists, and ethnographers, especially Peter Whitehead, Marten Boeseman, and Dante Martins Teixeira. As a group these scientists have been especially active in identifying the plants and animals depicted, although they have also made preliminary assessments regarding the quality and authorship with respect to the Brazilian corpus of images as a whole.

Recent studies on the relationship between early modern science, visual knowl-
edge, and colonialism in the form of maps, images in travel accounts, and natural history illustration have done much to reevaluate the status of these types of visual materials and make them acceptable subjects of art historical inquiry. In this chapter I focus primarily on the drawings in the Kraków corpus that can be attributed to Albert Eckhout, making comparisons to the work of his contemporary in Brazil, Georg Marcgraf.
(whose life and work I have addressed in detail elsewhere). By broadly outlining their formal qualities, conditions of production in Brazil, and their critical reception in Europe after 1644, I hope to bring increased attention to Eckhout’s exceptional works on paper, whose very survival seems uncertain given their pressing need for conservation.

**History of the Brazilian Drawings in the Kraków Collection**

Before addressing the drawings themselves, it is important to first discuss their post-Brazilian history, which shaped both the contents of the collection in Kraków and how we interact with the images today. No contract survives describing the creation or use of the drawings by Eckhout from his Brazilian period. Apart from a few brief comments about natural history illustration in Piso and Marcgraf’s *Historia*, the earliest extant document to address these images dates to 1652, when a group of loose, unsigned drawings and two bound volumes of watercolour ‘miniatures’ were presented by Johan Maurits to the Elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich Wilhelm. These images formed only a small part of a large and elaborate gift, which also included oil paintings, rare military books, marble statues, and carved ivory furniture. Accompanying the 18 September 1652 contract for the transfer of these goods is a complete inventory, in which items fourteen and fifteen are described as follows:

14. A large book in royal folio and another somewhat smaller (in folio), in which everything that can be seen and found in Brazil (people, quadrupeds, birds, worms, fish, trees, herbs, flowers) with miniatures is artfully represented after life [*nach dem Leben*] added to which are (descriptions, names, and characteristics) names, qualities, and characteristics.

15. Yet more than (several) hundred other (Indian paintings of animals and all sorts of other subjects with oil paints) paintings with oil paint on paper, unbound.

**Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae**

In the 1660s, Christian Mentzel (1622-1701) organized over 700 of the drawings from this gift into seven volumes: the *Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae* (4 vols.), the *Libri Principis* or *Handbooks* (2 vols.), and the *Miscellanea Cleyeri* (1 vol.), all of which may now be found in the collection of the Jagiellon University Library in Kraków,
Poland. Mentzel, a highly learned botanist and Sinologist, was the personal physician to the Elector. Mentzel gathered most of the loose images, described in item 15 above as including several hundred ‘Indian’ [i.e., West Indian] paintings of animals and other subjects in oils, into four large folio volumes, to which he gave the collective title *Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae* (Theater of the Natural Things of Brazil). Arranging the images into separate volumes by subject, Mentzel pasted the drawings onto new sheets of paper, sometimes cutting off parts of the original representations in his effort to fit them into the new format. Volume I (*Icones Aquatilium*) includes images of fish; volume II (*Icones Volatilium*) is limited to birds; volume III (*Icones Animalium*) includes images of people and animals; and volume IV (*Icones Vegetabilium*) is devoted to images of plants. Mentzel’s source for the Brazilian names, which he wrote at the top of the page above many of the images, as well as his basic system of classification, was Piso and Marcgraf’s *Historia*, both the 1648 and the 1658 editions, in which the natural world is separated into plants, quadrupeds, birds, insects, and fishes and sea animals.

Although the images in these volumes may be attributed to several different hands, a number of formal elements are consistent throughout, suggesting that the artists shared a similar project. The specimens, including this red ibis by Eckhout, are carefully posed and isolated on the page, and although the subject occasionally casts a shadow, each artist deliberately chose to exclude any markers of place – no trees, grass, or water are shown (Fig. 13). In addition to Mentzel’s labels at the top of the page, other notes on these images may represent the handwritten descriptions or comments of Albert Eckhout or even WIC Director Johannes de Laet. Large numbers of empty pages remain, complete with captions indicating animals and plants discussed by Piso and Marcgraf in the *Historia*, for which Mentzel had no corresponding representations. Mentzel had expected to fill in these gaps at a later date: in his preface to the first volume, he writes that he was waiting for the delivery of additional images, for which he had left empty places. Mentzel did not distinguish between the drawings with respect to size, quality, or style, so that life-size, realistic oil studies are occasionally located next to smaller, more schematic images. Despite the presence of images by other artists, the vast majority of the studies and chalk drawings in these four volumes may be attributed to Albert Eckhout.

**Miscellanea Cleyeri**

For reasons that are not entirely clear, Mentzel excluded thirty-five Brazilian images, the majority by Eckhout, from the *Theatrum*, which were later bound up with other, non-Brazilian, representations in the one-volume *Miscellanea Cleyeri* (Misc. Cleyeri).
In addition to Brazilian drawings of fruits, vegetables, and Indians, this volume displays an odd assortment of images by other artists, including the depiction of a meteor in flight, East Indian ethnographic representations, and watercolours of Asian plants. Many of these drawings were sent to Mentzel by Andrea Cleyer, who was Chief Factor of the Dutch East India Company’s factory on Deshima, Japan, during the 1660s. Like other botanists and collectors in the seventeenth century, Mentzel relied on his contacts abroad for a steady supply of specimens and images for study. The fact that many of Eckhout’s images in the Misc. Cleyeri are chalk drawings may be the reason why they were not included among the oil studies on paper in the Theatrum. Unlike most of Eckhout’s oils on paper in the Theatrum, the large-scale chalk drawings here were specifically created as studies for his still-life paintings. Other images by Eckhout here include a series of images of Indians produced after life. Unlike the carefully drawn and composed still-life studies, these images, such as this chalk drawing of a sleeping woman, are true sketches, with a spontaneous, flowing line and loose, expressive handling of surface details and textures (Plate 1, Fig. 14). These works are consistent in both style and subject matter to a small group of Eckhout drawings of Indians, which were removed at an early date from this collection and are now in the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (Figs. 37, 38).
**Libri Principis or Handbooks I and II**

In the 1652 inventory reproduced above, item 14 lists two volumes of ‘miniatures artfully represented after life’. These books are immediately recognizable as the *Libri Principis* (Books of the Prince) or the *Handbooks*. These books, which were already bound before they came into the Elector’s possession, include watercolour and body colour drawings. These images are largely the work of Georg Marcgraf, although there may be as many as two other hands present here (for example, the botanical images are not by Marcgraf). The images in the *Handbooks* were first ascribed to Marcgraf by the German zoologist Lichtenstein in the nineteenth century, and this attribution has steadily gained scholarly support. Johan Maurits also contributed to these volumes, especially in *Handbook* I, in the form of his original descriptions, handwritten under many of the animals.

According to the inventory of 1652, these books included ‘everything that can be seen and found in Brazil’. Today, however, they comprise a more limited selection of subjects, chiefly Brazilian birds, fishes, and other animals, and a small number of botanical images, which suggests that the images of people also mentioned in the inventory were removed by Mentzel. It is nonetheless certain that no drawings from the *Handbooks* were incorporated into the *Theatrum*. As Mentzel states with approval in his preface to *Theatrum* volume I, ‘Very correctly, His Serene Highness the Elector forbade that such watercolours were placed with our larger oil-painting collection, determining that some here and there would constitute their own “Theatre” separately’. Watercolour images, it would seem, could create their own ‘Theatre of Brazilian Nature’, but it was considered unacceptable to mix them with the drawings in oil on paper. The oils on paper appear to have had a higher status than the watercolours at the Elector’s court, for reasons that will be addressed in greater detail later.

**The Libri Picturati Collection, from Berlin to Kraków**

The Elector founded his library in Berlin in 1661, incorporating the *Theatrum, Misc. Cleyeri*, and the *Handbooks* into this collection, which became the Königliche Bibliothek in 1688. This library is now known as the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz. In the nineteenth century a number of the volumes of drawings were separated from the rest of the collection and named the *Libri picturati*. The Brazilian volumes were absorbed into this collection of natural history images, and became *Lib. pict. A*32-A37. In 1941, the *Libri picturati* collection, consisting of ninety-three volumes, was split up for safekeeping because of the war, and a number of the volumes, including the ones with the Brazilian drawings, were sent from Berlin to
Schloss Fürstenstein in Silesia. In 1943, the collection was again moved, this time to a Benedictine monastery at Grüssau (Krzeszów). After the war, the materials in this collection, which included music manuscripts by Bach and Beethoven, natural history images, and the Brazilian drawings, were thought lost. During the 1970s, however, the British natural historian Peter Whitehead and other scholars reopened the search, and in 1978 Whitehead was informed that the Grüssau materials could be found in the Jagiellon University Library in Kraków, Poland. They entered the general collection of the library around this time and became accessible to Polish nationals and foreigners alike, especially after 1989. The Brazilian volumes remain in the collection of the Jagiellon Library, and there are no plans to exhibit the drawings outside of Poland.

The Domesticated Exotic:
Collecting and Cultivating Brazilian Nature

Johan Maurits's governorship of Brazil has often been described as a 'scientific expedition', but it is nonetheless clear that most of the natural history representations in the Kraków volumes do not record encounters with wild specimens in their natural environment. Eckhout did not need to participate in dangerous expeditions into the interior to study Brazilian flora and fauna – indigenous animals and plants could instead be viewed within the boundaries of the new capital city Mauritsstad. In particular, they were present at Boa Vista and Vrijburg Palace: in the governor's menagerie, cabinet of curiosities, and elaborate gardens.

During the early modern period, menageries of exotic animals became an essential part of princely self-fashioning throughout Western Europe. In the fifteenth century the powerful unofficial ruler of Florence, Lorenzo de'Medici, numbered parrots, apes, peacocks, and even a giraffe in his famous collection of animals.22 Collections like this one were not simply for pleasure, although that certainly played a part, they were also a physical manifestation of the reach of one's empire and a reminder of political affiliations. As discussed by Pamela Smith and Paula Findlan in a recent essay on commerce and images of nature, the Indian rhinoceros that arrived in Lisbon in 1515, most famously pictured by Albrecht Dürer, started its long journey to Western Europe as a diplomatic gift from Sultan Muzafar II to Alfonso d'Albuquerque, the governor of Portuguese India.23 Alfonso shipped this exceptional creature to his king, Don Manuel, who in turn recycled the gift by sending it on to the Medici pope Leo X in Rome.24 Generally speaking, only the very highest ranking members of the European elite had menageries of exotic animals.

By building a zoo of South American and African animals during his governorship in Brazil, Johan Maurits demonstrated his interest in natural history and his
desire for affiliation with other European noble collectors of exotic and native animals, whose ranks included members of his extended family, such as Landgrave Wilhelm IV and the Dutch stadholders Prince Maurits and Prince Frederik Hendrik. As mentioned by Caspar Barlaeus, the Count’s historian and principal apologist for Dutch Brazil, animals arrived in Recife via ships from Africa, the East Indies, and other areas for the Count, and the presence of these exotic imports, mixed in with indigenous Brazilian specimens, is documented in both the *Theatrum* and the *Handbooks*. Eyewitness accounts by the Portuguese friar Manuel Calado and the German WIC servant (later governor of the Cape colony) Zacharias Wagener suggest that many of the Brazilian animals in the Count’s menagerie were gifts, given to curry favor with Johan Maurits. According to Calado, a frequent visitor at the Vrijburg court, the Count ‘brought thither every kind of bird and animal that he could find; and since the local *moradores* [colonists] knew his taste and inclination, each one brought him whatever rare bird or beast he could find in the back-lands’.

Not all of the animals that made their way into the Count’s possession were still alive. Many of these creatures were dried and stuffed and thereafter incorporated into Johan Maurits’s cabinet of curiosities (later a number of these Brazilian specimens were displayed in the Mauritshuis, the count’s palace in The Hague). As described by Barlaeus, the Count’s Brazilian ‘museum’, which seems to have been housed in Boa Vista, the second of his two Brazilian residences, included both artificialia, such as non-European ethnographic objects like clothing and weapons, and naturalia in the form of shells and dried plants and animals. Artists, apothecaries, professors, and princes throughout western Europe demonstrated their keen interest in natural history and the accumulation of exotic and unusual objects by creating cabinets of curiosities or Wunderkammeren, during the early modern period. In addition to his private zoo, Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II had an impressive Kunst- und Wunderkammer, which ‘embraced all the human arts, all the branches of human knowledge, and all the different realms of nature’ and set the standard to be emulated for this type of collection. Although his cabinet was exceptional, the Emperor’s natural history holdings paled in comparison to the thousands of specimens amassed by Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605), an Italian professor of medicine and a key figure in early modern science.

As with the zoological representations, it is probable that most of the botanical drawings in the Kraków volumes were made in the immediate vicinity of Mauritsstad or in the elaborate gardens surrounding Vrijburg. The Count’s gardens were laid out before the construction of the Vrijburg Palace, so they would have been available to artists from a fairly early date. In addition to Brazilian plants, the Count’s gardeners also cultivated non-native specimens, from European vegetables to African fruits. Like menageries and collections of curiosities, gardens, both botanical and for pleasure, were also founded by princes, universities, and members of the intellectual elite.
throughout Europe during this period. In his work on the origins of environmentalism, Richard Grove argues that in Europe botanical gardens ‘acquired a meaning as symbols of an economic power capable of reaching and affecting the whole biological world’.32 A similar type of argument has been made by Chandra Mukerji, who has convincingly argued that the monumental gardens at Versailles played a central political and cultural role during the reign of Louis XIV.33 In the same way, in Brazil Johan Maurits’s gardens created an ordered Eden, with specimens (botanical and animal) from all corners of his realm, symbolizing the extent of his domain and his ecological control.34 But unlike the vast collections of objects, specimens, and finely crafted items from around the world amassed by many of his elite contemporaries such as Louis XIV, Johan Maurits did not attempt encyclopedic coverage. Rather his menagerie, cabinet, and gardens both reflected and reinforced his position of governor-general for the Dutch West India Company by highlighting plants, animals, and specimens from Brazil and western Africa, the primary areas of WIC trade.

In a quite real sense, the images created by the Count’s artists in Brazil made these grand projects – the menagerie full of animals and the gardens full of plants – both permanent and transportable, without the problems associated with the conservation of specimens. Collectors of naturalia in Europe had long included representations of the natural world in their cabinets of curiosities, which took the place of unavailable specimens and allowed the collector to see and study the exterior of the living animal or plant. In contrast, the flora and fauna in Eckhout’s images were both local and available in and around the capital city of Mauritsstad, and as such it is useful to again invoke the collection of Rudolf II for comparison. Also called his Thierbuch, Rudolf’s Museum, which included detailed oil drawings on parchment, documented the living animals present in the Emperor’s zoo as well as the curiosities and preserved specimens of naturalia from his Wunderkammer. In other words, the Museum preserved ‘the natural world as it was embodied in and defined by his [Rudolf II’s] own collections’.35

It is clear that the animals represented in the Theatrum and the Handbooks mirrored the contents of Johan Maurits’s private zoo and cabinet of curiosities. Images of young animals (which were easier to catch and train), chained monkeys, and parrots on perches demonstrate both captivity and domestication (fig. 15). It can be inferred that all of the representations of aquatic animals in the Brazilian volumes in Kraków, such as this life-size image of a glistening fish by Eckhout, were created after dried or in this case recently caught specimens, some of which undoubtedly came from the ponds on the grounds of the Vrijburg Palace or from the waters off the shores of the colony (plate 14). Whereas the Museum documented Rudolf II’s impressive ability to gather together the new and the unusual from all over the world, the contents of the Theatrum and the Handbooks reflected both the contents of the Count’s collections

and the animals and plants that fell within Johan Maurits’s sphere of influence in South America and Africa.

*Reproducing the Domesticated Exotic: Eckhout’s Brazilian Drawings*

Although the life-like quality of the plants and animals in Eckhout’s oil studies can be credited to his artistic skill and naturalistic style, it undoubtedly helped that he was able to examine living animals and work from fresh botanical specimens, rather than relying only on verbal descriptions, skins and bones, and dried or withered cuttings. The cut-off stems of most of the plants and cut-open fruits depicted in his botanical representations, such as the green tomatoes reproduced here, are evidence that Eckhout did not work *en plein air*, but instead returned to his studio with the specimens (fig. 16). Although Willem Piso mentions in the *Historia* that he took an artist with him on at least one inland collecting expedition, the botanical studies produced *in situ* by this unknown individual were not incorporated into the Brazilian volumes. Field studies are generally quick drawings or sketches in watercolour or pencil, and they often include notes about colour and other details. Like the zoological images, the botanical representations in the four volumes of the *Theatrum* are finished drawings; they were made in the studio and represent later, reworked interpretations of earlier studies, which have not survived as part of this group.

In contrast to the clear reliance of Eckhout’s still-life paintings on his botanical drawings in the *Misc. Cleyri*, it is difficult to pinpoint a specific Brazilian function for most of the natural history representations gathered in the *Theatrum*. While this image of beans (complete with Brazilian names) suggests an interest in the identification of different types of indigenous plants and their seeds, together the multi-coloured beans, whose smooth, hard surfaces reflect the artificial light of Eckhout’s studio, become a small still life of three-dimensional, aesthetically pleasing forms (fig. 17). Many of Eckhout’s oil studies on paper, from this drawing of beans to this image of a tropical vine and its fruits, are painted in the same naturalistic and confident style as his works on canvas, and a number of these images appear to be finished and complete works of art in their own right, rather than preliminary studies (figs. 2, 12). Although they include many of the same specimens of flora and fauna pictured in Eckhout’s cycle of still lifes and ethnographic portraits from Brazil (discussed in detail in chapters 4, 5, and 6), only rarely is there a direct correspondence between his oil studies and his paintings on canvas. It is possible that many of these images were intended for projects planned but never undertaken in Brazil, or for the Brazilian tapestry series (now lost), which Johan Maurits commissioned from Gücht in Delft after 1644.
**Eckhout’s Materials and Techniques**

Eckhout’s use of oil paint on paper for his natural history representations is highly unusual for a seventeenth-century Dutch artist; this medium is also quite rare for images of nature. Unlike watercolour, oil paint was employed exclusively by trained artists, not scientists. Although many of the images in these volumes have been varnished, which has occasionally made determining the medium used difficult, the majority of works by Eckhout in these volumes appear to be oils on paper.

Careful examination of these images reveals Eckhout’s working method. On a painted piece of paper, covered with what now appears to be muddy, pinkish-brown ground, Eckhout sketched out his composition in white chalk, which he then covered with oil paint. In places the ground layer of paint has become transparent, revealing other, older drawings. Areas of loss, where the paint has flaked off, have also exposed writing, as seen in the upper right hand corner of his drawing of the green lizard (iguana?), demonstrating that Eckhout sometimes painted over old documents, perhaps even letters written to the artist (fig. 18). Eckhout’s tendency to recycle his works (which is not surprising, given the colonial context in which all paper had to be imported) is also demonstrated by the figure sketch in black chalk of a nude European (?) male from the back, which is visible above the lizard’s body (plate 13).

Eckhout’s oil studies throughout the *Theatrum* are generally large and robust, and project a three-dimensional presence. In his works, it is not the detail of each brushstroke that draws one’s attention; rather it is the overall physical presence of the specimen that is conveyed to the viewer. Eckhout’s images never hide his brushstrokes; he uses thick layers of paint to create texture and protruding drops of paint for the highlights, as in this image of lemons (fig. 19). His works generally display a great sensitivity to materiality; Eckhout took care to distinguish the texture of the soft pink (faded?) and yellowish down of the red ibis from the large, liquid, slate-gray and green eyes of the young ocelot (figs. 3, 13). The ocelot’s coat is painted in a quick, almost calligraphic manner, with thick, bold brushstrokes of black paint creating an abstract pattern of lines and dots. Eckhout also employs black outlines in his drawings, which can be thick, like on the hands of the Africans in *Theatrum* III (fig. 51) or fine and delicate, as on the leaves in his oil study of the a monkeypot plant and the chope and their fruits (fig. 2). The plants and animals in these highly finished oil studies on paper stand up well in terms of naturalism and technique when compared to paintings on canvas by Eckhout’s contemporaries, including the still-life specialist Jan Davidsz. De Heem (fig. 23).

Parallels may also be drawn between Eckhout’s Brazilian drawings and the zoological paintings made by the Flemish painter Pieter Boel at the court of Louis XIV in the second half of the seventeenth century. Both artists created large-scale images
FIG. 18 – Detail of plate 13.
**Fig. 20** – Albert Eckhout, *Batfish*, ‘Guacucua’, (*Ogocephalus vespertilio*). 42.4 x 27 cm, *Theatrum*, vol. I, f. 19, *Libri picturati* A32. Courtesy of the Jagiellon University Library, Kraków.
of exotic animals in the possession of an aristocratic patron. Just as Eckhout’s sketches would be used to create cartoons in Europe after 1644, Boel’s lively oil studies on canvas of animals from the king’s zoological collection at Versailles were specifically created as tapestry motifs for Gobelins. There are, nonetheless, some important differences between Boel’s canvases and Eckhout’s oils on paper beyond the difference in support, among them the fact that Eckhout’s more highly finished works always represent the entire animal, unlike Boel, who often focuses only on the animal’s head. Eckhout also positions his animals in much more formal and static poses than Boel, in this way suggesting a closer affinity with contemporary botanical and zoological prints.

Although painterly in execution, Eckhout’s studies record accurate details with respect to the external appearance of the specimens under consideration. For example, Eckhout’s image of a batfish, ‘Guacucua’ (Ogocephalus vespertilio), equals his study of the green lizard, addressed above, in its verisimilitude (fig. 20). Nineteenth-century zoologist Lichtenstein admired Eckhout’s attention to detail and naturalism, declaring this image to be a ‘masterful painting of this fish from the top as well as from the bottom’. Although a layer of varnish has darkened the representation and made adequate reproduction difficult, this oil sketch of two fish and a single pepper is subtly rendered in light and dark olive green and bright cherry red. Eckhout may have included the pepper in this composition to impress upon the viewer that the red of the fish’s belly was of the same intensity as the red colour of the fruit, although the presence of the pepper also imparts a still-life quality to the image. The sensitivity to form, volume, and the careful depiction of the fall of light on different surfaces are as developed here as in any of Eckhout’s oil paintings on canvas. Indeed, the red pepper in this image is a close match for the two peppers depicted in Eckhout’s Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and a Basket of Spices (plate 10). Other carefully painted and startlingly realistic images by Eckhout of marine animals, which share a similarly ‘scientific’ still-life aesthetic, include this drawing of red crabs as well as this study of cooked lobsters (again seen from the bottom and top) with a lizard (plate 15, fig. 21).

Eckhout’s botanical drawings (Theatrum IV) share a similar aesthetic, displaying realistic colour, bold forms, careful, naturalistic rendering of the leaves and fruits, and the tendency to offer a complete botanical description, depicting branches and leaves as well as flowers and fruits (fig. 2). Like his still life paintings in Copenhagen, in the oil drawings on paper, Eckhout favours large, simplified forms and he often paints fruit cut open, setting it apart on the page for the viewer’s examination, as demonstrated in his drawings of tomatoes and lemons addressed above. This suggests that his work could have been used to facilitate scientific identification and classification; the Italian natural historian Ulisse Aldrovandi, for example, suggested that a botanical image needed to include the flowers as well as the fruits, thus showing different stages of the plant’s life cycle in order to make the image as ‘perfect’ as possible. Eckhout takes
great care to accurately reproduce details of colour and pattern, and as such one could argue that his work is largely consistent with the dictates of scientific illustration as they were developing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Regardless of the intended function of Eckhout’s oil studies, the fact that they are large, often life-sized, and are painted in a convincingly realistic manner, makes them effective substitutes for the real specimens. And yet it seems likely that they were originally intended to be collectors’ items and sources of inspiration for various ‘fine arts’ projects and only secondarily visual resources for scientific study.

**Style and Pictorial Mode in the Kraków Volumes: Eckhout and Marcgraf**

Whitehead and Boeseman have suggested that some of the more obvious variations in style and quality in the Kraków volumes have to do with whether or not the artist had a live or dead specimen in front of him. This interpretation is problematic on a number of different accounts and demonstrates a misunderstanding of early modern artistic practice, in which verisimilitude was not always the artistic goal for natural history representation; nor was it necessarily the preferred visual mode. They imply that ‘life-like’ representations could only have been made by studying living plants and animals, whereas less convincing images were the result of studying dead or preserved specimens. But as noted by Arnout Balis in his discussion of late sixteenth-century images of
nature, ‘motifs painted after life can come across as wooden, whereas images that are copied after another’s work can demonstrate a fresh and lively character: everything is dependent on the skill and the élan of the person who creates the image’.43

In an important early work on Italian nature studies, Otto Pächt brought attention to the fact that the rendering of a specimen as posed and lifeless was not necessarily about lack of skill, it could also reflect a deliberate choice by the artist.44 As demonstrated by Pächt, adoption of this artificial mode of representation, in which the subjects ‘lack the full breath of life’, did not rule out the possibility that such images were produced during an encounter with the living animal.45 Rather, he argued that this mode was actually necessary for a nature study. Similarly, in Robert Scheller’s work on model book drawings, he suggests that artists may also have chosen to produce a more stylized and less naturalistic image in order to ensure the long-term status of their drawing as an exemplum.46 As will become clear in the following comparison of Eckhout’s oil studies to Marcgraf’s watercolour and body colour drawings, the status of the specimen and the skill of the artist, as well as the medium, support, and intended function of the image all influenced its appearance.

Both the Theatrum and the Handbooks include images of Brazilian and African animals from the Count’s collection, and visual evidence suggests that Marcgraf and Eckhout occasionally drew the same specimens. Yet even a cursory examination reveals that these drawings display enormous differences, not only in size and media, but also in style and pictorial mode. Comparing illustrations made by Eckhout and Marcgraf of the same specimen, in this case a small anteater, highlights their representational differences (plates 16, 17). Although both images include the same basic information about the animal’s colour and form, Eckhout’s painterly execution and large size produce a much more dynamic visual impact than Marcgraf’s small, flat, and linear production. Eckhout’s anteater is both larger and more physically present. He appears to be aware of the viewer’s presence, as he begins to take a step across the page, flicking his thin red tongue out in front of him. In contrast, Marcgraf’s work is more detailed but less naturalistic; the scurrying ants on the ground provide the only movement in an otherwise static image. The informational status of Marcgraf’s drawing is reinforced by Johan Maurits’s handwritten description, which reads: ‘a kind of small anteater, the size of a badger. They climb trees and hang by their tails from the branches’.47

Eckhout’s oil studies and Marcgraf’s watercolours belong to separate visual traditions and demonstrate diverging priorities in their encounter with and reproduction of Brazilian nature. Marcgraf followed the descriptive style of the nature study, as exemplified by this well-known Flemish drawing of a hoopee from the fifteenth century, while Eckhout employed the dynamic and naturalistic vocabulary of a seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painter (figs. 22, 23). Independent of style, both the oil studies and the watercolours were nonetheless recognized as having informational
value by contemporaries in Europe, from WIC director Johannes de Laet in the Dutch Republic to physician and botanist Christopher Mentzel in Germany. Both bodies of images were put to practical scientific ends; they were copied for the illustrations in the *Historia naturalis Brasiliae* and used for the investigation and classification of new species of South American plants and animals. This does not mean, however, that contemporaries in Europe did not make distinctions between them.

In the following analysis of the drawings and their reception in Europe after 1644, I have relied on the 1652 German inventory, reproduced above, and Mentzel’s 1664 preface to the *Theatrum*. Mentzel’s writings are particularly important, because they provide the only in-depth analysis of these images by a contemporary. To a greater degree than the anonymous inventory, Mentzel provides unique and important information on the reception of images of nature in a seventeenth-century scientific and courtly context. As curator of the Elector’s collection of Brazilian natural history illustrations, Mentzel was primarily interested in Marcgraf and Eckhout’s drawings because of their status as unique representations of exotic and largely unknown species of plants and animals that were made *in situ*.

**Fig. 22** – Simon Marmion (attributed to), *Hoopoe*, watercolour on paper, 17 by 28 cm, fifteenth century. Courtesy of the Österreiche Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.

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FIG. 23 – Jan Davidsz. De Heem, *Still Life with Parrots*, late 1640s, oil on canvas, 150.49 x 117.74 cm. Courtesy of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota.
Mentzel and the Kraków Volumes:  
Artistic Authority and Oil Paint

In Brazil, Eckhout’s drawings reproduced the flora and fauna of Johan Maurits’s colonial domain, and upon their arrival in Europe in 1644, they became models for natural history woodcuts in the Historia, tapestries, and ceiling paintings in the Mauritshuis. With their transfer to the Elector of Brandenburg in 1652, however, they became first and foremost a visual resource for the study and classification of South American natural history.

In his dedication to Theatrum volume I, Mentzel writes: ‘When our Prince Maurice of Nassau, conqueror of Brazil, did bring with him a collection of paintings of Brazil’s natural things, incomplete, however, and in detail lacking, Thou [Friedrich Wilhelm], not content with thy splendid feats, wished, as a complement to thy achievements, that all be compiled and classified in those four volumes’. The desire to sort, classify, apply scientific labels, and arrange the ‘raw’ nature of the unsorted images into neatly bound and organized volumes was the essence of this enterprise. According to Mentzel, the Elector planned to make the collection available to ‘students of Humanities and Arts in the sanctuary of his library’. The acquisition of the South American natural history images and the creation of a ‘theater’ of Brazilian nature furthermore allowed the Elector to ally himself with a scientific and colonial enterprise at a time when he was contemplating the establishment of overseas trading companies for economic expansion into Africa and the New World.

Although Mentzel calls Marcgraf’s gouache and watercolour drawings ‘authentic and authorized records’, he also forcefully asserts that ‘no less authority must be given to the paintings [Eckhout’s works on paper], fruits of the same land, made with the same care and accuracy by those who gazed upon them with their own eyes’. In fact, he carefully draws attention to the status of these images, calling them ‘pictures of the things that Nature hath produced, nourished and nurtured, formed in their own original habitat and painted in exact colours after life [ad vivum]’. For the anonymous writer of the 1652 inventory, the label nach dem Leben verified the accurate content of Marcgraf’s drawings and established a functional distinction between the oil studies and the watercolour/gouache drawings. Given this assessment, it is somewhat surprising that only eleven years later Mentzel, while recognizing the informational content of the watercolours, would nonetheless turn this hierarchy on its head by valuing Eckhout’s oils on paper more highly as complete visual statements.

As discussed in recent literature on Northern European art, during the sixteenth century it became increasingly common for images to be produced and labeled as sources of accurate visual information rather than examples of artistic invention.
In particular, such representations included, but were not limited to, portraits, images of natural or preternatural phenomenon, natural history representations, and ethnographic illustrations in travel accounts. In his detailed analysis of the use of the term *contrafactum* on printed images in the sixteenth century, Peter Parshall has argued that such informational images (which ranged widely in quality, style, and degree of verisimilitude) were not distinguished by their use of ‘conventionally’ realistic representation, but rather by the vocabulary used to describe them. The designation of an image as a true ‘counterfeit’ vouched for its correspondence to the original. As he argues, ‘the type or class of portrayal designated by *contrafactum* came to be determined primarily by the intention to convey some particle of information deemed transmissable through a picture’. Especially in cases where the original was unavailable for purposes of verification, such a designation was deemed necessary to assure the viewing public of the representation’s accuracy. In this respect it is not insignificant that the nature study of the hoopoe addressed above includes the handwritten text, ‘Simon Mormion myt der handt’ (Simon Marmion [made this] with his hand), which makes the same kind of claim to eyewitness accuracy. In a similar way, Johan Maurits’s handwritten descriptions in the *Handbooks* serve to verify the content of Marcgraf’s images.

Focusing on the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Claudia Swan has explored the implications of the term *ad vivum* and its vernacular cognates, such as the German *nach dem Leben* and the Dutch *naer het leven*, coming to many of the same conclusions as Parshall with respect to the designation *contrafactum*. As she notes, ‘Like images identified as *gheconterfeyt*, those said to have been done *naer het leven* promise a verifiable conformity with their subject, an iconic correspondence’. When identified as having been made ‘after life’, the image took on the status of a document. As Swan argues, ‘The specification of how the drawing (or portion of it) was made – *naer t’leven* – invests it with a functional value neither its style nor its subject could’. Although Marcgraf does not write this type of description directly on his images in the *Handbooks*, he does specifically state in the preface to his section of the *Historia* that he produced images *ad vivum* of Brazilian nature.

Like Parshall, Swan focuses on images that were designated ‘true counterfeits’ or accurately produced ‘after life’ by the artists who created them or by those who had commissioned or published them. Swan nonetheless also brings attention to the important artist and theorist Karel van Mander and his use of the phrase ‘*gheconterfeyt nae t’ leven*’ to describe portraits and natural history images in *Het Schilderboek* (1604). She suggests that such an assessment required Van Mander to make a ‘leap of faith’ because he was neither familiar with the original nor had he witnessed the image’s creation. Regarding the visual characteristics that allowed an observer like Van Mander to make such an assessment, an image’s ‘lifelike effect’ appears to have been
understood by Van Mander as evidence of the image’s production *naer bet leven*.\(^5\) Certainly this ‘life-like’ effect was created in part by Van Mander’s favourable recognition of pictorial naturalism and the realistic use of colour.\(^6\) Apart from all too brief discussions like this, there has been little investigation regarding how particular combinations of visual and physical characteristics (apart from linguistic evidence) may have made a viewer believe that the image was a trustworthy bearer of information.

Mentzel organized the images in the four volumes of the *Theatrum* based on the *Historia*, which was an obvious model because many of the images in the *Historia* are based on drawings from the *Handbooks* and the *Theatrum*. Nonetheless, the *Theatrum* contains many more illustrations than there are woodcuts in the *Historia*. Mentzel had to classify and organize these unique images based on information he was able to gather visually. Although Mentzel’s eye was far from ‘innocent’, he did not know the artists and he had never been to Brazil. Unfamiliar with its indigenous flora and fauna, Mentzel could not judge the drawings with respect to their visual accuracy beyond what he could infer from the images themselves.

Given the differences in pictorial impact, one can understand how the naturalism possible with oils and the rich, realistic colours and textures of Eckhout’s images made Mentzel believe that each oil study could stand alone as a complete description. The ‘nature study mode’, here exemplified by Marcgraf’s work, with its small size, linearity, and lifelessness, had not been embraced by everyone as the ideal, and there was quite a bit of uncertainty regarding what was appropriate for natural history, especially zoological, representation. Although a scientist by training, Mentzel appears to have responded to and judged images in much the same way that Van Mander did; Eckhout’s paintings appeared more ‘lifelike’ than Marcgraf’s because of their naturalism and vivid, realistic use of colour.

Despite their collation into a set of study volumes on the natural history of Brazil, it is striking that the oil studies lack anything more than a label written above each image. Yet it is this lack of written description that is essential for understanding Mentzel’s view of scientific illustration. He describes the oil studies as visual substitutes for the real object, conveying the information of a written and a visual description in one. Like many other early modern scientists, Mentzel believed in the power and importance of images in transferring vital information – information that could not be expressed by words alone.\(^6\) As Swan notes, Aldrovandi believed that images could replace words in their descriptive capabilities.\(^6\) In a letter to Charles V (1500-1558), Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain, the famous anatomist Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) expressed a similar sentiment when he wrote: ‘Pictures greatly aid the understanding of these anatomical matters, and how much more accurately they put things before the eyes than even the clearest language’.\(^6\) In the preface to the *Theatrum*, Mentzel demonstrates that he is clearly of this school of thought, which
furthermore calls upon the historical tradition of the paragone, or rivalry between the arts in their efforts to reproduce nature:

So behold the magnificence of this ‘Theatre’, its splendour, its recommendation: that the powers immediately perceive at a single glance the truth and authenticity of the things, without the need for long detailed descriptions, and that this subject leaves nothing to be desired. Indeed, even to the most demanding pen would it be impossible to describe with perfection the particularities of the colours and distinguish them, as well as the number and division of the parts, details that may be seen in the picture at a single glance. It would be in vain to strive to describe the things of natures since the Creator’s skill and art are far superior to the phantasy of any writer. In practice, such greater worth hath painting than eloquence, principally when the reproductions are authentic and created by skilled hands, which do not intend to surpass natural beauty.

According to Mentzel, the written word was unnecessary in the face of such visual perfection, which accurately reflected the beauty of God’s creation.

Mentzel’s preference for Eckhout’s dynamic (but ‘authentic’) oil studies over Marcgraf’s careful drawings would not, however, prove typical of botanists of later generations. Colour would be rejected because of its mutability, and a painterly manner like Eckhout’s would be rejected in favor of the linear style of Marcgraf’s watercolours. Indeed, natural historians such as Carolus Linnaeus in the eighteenth century would favor the written word over the illustration. The Brazilian drawings and oil studies by Eckhout and Marcgraf were created during a period when artists and scientists alike were attempting to create the appropriate visual language for the representation of nature. Their works represent but two possibilities in the search for an accurate yet convincing solution to this problem. It is nonetheless fitting that during a period marked by an unstable boundary between art and science, both Marcgraf’s watercolours and Eckhout’s oil studies could be considered appropriate models for projects as distinct from each other as the illustrations for Piso and Marcgraf’s *Historia* and the tapestry designs produced for Gücht in Delft and Gobelins in Paris.
Fig. 24 – The People of the Islands Recently Discovered, woodcut, ca. 1505.
Courtesy of the New York Public Library, New York.
The people are thus naked, handsome, brown, well shaped in body, their heads, necks, arms, private parts, feet of women and men are a little covered with feathers. The men also have many precious stones in their faces and breasts. No one also has anything, but all things are in common. And the men have as wives those who please them, be they mothers, sisters, or friends, therein they make no distinction. They also fight with each other. They also eat each other even those who are slain, and hang the flesh of them in the smoke. They live one hundred and fifty years. And have no government.1

The text above, which draws heavily on Amerigo Vespucci’s highly influential pamphlet Mundus Novus (The New World, 1504), accompanies one of the earliest European representations of indigenous Americans, often identified as the Tupinamba of Brazil (fig. 24).2 I have chosen to begin my discussion of the ‘ethnographic impulse’ in the visual arts with this broadsheet, because in spite of the fact that both the image and its accompanying description are highly inaccurate by modern anthropological standards, the illustrator has 1) made an attempt to represent...
‘authentic’ dress and artifacts and depicted the Indians engaged in activities considered culturally specific. This print, published anonymously in Augsburg around 1505, already emphasizes nudity, feather ornamentation, and cannibalism, all of which became part of the standard iconography for Indians.3

This print presents the Indians as more modest in dress and activities than the text would have us believe: ‘private parts’ are covered and a woman in the foreground breastfeeds a baby while supervising three young children. Bearded and non-bearded men hold bows and display what Hugh Honour has designated highly improbable, ‘if not slightly perilous’, feather skirts, an article of clothing that was likely never worn as depicted.4 Other members of the group, who do not participate in these prescribed gender roles of childcare and hunting, enjoy a dinner of human flesh, served within an open-air structure on the left. A second course of body parts dangles from the beams of this structure and cures in the smoke from the fire below. The consumption of such ‘unnatural’ food will not, however, go unchallenged. European ships representing the forces of Judeo-Christian morality and Western civilization have appeared both on the horizon and close to shore in the background.5

Through a focus on the European encounter with South America and Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this chapter investigates the desire, which I refer to as an ‘ethnographic impulse’, to dissect, identify, and reconstitute in images those things (including cultural practices, such as cannibalism) that were thought to make an ethnic group unique. In addition to discussing early modern ideas about nation and ethnicity, this chapter also investigates the term ‘ethnographic portrait’ and its application to Albert Eckhout’s paintings of non-European peoples. These paintings, which are addressed in detail in the following two chapters, represent an important transitional stage in the development of ethnographic representation. Eckhout’s mid-seventeenth century paintings of the nations of Brazil and Africa are a synthesis of pictorial modes. They demonstrate their roots in the sixteenth century, when national types were differentiated by clothing, external attributes, and hairstyle, and look forward to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when skin colour and other external physical characteristics became the primary means of distinguishing ethnic and racial groups.

_Anthropology and Ethnography in the Early Modern Period_

Anthropology, ‘the study of man, or of mankind, in the widest sense’ and ethnography, ‘the scientific description of nations or races of men, with their customs, habits, and points of difference’ developed into theoretically based academic disciplines in the nine-
eenth century. Nonetheless, the term ‘ethnography’ was already in use in the eighteenth century, and the word ‘anthropology’ is first recorded in the sixteenth century. Margaret Hodgen, Anthony Pagden, and John Rowe, among others, have brought attention to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a key period in the development of modern anthropology and comparative ethnology. During these centuries scholars began to pay greater attention to the lifeways and customs of various peoples, turning their eyes not only to Europe, but also to Africa, Asia, and even America. Information about the different cultural or ethnic groups of the world, generally referred to as ‘nations’ by contemporaries, was recorded in travel accounts, atlases, geographies, and cosmographies and visualized in the images that often accompanied these texts.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ‘cultural divisions were never associated with “racial divisions”. Before the biological theorization of racial difference, Europeans were taught that all humans were the direct descendents of Adam and Eve. This belief in a single Creation, also called monogeneticism, was the official doctrine of the Catholic Church, and to assert otherwise was heretical. Nonetheless, some had their doubts about a shared heritage, especially because of the wide variety of appearances, languages, religions, and customs that could be observed among the world’s peoples. Hartmann Schedel’s map of the world from the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493) is a visual manifestation of the idea that all people could be traced back to Adam and Eve via Noah (fig. 25). According to the Bible, following the devastation of the great flood, the sons of Noah repopulated the world. Here the three men stand outside of the map of the world and gently rest their hands on its borders while directing the viewer’s gaze inward. T-O maps, the circular and highly schematic world maps created in the Middle Ages, often made a connection between Asia and Shem, Europe and Japhet, and Africa and Ham, although such a claim is more problematic here. On this map, Japhet is closer to Africa than Ham (labeled ‘Cam’); the latter looks towards India and Asia not Africa.

Modern scholars generally assume that Ham has always been paired with Africa, although Benjamin Braude has recently demonstrated that this is incorrect. As he notes, Genesis assigns no geographical areas to the brothers, and Ham is frequently associated with Asia in medieval literature, an association also suggested by this map. As late as the sixteenth century, Martin Luther referred to Ham as a ‘Lord of Asia’. Furthermore, the existence of separate continents was not understood as such until the seventeenth century. Europe, Asia, and Africa were not the modern constructions we recognize today: instead they were roughly defined regions with rather fluid boundaries. The depiction of the three sons of Noah on this map should not be viewed as a proto-racial division of the world’s inhabitants. The peoples of Europe, Africa, Asia, and America were eventually distilled into four fixed racial types, but such a development had to wait until the eighteenth century.
The unity of Schedel’s map of the world is further disturbed by the monsters, prodigies, and ‘Marvels of the East’ who occupy a separate space to the left of the map and an additional page of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*. As described in antiquity by Greek historian Herodotus (5th century BC) and Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), these ‘human oddities’ included dog-headed anthropophagi, headless men, and Amazons, all of which are pictured here. In the middle of the fourteenth century, these monstrous or Plinean races were addressed anew in the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, a work that claimed to be the true account of an English knight’s travels in Africa and Asia on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. This book has been called ‘the most widely read work of travel between 1350 and 1600’, and it was very influential in shaping European expectations about the people who inhabited the rest of the world. Although Schedel published the *Chronicle* a year after Columbus’s first encounter with America, it adhered to Mandeville’s late medieval view of the world, which would take some time to eradicate from the European consciousness.
Cannibalism and the New World

In Columbus’ first letter (1493), which addresses his initial voyage to America, he writes: ‘In these islands I have so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected’. Expressing some surprise, he further notes: ‘on the contrary the whole population is very well formed’. As a fifteenth-century European, Columbus’s expectations regarding unknown peoples were shaped not only by stories about marvelous humans in faraway lands in the accounts of Sir John Mandeville and Marco Polo, but also by the belief in the existence of savages within Europe’s borders, who included hairy wild men and naked, sexually deviant witches. As argued by Larry Silver, ‘lustful aggression, violence, and physical strength distinguish the conduct of the wild man, whose proper realm is at the furthest distance from “civilisation”’. Given the fact that the newly discovered peoples of America were geographically as well as socially located far outside of European boundaries, it is not surprising that these categories of internal and external ‘others’ directly influenced how indigenous Americans were first described and illustrated. For example, the 1505 description of Amerindians cited at the beginning of this chapter draws heavily, via Vespucci, on Mandeville’s discussion of the savage people of the island of ‘Lamary’. According to Mandeville, ‘the Custom there is such, that Men and Women go all naked... and they wed there no Wives... [and] they eat more gladly Man’s Flesh than any other Flesh’. In addition, the fact that most of the men in this early illustration of Indians have beards (not worn by indigenous Americans) suggests that the iconography of the wild man, the prototypical savage of the Old World, influenced the artist in his creation of an Indian type.

Repeated contact demonstrated that the people of the ‘newly discovered islands’ were monstrous not in form, but in habits, and cannibalism became one of the most common accusations made in visual and written descriptions of native American peoples during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Cannibalism must, nonetheless, always be recognized as the ‘quintessential symbol of alterity, an entrenched metaphor of cultural xenophobia’, and its ‘uses and abuses’ have come under greater scrutiny in recent scholarship. This critical attitude is especially due to the influence of William Arens, who brought attention to the lack of credibility in many accounts of cannibalism, whether the country in question was ancient Ireland or sixteenth-century Brazil. Although there is little doubt that cannibalism existed in some form in the Americas, it was never as widespread as suggested in early modern accounts. Regardless of one’s position in this highly contentious debate, fascination continues to surround such cultural practices (whether real or imagined). As Arens aptly notes, ‘Cannibalism is so good to think about that the intellectual appetite is not easily satisfied’.22

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Both Peter Hulme and Frank Lestringant have made careful studies of the etymology of the word cannibal. The classical term ‘anthropophagi’ means ‘eaters of human beings’, and it goes back to a label applied by the ancient Greeks to a nation that lived ‘beyond the Black Sea’. ‘Carib’ is much more recent and relevant to our discussion here, because it is the first name recorded by Columbus for a New World people, and it probably originally meant ‘brave and daring’. According to Lestringant, it was a descriptive term that inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles applied to themselves. However, for their enemies, the Arawaks of Cuba, the term took on a ‘distinctly pejorative connotation of ferocity and barbarity’. For the Arawaks, Carib became caniba or kanibna. This word entered the vocabulary of the Spanish as ‘cannibal’, which came to mean ‘eater of human flesh’ rather than simply ‘native of the Antilles’. Even when Carib was retained as a proper name, it remained interchangeable with cannibal. The general term ‘cannibalism’ entered the OED in 1796, although variants of the word had been in use by Europeans since the sixteenth century.

As noted by Hulme, in early modern travel accounts, as well as in recent anthropological textbooks, there has been a consistent juxtaposition between the ‘peace-loving’ Arawak and the ‘hostile, war-like’ Carib, a contrast that originates in the journals of Columbus. The Caribs, who actively resisted the European presence and were indifferent to Christianity and other aspects of Western culture, have historically been seen in opposition to the Arawak. This latter group was, by contrast, considered promising material for missionaries, and their mild manner suggested to Columbus that they would make ‘good servants’. This ideal of proto-Christianity and childlike innocence found especially fertile ground in Peter Martyr’s De Orbe Novo (Decades of the New World, 1516), in which the Indians are described as living in a peaceful ‘golden age’ in harmony with nature. Such positive descriptions, nonetheless, often functioned more as a commentary on European practices and interests than on the reality of indigenous lifeways. As argued by Gustav Jahoda among others, the ways in which Indians were described and understood, ‘whether as irremediably sub-human or potentially improvable, was also to a considerable extent a function of the conflicting aims of different categories of Europeans; notably conquest and exploitation versus missionary efforts’.

**Putting America in Her Place**

The frontispiece of Abraham Ortelius’s Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (1570) is the first image to represent the personifications of the four parts of the world as a unified group (fig. 26). The attributes held and worn by the four women not only associate each figure with a particular continent, they also support a hierarchy of civility.
America is at the bottom, Africa and Asia hold positions in the middle, and Europe reigns on high. Enthroned on top of the triumphal arch, a crowned and regally dressed European woman is the queen and natural ruler over the other parts of the world, and perhaps of the heavens as well, which is suggested by the fact that both celestial and terrestrial globes appear on either side of her. With her left hand she holds a Latin cross, with which she ‘steers’ a globe-like orb of power. Just as Schedel’s map, following medieval mappamundi, made Jerusalem the centre and ‘navel’ of the world, this image similarly uses geography, scale, and location to reinforce European authority and prominence over the rest of the continents.

Asia, the wealthiest and most highly cultivated part of the world after Europe, stands in front of the pillar below Europe, in a favourable position to her right. In the poem that Ortelius commissioned from Adolf van Meetkerke to explicate the frontispiece, Asia’s perfumes (she holds an incense burner in her left hand), gems, and luxurious fabrics are praised. The fully clothed Europe and Asia are in stark contrast to Africa, who wears only a plain cloth loosely draped over her shoulders and across her loins. She stands opposite Asia, but is clearly below her on the scale of civility. Poor in terms of material culture, she holds a sprig of balsam as her only object of trade. The flames around her head suggest both the heat of Africa’s climate and the source, according to classical authors as well as many contemporaries, for the dark skin of her people. As the last in this series of four, the newly discovered American continent lies on the ground in front of the triumphal arch, accompanied by the flaming bust of Australia, or terra incognita. Although America wears a close-fitting cap of feathers on her head, the rest of her body is nude. The long hair that escapes her cap has the dual function of both obscuring and drawing attention to her pubic area. As Van Meetkerke states, ‘She, forgetting herself, forgetting chaste shame, sits nude of her whole body’. The club she holds is used for killing other human beings, and ‘whenever the madness of famine goads her to more slaughter, she devours their members’. Her proclivity for violence is also suggested by the severed human head she holds in her left hand. Nudity and cannibalism, America’s two most distinctive traits, determine her prostrate, submissive, and curiously seductive position below the rest of the continents. America is a savage, but like Asia and Africa, she too has been brought under European rule.

Hierarchies of Civility and Contempt:

Europe, America, and Africa

The ‘habit of hierarchical thinking’ was characteristic of sixteenth-century humanists, who searched for ways in which to make the universe a more ordered, comprehensible
They were strongly influenced by ideas about the ‘Great Chain of Being’, a classical system for interpreting the world that was not abandoned until the nineteenth century. As noted by Jahoda, the Great Chain manifested itself as ‘a comprehensive hierarchical order, instituted by the Creator, in which the varieties of objects of creation are arranged in infinitely small gradations, from minerals via plants, animals and humans right up to the angels, in increasing degrees of perfection’. The ‘Great Chain’ originally had the religious function of showing man his place in the hierarchy of creation and how he might improve his ranking. It nonetheless also ‘served as an intellectual instrument for clarifying the muddle of multitudinous earthly and social forms’. This objective of clarification and order became increasingly challenging following the first contact with American ‘savages’ at the end of the fifteenth century, which nearly splintered the unified view of humanity. European scholars scrambled for ways to meet this challenge, eventually recognizing indigenous Americans as human beings, an opinion that received official sanction with Paul III’s Papal bull *Sublimis Deus* in 1537. Although Indians could now be considered ‘true men’, they were clearly of a less perfect sort than Europeans. This idea is represented in Ortelius’s frontispiece, which asserts America’s humanity by inserting her into the European world order, but clearly subordinates her because of her lack of civility.

According to Rowe, “civility” was the sixteenth-century equivalent of the later term “civilisation”. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a nation’s level of civility was determined by examining religion, morality, type of government, material culture, manner of making war, and cultivation and preparation of food, among other things. The distinction between Christian and non-Christian was, however, the real litmus test for distinguishing ‘us’ versus ‘them’ for most Europeans. On Ortelius’s frontispiece, Europe’s dominance over the rest of the continents makes it clear that Western political and governmental structures linked to Christian morality formed the paradigm of civility against which all other nations had to be measured. With Europe as an ideal model, America clearly lacked what was necessary. French writers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including French royal cosmographer André Thevet, endlessly invoked the pithy rhyme, *sans roi, sans loi, sans foi*, describing America as without king (government), law, and religion. Building on the work of Ernst van den Boogaart, Peter Mason has brought attention to the clear bias in such assessments in the context of the European expansion. As he has argued: ‘Civilized and uncivilized... are loaded terms which reflect the vision of the colonizers. Civilized means for them docile and amenable to European domination; uncivilized means putting up a spirited resistance to this colonial endeavor’.

Such biased descriptions continued well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1787, for example, the German scholar Christoph Meiners wrote that: ‘Americans are unquestionably the most depraved among all human, or human-like
creatures of the whole earth, and they are not only much weaker than the Negroes, but also much more inflexible, harder, and lacking in feelings’. This was not an opinion shared by all. Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, America’s position as the least civilized continent was increasingly challenged by Africa. Early modern Europeans labeled both Africans and Indians savages and barbarians, with the latter term ‘reserved for those who neither subscribed to European religious views, nor lived their lives according to European social norms’. The application of either word, in practice often interchangeable, asserted that the group in question was made up of uncivilized non-Christians. Descriptions of this type justified many violent acts, from conquest to enslavement.

The promotion of Christianity proved a particularly potent rationalization for the Atlantic slave trade. The Portuguese, who initiated the trade in the mid-fifteenth century and controlled it until the beginning of the seventeenth century, declared that they were ‘winning souls for Christ’ by enslaving ‘heathen’ and Muslim Africans and converting them to Christianity. Spaniards such as Francisco de Vitoria similarly rationalized the enslavement of Africans by asserting that they would be better off as ‘slaves among Christians than free in their own lands’. Even the Bible was used as a tool to justify African slavery. Genesis 9 (18-27) tells the story of Ham, who gazes upon his father Noah’s nakedness while the latter is drunk. When Ham tells his brothers of Noah’s condition, they demonstrate a more respectful attitude than their brother by averting their eyes and covering their father. Upon learning of Ham’s transgressive act of looking, Noah curses Canaan, Ham’s son, and requires that Canaan be ‘a servant of servants’ to his brothers. Later interpretations of this curiously moralizing story extended Canaan’s obligatory servitude to all of his ancestors (whose relocation to Africa has been addressed by William McKee Evans). The Portuguese invoked Noah’s curse on Canaan as a justification for African slavery in the fifteenth century, but this interpretation did not gain widespread acceptance until much later.

Between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and linked to Africans’ eroding status as full members of the human race, the rationalization for African slavery changed from religious affiliation, or exterior circumstances such as war, to a negative assessment of mental abilities and an assumption of ‘racial’ inferiority. By denying Africans the capacity for reason, for example, writers were able to justify their enslaved condition. Going back to Aristotle, reason was a key criterion for full humanity, and without it one was classified a natural slave, whose single purpose was ‘to be a slave’. The assumption that Africans were natural slaves further bolstered the argument that black skin could be taken as an outward sign of Noah’s curse. As noted by Bryan Edwards in his late eighteenth-century history of the British colonies of the West Indies, it is a person’s ‘complexion, generally speaking, [that] distinguishes freedom from slavery’. It is clear that slavery as an institution facilitated the demotion
of the African to the level of the sub-human, although Africans did not officially occupy the bottom tier in the scale of humanity established by Europeans until the end of the eighteenth century, with the theorization of a racial hierarchy based on biological difference.

*Visual Ethnography (1500–1700)*

With respect to the criteria Europeans used for understanding, ranking, and classifying others, Roxanne Wheeler writes: ‘Initially, they were religious and political concepts, such as Christianity and civility; later they were concepts related to physical appearance’. But even before European writers in the late eighteenth century defined racial difference via phenotype and presumed mental ability, artists explored a number of other ways to visually establish both identity and difference. Examination of illustrations in printed works, such as Renaissance travel accounts and costume books, demonstrates that Europeans and non-Europeans share the same ‘universal’ body type; they are differentiated only via costume, hair style, and ornamentation. Through her examination of primarily British texts, Wheeler argues that skin colour does not become an essential criterion for determining civility or ethnicity until the end of the eighteenth century. But is it possible to make this type of generalization about ethnographic images produced throughout northern Europe?

Before the eighteenth century, European descriptions of non-European peoples record differences in skin colour and even demonstrate colour prejudice, but there were no rules dictating how one was supposed to assess the complexion of each new group encountered. There was also a remarkable degree of ambivalence and a great range of response to difference in skin colour; the British, for example, responded in a far more negative manner to the dark colour of African skin than the Dutch. Nonetheless, Ernst van den Boogaart notes that the Dutch explorer Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1562–1611) ‘associated civility earlier with those having white skin than with those having dark skin’. Whiteness was not, however, a category exclusive to Europeans, because Linschoten included the Chinese among the ‘white’ nations. Van den Boogaart suggests that the Chinese were accorded this favourable position because their civilization was highly developed from a European point of view. This has been supported by Rotem Kowner’s recent work on European views of Japan in the early modern period. Kowner argues that until the seventeenth century, for Europeans ‘the color white did not carry explicit racial connotations but signified culture, refinement, and a “just like us” designation’.

Opposite to the colour white’s generally positive associations of purity, cleanliness, and ‘refinement’, the colour black has historically been linked to sinfulness and
evil in Christian thought. This did not, however, prevent the veneration of Saint Maurice in Western Europe in the late Middle Ages, a figure who was represented as a black African in paintings and sculpture. Similarly, painters in Northern Europe often included a black magus at nativity scenes into the sixteenth century. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while Africans were certainly subject to prejudice because of the darkness of their skin, they were still full members of the family of Adam. Europeans described, sometimes in great detail, the skin colour of Africans, Asians, American Indians, or other newly encountered peoples, but this information was not considered essential for the creation of a visual ethnic type. Only in the seventeenth century does the representation of skin colour begin to take on real importance, appearing even in printed representations where it previously had been ignored.

Late-Sixteenth Century Images of Africans

Examination of the illustrations for the original and the 1596 Dutch edition of Filippo Pigafetta’s *Relazione del reame di Congo* (originally published in 1591), as well as Pieter de Marees’s *Beschryvinge ende historische verhael vant Gout Koninkrijk van Gunea, 1602*, reveals that the artists did not use cross-hatching or stippling to indicate pigmentation (*figs. 27, 48*). While black and white prints are technically limited in their means of expressing variations in colour, engravings of Africans in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries nonetheless demonstrate much greater interest in suggesting differences in complexion. In both sixteenth-century illustrations reproduced here, the African women and men have white skin, reflecting the colour of the paper. Furthermore, in the 1596 image of women from the Congo, their dresses resemble togas, and the figures are completely European in conception. The woman on the right, for example, even holds her hands in the traditional manner of a Venus pudica; the 1602 illustration to de Marees continues this trend.

During the sixteenth century, artists created gendered types of the world’s nations not via distinctions in physical appearance but through clothing, ornamentation, and hairstyle. In Abraham de Bruyn’s *Habitas omnium pene Europe, Asiae...* (1581), men and woman from Europe, Asia, America, and Africa stand alongside each other in a horizontal format, creating with each turn of the page a ceremonial procession of figures dressed in distinctive costumes. They are not, however, made into separate physical types. In de Bruyn, like other sixteenth-century costume books, the same generic human model is used over and over again, with minor variations in pose and form enlivening the images. The idea of biological or inherited physical traits has no place in these prints. Although religion was the primary means by which Christian Europeans distinguished themselves from Jews, Muslims, and rest of the world’s peoples,
beliefs do not lend themselves to simple or unproblematic representation. Clothing, hairstyle, and other secondary attributes carried the burden of difference, both religious and more broadly cultural. Lack of clothing was an equally important marker of alterity. In fact, the nudity generally associated with Amerindians in the sixteenth century was a key component of their ethnic identity and an important signifier of their low level of civility.

One of the most influential sources for images of New World peoples during the early modern period was Theodor de Bry’s *Grands Voyages* (1590-1634). This series reproduced influential accounts of travel to the Americas (generally by Protestant authors) and illustrated them with fine engravings. As in the costume books and travel accounts discussed above, the illustrations in de Bry’s publications emphasize

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**Fig. 27** – *Women of the Congo*, engraving. Reproduced in Filippo Pigafetta, *De beschryvinghe vant groot ende ermaert coninckrijk van Congo*, 1596. Courtesy of the Royal Library, The Hague.
clothing, weapons, and hairstyle, especially for the men, as the primary means of creating convincing representations of indigenous Americans. In Theodor de Bry’s 1592 image of a cannibal feast from Hans Staden’s account of Brazil (discussed in detail in chapter 4), the bodies of the men and women are based on Renaissance and antique prototypes, just like the figures from the sixteenth-century accounts of travel to Africa discussed above (FIG. 28). Given the abundance of descriptions emphasizing the well-formed, attractive, and largely nude bodies of Africans and Indians, many illustrators turned to the ideal physical types represented in statues of Greco-Roman gods and goddesses. Whereas lack of clothing could be taken as evidence of a lack of civility, the Golden Age connection made by these heroic figures presents a more respectable alternative.

Bernadette Bucher has argued that the visual idealization of the Indians throughout the *Grands Voyages* was also de Bry’s contribution to the Black Legend of Spanish cruelties. This is especially the case with Part IV, which reproduces Girolamo Benzoni’s account of his fifteen years in the Spanish colonies of South America. By idealizing the Indians and making them European in appearance, the Spaniards’ inhumanity towards them appears all the more unacceptable. Nonetheless, this image of a cannibal feast after Staden highlights the pleasure that the Tupinamba women take in consuming a dismembered body; the women sit in a circle and share body parts with their children. In this respect, the illustration is more in keeping with the conventional connection between savagery and lack of clothing. In other images of cannibalism in de Bry, Staden in his role as the pious Christian and eyewitness observer, stands with his eyes raised in prayer. His body is like that of the Tupinamba men, but his beard sets him apart.

As noted by Bucher, ‘pictorial representation of Indians, especially in engravings, lags behind the descriptions of them found in explorer’s narratives. Still, even in texts, we rarely find the Indian classified as a particular physical category, whereas the peoples of Africa were classified much earlier’. Moving from the universalist model of humanity presented in the travel books and costume books discussed above, printed images of Africans made in the seventeenth century begin to demonstrate a unified group of stereotypical characteristics, including ‘kinky’ hair, full lips, and a dark skin colour, predating the attempts at ‘racial’ classification of the eighteenth century. Some of the earliest examples of this trend can be found in de Bry’s *Petit Voyages* (which reproduces accounts of travel to Asia and Africa), in which many of the engravings of Africans display figures with these physical signs of difference.

**The Emergence of Racial Classification**

Between the seventeenth and the end of the eighteenth centuries, the monogenists would lose control, and under the polygenists (who argued for separate creations) human unity would reassemble itself into a human hierarchy. As Bronwen Douglas argues, this was ‘paralleled by a broad shift in the meaning of the concept “race”: from the humanist, where “race” was a synonym for “variety”, “kind” or “nation”, to the scientific, connoting permanent, inherited physical differences between circumscribed human groups’. The first attempt at creating a racial classification based on physical characteristics, including ‘skin color, facial type, and bodily shape’, was made by the seventeenth-century French doctor and philosopher François Bernier (1625–1688). In his 1684 essay ‘Nouvelle Division de la Terre’, Bernier separated humanity into ‘four or five Species or Races of men so notably differing from each other that this may serve as the just foundation of a new division of the world’. His groups included...
The “first” race; 2) The African negroes; 3) The East and Northeast Asian race; 4) The Lapps’ in a descending hierarchy beginning with the Europeans (‘the First race’) at the top. Although Bernier could describe Africans as black with ‘thick lips and an oily skin, three or four tufts of beard, and a peculiar sort of hair’, he still embraced a monogenetic explanation of Creation, demonstrating that his racial categories were still part of the humanist tradition.

According to Hodgen, the definitive split came between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. She argues that with the publications by William Tyson, William Petty, and Carolus Linnaeus, ‘mankind was no longer considered a perfect whole’. In his immensely ambitious *System of Nature* (1735), a natural history that embraced all living things, the Swedish botanist Linnaeus gathered the world’s people into two groups, the *Homo Sapiens* and the *Homo Monstrosus*. The former included the American, the European, the Asiatic, the African, and (somewhat curiously) the Wild Man, and they were distinguished from each other on the basis of internal and external characteristics, including skin colour, colour and type of hair, personality, form of government, and clothing. For example, Linnaeus describes the American as ‘copper-colored, choleric, erect. Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide, face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content free. Paints himself with fine red lines. Regulated by customs’.

This reduction of the cultural and physical diversity of the world’s peoples into only five (eventually four) groups reflects the ‘generalizing trend in European writing during the eighteenth century’. As argued by Nicolas Hudson, this trend is part of an intellectual shift, from a recognition of the diversity of nations in the early modern period to a concerted effort to homogenize this diversity into a highly limited number of races at the end of the eighteenth century. Scholars in the nineteenth century would apply a definitive hierarchy to these groups and greatly expand the racist ideology and inflexible structure inherent in Linnaeus’s definitions, but discussion of that highly complicated period is far beyond the scope of this book.

*The Ethnographic Portrait*

The trend towards the codification of distinctive physical types for national groups that occurs in written works during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries finds a clear parallel in the Brazilian paintings of Albert Eckhout. These paintings occupy a transitional space between the national type of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, largely based on attributes and costumes, and the racial categories as they developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, based on skin colour, distinctive physical features, and ideas about national character.
I have consciously chosen to call Eckhout’s paintings of the different nations of Brazil ‘ethnographic portraits’ despite the fact that in the literature on Eckhout, this term has been interchangeable with ‘exotic portrait’ and ‘ethnic type’, terms that also lack clear definitions. In Richard Brilliant’s wide-ranging study of portraiture and the creation of identity, he writes: ‘If we mean by the term “ethnographic portrait” the portrayal of exotic non-Westerners by Western artists for Western audiences, in which the exoticism of the person portrayed is intentionally represented as the principle subject, and that exoticism is manifested through careful attention to details of costume, personal appearance, and “race”, then such ethnographic portraiture is both anthropologically defined and culturally biased’. The following paragraphs will amplify and limit this definition of the ‘ethnographic portrait’, drawing in particular on Peter Mason’s use of the term for Eckhout’s paintings.

Mason is the only author to have discussed both ‘exoticism’ and the ‘ethnographic portrait’ in Eckhout’s work, with the former having important implications for his interpretation of the latter. His understanding of exoticism is much more fully articulated than Brilliant’s. For Mason, the exotic is a category born of discovery and misapprehension. It is ‘produced by a process of decontextualization; taken from a setting elsewhere (it is this “elsewhere” which renders it exotic), it is transferred to a different setting or recontextualized. It is not the “original” geographic or cultural contexts which are valued, but the suitability of the objects in question to assume new meanings in a new context’. Indeed, he argues that the ‘exotic’ is ‘indifferent to ethnographic or geographic precision’. The fact that feather skirts, as worn by the Amerindians whose image opened this chapter, probably never existed as such but nonetheless became an attribute for non-European peoples from Brazil to Taiwan, is emblematic of Mason’s understanding of the exotic genre.

For Mason, the ethnographic portrait, in contrast, includes real artifacts represented in a recognizable manner, and reproduced ‘from direct observation’. He argues, ‘since the objects themselves are ethnographically identifiable, their addition to the human support introduces ethnographic distinctiveness to the composition as a whole... by virtue of the increased degree of specificity, the indeterminacy of the exotic genre gives way to the verisimilitude of the “ethnographic portrait”’. In this way he challenges Brilliant’s assertion that the subject of the ethnographic portrait is exoticism. In Mason’s version, the reproduction of recognizable attributes conveys believability, authenticity, and a reality effect that works against exoticism. Nonetheless, for Mason reproduction of authentic artifacts is not enough. As he argues, the images of Amerindians made by the German artists Albrecht Dürer and Hans Burgkmair, for example, which also include identifiable native artifacts, ‘can hardly be classified ethnographic portraits given the lack of contact with and information about the human beings depicted’. For Mason, human contact and information, and the
direct observation of artifacts, all products of ‘being there’, are also essential elements in the creation of an ethnographic portrait.⁸⁹

Eckhout’s works are apt examples for discussion of this term because they are products of the period in which the genre of the ethnographic portrait was created. As a European genre of representation, the ethnographic portrait emerges as a distinct visual form in the early modern period, most closely allied to colonization as part of the European expansion. In an important early work on the relationship between science and artistic production in northern Europe, Svetlana Alpers identified what she termed a ‘mapping impulse’ in seventeenth-century Dutch art. Specifically, this term designates a cultural milieu in which information ‘is to be gained and asserted through pictures’; it explains the interest of many Dutch artists, like Eckhout, in paintings that emphasize pictorial forms of knowledge.⁹⁰ This ‘mapping impulse’ was by no means limited to the Dutch Republic; governments and individuals throughout Europe attempted to represent, organize, codify, and control the flood of information about new plants, animals and peoples flowing into Europe from around the world. In this way there are many overlaps between the written and the verbal ethnographic portrait.

The ethnographic portrait can be understood in many respects as a visual manifestation of the early modern concept of *habit* as applied to different cultural groups rather than individuals. As noted by Valerie Traub, *habit* ‘synthesizes the separate but closely related concepts, *costume* and *custom*, *manners* and *morals*.⁹¹ *Habit* referred to ‘the way in which one holds or has oneself...[one’s] outward appearance, fashion of body, mode of clothing oneself, dress, habitation...[in addition to one’s] mental constitution, character, disposition, way of acting, comporting onself*.⁹² Generally speaking, ethnographic images attempt to identify and represent those aspects of a particular ethnic group and culture that can be distilled into a visual form. These most obviously include external characteristics, such as skin colour, costume, and hairstyle (and ‘race’ beginning in the nineteenth century), but can also extend to social activities, such as those surrounding religion, food gathering and consumption, marriage, death, and war. The standing posture, frontal pose, and static rendering of most ethnographic portraits derive from the images of more generic national types on maps and in travel accounts, like those produced by de Bruyn. The ethnographic portrait is, however, more specific in the reproduction of attributes and more ambitious in terms of its importance. It is both an artistic and a scientific response to the problem of human diversity.

The ethnographic portrait represents a single individual and adopts formal aspects not only from images of national types in costume books, but also from traditional portraiture. Specifically, the artist must employ a naturalistic style and reproduce just enough facial and physical detail to convince the viewer that a real person
could have posed for this portrait, although that need not have been the case. In this way I differ from Mason’s understanding of the term, which is predicated on a real encounter. Unlike traditional portraits, the ethnographic portrait emphasizes those aspects of a person that are not his alone but are considered characteristic of a larger – often ethnic or national – group. In this way it homogenizes the human subject, while at the same time insisting on absolute specificity of the ethnographic or ornamental details.\(^9\) Even when ethnographic portraits are intended to be viewed in pairs, social activities are generally not included or are relegated to the background. For this reason, artifacts carried or worn by each person become especially important. In this respect, I agree with Mason’s assessment that a hallmark of the ethnographic portrait is the ‘realistic rendering of authentic exotic artifacts, whose authenticity is then (unjustifiably) assumed to extend to the representation as a whole’, with the application of an ‘ethnographic label’ completing the process.\(^9\) Herein lies the fundamental tension between the real and the abstract at the heart of the ethnographic portrait: abstract on one level because this person is intended to stand in for the group as a whole or that gender position within the group, and real because of the depiction of authentic artifacts, costumes, hairstyles, and other observable physical characteristics.

Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits are convincing as real people, although the images were carefully constructed from many different sources in order to impart this effect. In Eckhout’s work the oil-paint medium, life-size representation, and the direct gaze of each figure out of the canvas give the depicted ‘specimens’ the illusion of subjectivity. The naturalistic land and seascapes that stretch out into the distance behind each figure serve to frame and situate the man or woman as part of a particular environment in a particular place. But despite this specificity of detail, the figures in these works did not create these images – these representations were made for the visual consumption of someone else. This aspect is also made clear in casta paintings, essentially ethnographic family portraits, which were produced in colonial Mexico and Peru in the eighteenth century, most likely for the European export market. All of these paintings, from Eckhout’s Brazilian works to the casta paintings, demonstrate this lack of ‘ethnic self-ascription’, as it is called in social anthropology, which is the final characteristic of the ethnographic portrait.

In her analysis of natural history and travel writing from the eighteenth century, Mary Louise Pratt argues that the act of writing an ethnographic portrait can be implicated in imperialism: ‘indigenous peoples are abstracted away from the history that is being made – a history into which Europeans intend to reinsert them as an exploited labor pool’.\(^9\) In the nineteenth century – a highly active period with respect to European colonial expansion – ethnographic portraits reached an even wider audience with the development of photography. Although rarely recognized by scholars of visual anthropology, the type of carefully posed, full-length photograph seen
FIG. 29 – Polynesian Man, black and white photograph, late 19th century.
Courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge.
here, in this case representing a tattooed man from Polynesia, owes its very existence to the powerful visual tradition that first developed in the seventeenth century with images like Eckhout’s paintings of the ‘savage’ peoples of Brazil and Africa (fig. 29). Here, however, a somewhat ridiculous studio background reveals little about the figure but much about the dishonesty of this mode of representation. The following two chapters make a close analysis of Eckhout’s figure paintings. Although not as obviously posed as this studio portrait, they are equally artificial in construction.
CHAPTER 4

Between the Savage and the Civilized
Eckhout’s Brasilianen and Tapuyas

The best-known images in Albert Eckhout’s Brazilian oeuvre are his paintings and drawings of Indians, representations that have been praised by some for ‘accuracy’ and damned by others for ‘sensational’ details. These representations include five large-scale paintings, namely a dance scene and four life-size ethnographic portraits, and ten chalk figure studies (plates 1-5; figs. 14; 36-38). These images fall into two categories: carefully constructed studio works and drawings after life. As discussed in the conclusion to this book, Johan Maurits presented the ethnographic portraits by Eckhout to the king of Denmark in 1654. In a 1679 letter to the Danish court, Johan Maurits described these paintings as representations of the wilde natien, or ‘savage peoples’, whom he had ruled during his governorship in Brazil. Although Eckhout signed, dated, and noted his Brazilian location on seven of these works, he did not label the peoples displayed here. Nonetheless, Johan Maurits’s Danish correspondent, a former WIC employee like the Count, had little difficulty identifying their ethnicities, describing them as ‘Brazilians, Tapuyas, mulattos, and mamalucos’ (brasilianen, tapoyers, molaten en mamalucken). Similar assessments had already been made in the 1640s: WIC employees Zacharias Wagener and Caspar Schmalkalden in Brazil and WIC director Johannes de Laet in Leiden all labelled copies of Eckhout’s Indians Brasilianen and Tapuyas (spelled in a variety of ways). Although some scholars have continued to use the term Tapuya, often written...
‘Tapuya’, these seventeenth-century titles have given way to ones considered more ethnographically precise: Eckhout’s *Brasilianen* are now called Tupinamba (or Tupí), while the *Tapuyas* have become the Tarairiu.

As I argue here, the most appropriate titles for the figures in Eckhout’s works are the ones that seventeenth-century northern European observers applied to them: *Brasilian* and *Tapuya*. Although these designations now carry little anthropological weight, they are essential for understanding Eckhout’s paintings. *Brasilian* is the title that was most frequently applied to the Indians living in the *aldeas* or ‘mission settlements’ under European supervision. It is a title that endorsed their assimilation as well as their position as the most widely recognized indigenous group. *Tapuya*, on the other hand, was a pejorative title of Tupí origin that carried the connotation of savagery. These titles set up a contrast between the colonized and the untamed (and untamable), a seventeenth-century Brazilian version of Columbus’s distinction between the Arawak and the Carib.

### The Changing View of Eckhout’s Accuracy

Seduced by Eckhout’s pictorial naturalism and adoption of the ethnographic mode for making images, observers from the seventeenth century onward have traditionally regarded his figural works as accurate representations of particular ethnic groups in Brazil. Just as scientist Christopher Mentzel valued Eckhout’s natural history oil studies for their botanical and zoological content (discussed in chapter 2), scholars of South American Indians, including the famous German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), have been drawn to the paintings because of their status as anthropological records. This traditional view was given new life as recently as 1989 by the natural historians P.J.P. Whitehead and M. Boeseman in their encyclopedic study of the works of art and science produced in Dutch Brazil. Here they praised Eckhout for his sensitivity to the actual appearance of seventeenth-century Brazilian Indians, stating that his life drawings of the *Tapuya* in particular are ‘virtually unsullied by European pose, body proportions or physiognomy’. Although they recognized that the paintings were removed from the moment of direct transcription, Whitehead and Boeseman nonetheless stated with confidence that Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits ‘did not greatly distort the honesty of the first-hand observation’. As summarized by Whitehead and Boeseman: ‘Eckhout was not a great painter’, but ‘he had an extraordinarily honest and penetrating eye when it came to seeing what was before him’, suggesting that his vision was not clouded by the ‘over refinement’ associated with artistic training. If one endorses this line of interpretation, Eckhout’s paintings are sources of anthropological, botanical, and zoological data, not carefully constructed works of art.
Art historians have had little interest in Eckhout’s paintings until quite recently, and they continue to retain their outsider status with respect to the traditional canon of seventeenth-century Dutch art. Called ‘unpainterly’, ‘stiff’, and ‘awkward’ into the 1960s, Eckhout’s works were not considered worthy of scholarly attention. Largely ignored by historians of Dutch art, in the 1970s scholars such as William Sturtevant, Hugh Honour, and Rüdger Joppien began to incorporate Eckhout’s images into their studies. These scholars were united by their interest in early European images of the New World, and all of them endorsed Eckhout’s artistic skill by celebrating his accuracy and portrait-like presentation. Sturtevant further placed Eckhout in an important position in the literature on the European reception of the New World, stating: ‘the first convincing European paintings of Indian physiognomy and body build of which I am aware are those by Albert Eckhout done in Brazil in 1641-43’. Joppien, whose 1979 wide-ranging essay on Johan Maurits and his artists is still essential reading, highlighted the unique status of these images, which are the first full-length paintings of Indians made in the Americas. Like Sturtevant and Whitehead and Boeseman more recently, Joppien also endorsed Eckhout’s accuracy, stating that the ethnic portraits are ‘extremely truthful in their different physiognomy and general physical appearance... [and] make no attempt to eschew ethnic truth or to compromise it for the sake of European taste or feeling for decorum’.

Historians, anthropologists, and art historians alike have nonetheless turned an increasingly critical eye to representations of indigneous Americans in European literature and art of the early modern period. As many scholars have demonstrated, such works often served to denigrate the ‘native’, thereby naturalizing the unequal power relationship between Europeans and those whom they had conquered and colonized. In his 1979 study of Dutch-Tarairiu relations, historian Ernst van den Boogaart broke new interpretive ground by suggesting that Eckhout’s paintings of Tapuyas, which he labeled Tarairiu, and Tupinamba from the ethnographic portrait series were conceived in opposition to each other, setting up a dichotomy of savage and civilized Indians. As he noted, the Tapuya/Tarairiu are naked and occupy wild landscapes. The man’s face is ‘deformed’ by ornaments, and the woman carries body parts, signaling cannibalism. The Tupis, by contrast, wear clothes to cover their genitals, and they are juxtaposed with manioc and bananas in cultivated landscapes. According to this interpretive model, the semi-civilized Tupinamba are ‘recruits to civility’ while the cannibalistic Tapuya/Tarairiu remain stubborn, ‘irredeemable’ savages. Van den Boogaart expanded this hierarchy of civility to three levels by including the rest of the images in Eckhout’s ethnographic portrait cycle. The mameluca and the mulatto man, whose fathers are Europeans, hold the top position. The Africans are coded semi-civilized like the Tupis and occupy ‘more or less’ the same level as their Indian counterparts. As argued by Van den Boogaart, Eckhout’s series ‘illustrates Dutch rule’ over
the indigenous American population and functions as a justification for the ‘civilizing’ presence of the Europeans.16

Recent work on Eckhout by art historians and cultural anthropologists, including Paul Vandenbroek, Bodo-Michael Baumunk, and Peter Mason, is indebted to this interpretation. These scholars employ a variety of approaches, including post-structuralism, post-colonial theory, and psychoanalysis to aid their investigation. In his essay on Eckhout’s paintings, Baumunk endorses Van den Boogaart’s three levels of civility, paying close attention to how the images construct a negative reading of the Tapuya. According to Baumunk, the pictorial emphasis on cannibalism and nudity in Eckhout’s paintings of the Tapuya was enough to connect them to witchcraft and devil worship in the eyes of early modern viewers.17 Vandenbroek also adopts Van den Boogaart’s three-tiered hierarchy for his discussion of Eckhout’s paintings. Additionally, he attacks Eckhout’s realistic style as deceptive, arguing that the paintings of the Tarairiu/Tapuya are ‘ethnographically incorrect’.18 According to Vandenbroek, the Tarairiu/Tapuya were not cannibals, yet Eckhout’s images reinforce this negative stereotype by including ‘sensational’ details such as the body parts held by the Tarairiu/Tapuya woman.

Building on the work of the scholars cited above, Mason’s publications have offered the most nuanced reading of Eckhout’s paintings to date.19 Although he suggests that because Eckhout was in Brazil, the paintings made must have some informational value, he primarily analyses these works as colonial statements that reinforce a hierarchy of civility and create ‘visual constructions of sexual difference’.20 In his work he contrasts the eroticized representations of the African woman and the Tupi ‘woman with the non-sexualized nudity of the Tapuya woman, who is the most savage female of the group’.21 Beginning with the idea that ‘the “Tapuya” are wilder than the Tupi, who are in turn less civilized than the mestizos’, Mason pushes this interpretation further by arguing that the ‘“Tapuya” couple represent the nightmare of psycho-analysis – the castrating, aggressive, active female and the (symbolically) castrated and unmanned male’.22 According to Mason, this negative and dangerous view of the New World ‘suggested that intervention by Europe was needed to restore the proper balance by turning everything the right way around’.23

Mason and Van den Boogaart offer important criticism of the previous literature by exposing Eckhout’s paintings as visual statements intended to create, justify, and ultimately preserve the European colonial order. Nonetheless, their work provides a highly limited degree of pictorial analysis and gives inadequate attention to the early modern visual tradition for Indians in general. Eckhout’s chalk drawings of Brazilian Indians, perhaps the Tarairiu, are among the earliest and most sensitive representations of New World people, but his oil paintings are complicated reconstructions that draw on many different sources besides these drawings after life, including the
visual tradition for Brazilian Indians, Dutch ideas and stereotypes about indigenous peoples, and his own artistic training.

Furthermore, an odd slippage occurs in much of the recent scholarship on Eckhout’s images: the paintings are held up as ideological constructions, while scholars nonetheless insist that anthropologically ‘correct’ titles be applied to the figures depicted. Displaying a curious twist of logic, scholars first assert that Eckhout’s paintings of the Tapuya, for example, actually represent the Tarairiu, and then criticize the painter for including ‘sensational details’ or information that is ‘ethnographically inaccurate’.24 Anthony Pagden has attacked and labeled anachronistic a similar approach taken by many historians, who ‘seem to take it for granted that some accurate descriptive account of the seemingly obvious novelty of the American experience was what the early-modern observer had set out down his long tunnel to achieve’.25 Eckhout’s agenda in creating his ethnographic series was informed by many things, but it was in no way dominated by an attempt to demonstrate modern anthropological accuracy. It is not at all self-evident that Eckhout wanted his paintings of the Tapuyas to be identified as Tarairiu. In fact, calling them Tarairiu may give these carefully constructed works of art more ethnographic authority than they warrant. Similarly, the early modern visual and written tradition associated with the Tupinamba is quite distinct from the two paintings that usually carry this label, suggesting that this title may be incorrect as well. Anthropologists today do not use Tupinamba to designate a single ethnic group. Rather this term is currently applied to all Indian nations that speak (or spoke) a Tupí-Guanáni dialect.26

Brasilian is a more appropriate title than Tupinamba, because it conveys the colonized condition of these people, whose men fought in both the Portuguese and the Dutch armies. Art historians and anthropologists have paid inadequate attention to the titles, Brasilian and Tapuya, which contemporary observers in Europe and Brazil applied to the figures in these paintings. Investigation of these seventeenth-century terms with their connotations of ‘savage’ and ‘semi-civilized’ supports Van den Boogaart’s broader interpretative framework while suggesting that scholars have been hasty in rejecting these titles for ones considered more anthropologically precise.

The Tupinamba ‘Savages’ of Brazil

When Europeans first arrived on the Brazilian coast at the beginning of the sixteenth century, members of the Tupinamba ethnic group had only recently completed a migration northwards and along the coast, driving the area’s previous inhabitants, whom they identified as Tapuyas, inland.27 Competing Tupinamba groups in the early modern period were often at war with each other as well as with neighbouring tribes,
Despite cultural and linguistic ties, Europeans first traded with the indigenous peoples of Brazil because of the red dyewood, called Brazilwood, from which the country derives its name. At first the Europeans were satisfied in limiting their contact to the coastal areas. They traded with coastal Tupinamba groups, who harvested the wood and brought it to the waiting European vessels, a process that often took several months. As the Portuguese, French, and later the Dutch attempted to establish colonies on the mainland, indigenous groups either allied themselves with or attacked these newcomers.

The widespread European interest in Brazil’s resources, colonial prospects, and its Tupinamba ‘savages’ is indicated by the elaborate Indian villages that the city of Rouen created for the Royal Entry of Henry II in 1551. This dramatic event is recorded in a contemporary illustrated manuscript and a published account of the Royal Entry. The villages were peopled with 300 naked ‘Indians’, composed of fifty apparently authentic Tupinambas and 250 French sailors and prostitutes ‘undressed’ for their parts. Here, for the pleasure of the king and his entourage, the ‘savages’ of the New World fought battles, burned villages, and even made love in hammocks and behind trees. Less than ten years later, three illustrated books on Brazil were published in northern Europe, each specifically addressing the Tupinamba of Brazil. All of these books include detailed discussions of cannibalism, any hint of which was carefully excluded from the festive entry in Rouen (as it would also be from the frontispiece to Piso and Marcgraf’s Historia naturalis Brasiliae). Stories of cannibalism justified conquest in the Americas and proved a sensational topic for published works, but encouraging colonization and royal support required a more subtle approach.

Hans Staden’s Wahrhaftig Historia... in Neuen Welt (1557), André Thevet’s Singularités de la France antarctique (1558), and Jean de Léry’s Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil (1578) are eyewitness accounts of Tupinamba culture written by Europeans who stayed in Brazil for an extended period of time. Staden’s work was the first to appear, and it is difficult to overestimate its influence and popularity, although its accuracy is still being debated. This exciting example of ‘survival literature’ tells the story of the German Lutheran and mercenary soldier’s period of captivity among the Tupinamba. Given his subject matter and narrative approach, it is not surprising that Staden’s account became a European bestseller and was immediately translated into a number of languages. The other two books, one by French Catholic André Thevet and the other by French Calvinist Jean de Léry, were written as the direct result of a disastrous French attempt at colonization in Brazil between 1555 and 1560. This missionary venture, which united Huguenots and Catholics (at least in principle) under the leadership of Nicholas Durand de Villefagnon, resulted in a complete failure because of this explosive religious mix. Thevet’s Singularités de la France antarctique (1558) presents a moralizing, contradictory, and abundantly illus-
trated account of Tupinamba lifeways. French Calvinist Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil* (1578) is a more balanced work in both tone and coverage, offering a rather positive assessment of the Tupinamba. Although his account was first composed in the early 1560s, this book was not published until almost twenty years later. These three publications shaped the European view of South America and did much to popularize images of the Tupinamba of Brazil.

Staden’s book details his voyage to Brazil, his work there as a mercenary soldier, and his subsequent capture by the *Tuppin Inbas* (a Tupinamba group), whom he generally refers to as ‘Wilden’ (savages). The book addresses his nine-month period of captivity, during which he was able to observe the customs and culture of the Tupinamba first hand. Whether or not Staden was strictly truthful in his account is of secondary concern to this analysis; what is of central importance is the popularity and influence of this text. It includes a short description of Tupinamba culture, which pays special attention to war and the practice of ritual cannibalism. Many of the book’s fifty-six illustrations are devoted to these themes. Naked but bearded, Hans Staden himself is a constant presence in the illustrations, functioning as a pious eyewitness observer and victim of the Indians’ ‘cruel’ practices.

Staden calls the Tupi ‘a fine race and handsome in face and general appearance, both men and women’, although the people in his crude woodcuts scarcely seem recognizable as human beings. These images, which may have been based on drawings by Staden himself, were nonetheless highly influential, especially as reinterpreted in engraved form by Theodor de Bry in Part III (1592) in his *Grands Voyages* series on the New World. Staden’s ethnography includes a fairly detailed image displaying two frontally posed men in ceremonial dress (Fig. 30). Both men are nude, have shaved heads with a fringe of long hair at the back, and wear ornamental stones in their faces. Each has a stippling of dots over his body, which represents either paint or feathers. The man on the right wears feathers both on his head and arranged in a circular fashion on his back, and the man on the left wears a beaded necklace with a half-moon shaped pendant. This image sets up two visual types for Tupi men, both of which are militaristic. The man on the left holds the elaborately decorated club involved in the ritual murder and consumption of prisoners, and the man on the right wears full battle dress with arrows and a bow. As discussed in chapter 3, like most sixteenth-century images of non-European people, emphasis is placed on body ornamentation, hair style, clothing, and other external attributes. In Staden’s illustrations, only the Tupinamba men appear truly alien and ‘other’. The women, by contrast, are simple nudes with long braided hair, holding or followed by small children. In all of the images, including his illustrations of cannibalism, the illustrator demonstrates relative indifference to Staden’s discussion of the long earrings worn by the women or their body paint, although body decoration is occasionally indicated by a light stippling.
DE LA FRANCE ANTARCTIQUE.

richement estoffée de divers plumages. Et tant plus le
prisonnier verra faire les preparatibes pour mourir, &
plus il monfrera signes de joie. Il sera donc mené, bien
lié & garroté de cordes de cotton en la place publique,
accompagné de dix ou douze mil Sauages du pays, ses
ennemis, & la sera assommé comme vn porceau, après plu-
sieurs ceremonies. Le prisonnier mort, sa femme, qui lui
avoi esté donnée, sera quelque petit duel. Incontinent
le corps étant mis en pieces, ils en prennent le sang & en
laurent leurs petits enfans maîles, pour les rendre plus har-
dis, comme ils disent, leur remontrans, que quand ils se-
ront venuz à leur age, ils faizent ainsi à leurs ennemis.

Donst faut penser, qu’on leur en fait autant de l’autre part;
quand ils sont pris en guerre. Ce corps ainsi mis par pie-
ces, & cuit à leur mode, sera distribué à tous, quelque nô-

Unlike Staden’s extended period in Brazil, Thevet remained there only ten weeks, and much of that time was spent on board a ship anchored off the coast. Relying, to a large extent, on the accounts of others, Thevet’s account is a rich mixture of firsthand information and fantasy. Like Staden, Thevet’s attention is focused on the Tupinamba, whom he calls the ‘Amériques’. Nonetheless, Thevet’s text is more typical of early travel accounts, which unlike Staden’s adventure tale, were written to encourage further interest in and settlement of a region. As Thevet states: ‘if the land were tilled, it wold bring forth very good things, considering how it doth lye with fayre mountaynes and dales, rivers bearing good fish’.

Like Staden, Thevet most frequently calls the Amériques ‘savages’; he describes them as:

a marvelous strange wild and brutish people, without Fayth, without Lawe, without Religion [sans roi, sans loi, sans foi], and without any civilite: but living like brute beasts, as nature hath brought them out, eating herbes and roots, being alwayes naked as well women as men, untill such time as being more visited and frequented of Christians, they may peradventure leave this brutish living, and lerne to live after a more civill and humayne manner.

Despite this rather negative and stereotypical description, which owes equal parts to Vespucci and Mandeville, these Brazilian ‘savages’ demonstrate the possibility for redemption and civilization, given additional contact with Christians. As noted by Lestringant, Thevet’s text sets up an opposition between the Amériques of Brazil and the ‘Cannibals’ who occupy lands to the north. Although both groups practice anthropophagy, the ‘Americans’ unlike the ‘Cannibals’ do not thirst for human blood but for vengeance, and therefore their practice of eating enemies is made more acceptable.

As the French royal cosmographer, Thevet had access to better artists than Staden, and the elegant, if somewhat elongated, bodies of the Indians in his text form a sharp contrast to the more rudimentary figures in Staden’s book. According to Thevet, the American ‘savages’ are tall, tawny coloured and ‘wel formed...but their eyes are eveill made’, which gives them an animal-like appearance. The artists who created the woodcuts for Thevet, most likely active in the circle of French mannerist Jean Cousins, generally gloss over the author’s more negative comments and instead present a largely positive view of Indian humanity. Even in this image of a cannibal feast, one can ignore the woman pulling out the victim’s intestines on the left and instead admire the classical forms of the decapitated torso that lies on the ground at the right, looking more like a fragment of ancient sculpture than dinner (FIG. 31).
Like Staden, Thevet mentions that the women stain their skin, but this aspect is absent from the illustrations, which present remarkably European figures. As pictured here, the men have somewhat small heads, but their nude bodies are heroic and well-muscled. The women, with their small, high breasts, flowing hair, and statue-like bodies, correspond to an ideal female type seen in sixteenth-century northern European prints. Although the men display a monk-like haircut and occasionally wear feathers, Thevet’s illustrations do not emphasize facial decoration, with the result that the men look less ‘savage’ than Staden’s.

Despite their idealized bodies, Susi Colin has argued that this illustration of a Tupinamba family enjoying a meal reinforces Thevet’s negative description of their eating habits (fig. 32). Although Thevet begins this chapter by asserting their lack of civility in eating, he commends their ‘marvellous silence’ at mealtimes and their tendency to share food equally, even with Christians. It is difficult to read this image as a condemnation of the Tupinamba simply because it displays them sitting and lying down while eating and swallowing fish whole. Such ‘barbaric’ tendencies are surely offset by the peacefulness of the lush, exterior setting and the attentiveness of the parents to their young children. Other more clearly positive images of the Tupinamba in Thevet’s text include idyllic representations of men and women harvesting fruit and wood.

Although Ter Ellington has recently argued that our contemporary understanding both of what ‘noble savage’ means and Rousseau’s involvement in the creation of this concept, were largely invented in the mid-nineteenth century by anthropologists, this does not detract from the fact that there is an older, well established tradition in European art and literature (drawing in part on ideas about a Golden Age in Greco-Roman mythology), which idealizes the primitive, pastoral lifestyle and expresses admiration for the ‘good savage’ (le bon sauvage). The cannibalistic acts ascribed to South American Indians in the early modern period horrified Europeans, but scholars recognize the deep sympathy for the Tupinamba expressed by Michel de Montaigne in his 1580 essay ‘On Cannibals’. Here Montaigne gave his Tupinamba informant – whether real or fictive – the ability to speak back and respond to the critiques of his culture and offer his own critiques of European society. In writing this work, which specifically addresses the peoples of ‘France Antarctique’, Montaigne drew heavily on Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Bresil*, the last of the three Brazilian books under consideration here.

In this work, Léry’s cultural relativism does much to place the idea of South American cannibalism into a broader comparative context. As argued by Lestringant, Léry and Montaigne create ‘a sort of allegorization of the savage, making him incarnate, for example, the realm of nature, primitive equality, or the leisurely freedom of an Ovidian golden age’. Of the three authors, Léry’s ethnography is the most
de poisson, que de chair: ainsi que Hérodote affirme des Babiloniens, qui ne viuoient que de poisson. Les loix de Triptoleme, selon Xenophon, defendoient aux Atheniés l’usage de la chair. Ce n’est donc chose si estrange de pouvoir viure de poisson sans visage de chair. Et mesmes en nostre Europe du commencement, & auant que la terre fuss ainsi cultuée & habitée, les hommes viuoient encore plus austerement sans chair ne poisson, n‘ayans l‘industrie d‘en vier: & toutefois estoient robustes, & viuoient longuement, sans estre tant effeminés, que ceux de nostre temps: lesquels d‘autant plus qu‘ils sont traités delicatement, & plus sont sujets à maladies, & debilités. Or

Les hommes sont plus souvent nourris delicatement, et moins robustes.

nos Sauvages viennent de chairs & poissons, comme nous avons dit: & en la maniere qui vous est icy monstree par figure. Quelques uns d‘icelx se couchent en leurs

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detailed, sensitive, and informative. It is also the best written of the three, probably because he had nearly twenty years to write, rewrite, and meditate on his experiences before the first edition of the work appeared in 1578. Léry’s information, although supplemented by Thevet’s *France Antarctique*, was based on his first-hand experience living among the ‘savages of America who live in Brazil, called the Tupinamba’. During the year that he was in Brazil, Léry stayed in an indigenous village for around two months, which allowed him intimate access to the Tupinamba and their culture.

For Whatley, Léry’s chapter 15 on how the Tupinamba kill and eat their prisoners and chapter 18 on their laws and civil order provide opposite, but mutually informative, glimpses of the Tupinamba society. Here Léry describes the ritual of death, replete with honor for both the victim and his executioners. Like Thevet, Léry makes certain that the reader knows that the enemy is consumed ‘more out of vengeance than for the taste’, making cannibalism (as in Thevet) part of their culture instead of their nature. Chapter 18 offers a complete overview of Tupinamba humanity, from their weeping, grateful greetings to friends and strangers to their artistic skill in decorating earthen vessels. Léry finds much to admire, stating, ‘it is an incredible thing...how a people guided solely by their nature, even corrupted as it is, can live and deal with each other in such peace and tranquility’.

The difficulty in producing an accurate representation of the Tupinamba of Brazil, or indeed of any newly encountered people, is emphasized by Léry in this book. As he states: ‘you would need several illustrations to represent them well, and even then you could not convey their appearance without adding painting’. Perhaps this frustration with the limitations of the printed image is what made him include only six woodcut illustrations in the first edition of this book. While it is unlikely that the artist had firsthand knowledge of their appearance, these illustrations nonetheless support Léry’s generally positive view of the Tupinamba (fig. 8). Léry states with approval that the Tupinamba are ‘stronger, more robust and well filled out, more nimble, [and] less subject to disease than Europeans’, although he does not condone their nudity. In the book, the men are presented as well-muscled and heroic nudes, but they are shorter and stockier than the elegant figures in Thevet’s text, with which Léry’s artist was clearly familiar. The attention to faces, which appear heavy set and rounded, suggests an attempt to reproduce a more accurate appearance of the Tupinamba. Léry calls their skin colour ‘tawny... like the Spanish or Provençals’, making them less exotic by likening them to Europeans. The artist has nonetheless made an attempt to indicate their ‘tawny’ complexion through cross-hatching and shading. Attention to skin colour or external decoration, including lip plugs, half-moon shaped necklaces, and scars, is nonetheless clearly secondary in importance to the overall physical presence of the nude male’s body. Léry’s women, as in the other texts discussed above, are entirely European in conception and appearance.
In Staden and Thevet, the majority of the images are busy with activities and interacting bodies. To illustrate Thevet’s discussion of the generosity of the *Amériques* and their customary weeping greeting, the artist represents the interior of a native dwelling occupied by six adults and one child. The illustration of the same activity in Léry’s text borrows its female figure from Thevet’s illustration. Here, however, the artist has focused the viewer’s attention solely on bodies and gestures, because he has reduced the number of participants to three, removed the setting, and made the figures much larger. Léry’s illustrations stand apart from the images in these earlier books because of their solemn, almost reverential quality and their insistent pictorial emphasis on the nude male Tupinamba body (fig. 33). As noted by Claire Farago, Léry’s Tupinamba are ‘iconic, sculpturally-conceived figures, modeled in light and shadow, with only a bare indication of a setting’. As a possible source for this approach, Farago suggests the ‘anatomical mode’ employed by Vesalius’s artists for the human figures in his anatomy texts, such as *De humani corporis fabrica* (1534). The full-length, dynamic, and non-narrative images of Tupinamba men in Léry’s text can be viewed as precursors to the ethnographic portrait as practiced by Albert Eckhout, although his knowledge of them may have been mediated through other sources, such as the engravings after them in de Bry’s *Grands Voyages*.

The complicated ideas about and images of the Tupinamba present in the works of Staden, de Léry, and Thevet reached their largest audience via de Bry’s 1592 publication of Part III of the *Grands Voyages* series, which focuses on Brazil with a text based on Staden and de Léry. The artful engravings included here, which have been studied in detail by Bernadette Bucher, are idealized and highly reworked copies of Staden’s woodcuts, presenting a synthesis of Léry’s robust nudes and the elegant figures in Thevet’s work. When one compares any of de Bry’s engraved images of the Tupinamba to Staden’s originals, they are unrecognizable with their newly ‘statuesque bodies and Roman profiles’ (fig. 28). De Bry’s illustrations of the Tupinamba are more convincing than the woodcuts they are based on, in part because the engravings are far more artful and attractive than the earlier images, but also because these later prints give greater attention to facial expression and naturalistic body movement (here, for example, it is clear that the women are really enjoying their feast of human flesh). Of course, the more detailed representations of Tupinamba artifacts, including feather bustles, headdresses, and clubs in other images, also lend an air of authenticity. Nonetheless, de Bry’s frontispiece to this Brazilian volume of the *Grands Voyages* is quite opposite the Eden-like entryway presented fifty years later on the title page of Piso and Marcgraf’s *Historia naturalis Brasiliae* (figs. 5, 34). In de Bry, the reader is instead greeted by a Tupinamba man and woman, who stand on an architectural framework and bite into severed limbs, preparing the reader for the savagery that follows.
Eckhout’s paintings of the Tupinamba are clearly more informative than the printed images addressed above, despite the apparent ‘ethnographic authority’ of de Bry’s engravings. Eckhout’s naturalistically painted, life-size images display careful attention to skin colouration (not possible in black and white prints), the reproduction of identifiable artifacts, and the delineation of an appropriate setting. But it is more than a difference in medium, size, and descriptive content that sets Eckhout’s works apart from these earlier images. Although it has not been addressed in the scholarship, Eckhout’s Tupinamba are puzzling if one compares them to the important sixteenth-century tradition discussed above. What does Eckhout’s allegedly Tupinamba man, with his white shorts, European knife, and groomed facial hair, have to do with the naked, feather-ornamented, and painted cannibals described and represented in the books by Staden, Thevet, Léry, and de Bry? Is it even correct to call the man and woman in Eckhout’s paintings Tupinamba? Like the label Tarairiu, Tupinamba will be exposed as an equally problematic addition to these paintings.

**How the Tupinamba Became Brazilianen**

During the second half of the sixteenth century, after their numbers had been decimated by war, disease, and slavery, the Tupinamba peoples who did not escape into the interior were gathered into supervised villages by the Portuguese, with only a small group of them remaining undefeated on the coast north of Bahia. In the *aldeas*, Jesuits taught the Indians Portuguese and rooted out unacceptable practices, such as habitual nudity and ritual cannibalism. The *aldeas* were the ideal location for proselytizing and converting the Indians to the Roman Catholic faith. From the European point of view the advantages implicit in this system were summed up by one of the Jesuits, who stated that in these villages the Indians ‘have become civilised and are saved’.

After his capture in 1635, Portuguese Jesuit Manuel de Moraes defected to the Dutch side, bringing with him 1,600 colonized Indians from the *aldeas* of Paraibai and the Rio Grande region. These Indians, members of a Tupinamba ethnic group, soon became important to the fledgling Dutch colony as their main auxiliary soldiers. The WIC adopted the *aldea* system, which Dutch ministers then operated like their Portuguese predecessors, as the ideal venue for converting the Indians. But in this case, the conversion was not simply to Christianity, but to Calvinism. Abolition of the ‘Papist’ Roman Catholic beliefs introduced by the Portuguese was the goal; the original belief systems of the missionized Indians, along with much of their original culture, had already been supplemented by, and to some extent replaced with, Western ideas and values. This process was occurring all over South America. As argued
by Olivia Harris, ‘By the late seventeenth century “Indian” culture was thoroughly “mestizo”’. Although her work focuses on the indigenous peoples of the Andes, the same holds true for the Tupinamba of Brazil.

**The Tupinamba/Brasilianen and the Dutch**

In 1625, four years after the establishment of the WIC, Company director Johannes de Laet published his *Nieuwe Werelt ofte Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (New World or Description of the West Indies), in which he included a description of the ‘diverse nations found in Brazil’, originally written by the Portuguese Fernão Cardim in 1584. In this widely known and frequently reproduced description, we find clear evidence that European observers were able to distinguish between multiple ethnic groups present in Brazil. This text describes the Topimanbazes as sharing language and ‘other things’ with the Petivares, who are cannibals, but less ‘barbaric’ than the rest of the Indians in Brazil. The Topimanbazes are noteworthy for their attractive women and for the fact that the men let their beards grow, this facial hair setting them apart from other South American Indians. The Petivares may be the same as the Patiguares ofte Brasilianen (Patiguares or Brazilians) described in 1639 as a Tupinamba nation originally allied with the French and harbouring a deep hatred of the Portuguese.

In his 1647 history of Dutch Brazil, *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia*, Caspar Barlaeus calls the Brasilianen the ‘former inhabitants and lords of these lands’. But to whom is he referring? The colonization of northeastern Brazil by the Dutch resulted in discussions about and descriptions of the indigenous population, many of which have survived in the form of WIC reports, letters, pamphlets, and the *Historie ofte iaerlyck Verhael* (1644), de Laet’s four-part history of the WIC between 1624 and 1636. Although scholarship on Eckhout’s paintings has tended to emphasize the descriptions found in Zacharias Wagener’s *Thierbuch* (ca. 1641), I have supplemented this important source, addressed in greater detail in chapter 5, with information from other contemporary accounts. Study of these printed and written documents demonstrates that the word Brasilian was frequently used by the Dutch and WIC employees to designate the indigenous people living within the aldeas. Only occasionally was it used as a generic label for all indigenous people in Brazil.

Barlaeus’s sources for his book included letters by Johan Maurits and WIC reports, including the July 1639 report on the captaincy of Paraiba by Elias Herckmans, a Political Councillor in Brazil. In Herckman’s report Brasilianen are the people who have come under Dutch control. The aldeas, which he calls ‘villages of the Brasilianen’, are where the Brasilianen receive religious instruction. More information is provided in a pamphlet written in 1639 by Vincent Joachim Soler, a Calvinist.
minister in Brazil. Soler states that there are thirteen *aldeas* under Dutch jurisdiction, having a total of twenty thousand Indian souls, although it is likely that he overestimated this number.72 Here the *Brasilianen* are baptized, married, and adopt Christian names.73 As Soler further notes, the men from the *aldeas* make up a regiment of twelve companies and fight with the WIC’s soldiers in Brazil.74 Zacharius Wagener further notes that the *Brasilian* men are ‘well versed in handling muskets and other fire-arms’. Although he argues that they never ‘submitted to the yoke of obedience’ under the Spanish [Portuguese], the colonized status of the *Brasilianen* under Dutch rule is made clear by Wagener’s offhand comment that officers [presumably WIC officials] do not allow them to consume alcohol on a daily basis.75

Descriptions of these colonized and semi-civilized *Brasilianen* are much more subdued than the tales told about their more colourful ancestors, the Tupinambas. As Van den Boogaart notes, ‘the written sources on the Tupi are remarkably brief and insipid’, clearly referring to the seventeenth-century reports and not those from the sixteenth century.76 Contemporary observers in Dutch Brazil noted that the Indians in the *aldeas* raise crops, including fruit and the manioc root, which is used to make their bread. In addition to serving in the WIC’s army, *Brasilianen* work on the sugar plantations cutting firewood, caring for animals, and planting sugar cane.77 Soler states that they ‘are a very simple people, without malice, of few words, and with no ambition to possess earthly goods’.78 Wagener comments that they are ‘always happy and well-humoured, notwithstanding their poverty and misfortune’.79 They sleep in hammocks, drink from calabashes, and use a bow and arrow for hunting.80 Recalling descriptions in Staden, Thevet, and Léry, Herckmans points out their use of a black dye called ‘jennip’, but the practice of staining their bodies with it has disappeared.81 Perhaps most significantly, the *Brasilianen* wear clothing to cover their nudity; the women wear long cotton dresses, and the men wear trousers and a coat.82 The sources agree that the *Brasilianen* work only to earn enough to pay for the clothes they wear, which they get from the Dutch. Their negative characteristics are limited to an obsession with dancing, laziness, and the abuse of alcohol. The use of hammocks, the cultivation and consumption of manioc, and the distillation of alcohol from cashew fruit are, for the most part, the only cultural similarities left over from earlier descriptions of the Tupinamba. As will become clear in the discussion below, Eckhout’s paintings of the Tupinamba, more properly called *Brasilianen*, are far closer to the colonial reality of the *aldea* than the sixteenth-century ‘savage’ of Staden, Léry, and Thevet.
Eckhout’s Brasilianen

In Eckhout’s painting (plate 4), a scantily clad Brasilian woman stands on a hill and stares blankly out at the viewer, with an orderly plantation of citrus trees pictured in the background behind her. On her head she carries a basket holding a rolled-up net, possibly a hammock, and several calabash containers. Her small nude daughter, whom she supports on her hip, lightly touches her mother’s right breast and turns her small, lively face towards the viewer. A reddish gourd on a string hangs from the main figure’s right wrist, and she gently supports the overladen basket on her head with her left hand. Her smooth, light brown skin shows no evidence of body painting or jewellery. The wheat-coloured woven basket is her only distinctive possession; her long thin braids interwoven with white and red string are her only distinctive decoration. To her left is a banana tree, introduced by Europeans into Brazil just like the citrus trees planted in neat rows behind her. A large greenish toad sits on the ground at her feet.

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On the plantation grounds behind her, twenty-one tiny human figures, mostly Brasilianen like the main figure and her child, are busy tending animals and children, carrying baskets, or resting in hammocks stretched between the trees. Most of these figures are women, wearing the long white dresses described as the clothing typically worn by Brasilian women, not the short white skirt with exposed breasts of this painting’s main figure. In between the rows of trees on the right, men clad in white shorts hold weapons, a rifle and possibly a spear. A watchful European presence is embodied by the lord and lady of this tropical manor, recognizable as such because of her clothing and his broad black hat. They stand on the balcony of the second floor of the house and look out over their servants, trees, and livestock below. As scholars have suggested, this is a calm and cultivated landscape, reflecting the status of the main figure within this colonized realm and its European overseers.

Eckhout’s Brasilian man (plate 5) is dressed in a simple pair of white shorts, like the tiny male figures in the background behind his female counterpart. His thin moustache and small trimmed beard are highly unusual in an image of an Indian from this period, who were more generally known for their lack of body hair. He holds a bow and four arrows, in addition to a European knife with a metal blade, which is stuck into the waistband of his shorts. Like the Brasilian woman, his smooth brown skin bears no evidence of staining, painting, or other ornamentation. Although his outward gaze is curiously unfocused, his tools suggest that he will soon be hunting for meat to supplement the blue crabs and manioc roots at his feet. Manioc roots are planted in a cluster behind him, and a small, unconvincing green hummingbird perches on a branch of one of the fully developed plants.

From the top of the hill where the main figure stands, a peaceful and idyllic green and blue river landscape stretches out into the distance. As embodied by the
lord and lady on their balcony in Eckhout’s painting of the Brasilian woman, this painting also includes a European presence in the deep background. Sitting in a small boat in the middle of the river, three men in dark clothing and broad hats survey the bathing and washing activities of the men and women along the shore.\textsuperscript{89} The purpose of the European presence in these two paintings goes beyond the voyeurism suggested by their proximity to the four nude women bathers in the background here. They observe, control, and construct the activities of the Brasilianen, both within the paintings and in the colony itself, becoming a ‘conceptual vanishing point’.\textsuperscript{90} The European I/eye structures the work and dictates its limitations as well as its possibilities. Although white Europeans are not portrayed as one of the paired national types in this series of ethnic types, they form the ideal against which the others must be measured.\textsuperscript{91} Their depiction in the backgrounds of these two works affirms that their presence in the portrait series is not simply indirect.

For the Dutch, the Brasilianen were the aldea or ‘mission’ Indians, a people in the process of assimilation into what was the dominant culture, thus occupying an entirely new taxonomic category – neither fully Indian nor fully European. Accordingly, the visual tradition of the Tupinamba was both inappropriate and inaccurate for his purposes. Eckhout had to create a new genre of representation for the Brasilianen that would visually convey the idea of a people undergoing cultural change. To a much greater degree than his Tapuyas, his paintings of Brasilianen are unprecedented. This does not mean, however, that Eckhout began the process of creating a new ethnographic type with a clean slate. He made studies after life, including a delicately drawn image of a young girl in a long white skirt in the Miscellanea Cleyri volume.\textsuperscript{92}

Given the absence of an established visual tradition for the Brasilianen, Eckhout may also have sought inspiration from illustrations in accounts of travel to other parts of the world. The body of Eckhout’s Brasilian woman, for example, resembles a female inhabitant of the ‘Great Bay of Antongil’, as illustrated by Willem Lodewycksz in his Historie van Indië (History of the Indies, 1598) (Fig. 35).\textsuperscript{93} On the right side of the print, a woman clad only in a skirt carries a nursing child on her left hip and holds a small bag in her left hand. The similarities to Eckhout’s painting are not limited to the frontal stance, short skirt, exposed breasts, and small child. Each woman also displays a high forehead, wide-set eyes, pursed lips, and a broad nose (a similar type of female face is also seen in the work of the seventeenth-century Dutch painter Paulus Bor, whose possible connection to Eckhout is discussed in chapter 1).\textsuperscript{94} Characterized in the text as a shy, ‘well-formed’, and friendly people who traded foodstuffs to the Dutch, this image of a peaceful indigenous group would have formed an appropriate point of reference for Eckhout’s semi-civilized Brasilianen. Copies of these illustrations were included in de Bry’s edition of this account in his Petit Voyages
series, although Eckhout’s painting could have been based on the original illustration, which shows the woman in the same pose, unlike de Bry’s mirrored version.

Images of indigenous women wearing little or no clothing were a fairly standard feature of travel accounts by the mid-seventeenth century. In this category we find the native mother type, who exposes her breasts to the viewer and holds the hand of a small child or breastfeeds a baby, as seen in both Eckhout’s painting and the print discussed above. As early as the 1595 German illustration discussed at the beginning of chapter 3, breastfeeding was considered an appropriate and characteristic activity for Indian women. The interest in depicting activities associated with childcare is made explicit in the text that accompanies the image of the inhabitants of the Great Bay of Antongil, which states: ‘Their women carry their children on their hip and breast-feed them in this manner’. While breastfeeding was certainly practiced by women around the world, the decision to represent it as a traditional activity of indigenous women may say more about contemporary debates regarding the proper maternal duties of European women than actual social practices outside of Europe. In her recent analysis of French Capuchin Claude d’Abbeville’s early-seventeenth century descriptions of Tupi women, Laura Fishman has similarly noted how his

**Fig. 35 – Inhabitants of the ‘Great Bay of Antongil’, engraving. Reproduced in Willem Lodewycksz, *Historie van Indien* (1598). Courtesy of the Royal Library, The Hague.**
description of native women breastfeeding functioned as a critique of their European counterparts, many of whom engaged wet nurses for their children. It is also difficult to overlook similarities between this visual tradition and the one that developed promoting breast-feeding as an appropriate maternal activity in eighteenth-century France.

Eckhout’s Brasilian man is not modeled on any known print, but his image is nonetheless related to the generic masculine type for the ‘native’ man, whose universal attributes included a bow and arrows. In creating this image, Eckhout appears to have borrowed aspects of pose and muscle development from his life studies in Kraków and Berlin of indigenous men in Brazil, now usually identified as members of the Tarairiu ethnic group. Comparing the Brasilian man’s body with the men in Eckhout’s Tapuya Dance demonstrates further similarities (fig. 36). Nonetheless, his obvious links to European culture, which include his shorts, knife, and facial hair, have placed him into a new category of Indian. Although the tendency today is to emphasize skin colour as one of the primary external markers of ‘racial’ difference, Harris has demonstrated that beginning in the late seventeenth century, Indians in the Andes were able to redefine their ethnicity as mestizo, not via miscegenation, but by the adoption of Spanish dress and language, relocation into the cities, and their participation in certain types of economic activities, such as trade. It seems likely that the same thing was occurring in Brazil at the same time.
Given the fluidity of ethnic identity, the representation of the *Brasilian* man’s moustache deserves further commentary. As noted by Londa Schiebinger, in the eighteenth century the absence or presence of a beard was used to distinguish between the races. Because they lacked this essential marker of masculinity and sexual virility in European culture, some natural historians assigned Amerindians to a lower level of humanity. Already in Cardim’s description of the peoples of Brazil from the sixteenth century, discussed above, the beard worn by the *Topimanbae* men was considered important enough to be listed among their essential characteristics. Wagener also makes mention of the *Brasilian* man’s ‘sparse beard’ in the description that accompanies his copy of Eckhout’s painting. Even his medium length, wavy, dark brown hair is unusual for Amerindians, who are always described as having straight black hair. To an even greater degree than Eckhout’s painting of the *Brasilian* woman, this image freezes the *Brasilian* man halfway on his journey towards full assimilation into Western culture. This is especially obvious when one contrasts his image with Eckhout’s *Tapuya* man, who plays the traditional role of the Indian ‘savage’.

Eckhout’s *Brasilianen* fall entirely outside the visual tradition for New World Indians. Eckhout responded to the situation by creating a new Indian type – the *Brasilian* – who existed only within the colonial context. Eckhout’s paintings may have promoted the assimilation of the *Brasilianen* – naturalizing their existence and their place within the Dutch world order as it existed in Recife and Mauritssstad. The fact that mamelucos, whose mothers were Amerindians and whose fathers were Europeans, were an established presence in the colony suggests that Eckhout’s depiction of an attractive and accessible *Brasilian* woman both reflected and reinforced the colonial reality of sexual intercourse between various groups, and perhaps even functioned to encourage this type of behaviour. In contrast, Eckhout’s paintings of the *Tapuya* make no reference to cultural or sexual assimilation. These images are the direct heirs to the sixteenth-century illustrations of Tupinamba cannibals in Staden, Thevet, and Léry. But before beginning an analysis of these works of art, let us first turn to the term *Tapuya* and what it meant for contemporaries in Dutch Brazil.

**Tarairiu or Tapuya?**

Identifying just who the *Tapuya* were has long troubled scholars of South American Indians. At the end of the nineteenth century, Paul Ehrenreich suggested that the *Tapuya* were a Gê-speaking people, probably either the *Tarairyou* or the *Otschuca-yana*, although more recent scholarship has called this Gê connection into question. Twentieth-century historians and anthropologists now caution against using the term *Tapuya*, because it is a Tupinamba expression believed to have meant ‘people of the
strange tongue',101 ‘enemies’,102 or ‘tribes of the interior’.103 Already in the 1960s, anthropologist Robert Lowrie called Tapuya a pejorative and non-specific ‘blanket term’ and recommended that it be eliminated from scientific usage, because it had been applied to many different Indians groups by hostile Tupinambas and European outsiders.104

Following this advice, scholars have turned away from using this label for Eckhout’s Indians, from the two figures in the ethnographic portrait series, to the Tapuya Dance, to almost all of the indigenous people depicted in his chalk studies. These figures are now labeled ‘Tarairiu’, which is what the indigenous group having the greatest contact with the Dutch are reported to have called themselves.105 As noted above, application of this ‘scientific’ title has opened up Eckhout to additional criticism, because he includes what some scholars consider ‘ethnographically inaccurate’ details, such as the body parts held by the woman. Such an attack is made possible by applying anachronistic standards to these works and is furthermore based on two problematic assumptions: 1) that Eckhout’s images represent this specific group of Tapuya and 2) that his figures are meant to be strictly truthful, disallowing the possibility that the objects depicted had symbolic or emblematic functions.

Rather than being an attempt to accurately depict a specific New World ethnic group, it appears more likely that Eckhout’s intention was to represent the savage Tapuya type as a counterpart to a Brasilian type. Certainly, written sources make the connection between the Tapuya and the Tarairiu, and there is a rich body of historical materials that documents the relationship between the Dutch and this Indian group.106 Contemporaries in the seventeenth century knew that Tapuya was a general designation that did not refer to any single Indian nation, in the same way that they recognized that there was more than one Tupinamba nation. As the historical title most frequently applied to the figures in Eckhout’s paintings and drawings, it is essential to reconstruct exactly what it meant for the Dutch in Brazil.

During the early modern period, the label Tapuya (also Tapuiia, Tapuja, tapoeijer, and Tapoye) was applied by the Dutch to non-Tupinamba Indians in Brazil. While Cardim was one of many Europeans to describe the Tupinambas, his 1584 report is one of the first to mention the Tapuya. Again following Cardim’s description of the Indians in Brazil, de Laet’s Nieuwe wereld (1625) states that the Maraquites, who inhabit the area between Pernambuco and Bahia, are called ‘Tapoyes’ or ‘wild people’ by other Indians.107 These Tapoyes are nomadic cannibals, lacking both religion and allies among the other Indians.108 In addition, de Laet notes that according to his Portuguese source (Cardim), seventy-six different types of Tapuiais had been identified in Brazil, all having different languages and customs. A description written by a Portuguese sugar planter in 1618 gives similar information, stating that the nomadic Tapuya lack ‘villages or regular dwellings’, ‘differ in speech’ from other Indians, and are widely feared.109
The reports made by WIC employees Elias Herckmans in 1639 and Jacob Rabb in 1642 are the most comprehensive descriptions of the Tapuyas produced in Dutch Brazil, although de Laet’s Historie ofte iaerlyck Verbael (1644) also reproduces contemporary discussions of the Tapuya. Herckmans’s ‘Short description of the Tapuya way of life’ (Een corte beschrijvinge vant leven der Tapuyas) is included, along with his comments about the Brasilianen, as part of a longer work on the captaincy of Paraiba.110 These reports circulated not only within the colony, but reached a wider European audience via Barlaeus and the ethnographic appendix added by de Laet to the end of the Historia (1648). Johan Rabb (also Rabe), so-called ‘director of the Tapuya’, lived near the Tarairiu and was employed by the Company to supervise them.111

Similar to the report cited by de Laet above, Herckmans states that the Tapuyas are ‘divided into different nations’. He names four, but says that Tarairyou are the Tapuyas best known to the Dutch.112 Herckmans then offers an ethnographic and visual analysis of the Tapuya as a group. According to him, they lead a ‘completely bestial and carefree life’.113 The men are tall, with brown skin, a sturdy build, a ‘big fat head’, and no beard.114 Their black hair is cut around their head to their ears, the rest hanging to the neck, and they wear a green, black, or gray stone in a hole under their lip.115 Men who have proved their ‘manhood’ are distinguished by white bones that look like broken off pipe stems and protrude from each cheek.116 Both men and women go naked, although men wrap the penis with the nearby skin, tying it with a string: the arrangement is described as their ‘figleaf’. The women wear a covering of green leaves over their pubic area and buttocks.117 In times of war and celebration, the men also wear feather decorations.118 They have no knowledge of God, but rather serve the devil or evil spirits.119 Furthermore, Herckmans asserts that they practice endocannibalism, consuming both still-born children and family members when they die.120 Much of the information found here occurs in contemporary discussions of the Tapuya, including the works by Soler (1639), Wagener (ca. 1641), and Rabb (1642). It is clear from Rabb’s report that the Tapuya he describes are the Tarairiu, because their leader is Jan de Wy (also Nhandúi), who is also mentioned by Herckmans as one of the two rulers of the Tarairiu. Given Rabb’s close relationship with this nation because of his position as ‘director of the Tapuya’, his report contains much of the same information as Herckmans’s.121

It is likely that contemporary ideas about the Tapuya in Dutch Brazil were based on contact with their Tarairiu allies, although it is important to note that the term had been in use for more than fifty years before the Dutch colonized northeastern Brazil. Furthermore, Herckmans, de Laet, and others apply the Tapuya label to Indians other than the Tarairiu. Even Marcgraf’s newly discovered 1639 report on a slaving expedition into the interior chronicles how a group of 250 ‘Brazilians’, fifteen whites, and 150 ‘tapooeijers’ chased ‘wilde tapooeijers’ into the interior.122 Thus, while it
is true that all Tarairiu were Tapuyas, it cannot be assumed that all Tapuyas were Tarairiu. Removing the anthropological title Tarairiu frees the investigation of Eckhout’s images from a preoccupation with establishing an ethnohistorical reality that has characterized many earlier assessments of his work.

Eckhout’s Tapuya Man and Woman

The figures in Eckhout’s paintings share many similarities with the contemporary descriptions of the Tapuya discussed above, but this is not a simple case of images illustrating a text. Eckhout’s Tapuya man and woman were built up from in situ drawings, which may depict the Tarairiu people, and references to earlier images of Indians, adopting aspects of the iconography of the ‘wild Tupinamba’ from the sixteenth century. Indeed, although the title Tapuya brought with it a number of negative connotations, including cannibalism, nudity, and lack of a ‘true’ religion, it is important to note that exactly these same sorts of things were said of the Tupinamba when Europeans first encountered them along the coast of Brazil in the sixteenth century.

Eckhout’s painting of a Tapuya woman is his most controversial image because of its references to cannibalism (Plate 2). This painting features a nearly nude woman with warm brown skin standing at the edge of a small stream. Her weight-bearing left leg is on dry land and her right foot rests on a rock in middle of the small stream that runs at her feet. Described by Herckmans as typical of all Tapuya women, here her genitals and buttocks are covered by two small, tightly bound bunches of leafy twigs – one in the front and one barely visible in the back – held in place by a thin cord that goes around her hips. She holds a longer bunch of twigs under her breasts with her left hand, and on her feet she wears simple string sandals. Clutched firmly in her right hand is a severed human hand, with ragged flesh, long gray nails, and a protruding white bone, presumably from the same victim as the foot that sticks out of the basket she wears on her back. Her softly painted face, framed by black hair that falls to her shoulders, glances towards the viewer, whom she contemplates in a passive manner that contradicts the violence done to the human whose bloody limbs she carries. Her skin is covered by greenish patches, especially on her legs and below her left eye, but also evident on the severed hand she carries. She is framed on the right by a tree from which long brown seed pods hang. A non-descript brown dog with white paws displays a mouthful of sharp teeth as he drinks from the stream between her legs. Framed by the opening between her legs, tiny Amerindian figures – two groups of six figures with spears – can be seen in the deep background.

The spear carried by these tiny figures are echoed by those in the possession of the Tapuya woman’s male counterpart – whose weapons include four spears, a spear
thrower, and a black club (Plate 3). The Tapuya man is both significantly taller and more substantial than the Tapuya woman and the rest of the figures in this series of paintings. He is over-life size in terms of height, and while the other figures in the series take up approximately one-fourth of the width of the canvas, his body takes up one-third. Indeed, his legs, especially his calves, appear too short for his enormous torso. He wears a colourful headdress, with red, yellow, and blue feathers, and a feather bustle is attached to his back by a thin string tied around his middle. His head is painted more carefully than the rest of his body, with highlights reflecting off of his forehead and right cheekbone, and he looks towards the viewer with a serious, not hostile, expression on his face. He wears a plug in his right ear lobe; long, thin, bone-like objects protrude like fangs next to his mouth; and a large, bright-green stone is worn in a hole beneath his lower lip. His penis is wrapped and tied in a string in a manner that is strongly resonant of Herckman’s description, and there is no evidence of pubic hair. A dead green boa constrictor lies at his feet on the right, and a tarantula approaches from the left.

As with the Tapuya woman, tiny Amerindians can be seen in the background behind him. Here the ten male figures – possibly holding spears – dance in a circle, while two figures sit, and another lies on the ground at the side. This scene is similar to Eckhout’s large Tapuya Dance composition where the figures dance by raising one of their legs. A flowering vine running along the foreground of this canvas was uncovered when the painting was last restored in the late 1970s. Removal of this overpainting was probably a mistake, because Eckhout’s signature is painted on it. The signature has now been isolated as a small rectangular island, the only place where the overpainting was not removed.

In 1965 Rüdiger Klessmann published a group of five drawings of Amerindians by Eckhout, newly discovered in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. At an early date this group had been separated from the rest of his Brazilian drawings in the Libri picturati, now in Kraków (see chapter 2). Most of these drawings have been identified by twentieth-century scholars as depicting the Tarairiu people, although one cannot know for certain whether this title is the correct one or not. These images are closely related to Eckhout’s paintings, forming studies used for the Tapuya man, the Tapuya woman, and the dance scene, and as such allow us to reconstruct Eckhout’s manner of working. One sketch displays a standing man with his right leg raised like the men in the Tapuya Dance (Figs. 36, 37). While the connection between this study and the central figure in the Tapuya Dance scene is clear, the fact that his torso is also the same as that of the Tapuya man has been overlooked. Both men share the same three-quarter view and solid body build, although the position of the legs, arms, and head do not match. Klessmann also points to the close resemblance between the contrapposto pose of the woman in Eckhout’s drawing of a standing but
FIG. 38 – Albert Eckhout, *Indian woman sitting*, chalk on paper, 33.2 by 21.6 cm. Courtesy of the Kupferstichkabinett, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.
headless nude and the pose of the Tapuya woman in his painting. They also share the same curve of breast and stomach, and their legs are positioned in the same way. Klessmann overlooked the connection between Eckhout’s painting and the drawing of a sitting woman holding a bunch of leafy twigs under her breast in left arm (FIG. 38). Eckhout seems to have used both the arm and head in conjunction with the other drawing in making the final composition for the figure in this painting.

Despite the fact that the underlying form for the painting of the Tapuya woman is based on drawings of Amerindian, possibly Tarairiu, women in Brazil, this is not a portrait of one of them. This nude woman cannibal is meant to be seen in opposition to the semi-clothed Brasilian woman, discussed above, who cares for her small child in her role of the good native mother. Existing beside this visual tradition of the nurturing native mother, but quite opposite to it, is that of the savage woman warrior, who has no children and instead carries weapons and body parts from her enemies. While the leaves covering her genitals match the description in Herckmans’s text and Eckhout’s life drawings, Eckhout includes body parts because he believed that Tapuya Indians, based on contemporary descriptions, were cannibals. Whether or not the accusation of cannibalism was true, all contemporary Dutch sources list it as one of the main Tapuya characteristics.

Eckhout’s figure in this painting can be likened to the ‘savage woman’ warrior type as displayed in Phillipe Galle’s America (1581-1600) and in this frontispiece from the American volume of Johannes Blaeu’s Grand Atlas (FIG. 39). Both of these images display tall nude woman warriors with long spears, with their savagery and cannibalism demonstrated by the severed heads at their feet. These images, including Eckhout’s Tapuya woman, are related to ideas about the Amazons, a mythic race of ‘rude and savage’ women warriors believed by many, including André Thevet, to dwell in the newly discovered ‘islands’.127 Although Eckhout’s Tapuya woman has no weapons, the tiny armed figures in the wilderness behind her support a militaristic association. These references to fighting and killing and the wild landscape behind the Tapuya woman are a sharp contrast to the Brasilian woman’s submissive role before the peaceful plantation with European landholders at its centre. Baumunk has suggested that the dog at the Tapuya woman’s feet could be an allusion to hunting, and as such does not rule out a possible connection to Diana, Roman goddess of the hunt.128 It seems more logical, however, that Eckhout intended this animal to reinforce her status as a cannibal. Dog-headed cannibals and other ‘Marvels of the East’ populate early images of the New World.129 As Lestringant notes, Europeans also made a linguistic link between canis-caniba.130 But dogs are primarily associated with cannibals because of their tendency to eat feces – cannibals, like dogs, cannot distinguish between proper and improper food.131 Body parts, body painting, the dog, in addition to her full nudity, demonstrate the Tapuya woman’s lack of civility to the viewer.
Fig. 39 – *America*, hand-coloured engraving. Reproduced in Johannes Blaeu’s *Grand Atlas* (1662). Courtesy of the Dartmouth University Library, Hanover.
Beyond general connections to the iconography of Amerindian cannibalism and the ‘savage woman warrior’, Eckhout may have borrowed attributes from sixteenth-century images of Tupinambas. For example, the basket she wears on her back, bound to her head by a long band, resembles the one illustrated in chapter 30 of Thevet’s *Antarctique*. Eckhout may also have seen Johannes Blaeu’s 1617 map of America with an illustrated border, which includes a representation of two ‘Brazilian soldiers’. Here the right figure wears the same kind of basket attached to his head. Their nudity, weapons, and awkward but powerful bodies offer similarities beyond the basket to Eckhout’s *Tapuya* woman.

Like the basket, body painting and staining are listed by Europeans, including Staden, Thevet, and Léry, as characteristic of the indigenous peoples of Brazil, although they are almost never reproduced in images. The earliest example displaying such external skin decoration is from Staden’s *Wahrhaftig Historia...in Neuen Welt* (1557), in which male Tupinamba warriors are covered with spots of paint or feathers. To a much greater degree than Staden’s warriors, the spotting on the Tapuya woman’s skin simply gives her a dirty and unattractive appearance, especially when contrasted with the smooth, unmarred skin of the Brasilian woman. These painted spots were uncovered in the last restoration of this work in the late 1970s. The painting must be examined in person to see the marks properly, which explains why scholars have failed to mention them in earlier discussions of this painting. Although the blotches covering her legs and arms, and even the severed human hand she carries, appear greenish to the naked eye, the pigments present here are black, lead white, and smalt, suggesting that the original appearance was closer to a bluish black. In sixteenth-century texts, the Tupinamba were said to have used jennip to dye their legs black. The only copy of this work to reproduce her original body staining (and add it to the *Tapuya* man) is Joan Niehoff’s *Gedenkwaerdige Zee en Lantreize door der voormaemste landschappen van west en oostindien* (1682) (fig. 40). Because the original spots have faded to such a large degree, it is useful to look at this print to get an idea of the original effect.

Scholars have also suggested that Eckhout further demonized his *Tapuya* woman by showing her nude, thus making a connection to beliefs about witches and witchcraft. Like the *Tapuya* woman, contemporary European images of witches show them as naked, dangerous figures. That Europeans made a connection with such groups is demonstrated by Léry, who writes that the Tupinamba women of Brazil and the witches of Europe ‘were guided by the same spirit of Satan’, although this association was not based on their nudity. In Part III of the *Grands Voyages*, de Bry reproduces an image of Tupinambas attacked by devilish figures, and Wagener asserts that the *Tapuya*, in turn, ‘worship, serve, and adore the devil’. The two female figures in Eckhout’s *Tapuya Dance*, who stand on the side and cover their mouths while watch-
ing a large group of dancing men, have also been interpreted as witches. Nonetheless, while the Dutch accused the *Tapuya* of ‘serving the devil or evil spirits’, they do not generally call them witches, although a connection to this group may have been implicit in the accusation. The charge of devil or demon worship is made so frequently in contemporary descriptions of indigenous Americans that it seems problematic to isolate Eckhout’s *Tapuya* woman or the female figures in the *Tapuya Dance*. Like devil worship and ignorance of god, nudity had been a fundamental characteristic of Brazilian Indians since the first descriptions were made of the Tupinamba at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The contrasts between the *Brasilian* woman and the *Tapuya* woman are clear enough without having to label the *Tapuya* woman an ‘excessively aggressive’ witch.

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Courtesy of the Royal Library, The Hague.
The Tapuya Man

Both the Tapuya man and the Brasilian man have a similar body build and stand holding weapons in a three-quarter pose. Like their female companions, however, the differences between the two could not be clearer (plates 3, 5). Again, it is not simply a contrast of clothed and naked, but of Westernized versus ‘wild’. No sketches survive by Eckhout for this figure, although other, similar images of Indian men in his Tapuya Dance clearly draw upon his life drawings, now in the Misc. Cleyeri (plate 1; fig. 37). Despite Eckhout’s study of real Brazilian Indians, it is striking how closely the man’s body and facial decoration match the description given by Herckmans, cited above. Because this painting is not a portrait of a particular man, Eckhout may have looked to images like those illustrating Thevet’s Les Vrais Pourtraits et Vies des Hommes Illustres... (Paris, 1584). Here it is not Quoniambec, a sixteenth-century king of the Tupinambas, who offers the clearest parallels, but rather Nacolabsou, king of the Promontory of the Cannibals, whose two-part feather headdress and sharp and protruding facial decorations offer the closest model for Eckhout’s Tapuya man. A connection with this print would conveniently connect this painting to the Tapuya woman and her references to cannibalism.

The large green stone in his chin is also mentioned in Herckmans’s report, although it was also a standard feature in descriptions of the Tupinamba and was reproduced in dozens of contemporary images of Brazilian Indians in general. His club may also be related to descriptions of Tupinamba clubs, which were used to kill prisoners before consumption and are frequently represented in sixteenth-century images. A contemporary example is currently on display in the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, perhaps given to the king by Johan Maurits with the paintings in 1654. Finally, the Tapuya man’s feather bustle is also a standard feature in images of Tupinamba men in the books by Staden, Léry, and Thevet.

Eckhout’s Tapuya man, despite the use of life studies, appears to be an updated version of a sixteenth-century Tupinamba, while the Brasilian man has almost entirely lost his connection to this past. The Brasilian man’s landscape is edenic, fruitful, and carefully supervised by a subtle European presence. His weapons are not threatening to the viewer. In contrast, the Tapuya man’s weapons are of a different sort, with the spider and the bleeding snake in the foreground suggesting both the difference in foodstuffs between the two nations and reinforcing a sense of danger. Europeans are not welcome in this barbarous place, where naked Indians dance at the edge of a forest.

Neither pair of Amerindians in this series of paintings was meant to be an exercise in ethnographic accuracy. By the 1630s, none of the Indians encountered by the Dutch in the captaincy of Pernambuco was truly ‘wild’ or untouched by the changes
introduced by the European invaders and colonists since the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Tarairiu may have modeled for the savage Tapuya of Eckhout’s paintings, but these images are not mirror reflections of this particular people. The Brasilianen are acculturated Indians, sitting on the border of civility. Although they are not yet welcomed into the company of the Europeans, they are already disconnected from their Indian heritage. The interpretation of grades of civility works well with Eckhout’s four paintings of Tapuya and Brasilian Indians. As addressed earlier, this hierarchy has also been applied to the rest of the pairs in the ethnographic portrait series, which are said to embody three levels between savage and (more or less) civilized. The problems with the expansion of this theory to these images will be addressed in the next chapter, which discusses Eckhout’s representations of Africans, mulattos, and mestizos.
fig. 41 – Zacharias Wagener, *Omem Negro*, ca. 1641, watercolour on paper, in his *Thierbuch*. Courtesy of the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Dresden.

CHAPTER 5

Black, Brown, and Yellow

Eckhout’s Paintings of Africans, Mestizos, and Mulattos

The colonization of parts of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by various European nations during the early modern period had many consequences for the indigenous populations, not least of which was the birth of children to non-European women and European men. A particularly complicated situation developed in the Americas where Europeans, Africans, and indigenous peoples engaged in interracial sexual activity. Enslaved African women were in no position to deny their bodies to men of the ruling white minority, and European colonists, soldiers, and traders had actively pursued sexual relations with indigenous women (many of whom were also enslaved) from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In New Spain (Mexico) in the eighteenth century, there were special names for dozens of different ethnic groups and the people produced by mixtures between them. The same is true of the Portuguese colonies in Brazil, where many of the racial terms developed in the early modern period are still in use today. In the seventeenth century, however, the main non-European ethnic groups recognized by the Dutch in Brazil were limited to Brasilianen, Tapuyas, Africans, mulattos, and mamelucos. It is not a coincidence that these groups are the ones represented in Eckhout’s ethnographic portrait series.
As addressed in chapter 4, Eckhout’s status as one of the first trained European painters in the New World has meant that interpretive emphasis has long been placed on his images of indigenous Americans. As a result, the other figures in his ethnographic series have been relatively understudied in comparison. His paintings of the African man and woman and the mameluca and the mulatto man are, nonetheless, remarkable works without precedence in the history of art (plates 6-9). In the mid-seventeenth century, there was no set iconography for mestizos or mulattos, and representations of them are highly unusual despite their presence in every colonial city and outpost. Early modern images of Africans are considerably more common, although Eckhout’s fascinating paintings of a black man and woman are unique in this genre of images. Due to the lack of scholarly attention, the status of these figures has yet to be established: are they African nobles or New World slaves? To address these gaps in the literature, this chapter offers a detailed analysis of Eckhout’s images of Africans, mestizos, and mulattos. Building on the interpretation of his representations of the Brasilianen and the Tapuyas in chapter 4, as well as the analysis put forth here, I will conclude with a reconsideration of Ernst van den Boogaart’s three-tiered colonialist hierarchy structured around degrees of ‘civility’. This interpretive model clearly requires some adjustment in order to properly account for Eckhout’s paintings of Africans and people of mixed racial background in the New World. In particular, the complexity as well as the importance of the representations of the Africans strongly suggests that they should be assigned their own level of civility.

Before beginning a detailed analysis, it is essential to point out that these paintings exemplify, to a greater degree than Eckhout’s images of Indians, the complexity and hybridity of images produced in the colonial context. In its most basic form, hybridity refers to the transcultural productions of the borderland or ‘contact zone’, as theorized by Mary Louise Pratt, which describes the negotiated space between cultures.3 Homi Bhabha, whose work on hybridity and ambivalence are fundamental in post-colonial studies, engages the idea of hybridity via what he calls the ‘Third Space of Enunciation’, which he argues is responsible for the production of all cultural statements and systems.4 This theoretical space has its origins in linguistics and the ‘disjuncture between the subject of the proposition (énoncé) and the subject of enunciation, which is not represented in the statement but which is the acknowledgement of its discursive embeddedness and address, its cultural positionality, its reference to a present time and a specific place’.5 Bhabha’s Third Space is similarly rife with the possibility of misinterpretation and contradiction, but it is also where culture is formed and the ostensibly stable identities (both of colonizer and colonized) are created. Here it is of particular importance that this Third Space is also where representations, such as Eckhout’s ethnographic portrait series, are produced. The ambivalent, hybrid products of this Third Space have the power to challenge the foundation of the power
relations within the colonial discourse that they create. For Bhabha, it is a place of revolutionary power: ‘the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, not based on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of nature’s hybridity.’

In employing the term hybridity, I am also consciously invoking its conflicted nature, an aspect that is also present in Eckhout’s works of art. As addressed in detail by Robert Young, hybridity as applied to human beings has its roots in the highly polemical imperial discourse of the nineteenth century on the mixing of the races. Scientists and race theorists discouraged interracial sexual contact, arguing that the offspring of such unions were (or would become) degenerate and infertile. Nonetheless, miscegenation was encouraged by others, some of whom had first-hand experience in the tropics, as the only means of survival for colonies in such locations. As Young argues, ‘[t]heories of race were thus also covert theories of desire’. But even in this case, miscegenation had to be carefully monitored to prevent the anticipated backward slide of the hybrids into the more primitive state associated with the non-white races. As the discussion here on Eckhout’s paintings of Africans, mulattos, and mestizos will demonstrate, earlier versions of these ideas were already in place in the seventeenth century, although they had not yet found expression within a scientific framework.

Africans, Africans in America, and African Americans

Van den Boogaart has convincingly argued that blacks are included in this series of South American ‘national’ types because they represent people from the West African coastal holdings of the WIC. As will be demonstrated below, Eckhout’s black figures are connected to the areas where the Dutch had cultivated the greatest number of commercial contacts during the seventeenth century, namely Guinea (a historical term designating a large geographical area, today most closely identified with Ghana) and Angola (similarly, a historical term for the area between Cameroon and the Congo river, covering areas of the Congo and its neighbouring countries). WIC troops had captured and established forts in these two areas of the West African coast precisely because the Dutch needed a reliable source of black Africans for enslaved labor on their Brazilian sugar plantations. As contemporary documents make clear, sugar production was impossible without the labor of African slaves. Nonetheless, with their costly attributes and dignified bearing, Eckhout’s black man and woman cannot easily be categorized as slaves, nor do they form a typical pair of ethnographic portraits. Rather, these paintings have transcended these categories by speaking a
multi-layered language of trade, gift-giving, and political alliance to their contemporary audiences. These audiences included the Count and his court, other WIC officials and leaders in Brazil, as well as West African ambassadors to the Dutch colony.

Eckhout’s black woman stands against a coastal landscape with palms and a papaya tree, fishing Amerindians along the shoreline, and ships in the deep background (Plate 6). Her attributes include an elaborate hat decorated with peacock feathers and a small white clay pipe tucked into the sash at her waist. The nude boy at her side is presumably her son, although his skin colour is several shades lighter than his mother’s. A small bird perches on his left hand, and he points an ear of shucked corn towards his mother’s vagina. The double ropes of white pearls and red coral beads curving around her neck echo the form of her full, exposed breasts. This emphasis on sexuality, fecundity, and prosperity is reinforced by her cornucopia-like basket, which overflows with tropical fruit.

Similarly, the black man’s strength and virility are emphasized by his muscular appearance and the phallic form of the palm tree on his left (Plate 7). His attributes include a ceremonial sword decorated with a large pink shell and a tuft of long yellow hair. Near the shells scattered at his feet, an elephant’s tusk lies on the ground and curves out of the picture plane to the right. Like his female counterpart, his only article of clothing is a piece of blue and white striped cloth, here wrapped tightly around his genitals. Other similarities include the coastal landscape, framed by a palm tree and flowering vines that wind across the ground. However, while the woman’s wax palm tree and papaya are native to Brazil, his date palm is native to Western Africa, suggesting that Eckhout’s black figures stand on different continents.

In comparison to the large body of literature and documents addressing the indigenous peoples of Brazil, there are few sources – Dutch or otherwise – that give a detailed discussion of the culture, or even appearance, of Africans and people of African ancestry in Brazil in the seventeenth century. Fortunately, circa 1641 WIC employee Zacharias Wagener (1614-1668) made annotated copies of Eckhout’s paintings for his Thierbuch, which will serve as the starting point here. Whereas Wagener’s descriptions of his copies of Eckhout’s Brasilianen and Tapuyas were based on other sources and therefore warranted less attention in chapter 4, his discussion of the Africans, the mulatto man, and the mameluca woman (addressed in the second half of this chapter) are largely unique. Nonetheless, care must be taken with this rich but problematic source.

Wagener eventually became governor of the Cape Colony for the Dutch West India Company, but his beginnings are less impressive. The early years of Wagener’s life resemble those of Georg Marcgraf, the artist-naturalist at Johan Maurits’s Brazilian court. Like Marcgraf, Wagener was German and left his home when he was a very young man. Arriving in the Dutch Republic, he worked for the Blaeu family of
cartographers in Amsterdam before enlisting in the WIC in 1634 and sailing for Brazil. His initial service as a common soldier eventually led to his appointment as chief notary and butler to Johan Maurits. He was also something of an artist, with professional training in drawing maps. As an intimate member of the Count’s household, Wagener had access to both Eckhout and Marcgraf, and the Thierbuch, his personal natural history of Brazil, reproduces images of people, animals, and plants after each. It must be emphasized, however, that Wagener’s descriptions cannot be used as an infallible key to Eckhout’s paintings. Wagener’s descriptions were created to accompany his copies, not the original paintings. As such it is important to keep in mind the fact that this man had his own ideas and prejudices regarding the various ethnic groups present in Brazil.

For Wagener, blacks in Brazil are slaves; there are no other options in this New World environment. Wagener labels his copies of Eckhout’s man and woman ‘Omem Negro’ and ‘Molher Negra,’ borrowing from the Portuguese terms ‘homem negro’ (black man) and ‘mulher negro’ (black woman) (figs. 41, 42). In the text accompanying his image of the man, Wagener clarifies their status: ‘These blacks are brought to Brazil from Africa’, naming Guinea and Angola as the main points of origin. He claims that most are sold as slaves to the Portuguese, who treat them very badly. This poor treatment is, according to Wagener, partly the fault of the slaves themselves: ‘it is necessary to whip and humiliate these blacks if you want them to work... as they are very stubborn and obstinate by nature’. Wagener takes liberties with his copies, eliminating the backgrounds, substituting a stump for a palm tree, and adding a shield behind his ‘Omem Negro’. His black figures are also stockier in build and generally less elegant than the man and woman in Eckhout’s paintings, but it is difficult to say whether this was done to make the figures less attractive or is simply the result of his shortcomings as an artist. Other additions include a brand in the form of a crowned M above the left breast of his ‘Negra’, apparently the monogram of Johan Maurits. This detail was added because Wagener’s text describes the contemporary practice of branding slaves in the colony. As he impassively states: ‘Our people, like the Portuguese, recently decided it would be a good idea to put certain signs or marks on men, women, and children’.

The fact that slaves of African ancestry were such a large and highly visible part of the population in Dutch Brazil also suggests that this is an accurate category for the black man and woman in Eckhout’s paintings. In 1630, the beginning of the Dutch occupation of Pernambuco, it is estimated that there were 40,000 slaves living in that province alone. And from 1630 to 1651, the Dutch imported an additional 26,286 Africans as slaves into the colony. From 1634 onwards, the WIC was actively involved in the importation of slaves into the Americas. As mentioned above, during the period of Dutch occupation, WIC officials and others present in Brazil repeatedly
state that slaves are essential for operating the sugar plantations, the heart of the colonial economy. According to contemporary observer Pierre Moreau, one could never import enough of them.25

Comparing Eckhout’s paintings to early modern representations of black slaves in the New World nonetheless demonstrates that this identification is highly problematic. The man and woman in Eckhout’s paintings have little in common with the anonymous men pictured in this 1594 image of African slaves working on a sugar plantation in South America (FIG. 43).26 Like the sixteenth-century images of Indians discussed in chapters 3 and 4, these figures betray their reliance on the heroic nude of antiquity. They were also made by European artists – in this case from the de Bry family – who had, in all likelihood, very limited experience with Africans. As Elmer Kolfin has argued, descriptions of New World Africans in the eighteenth century and earlier generally focus on their productive capacity as slaves; they are labouring bodies rather than ethnographic types.27 In such cases, their main attributes here are limited to closely cropped hair and near nudity, which exposes their youthful, well-muscled bodies. Most early modern images of slaves are in the form of prints, which begin to consistently emphasize skin colour only in the eighteenth century. Images of African slaves in the Americas made during the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries do not include weapons or exotic and costly objects – such as the pearls, gold bracelets, and ceremonial sword seen in Eckhout’s paintings.28

Historians believe that Brazilian slaves lived under especially harsh conditions because of the climate and labor-intensive work on the sugar plantations and in the mills.29 Wagener describes this miserable existence, from physical abuse to inadequate food, and he illustrates it in this original drawing (FIG. 44). Here we see pathetic, huddled groups of naked Africans freshly arrived in Pernambuco and about to be sold at the slave market.30 This highly unusual depiction is at odds with both Eckhout’s original paintings and Wagener’s copies after them.31 Other original drawings of Africans by Wagener include a representation of a slave dance and an image of slaves carrying a Portuguese woman. These two watercolours are lively, amusing representations that demonstrate greater interest in skin colour than the print by de Bry addressed above. Nonetheless, the majority of Wagener’s drawings, like most images of black slaves in Brazil from the seventeenth century, follow the iconography set out in the sixteenth century. As best exemplified in landscapes painted by Frans Post in Brazil, these images most commonly depict de-individualized brown bodies, diligently laboring on the colonized land and its sugar plantations or relaxing peacefully on the banks of its rivers. In Frans Post’s 1637 View of Itamaracá from the Mauritshuis, the black slaves, carrying a basket of fruit and tending a horse, are not foreign to the Brazilian landscape, but have been naturalized into it as the country’s new natives (FIG. 45).32 They have been stripped of any direct association with Africa and carry and wear no ethno-
**Fig. 44** – Zacharias Wagener, *Pernambuco slave market*, ca. 1641, watercolour on paper, in his *Thierbuch*. Courtesy of the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlung, Dresden.

**Fig. 45** – Frans Post, *View of Itamaraca*, 1637, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 89.5. Courtesy of the The Mauritshuis, The Hague.
graphic attributes. Indeed, except for their darker skin and status as slaves, there is often little to distinguish black slaves in Brazil from the Tupinamba men and women (more properly called Brasilianen) in Frans Post’s drawings and paintings. Post’s landscapes may have supported both the trade in slaves and the Dutch colonial project more generally by making these figures seem natural and appropriate in the Brazilian landscape.

In comparison to the images of New World slaves addressed above, Eckhout’s fascination with physical and ethnographic detail is unique in the seventeenth century. Dirk Valkenburg’s Slave Dance (1707-1709), which was painted in the Dutch colony of Surinam, is similarly distanced from the dominant visual tradition (Fig. 46). Like Brazil, the economy of Surinam was based on agricultural exports, such as sugar, and relied heavily on the labor of African slaves. Valkenburg’s small, but highly compelling painting was created for an absentee plantation owner’s cabinet of curiosities in Amsterdam. Here Valkenburg demonstrates an almost obsessive interest in documenting the ethnicity of New World slaves, from the patterns of scarification present on the skin of the new arrivals, to the shades of their gleaming brown skin, to their different physiognomies. As Kolfin points out, this image displays the slaves at rest, dancing, playing drums, and drinking in a stereotypically carefree manner that was often ascribed to Africans. Here, as in Wagener’s scene of slave revelry, signs of their enslaved state are absent. The slaves work neither in the fields nor in the sugar mills; furthermore, no white colonists are present. The works produced by both Valkenburg and his predecessor Eckhout emphasize the external appearance and physical characteristics of people of African origin. Each artist created paintings on commission for an elite patron, and it is clear that these paintings had a higher value and a different function than printed images of similar subjects, which addressed a much broader public. While the specific needs of the colonial governor and the sugar plantation owner were undoubtedly different, both Eckhout and Valkenburg created paintings that reproduced specific ethnographic details and represented the larger interests – economic and otherwise – of their patrons in the New World. Yet Eckhout’s work is even more radical than Valkenburg’s in establishing the dignity and desirability of the blacks he portrays. He does this, in part, by elevating their status and emphasizing their African origins.

In his 1938 monograph on Eckhout, Thomas Thomsen, then director of the ethnographic department of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, asserted that Eckhout’s paintings were portraits of Ashanti nobles from the Gold Coast of Guinea (present-day Ghana). According to Thomsen, these nobles, identified as such because of their costly attributes, were brought back to Brazil as the result of the 1637 Dutch conquest of the Portuguese fort at Elmina, at that time the most important site of trade on the Gold Coast. While there is no documentary evidence to support this assertion,
FIG. 46 – Dirk Valkenburg, *Slave Dance*, ca. 1707, oil on canvas, 58 x 46.5 cm. Courtesy of the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.
scholars nonetheless agree on a West African provenance. Eckhout’s black man and woman are recognizably African – it is not simply their skin colour, but also his spears, sword, and elephant tusk, her hat, basket, and red coral beads, and the African bird held by the child, which align these representations with the allegorical and ethnographic images of Africans found in costume books, on maps, and in travel accounts.

It is likely that Eckhout was familiar with Pieter de Marees’s 1602 Beschrijvinge ende historische verbael vant Gout Koninckrijk van Gunea (Description of the gold coast of Guinea).37 De Marees’s account of a Dutch voyage to West Africa is one of the earliest and most important European descriptions of the Gold Coast and its people, an area that was of great importance to European, and especially Dutch, traders.38 During the seventeenth century, the majority of gold imported into the Dutch Republic came from the Gold Coast of Guinea, and it was also a key area for the trade in slaves.39 In addition to its treatment of religion and customs, de Marees’s book discusses and illustrates Africans from various areas and social classes, from a prostitute whose skin shows special patterns of facial scarification, to a linen-robed and dignified nobleman.40 The images in this text are part of an established ethnographic tradition for representing Africans. An early example is this woodcut after a print by German artist Hans Burgkmair illustrating an account of a voyage to India (1506-1507). This book, which was published by Balthasar Springer in 1509, included Burgkmair’s illustration of a man, woman, and child from Guinea, which was copied by an anonymous artist for the illustration seen here (FIG. 47). This rather generic image of a ‘native’ nuclear family is, again, quite typical of ethnographic representations made in the sixteenth century, in which details of hair, ornament, and costume are emphasized, but skin colour has little importance.

Eckhout’s paintings of blacks in the Copenhagen series, especially his representation of the man, draw upon this visual tradition by borrowing aspects of de Marees’s illustration of the inhabitants of Capo Lopo Gonsalves or Cape Lopez, a source that has, until now, eluded scholarly attention (FIG. 48).41 A half-nude but jeweled woman and a small child occupy the center of this image, framed by a man on either side. She may be the companion of the man on the right, who wears a loincloth and belt and holds both a spear and an elephant tusk.42 This man, described by de Marees as a trader with foreigners, is of lower status than the fully-clothed nobleman in his fur hat on the left. Yet the trader is clearly of higher status than the slaves in the background, who are shown without any clothing, weapons, or ornaments. The figures in this image, which are framed by a palm tree on the right, may have been a direct inspiration for Eckhout’s paintings of the black man and woman.43 Earlier in the text, de Marees even discusses weapons made by the Africans along the Gold Coast, and he specifically mentions a large sword with a ‘fish’ skin scabbard decorated by a large red shell. This description is almost a perfect match for the ceremonial
A sword with the ray skin scabbard decorated with a red oyster shell that is held by the man in Eckhout’s painting. Scholars have identified this sword as Akan, from the Gold Coast of Guinea.

As discussed in chapter 3, de Marees’s illustrations were made by artists in Europe, and they are based on idealized European models, just like the images of slaves illustrating de Bry’s edition of Benzoni in his _Grands Voyages_. In contrast, Eckhout was in Brazil and accordingly had the opportunity to closely observe people of African ancestry. The body of his black man has the same athletic build as the figures in the de Marees’s illustrations, but the care and detail used in painting his face suggest that Eckhout employed a model from among the slaves or freed blacks in Dutch Brazil. He created a West African setting by including a date palm tree, shells from the Atlantic coast, and an elephant tusk, all standard in illustrations of Africans, although the shells and tusk show the specificity of first-hand knowledge. The accurate representation of African weapons suggests that Eckhout’s black man is not simply a generic African type or even a West African type. Rather Eckhout has created an ethnographic portrait of a man from Guinea. As depicted, however, Eckhout’s African man falls outside of de Marees’s categories; he wears a loin cloth like the merchants.

and traders illustrated in de Marees’s text, but his impressive sword, discussed below, could only have been the possession of a nobleman or leader. Furthermore, his hairstyle is not usual in images of Africans or New World slaves during the early modern period. His hair, which is worn in soft curls over his ears, strongly resembles the hairstyle of the Brasilian man, another figure in Eckhout’s series whose protracted contact with Europeans is evident in his clothing as well as his hairstyle.48

In 1612, the Dutch built Fort Nassau at Mouree, their first permanent settlement along the Gold Coast of Guinea. In 1637, Johan Maurits directed the WIC’s successful conquest of the Portuguese castle and trading post of Elmina, the center of trade along the Gold Coast. This, in addition to the WIC’s capture of Fort Saint Anthony at Axim in 1642, resulted in closer trade relationships between the Dutch and various African groups along the coast of Guinea and permanently ended Portuguese dominance in this region of Africa. It is possible that the sword represented in Eckhout’s painting was a gift given to Johan Maurits by his African allies in Guinea during a contractual negotiation, with the tusk symbolizing the important trade in ivory from this area.49 The African man’s Akan sword and spears closely resemble weapons in the collection of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, which were probably given to King Frederik III of Denmark by Johan Maurits in 1654. This gift also included Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits.50

The representation of these weapons need not suggest that the man depicted in the painting is simply a warrior, as some authors have assumed.51 In de Marees’s descriptions, and in most ethnographic images, men carry weapons of all sorts, which often signal their rank and position. Indeed, the Akan sword in its original African context would have been the possession of a man of high or noble rank, whose costume would have been considerably more elaborate than a simple loincloth.52 Eckhout surely meant this man to be identified as an African trader from the Gold Coast of Guinea, like the man in the de Marees illustration. The fact that Wagener identifies him as a ‘Moor from Guinea’ suggests that his specific national origin was clear to contemporary observers in Brazil. Nonetheless, later viewers in Europe would fail to appreciate the geographic specificity of this representation and would simply label him ‘African’.53

Eckhout’s painting of a black woman may also be compared to the woman depicted among the inhabitants of Cape Lopez in the de Marees illustration. The women in both images have exposed breasts, wear elaborate jewellery and a short skirt, and are accompanied by a nude male child. Like Eckhout’s Brasilian woman, these figures fall into the category of the good native mother, discussed in chapter 4. In the painting, the black woman’s attributes also connect her to the iconography of Africa as one of the four parts of the world, most frequently personified by women. A representative image is Frans Francken II’s Allegory on the Abdication of Emperor Charles V (1636) in the Rijksmuseum, in which the continents of America, Asia, and
Africa are represented as beautiful, exotic women kneeling in homage to the Emperor, who stands in for the continent of Europe. Africa, shown with darker skin than the rest, holds red coral in one hand and offers a bowl of coins, a reference to African gold, in her other. A crocodile peeks around from behind her, and her Oriental turban is decorated with feathers from a bird of paradise.54

The first illustrated edition of Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* (1603), a highly influential artists’ guide to emblematic representations, includes a simple representation of the female personification of Africa. She displays her most important attributes as described by Ripa, including a cornucopia filled with wheat, a lion, snakes, and a scorpion. While the text describes her as an almost nude black woman with curly hair and coral jewellery, the illustration ignores these details. In a 1644 Dutch edition of *Iconologia*, the artist has more closely followed Ripa’s description of Africa’s appearance, emphasizing her dark skin colour and curly hair, and reducing her clothing to a short skirt, which leaves her breasts exposed (fig. 49).55 Eckhout’s black woman, although displaying more ethnographic detail, is much like this contemporary Dutch illustration of Africa, who wears a coral necklace of large round beads and carries a basket overflowing with fruit in place of the traditional cornucopia. In Eckhout’s painting, however, there is additional pictorial emphasis on fecundity and sexuality, most obviously demonstrated by the ear of corn pointed towards the woman’s vagina.

According to early modern Europeans, the continent of Africa and its native animals were thought to be extremely fertile, while Africa’s peoples were generally described as oversexed.56 Legends reproduced by Johannes Leo Africanus and others, which were transmitted through travel accounts, prints, and atlases, emphasized the sexual voracity of ‘Negroe’ women and even told of animals commingling at waterholes and propagating a variety of bizarre new species.57 According to Ripa, because of their high rate of fertility, crocodiles were singled out as a symbol of *Lussuria* (lust) by the Egyptians. Thus, the personification of *Lussuria*, as described by Ripa, is a nude woman with curly hair holding a bird and sitting on a crocodile.58 As seen in Francken’s painting mentioned above, a crocodile is often included as Africa’s primary animal companion and main attribute; not every image followed the Ripa prototype, which favoured elephants and scorpions.59 Examples from this competing tradition include an engraving of Africa by Adriaen Collaert after a design by Marten de Vos (ca. 1589), in which a nude woman sits on a crocodile and displays her nude body to the viewer in a provocative manner.60 Similarly, in Crispijn de Passe the Elder’s engraving of the same subject, Africa, jeweled but nude, sits on a crocodile-like lizard and is offered bits of coral by an appropriately leering satyr seated on a crocodile.61

The combination of a nude woman with a crocodile provides a link between *Lussuria* and Africa, illustrating contemporary European stereotypes about African women, which emphasized their dangerous nature and easy sexuality. While Eckhout’s
painting more closely follows the Ripa prototype, both visual traditions for the personification of Africa were predicated on the assumption that African women were promiscuous by nature. This stereotype was reinforced by travel accounts, such as the Leo Africanus’s account or de Marees’s description, both mentioned above. In de Marees’s work he gives the following description of the women of Cabo Lopo Gonzales, whose image may have influenced Eckhout: ‘The Womenfolk are also very much inclined to unchastity and whoredom; in particular they like to fornicate with a foreigner, which they consider a great honor... a man will present his Wives to foreigners who come there.’

Given the emphasis on sexuality present in the early modern discourse on Africans, it is possible that Eckhout sought out images of Venus upon which to model his figure of an African woman in the New World. Hendrick Goltzius engraved an image of Venus ca. 1590, in which a nude Cupid, Venus’s son, offers his mother an ear of corn. Cupid’s gesture in this engraving is less obviously phallic than that of the young boy in Eckhout’s painting; he offers his mother the corn instead of using it to point between her legs. Ears of corn, in addition to sheaves of wheat and cornucopias, are often also associated with Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture. Venus and Ceres are linked in images, such as Goltzius’s, which illustrate the saying: ‘Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus Freezes’. In this poetic and visual tradition, food and wine are essential for igniting the passions; without them physical love will not be consummated, and Venus will ‘freeze’. The overlapping boundaries between the different iconographical traditions referenced by Eckhout’s painting bring us back again to Ripa’s Africa from 1603, whose wheat and cornucopia are matched by those of the goddess Ceres.

The discussion above has outlined the areas of correspondence between the figures in Eckhout’s paintings and a variety of different visual traditions, especially contemporary images in travel accounts and representations of the personification of Africa. It is now time to turn to a more specific analysis of the objects and attributes held and worn by Eckhout’s man and woman, now more properly termed Africans. Eckhout’s Africans wear clothing of the same striped cloth, yet the artifacts they hold and wear originate in different parts of western Africa. While these paintings may have faced each other from across the hall in Vrijburg, as discussed in chapter 6, they do not form a matched ethnographic pair like the Tapuyas or the Brasilien. They are both Africans, but one represents Guinea and the other Angola; each belongs to a different African nation. Her basket is Bakongo, produced around the mouth of the Congo River, while his sword is Akan from Guinea. It is also likely that her hat was produced in the area around Sonho, near the kingdom of the Congo, in what is now the Congo and its neighbouring countries. The hat is decorated with peacock feathers, which were objects of trade in this region. Although no similar hats have survived,
the presence of peacocks and the use of peacock feathers for headdresses are attested to by Fillipo Pigafetta in his 1591 book (based on the account of Portuguese traveller Duarte Lopez) on the Kingdom of the Congo.68

When the quality and number of slaves imported from Guinea proved inadequate, the Dutch moved southwards, and in 1641 the WIC conquered Luanda in Angola, the most important site for the West African slave trade.69 Competing African potentates from this region, such as the King of the Congo and the Count of Sonho, who were wealthy because of this trade in human beings, sent ambassadors to both Dutch Brazil and the court of Frederik Hendrik in The Hague in the years that followed. Lists of the gifts exchanged between these ambassadors and the Dutch in Brazil mention many rich and costly items, and documents attest to the importance the Dutch attached to this exchange as a way of establishing and cementing relationships with their African allies.70 Gifts offered to Johan Maurits by the WIC’s Congo allies included silver platters and other inanimate objects, and in 1642 also numbered two hundred African slaves.71 Because Eckhout’s paintings of Africans are dated 1641, her basket and hat may represent objects acquired during the attack on and subsequent occupation of Luanda.

This framework of conquest and slavery becomes especially important when one realizes that Eckhout’s African woman stands against an identifiably Brazilian coastline, although her most prominent attributes connect her to Africa. The African man is the only figure in the series not pictured on South American soil, but the African woman is the only figure depicted on non-native soil. Unlike the African date palm that frames the man and ‘demonstrates’ his African location to the viewer, the large wax palm tree on her right and the papayas behind her are indigenous to South America.72 Furthermore, close inspection of the painting even reveals a group of Brasilianen fishing along the shoreline in the deep background on the right. This vignette can also be found on Georg Marcgraf’s 1647 map of Pernambuco in Brazil, although the figures there are black slaves.73 It is also possible that the pipe she wears at her waist signals her location as well as her ethnicity. Beginning in the seventeenth century, blacks in the New World are often shown with pipes, which become one of their main attributes. Eckhout’s contemporaries Post and Wagener both display pipes prominently in images of black slaves in Brazil.74 Furthermore, a contemporary connection between smoking and a debauched lifestyle, especially for women, makes this detail consistent with the emphasis on Africans and sexuality addressed above.75

Although carefully rendered artifacts are generally used to demonstrate the ‘authenticity’ of the ethnographic portrait, here, in a rather remarkable manner, they instead highlight the African woman’s artificiality and hybridity. In Eckhout’s painting, the primary attributes of the main figure and her son are African, but they wear and carry other ornaments and objects that are recognizably European or American.
Her cultural identity, in particular, is formed through the deliberate intermingling of these various attributes. For example, her African basket is filled with tropical fruits grown in Brazil, and a European white clay pipe is tucked into the waist of her striped African skirt.\(^6\) The coral beads around her neck and her hat woven from raffia palm signal an African provenance, but her pearl earrings with red bows and pearl necklace are of a type worn by middleclass women in contemporary Dutch paintings.\(^7\) Similarly, her son signals his dual nationality by holding a cob of corn, indigenous to the Americas, in his right hand and an African love bird in his left.\(^8\)

The main figures in these paintings undermine the very idea of fixed ethnic boundaries, whose fluidity becomes even more evident in Eckhout’s paintings of the mulatto man and the mameluca. Even if Eckhout had been unable to distinguish between what was authentically African versus indigenous American, rather than limiting this intermixing of attributes to a display of ‘exoticism’, it more importantly shows that these are colonial works of art. Unlike many European artists, who created a mixture of unsuitable attributes in order to make their subjects appear more exotic, Eckhout made this mixture of European, American, and Indian appear natural and appropriate. This image promoted the evolution of the African woman to American slave, much in the same way that Eckhout’s paintings of the Brasilianen made their colonized status integral to their ethnic identity.

This complex painting of a woman and her child also stands apart because it is one of only two paintings in the series for which studies for the main figure survive.\(^7\) Examination of these studies provides additional evidence that Eckhout carefully constructed the figure of the African woman using a variety of sources. Among the hundreds of drawings attributed to Eckhout from Brazil are a number of figure studies, including a representation of a black woman in native African dress and a lighter-skinned woman of uncertain origin standing alone on a beach (Figs. 50, 51).\(^8\) Both of these images are painted in oils on paper. The first image, whose connection to this painting has been unnoticed until now, belongs to a series of five representations of Africans, ostensibly members of the Congo’s Christian elite because of their clothing and the crosses and rosary beads most of them wear.\(^8\) These large images, all approximately 30 by 50 cm, are closer to costume studies than portraits. In contrast, the woman in the smaller study, measuring about 36 by 24 cm, has a much more carefully painted face, complete with an intensely sullen facial expression, suggesting that this is a portrait of a now anonymous woman in Dutch Brazil.\(^8\)

To create the final image for his painting, Eckhout took the pearl and coral jewelry, dark skin colour, and muscular physique from the large costume study. And from the small portrait, he took her head and face (with a somewhat modified expression), in addition to the simple striped skirt, coastal backdrop, and bent arm. The ethnicity of this mysterious figure on the beach is unclear; her hair and features suggest African...
FIG. 50 – Albert Eckhout, *Woman on Beach*, ca. 1641, oil on paper, 35.5 x 24 cm. *Theatrum* vol. III, f. 21. Courtesy of the Jagiellon University Library, Kraków.
FIG. 51 – Albert Eckhout, *African Woman*, ca. 1641, oil on paper, 30 x 31.1 cm. 
*Theatrum* vol. III, f. 11. Courtesy of the Jagiellon University Library, Kraków.
ancestry, but the pale greenish object she holds in her right hand cannot be identi-

fied. The confusion in categorizing this figure – as slave, African, or even Indian – is demonstrated by the handwritten annotation labeling her a ‘Tapuyarum mulier’ (Tapuya woman), which was added above her figure in the late seventeenth century by German physician Christopher Mentzel. In the nineteenth century, ethnographer Paul Ehrenreich instead argued that she was Tupinamba, while others scholars con-

continued to reproduce the label ‘Tapuyaum mulier’ without question. Given the warm brown colour of her skin, which matches that of the Indians in Eckhout’s other paint-

ings, and the fact that her stance is similar to that of the Tapuya woman, such an iden-

tification is understandable.

Mason has recently suggested that the figure in this sketch, which he calls a ‘Negro woman’, is intentionally ambiguous, allowing Eckhout to use it as a model for paintings as diverse as the Tapuya woman and the African woman, thus demonstrat-

ing the ‘inderterminacy’ and interchangeability of the ‘exotic’ genre. Mason argues that ‘the basic structure of the human figure, the right arm bent at the elbow to sup-

port an object, applies to five of the eight large vertical paintings’. While this obser-

vation is correct, there is no proof that this figure was used as a basic outline for the rest of the images. Versions of this same representational type also occur in costume books and travel accounts, like that of Pieter de Marees discussed above. Furthe-

rmore, the presence in Berlin of two drawings (discussed in chapter 4) by Eckhout that are clearly studies for his painting of the Tapuya woman suggests that there are only superficial similarities between this ethnographic portrait of an Indian woman and the figure on the beach in Eckhout’s small oil study.

One aspect that has not been discussed regarding the mysterious woman in this drawing is the fact that her skin colour matches that of the young boy in Eckhout’s painting of the African woman. Like the woman on the beach in the oil study, the sta-

tus of the child in Eckhout’s painting is similarly fraught with uncertainty. The child largely plays a supporting role in this work of art by focusing the viewer’s eyes even more closely on his mother. For the last twenty years many scholars have assumed that the child’s light skin colour means that he is mixed ‘racially’, most frequently sug-

gesting that his father is a white European, with this aspect bringing additional atten-

tion to his mother’s sexuality. As Mason argues: ‘The firm, bared breasts and the short skirt convey an erotic invitation that is confirmed rather than denied by the presence of the half-blood child, who presumably serves as a reminder of the past sexual activ-

ities of his mother.’ While the numbers of forced and coerced sexual encounters between Europeans and female slaves meant that having a ‘half-blood’ child was not an uncommon event for a woman of African ancestry in Brazil, Eckhout may have intended a different interpretation. First, the skin colour of the boy is much darker than Eckhout’s mulatto man. In fact, his skin colour, like that of the woman on the
beach in the drawing, matches that of Eckhout’s Indians. Eckhout may have been familiar with contemporary beliefs concerning the blackness of African skin. One popular theory held that Africans were born with light skin, which darkened over time because of exposure to the sun. For example, concerning black Africans in Guinea, de Marees states they ‘are not completely black at their birth, but reddish like Brazilians; yet they gradually become black’. Thus one would expect a black ‘Creole’ child born and raised in South America to have lighter skin than his mother, who had been exposed to the burning sun of Africa. Regardless of the child’s ethnicity, his presence is more than a sign of his mother’s past sexual encounters. More significantly, he represents her ability to produce children in the New World. This aspect represents an unfulfilled desire of the colonial administration; statistics from the eighteenth century suggest that slaves working on the sugar plantations in Brazil had the highest death rate and the lowest fertility rates for enslaved peoples in the Americas, and given the WIC’s importation of large numbers of slaves during Johan Maurits’s governorship, it is likely that they had similar problems. Instead of reproduction providing the necessary supply of enslaved African labor, it was common for planters to work their slaves to death and purchase new ones when their numbers dwindled.

While the purpose of the colonial enterprise was to know and understand (and often denigrate) subject peoples in order to better rule them, Eckhout’s painting of the African woman demonstrates additional desires. She is like the ‘Sable Venus’ who travels from Africa to Jamaica in Issac Teale’s poem ‘Sable Venus; An Ode’ (1765). In Teale’s poem, his ‘sable queen of love’ dazzles her male audience with her beautiful face and body. But in Eckhout’s painting, the African woman’s muscled body does not simply guarantee pleasure, but also labour and profits. The body of Eckhout’s African woman is like the basket she holds, African in origin, but bearing fruit that is South American. It is not by chance that Eckhout’s blacks come from Guinea and Angola, the most important areas of WIC trade in African slaves and gold, both representing immensely valuable imports into the Americas and Europe. In this pair the man from Guinea is the trader with foreigners, representing both the geographical region of interest and the economic relationship on both sides of the Atlantic. Eckhout places him within an appropriately African setting in order to make it clear to the viewer that the man depicted is not a slave. In contrast, the African woman stands on Brazilian soil, although she wears and carries Bakongo artifacts. She represents both the geographical region of Angola and the most important commodity traded there – the millions of human beings who were shipped as slaves to the New World until the abolition of slavery in the late nineteenth century. In a less confrontational manner than Wagener, who literally branded his copies of Eckhout’s Africans as slaves, Eckhout alludes to the transition into slavery by depicting an African woman in coastal Brazil. In this idealized version, her body has been grafted,
like a botanical hybrid, onto a new landscape. Her child, now properly termed African-American, is the new creation of this fruitful mixing of African woman and New World location. He, like the black slaves in Post’s Brazilian paintings, is the new native who will eventually displace the Amerindian population.

**Brazilian Mestizos and Mulattos**

The cross between a Portuguese man and an Indian woman produces mamelucos; and with black women produces mulattos. These two classes are of inferior people. Vicente Joachim Soler, *Cort ende sonderlingh verbael Van eenen Brief van Monsieur Soler (Brief and Curious Report of Some Peculiarities of Brazil)*, 1639.

Scholars believe that the Portuguese, above all other Europeans, most enthusiastically embraced miscegenation as a way of populating their colonies both along the western coast of Africa and in Brazil. Dutch colonists in Brazil, however, were certainly no strangers to sexual liaisons with African and indigenous women. In Brazil, the creation of a mulatto and mestizo class was aided by the fact that there were large groups of unmarried European men – colonists, soldiers, and WIC employees – but almost no European women. In Eckhout’s painting of the African woman, a blurring of the boundaries, both national and sexual, was already present, but in his images of the mulatto man and the mameluca, this process of cultural and ethnic hybridization is even more pronounced (plates 8, 9). Whether or not the condition of being ‘mixed’ made one universally despised or gave one a superior status over the other non-European peoples in Brazil, there is no doubt that mamelucos and mulattos occupied a highly contested space between Africans, Indians, and Europeans in seventeenth-century Dutch Brazil. Such people embodied that tenuous, and clearly permeable, physical and sexual border between the colonized and the colonizer. But before addressing how ideas and prejudices in colonial Dutch Brazil shaped the creation of these paintings, it is important to first determine what contemporaries in Europe and the New World meant when they employed terms like mulatto or mameluco.

**Mulatto/Mulacken**

Given their proximity to Africa and their long-standing ties with that continent, it is likely that the Portuguese and the Spanish were the first to set mulattos apart as a separate group. By the sixteenth century, the term *mulato* was used in Portugal, Spain,
and their colonial possessions to classify various peoples – often slaves and those of mixed racial background – on the basis of the colour of their skin. As Jack Forbes notes in his study of racial and colour terms, mulatto was applied to those who were an intermediate colour – neither black nor white – over time coming to mean a person whose mother was black and whose father was European. Another early term that was used interchangeably with mulatto was *mulacken*. A 1639 French-Spanish-Dutch dictionary defines mestizo and mulatto in the same way; each is a ‘half Moor ghe-boren van eenen witten en eene swerte.../moulack’ (half moor, born of a white man and a black woman/a *mulacken*). In the 1596 Dutch translation of the Italian Filippo Pigafetta’s book on the Congo, the children born of African women and Portuguese men are also called ‘Mulacken’. The author is not interested in describing the character of these individuals, only the colour of their skin and the nationality of their parents. The chapter begins with a question about the skin colour of these children: are they ‘black, white or yellow’? As a way of refuting those who believe that black skin is the result of exposure to the sun, he notes that these children are not black, but ‘trecken meer op’t witte’ (are closer to white), despite their African location.

In the ethnographic section added by de Laet to the *Historia*, mulattos are again defined as the offspring of a European man and an ‘Ethiopian’ woman, Ethiopian being a term used by many Europeans to designate black Africans during this period. In his 1647 history of Dutch Brazil, Barlaeus calls them ‘half blacks’, noting that ‘Mulatten’ is the term used by the Spanish. Other contemporary Dutch works that discuss mulattos include Pieter de Marees’s 1602 account of the Gold Coast of Guinea. In addition to the image of peoples from Cape Lopez, addressed above in conjunction with Eckhout’s paintings of Africans, this book includes one of the earliest representations of a person of mixed African/European descent. In a plate illustrating chapter 7, ‘How the women comport themselves and how they dress’, the ‘Melato’ stands on the left next to three other women (fig. 52). De Marees states:

A is a Portuguese woman living in the Castle d’Mina [Elmina], half black, half white and yellowish: such women are called *Melato* and most keep them as wives, because white women do not thrive much there. They dress very nicely and have many Paternoster and other Beads on their bodies. They cut the Hair on their heads very short, like the men, thinking that it becomes them.

The *Melato* is ‘kept’ as a wife, although she is more likely to have been a concubine or slave. Her dress is more elaborate and covers more of her body than the clothing of the other women, but her right breast is exposed and she has bare feet. Either one of these last two characteristics would have demonstrated to contemporaries that she was
not a European woman, although it seems highly improbable that Melato women appeared in public in this manner. In chapter 49, which discusses Elmina, then the central trading post on the coast of Guinea, de Marees again takes up the subject of the women taken as partners by the Portuguese. Instead of white Portuguese women, whose numbers were very limited,

they [the Portuguese] take as their Wives many sturdy black women or Mulatto [women], half-white and half-black (that is, yellowish), whom the Portuguese like very much. Because they are not allowed to marry them properly, they buy these Women, but they consider them to be as much as their own Wives; yet they may separate from them as they please and in turn buy other women whenever it suits them. They maintain these Wives in grand style and keep them in splendid clothes, and they always dress more ostentatiously and stand out more than any other Indigenous women.107
This caption also brings up the important point that the vast majority of all mulattos were born to women who were slaves, and they remained in this same condition unless purchased by their fathers and freed.

The male children produced by such unions unsurprisingly played a much different role in the colony than their female counterparts. According to de Marees, the male black or mulatto slaves (Swerten of Melaten Slaven) made up the main fighting force at Elmina, and he calls them ‘more villainous and malicious by nature than the Portuguese’, a telling condemnation indeed!108 This opposition between mulatto women, attractive and desirable wives and concubines for the European colonizers, and the mulatto men, not entirely trusted and functioning on the periphery as additional manpower in the colonial armies, is reproduced in contemporary discussions about the status of people of mixed racial background in Dutch Brazil and, more importantly, forms the primary framework for understanding Eckhout’s paintings of the mulatto man and mameluca.

**Eckhout’s Mulatto Man**

Consistent with the other paintings of men in Eckhout’s series, the man in this full-length ethnographic portrait carries weapons and stands in a three-quarter pose facing the viewer (plate 8). Previous discussions have emphasized his firearm, now identified as a Portuguese gun, paying little attention to the main figure.109 Eckhout has placed the man against a cloudy greyish sky in a coastal setting, with three European ships visible on the horizon. The man stands on the bare, sandy ground, framed by a field of tall sugar cane on the right and a large papaya tree on the left. His light brown skin, which has a strong yellowish cast, is lighter than that of the Indians in Eckhout’s other paintings. An uncontrollable halo of frizzy, dark-brown hair grows out of his head, and his light-brown eyes stare out at the viewer in a direct, rather confident manner. He wears a simple long-sleeved shirt and skirt of white cotton cloth, which is made more formal by the addition of a brown and black slashed doublet. Unusual in Eckhout’s series is the fact that this work is unfinished. It is neither signed nor dated, and the legs appear to have been stopped at the underpainting stage.

It is nonetheless clear that this figure represents a soldier, which is demonstrated by comparing the painting to the illustrations in Jacques de Gheyn’s highly popular *Wapenhandlinghe van Roers Musquetten ende Spissen* (Amsterdam, 1608), a guidebook for weapons that includes a number of instructional plates. The images in de Gheyn make it clear that the man in Eckhout’s painting carries his gun over his left shoulder in the proper, although rather stiff, stance of a soldier who is marching, at rest, or on guard duty. In this illustration, which demonstrates the correct use of a
musket, the soldier is represented from the opposite side, but similarities to Eckhout’s figure include the left hand holding the musket, the right hand at the waist, and the long sword with the decorative handle (which can be seen more clearly in other plates) (Fig. 53). Comparison to contemporary Dutch genre paintings that include soldiers, such as works by the Utrecht artist Jacob Duck, also supports a military connection. Duck’s guardroom scene, *Soldiers Arming Themselves* (ca. 1630), shows a musketeer lifting a belt of charges over his head, who wears a rapier quite similar to that worn by Eckhout’s soldier. The facial hair of Eckhout’s figure, who wears a moustache and a small beard, is also typical of soldiers in Dutch genre scenes.

Demonstrating the flexibility of ‘racial’ terms in the seventeenth century, Caspar Schmalkalden, another German in the service of the WIC in Brazil, labels the children of a white father and a black mother (‘von einem weissen Vater und schwarzer Mutter’) not mulattos, but ‘Mestizen’ (mestizos). While this title has occasionally been applied to Eckhout’s man of mixed racial background in more recent times, mestizos are more typically defined as those with mixed Indian and European heritage. The figures (excluding the Africans) in Eckhout’s paintings were described in the seventeenth century as including ‘Brazilians, Tapuyas, mulattos, and mamalucos’, not mestizos. Furthermore, Wagener specifically labels the man in his copy of this painting a ‘Mulato’, suggesting that this is the proper title for this figure (Fig. 54).

Given the paucity of information on the lives of mestizo and mulatto soldiers in the army of the WIC in Brazil, Wagener’s discussion of the character of mulatto men and their position in the Dutch colony – written to accompany this copy – is an invaluable resource. He writes:

The people produced by relations between black women and Portuguese are called ‘Mulaten’ and like the other slaves, they are condemned to spend their lives in the worst bondage. Yet there are some who are more fortunate, who are allowed freedom thanks to the love of their lascivious fathers...[who] buy him for a goodly sum...and then the child moves from slavery to freedom. Once fully grown, they are greatly used for all sorts of military action and know how to handle all types of guns, especially shotguns, [with which] they daily hunt birds and forest animals, even daring, in the same way and using the pretext of shooting birds, to hide in the woods and attack passers-by, as is well know and clear among both the Portuguese and our people. Therefore, they are considered as knaves, fickle, false and treacherous. Since they come from Christian blood, His Excellency [Johan Maurits] originally intended to give them their freedom once and for all, but he immediately had second thoughts when told of their dreadful and treacherous behaviour.
Wagener does not introduce any substantial changes in the composition of his copy of this painting, although his mulatto soldier looks even more European than Eckhout’s. This is because in Wagener’s version his eyes are rounder, his hair is in looser curls, his skin is lighter, and his moustache larger. Although Wagener characterizes mulatto men as ‘fickle, false and treacherous’, certainly nothing in the image suggests that this man has a bad or untrustworthy nature. Nonetheless, soldiers during the seventeenth century in the Dutch Republic comprised a rather suspect group; they are often pictured drinking, brawling, playing cards, and entertaining prostitutes in Dutch genre paintings and prints.

But rather than sitting in a tavern or a guardroom of a Dutch genre painting, Eckhout’s mulatto soldier stands guard in an outdoor, tropical environment. Examination of his clothing and attributes, as well as his Brazilian setting, provides clues to the viewer about the status of this figure. Eckhout consciously connects this
painting to that of the African woman by reproducing a similar setting, complete with papaya trees and tiny European ships on the horizon. The ships in both paintings may represent the means by which large numbers of Africans were forcibly brought to Recife. Furthermore, the reason for this mass importation is present in this painting in the form of sugar cane, which connects the mulatto man to the sugar plantations and mills, the primary location of African labour in the colony. The connection between slaves and sugar cane became quite common in images of the Caribbean during the eighteenth century, as demonstrated in J.D. Herlin’s 1718 description of Surinam.\textsuperscript{114}

Despite his juxtaposition with sugar cane, the clothing and weapons carried and worn by this figure clearly demonstrate that he has been assigned to protect the field, not labour in it. Although Wagener suggests that all mulattos remained in slavery unless they were purchased by their fathers and freed, the status of this figure remains ambiguous. An enslaved status would not have prevented him from serving in the WIC’s army: slaves were used for fighting by the Dutch as well as the Portuguese in Africa and the Americas. The mulatto man’s doublet may have been standard issue for soldiers in the army of the WIC, although the jaguar skin strap for his rapier is a personal, somewhat exotic, touch, possibly functioning as tangible proof of his skill in hunting. His weapons are nonetheless standard for musketeers, which is evident from examining de Gheyn’s book and Duck’s painting. As mentioned above, even the mulatto’s facial hair, a moustache and a small beard, are part of the standard iconography for images of European soldiers. The man in Eckhout’s painting is, however, not a typical Dutch soldier: his tropical location, bare feet, pale yellowish skin, and halo of frizzy, dark brown hair all suggest an exotic locale and ethnicity. If it is possible to assume that this figure is not a slave, it is evident that his freed state and mixed status have afforded him neither wealth nor prestige. He wears no shoes, and his clothing seems to be made of the same white cloth as the shorts and skirt of the Brasili	extit{anen} in the ethnographic portrait series. Nonetheless, wearing facial hair also demonstrated one’s distance from Indians (and perhaps also Africans) as well as one’s proximity to Europeans. As such it is not insignificant that the man in this painting has a fuller moustache than the Brasilia	extit{n} man. The fact that his father was a European has, nonetheless, not freed him from the enslaved state associated with African heritage in the New World. Although the mameluca woman, addressed below, did not carry the stigma of African heritage, her position in Dutch society was equally unstable.
Contemporary authors in Brazil still invoke the saying, ‘white woman to marry, mulatto woman for sex, and the black woman to work’, expressing an attitude whose roots can be located in the colonial period, and whose framework of power and desire would certainly have been recognizable to the Dutch in Brazil in the seventeenth century. Unlike mulatto, mameluco is a term whose use is limited to Brazil, but like mulatto, mameluco can be traced back to Portuguese sources in the sixteenth century, following their establishment of a colonial outpost in Brazil, and may in fact originate from a Tupí term. According to Forbes, as early as 1552 it was used to label someone as having ‘mixed blood’. The basic definition is found in Wagener’s *Thierbuch* and the *Historia* and differs little from that offered by Soler at the beginning of this section: a mameluco is the offspring of a Tupinamba (Brasilian) woman and a European man. According to Wagener, the father could be Portuguese or Dutch, but by 1681 Arnoldus Montanus’s definition mentions only a Portuguese father, possibly reflecting the fact that the Dutch had officially surrendered their Brazilian colony in 1654.

Although mamelucos are mentioned in colonial documents beginning in the first half of the sixteenth century, the first representation of a mameluco is in de Bry’s version of Hans Staden’s description of Brazil, which has already been discussed in chapter 4. Although not included among the simple woodcuts in Staden’s original book, de Bry’s embellished edition includes an image of four Christian, half-Tupinamba/half-Portuguese brothers taken prisoner by the same Indians who held Staden during his nine-month captivity. Nude and bound by ropes, they are differentiated from the Tupinamba by their hairstyles and by the luxuriant moustaches of the two central prisoners. They are meant to look European like Hans Staden, who stands nude in the upper left corner of the image and is unmistakable because of his facial hair, especially his long beard. In my research, I did not discover any painted representations of mamelucos that predate Eckhout’s image.

Eckhout’s painting displays a standing half-Brasilian/half-European woman holding what one scholar has called a ‘completely useless basket of flowers’ (plate 9). She engages the viewer’s eye with a direct glance and a playful expression – her lips are slightly turned up at the ends suggesting that she will soon break into a fuller, more inviting smile. A green landscape dotted with sugar plantations stretches out behind her, and a large cashew tree dangles ripe fruit over her head. At the base of the tree, two guinea pigs huddle together. Behind her and next to the tree, a large flower resembling a bird of paradise is in full bloom. She is fully jewelled, with an ornate necklace and matching earrings. These jewels are complemented by her small green hat decorated with pearls and a sprig of orange tree blossoms. Her simple, slightly
rumpled, white dress seems a curious companion to all of this finery, although its plainness is relieved on the shoulders by epaulettes of embroidery.

As with the painting of Eckhout’s mulatto soldier, scholars have little contemporary information available to them apart from Wagener’s caption for his copy of Eckhout’s painting in his *Thierbuch*. Here Wagener states:

Illicit relations between Brazilian women as much with Portuguese as with Dutch leads to the birth to many of these sons [children] of prostitutes, among whom it is not uncommon to find attractive and delicate men and women. Normally, they wear long and beautiful white cotton shirts during the week, but on Sundays and holidays, they dress themselves up gaudily in the Spanish style, adorning their neck, ears and hands with coral and a profusion of false stones. Given their elegant figure, some pass for Spanish ladies. The men tend to work in any legal profession or to use their great skill at military matters. Many of the women marry within their own caste; others however (almost the majority) are
very honestly and legitimately desired as legal wives, sometimes by fairly wealthy Portuguese and also by some Dutch who are anxious to wed. 124

In his watercolour copy that accompanies this description, Wagener’s mameluca is not delicate (fig. 55). Her smile has faded and her features have been coarsened, possibly in an attempt to make her appear less European and more ‘Indian’ than the woman in Eckhout’s original painting. In Wagener’s version her full breasts and a broad nose make her resemble Eckhout’s Brasilian woman. Wagener’s description of the status of mestizo women in the colony echoes comments made by de Marees about the mulatto women in Elmina. As noted above, in seventeenth-century European colonies in Africa and South America, women of mixed racial background were highly desirable as sexual partners for European men, although they were not always considered prime material for marriage. We find evidence of this point of view present in the visual traditions that shaped Eckhout’s painting.

As with the other figures in this series of ethnographic portraits, Eckhout’s mameluca is carefully composed. In keeping with the stereotypical view of mestizo women, Eckhout wanted his mameluca to be seen as attractive and desirable, as well as

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164 visions of savage paradise
vain and sexually promiscuous. Wagener describes the mothers of such woman as ‘prostitutes’, and it is possible that the mameluca may have suffered the same status by association. As if to signal her approachability and possibly suggest that she is ‘ripe for the taking’, her appearance may owe something to the iconography of affability or Vriendlijkheid. In Ripa’s Iconologia he describes this personification as a young woman with a cheerful expression, clad in a thin white wrap and holding a rose in her right hand and wearing a crown of flowers on her head.125

The mameluca also calls upon contemporary conventions in portraiture as presented in books like Crispijn de Passe’s Les Vrais Pourtraits (1640). This book includes twenty-eight portraits of noble and generally upper-class women and girls represented as shepherdesses.126 While these women are dressed in a more elegant fashion, Eckhout’s mameluca could be the mestizo sister of De Passe’s Stellifera (Fig. 56), who appears in the section devoted to young noble women. Stellifera and the mameluca have the same hairstyle with wavy hair worn short and loose, both wear small hats decorated with pearls, and each has a dress with a plunging neckline. Furthermore, the viewer gets the impression that the main figures in each one of these images are...
dressing up and playing a ‘rustic’ role for the viewer. Books of portraits like this one were also produced for famous prostitutes and include de Passe’s *Miroir des plus belles courtisanes de ce temps* (1631).

Connections to portraiture and prostitution do not, however, explain the presence of the guinea pigs or the allegedly ‘useless’ basket of flowers she holds aloft in her right hand. In calling the mameluca a ‘dusky Brazilian Flora’, Whitehead and Boeseman were the first to recognize the connection to Flora, whose main attributes are flowers. Indeed, the appearance of the mameluca, with a few Brazilian modifications, fits in remarkably well with the iconography of Flora in European art. Eckhout was clearly aware of the symbolic connotations of this visual tradition, which resonate with the historical position of mestizo women in Dutch Brazil as objects of sexual desire. Flora, the Roman goddess of ‘flowers, gardens, spring, and love’, was a popular subject in Renaissance and Baroque art, with painted versions by well-known Northern European artists such as Jan Massys, Peter Paul Rubens, and Rembrandt van Rijn. An engraved example by Cornelius Cort after Frans Floris depicts a seated Flora in a long, loose-fitting drapery next to a basket of flowers. An image of Flora that is a bit closer to Eckhout’s mameluca can be found in Crispijn de Passe’s *Hortus Floridus* (1616), where the goddess sits under a fruit-laden tree, wears a wreath of flowers, and holds a cornucopia bursting with flowers (fig. 57). Titian’s *Flora* (ca. 1515), however, is without a doubt one of the most famous versions of this subject. In this version, Flora is dressed in a loose-fitting white gown that slips off her shoulder and threatens to expose her entire left nipple. With her left hand she casually covers herself with a fine brocade cape; her right hand is held slightly aloft and spills over with flower blossoms.

Julius Held’s classic study asserts that because of the goddess’s somewhat shady history, which includes her identification with a rich Roman prostitute as well as her long-term association with Venus, Flora was a favorite guise in which to depict Italian courtesans during the Renaissance. Accordingly, he calls Titian’s figure ‘Flora the courtesan’. This painting, in the possession of a Portuguese merchant in Amsterdam around 1640, was widely known at the time through copies and an engraved version by Joachim von Sandrart. The fact that the mameluca’s white dress strongly resembles the gown worn by Titian’s *Flora* is probably a simple coincidence, but the looseness of mameluca’s gown and its plunging, highly suggestive neckline nonetheless heighten the image’s sexual subtext. The mameluca’s gesture in exposing her ankle by lifting her skirt is flirtatious and invites erotic speculation. Contemporary viewers undoubtedly recognized that the woman depicted was either a prostitute or a concubine. Whether or not Eckhout knew Titian’s original painting or Von Sandrart’s engraving after it, he was surely familiar enough with images of Flora to have known that she was the goddess of the spring and fertility. In creating a
mameluca Flora, Eckhout found the perfect manner in which to capture the essence of this attractive and desirable mestizo woman, a prospective sexual partner for European colonists and soldiers in Brazil.

In Eckhout’s painting of the mameluca, the cashew fruits, ripe in the Brazilian spring, refer to the fertility of the colony and perhaps even to the highly intoxicating cashew fruit wine made every year by the Tupinamba, the ethnic group of the mameluca’s mother. Natural historians Whitehead and Boeseman have called the guinea pigs at her feet ‘harmless and frivolous’, but the connection between rabbits and guinea pigs may represent yet another connection to Flora’s fertility. For European colonists, Brazilian birds were ‘pheasants’, wild boars were ‘pigs’, and guinea pigs were ‘rabbits’. In his discussion of the ‘different varieties of Brazilian rabbits’, Marcgraf lists guinea pigs (‘cavia cabaya’) along with apera, paca, and agouti. Under Marcgraf’s drawing of a guinea pig in Handbook I, Johan Maurits writes, ‘This is a rabbit, the size of the European ones’ (fig. 58). Eckhout may have used this image as the source for his white, brown, and black guinea pig in the foreground of his painting of the mameluca. Given contemporary European beliefs regarding rabbits and fertility, it is only appropriate that Eckhout chose a Brazilian ‘rabbit’ to accompany his Brazilian ‘Flora’. As goddess of spring, Flora was associated with rebirth, and what better way to signal this than by including rabbits, long a symbol of sexual reproduction. See, for example, Roemer Visscher’s Sinnepoppen (1614), in which rabbits illustrate the saying ‘Ex foecunditate ubertas’ (uit vruchtbareheid overvloed/from fertility overabundance). In Ripa, one of Fecundity’s main attributes is a mother rabbit and her newly born babies. Among the large number of paintings inspired by Titian’s image is a painting of Flora with two rabbits by an anonymous Venetian artist.
While Eckhout certainly could not have known this image, this demonstrates that rabbits (or the Brazilian version thereof) could be included among Flora’s attributes.

Eckhout’s series of ethnographic portraits should not be read as a human version of Noah’s ark with a male and female breeding pair for each ‘species’. As demonstrated above, the Africans represent different parts of West Africa: Guinea and Angola. Similarly, Eckhout chose to represent two sorts of people of mixed ethnicity: the mulatto man as a soldier and the mameluca as the beautiful concubine. Although Van den Boogaart has puzzled over the fact that the man and woman of mixed racial background appear without a child, this was undoubtedly a conscious omission. In the nineteenth century scientists argued that mulattos and mestizos were degenerate and had lower rates of fertility; it is possible that similar ideas were already present in the seventeenth century. However, given the clear references to fertility in the painting of the woman, the primary reason for the lack of offspring may be because the mulatto and the mameluca were not intended to form a couple in the reproductive sense. As depicted, the mameluca is sexualized and open to contact with European men. Depicting her with a child would have diminished her accessibility and desirability. The mulatto man belongs to a lower caste than the mameluca, and he is superior to Africans slaves only because of his European blood and position within the Dutch army.

**Levels of Civility: Three Become Four**

As addressed in greater detail in chapter 4, Ernst van den Boogaart was the first to argue that the paintings in Eckhout’s ethnographic portrait series create a three-tiered hierarchy of civility. The eight paintings include four male/female pairs: Tapuyas, Brasilia- nen, Africans, a mulatto man and a mameluca. According to this interpretive framework, the cannibalistic and naked Tapuya are the least civilized of the group. The Africans are placed in the middle position with the Brasilianen, because both pairs are considered ‘recruits’ to civility. The mulatto man and mameluca woman occupy the highest level, because they are closest to the implicit European paradigm in attributes as well as physical characteristics. Scholars have argued that they have a more attractive and refined appearance than the Indians or Africans. The mulatto and mameluca are said to be ‘decently dressed’, look more ‘European’. They carry and wear objects that signify their superior degree of civility over the Indians and Africans. Their position above the rest of the figures is primarily based on the fact that their fathers are Europeans, although none of these scholars suggests that Eckhout’s series endorses miscegenation.

This interpretive framework has been widely adopted as the most convincing explanation for Eckhout’s series of ethnographic portraits. Despite the fact that civility does appear to be one of the main organizing principles behind these images, a num-
ber of interpretative problems arise when one more closely investigates Eckhout’s paintings of the Africans, the mulatto, and the mameluca, as we have done here. One of the first objections that can be made is the simple fact that there are four pairs of figures but only three levels of civility. This problem has been solved in a somewhat awkward manner by placing the Brasilianen and the Africans on ‘more or less the same level’. Van den Boogaart’s discussion of civility originated as an opposition between the semi-civilized Brasilianen and the irredeemably savage Tapuya, which he then expanded to the rest of the paintings in this series, resulting in a somewhat awkward fit. As has become clear in the analysis above, in terms of their visual presentation and degree of culture attained, it is not the Brasilianen, but the mameluca and the mulatto whose images are most closely related to the Africans. Both the African woman and the mameluca, for example, wear costly jewellery, and both the African man and the mulatto soldier carry finely crafted weapons.

The Africans, indeed, require their own level of civility, above the Brasilianen and directly below the man and woman of mixed race. As addressed in chapter 3, such a hierarchy of four had already been established in Abraham Ortelius’s frontispiece to his Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (fig. 26). In Ortelius’s frontispiece, the personification of Africa was placed above America because she had attained a higher degree of civility. With Eckhout’s Africans, their placement above the Indians and next to the mulatto and mameluca is due, in part, to their beautiful and costly attributes, which demonstrate a sophisticated material culture. But the high position of the Africans is also because of their importance in Dutch Brazil. Africans, both as slaves and as allies, played an increasingly central role in the economic and political life of the colony. The success of Dutch Brazil could be measured in the work of her slaves in the sugar mills and in the fields; the continued supply of these forced migrants from Africa required the Dutch to undertake conquest and develop trade relationships with various kingdoms along the West African coast. Eckhout’s painting of the African woman, in particular, holds a special place of honour in this series – her body is refined, fecund, and highly desirable, but at the same time muscled, sturdy, and capable of hard work.

Eckhout’s paintings operate within a complicated hierarchy of civility and contain multiple messages and sometimes contradictory information, all of which reveal the biases, needs, and finally the implicit desires of both their colonial and their European audiences in the seventeenth century. At the most basic level, they are detailed representations of the people present in Johan Maurits’s Brazilian domain, and as such are products of the colonial environment. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that they could have functioned as trophies in the Count’s Kunst und Wunderkammer, either in the Dutch Republic or Brazil. The following chapter will continue to address these questions of meaning, audience, and display through an examination of the still lifes and the ethnographic portraits as a complete pictorial cycle.
Fig. 59 – Still Life with Calabash, Fruits, and Cactus, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 94 by 94 cm.

Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
ECKHOUT’S SURVIVING PAINTINGS INCLUDE TWELVE STILL
lifes, eight ethnographic portraits, and one painting of dancing Tapuyas, all of
which are currently in the collection of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen.
They arrived as a group in Denmark in 1654 as part of a gift of twenty-six paintings
made by Johan Maurits to his cousin, King Frederik III of Denmark. Despite the
growing literature on Eckhout, there has been surprisingly little discussion about the
original venue for these paintings or even whether or not they constituted a single or
multiple decorative cycles. In this chapter I will address these important subjects and
revisit the current debate (discussed briefly in chapter 1) on where Eckhout made
these paintings, arguing that most of Eckhout’s paintings, if not all, were made in
Brazil. Although they may have been created for export to Europe (like casta paint-
ings made in New Spain in the eighteenth century), Eckhout’s paintings were clearly
not intended for the Count’s Dutch palace, the Mauritshuis.2 Rather it seems proba-
ble that Brazil was their original place of display, in either Johan Maurits’s pleasure
house Boa Vista or, more probably, in his official residence, Vrijburg Palace.
Fecit Brasil/Made in Brazil?

Until quite recently, scholars have assumed that Eckhout’s surviving paintings were made in Brazil and most likely decorated what architectural historian J.J. Terwen labeled the main ‘princely hall’ of Vrijburg, the Count’s main Brazilian palace. At first glance, the Brazilian place of creation would appear to be confirmed by the fact that all but one of Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits are dated between 1641 and 1643, with ‘brasíl’ written on them as the place of their creation. As mentioned in chapter 1, attacks on this Brazilian provenance have recently come from conservator Barbara Berlowicz, historian Florijke Egmond, and cultural anthropologist Peter Mason.

For several years, Berlowicz, a conservator at the Nationalmuseet, has expressed concern about the lack of physical evidence linking Eckhout’s paintings to Brazil. The canvas and paints used by Eckhout in these works of art (this is also true of the still lifes and the Tapuya Dance) are European in origin, and the paintings are generally consistent in terms of preparation and technique with contemporary works made in the Dutch Republic. Of course, as she notes, the use of European materials and manner of working is not unexpected given the fact that Eckhout was Dutch and his paintings were created in a colonial setting. Europeans and WIC employees imported (at great expense) nearly everything they needed into the Brazilian colony, including food, alcohol, and luxury goods, which almost certainly would have included oil paint and linen canvas.

Berlowicz also draws attention to the good condition of the ethnographic portraits, although they are marked by long cracks in the paint, the direct result of having been rolled up for transport or storage. While it is impossible to prove that these cracks resulted from an overland journey from the Dutch Republic to Denmark rather than a journey by boat to the Dutch Republic from Brazil, Berlowicz feels that a three-month sea voyage from Recife would have resulted in more damage to the paintings, damage that should still be discernible today. The paintings were, nonetheless, in poor enough condition when they arrived in Denmark in 1654 to warrant their first restoration shortly thereafter, most likely at the hands of the painter Lazarus Baratta. In addition to the probable repainting and ‘improving’ of areas of loss, the canvases (including the Tapuya Dance and the still lifes) were relined sometime between 1654 and 1656. It is likely that the ethnographic portraits were trimmed at this time; as mentioned in chapter 1, technical examination has demonstrated that all eight paintings were originally larger. Although it is unclear how much was trimmed from the top and bottom of the portraits, the width of each was reduced by about 30 cm, making their original width about 190 cm.

Other challenges have arisen regarding the veracity of the signatures. Berlowicz believes that Eckhout’s signatures on the ethnographic portraits are too consistent to
have been added as each painting was completed; she instead suggests that they were all added to the canvases at the same time. Their spelling of Eckhout with one e on all of the paintings has caused additional speculation that these are not autograph signatures. This is supported by recent discoveries in the archives, which have provided scholars with the first evidence regarding how Eckhout signed his name. From the three signatures discovered (excluding the signatures on the paintings), it is clear that the artist favored a number of different spellings for his own name: Eckhout, Eijkhout, Eeyckhout, never repeating the same form twice. He is furthermore referred to as Eckhout with one e only rarely, for example in documents from the municipal archives of Amersfoort and The Hague. The signatures on the canvases may indeed have been added later, either because Eckhout’s original signatures were trimmed off during restoration or to make the date, authorship, and provenance of the works clear for Danish audiences after 1654.

In fact, not all the evidence is negative regarding a Brazilian provenance for these works of art. Mads Christensen, another member of the Danish conservation team, has analysed the preparation of the canvas and the composition of the ground of Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits and compared them to Frans Post’s View of Itamaracá (whose creation in Brazil in 1637, as noted on the canvas itself, has never been called into question). Christensen discovered what she calls a ‘remarkable similarity’ between Eckhout’s paintings and this landscape, suggesting that they ‘could have been prepared at the same time and that they may even have come from the same batch of primed canvas’. She furthermore asserts that the good condition of all of Eckhout’s paintings is probably due to the fact that the ground was applied directly to the canvas without a layer of animal glue or sizing, which was typically the first thing applied to the canvas. The skipping of the glue layer ‘is probably the reason why there has not been severe flaking of the paint layers, although the paintings have endured harsh conditions’. As Christensen notes, other paintings that lack this layer of animal glue have survived in good condition, despite ‘adverse climatic conditions’, suggesting that an overseas journey from Brazil need not have caused extensive damage to the works.

In addition to information gathered from technical analysis, we have evidence for the existence of Eckhout’s paintings in Brazil in the form of Zacharaius Wagner’s Thierbuch, which includes watercolour copies of many of Eckhout’s images. In this personal natural history handbook, which was completed before he left the colony in 1641, Wagener includes copies of all of the main figures from Eckhout’s ethnographic paintings. The fact that this work includes individual representations of many of the animal ‘attributes’ in the figural works (such as the Brasilian woman’s toad and the Mameluca’s guinea pig) also suggests that Eckhout’s six paintings dated 1641 were already finished or at a fairly advanced stage when Wagener copied them, while the
painting of the Tupi man (dated 1643) and the mulatto man (undated) had already been begun.  

While there is indeed conflicting evidence regarding the provenance of these works, one should not ignore the dates on the paintings, Wagener’s *Theirbuch*, or Christensen’s interpretation of the technical evidence, all of which strongly suggest that the paintings were indeed made in Brazil. The subject matter of these paintings and their probable display as a group further suggest that they were intended to have a colonial function, whose specificity would have been lost on audiences in Europe.

*A Single Decorative Cycle*

Johan Maurit’s 1654 gift to Frederik III included twenty-six paintings: eight ethnographic portraits, the *Tapuya Dance*, twelve still lifes, two portraits of Johan Maurits, and a portrait of an African trader in Portuguese dress and pendant images of his two servants. After 1680, the paintings were displayed in the Royal Danish *Kunstkammer*, where the walls and ceiling of the ‘Antechamber’ were covered with the majority of Eckhout’s paintings, while the two portraits of Johan Maurits were displayed in the ‘Picture Apartment’.  

The ethnographic objects and paintings located in the Antechamber later formed the foundational collection for the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, not all of the paintings in the 1654 gift may be attributed to Eckhout.  

I have excluded four images in this group from my discussion here: the painting of an African trader, the pendant images of his two servants (all on panel), and a lost life-size portrait of Johan Maurits dated 1644. First, it is not certain that these unsigned and undated images of Africans should be attributed to Eckhout. Second, even if they were painted by Eckhout, the modest scale of these paintings, their panel support, and the fact that they are bust-length portraits, not full-scale ethnographic images, set these three paintings apart from Eckhout’s other works, which demonstrate closer affinities to natural history and ethnography. Regarding the last painting of the four, while there is little reason to doubt Eckhout’s creation in 1644 of a life-size image of Johan Maurits, this work of art was executed after Eckhout’s other Brazilian paintings had already been completed. As I have suggested elsewhere, this image, apparently the last he had commissioned in Brazil, may have functioned as a memento of his governorship in Brazil and may even have been intended to hang in the Mauritshuis or some other European location. The life-size portrait of Johan Maurits and *Johan Maurits with Brasilianen* have been lost, but given the presence of the Indians in the latter work, it seems more likely to have formed part of a unified pictorial cycle than the 1644 portrait.
Although it appears likely that the ethnographic portraits, the *Tapuya Dance*, *Johan Maurits with Brasilianen*, and the still lifes were intended to form a single pictorial cycle, it is important to first address the clearly identifiable subgroups within this complicated group of images. For example, the ethnographic portraits create their own series of eight male and female national types, including Africans, *Brasilianen*, *Tapuyas*, the mulatto man and the mameluca. These paintings are the same size (around 265 cm by 160 cm) and share a vertical format. In addition, they each repeat the same compositional formula: a standing adult figure against a coastal or inland landscape. Technical analysis has demonstrated that each of the eight canvases is made up of two pieces of canvas sewn together vertically, and that each painting has a light brown ground, which suggests that they were prepared together as a group. All of the paintings have been trimmed, perhaps during their first restoration in 1654. Six of these images are dated 1641. The *Tupinamba/Brasilian Man* is dated 1643. Of the figural works, only the paintings of the *Mulatto Man* and the *Tapuya Dance* are neither signed nor dated. Detailed discussion of the iconography of these works may be found in chapters 4 and 5.

The *Tapuya Dance*, measuring 294 cm by 168 cm, stands apart from the rest of the ethnographic images because, like *Johan Maurits with Brasilianen*, it displays a group scene, not a single standing figure. This canvas is only slightly larger than that used for the portraits, but it has been turned on its side to create a horizontal format for this stylized representation of dancing figures (fig. 36). This large canvas may be divided into six equal parts, each the size of a single still life, which suggests that Eckhout used an interlinking system of proportions to create a secondary group, which included both the *Tapuya Dance* and the still-life paintings. These thirteen paintings also display a uniformity of technique and a smoother manner of painting than the ethnographic portraits, suggesting that Eckhout painted them consecutively. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that five of the twelve still lifes and the *Tapuya Dance* share the same type of preparation, with a red and grey ground layer. Unlike the ethnographic portraits, none of these works is signed or dated.

Eckhout’s still lifes of tropical fruits and vegetables also form a series (plates 10-12; figs. 59-67). All of the paintings measure around 91 x 91 cm and depict various types of over life-size fruits and vegetables on a gray stone sill and against an open sky with clouds. They do not, however, create a continuous image, and they were clearly not intended to hang directly next to one another. The fruits and vegetables in these paintings often project out and over the edge of the sill and into the viewer’s space. The primary sense of movement in these images comes from the clouds, which appear to move across the background and show some diversity in light, shape, and colour. In addition to formal similarities, the paintings are also linked because all of the fruits and vegetables depicted in them grew in and around Mauritsstad. As discussed in chapter 2, contemporary plans and accounts of Vrijburg Palace, such as those repro-
duced by Barlaeus, describe rows of coconut palms as well as fruit trees introduced from abroad, including oranges, lemons, and figs. Native Brazilian flora was present in the palace gardens in the form of papayas, mangoes, gourds, and cashew trees, while Africa was represented by pear trees and watermelons. In addition to European plants, Johan Maurits’s gardens also included bananas, a Southeast Asian fruit first encountered by Europeans in West Africa in the fifteenth century. Spanish missionaries are credited with its introduction into South America.19

Instead of proposing that all the paintings – the still lifes, Tapuya Dance and the ethnographic portraits – were made in The Hague, it is more likely that Eckhout created them during two, or perhaps even three, distinct periods during his time in Brazil. The ethnographic portraits are the earliest works in this cycle; they show an immaturity of style and technique as well as evidence of an additional hand(s), Eckhout’s assistant in Brazil or perhaps a seventeenth-century restorer. Six of these works are dated 1641; technical evidence demonstrates that they were nonetheless painted over a long period.20 In the second phase of this project, which stretched into 1643 and possibly 1644, Eckhout was working on the last two ethnographic portraits, the twelve still lifes, and the Tapuya Dance. By the time he painted these works, he appears to have refined his technique, painted with greater confidence, and relied less on his assistant(s), at least for the still lifes.

Despite the four-year period of their creation, the subject matter and formal elements of Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits and still lifes demonstrate a connection between these two groups of images. For example, all of these paintings feature a cloudy tropical sky in the background, and repeated pictorial motifs create additional connections. African and Tupi baskets similar to those depicted in the paintings African Woman and Child and Tupinamba/Brasilian Woman and Child are represented in Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices, Still Life with Watermelons, Pineapple and Other Fruit, and Still Life with Calabash, Fruits and Cactus (plates 10, 11; fig. 59). These last two paintings include citrus fruits, which are also represented in the basket held by the African woman. A citrus fruit plantation, like what was then on the grounds of Vrijburg, is depicted in the background behind the Brasilian woman, and she also stands next to a banana tree. Bananas are the primary subject of Still Life with Bananas and Guavas (fig. 65). Similarly, the Brasilian man stands in front of a manioc field, with several freshly harvested roots on the ground at his feet. Still Life with Manioc isolates these roots and makes them the subject of a painting (fig. 62). A papaya tree grows to the right of the mulatto man as well as in the background behind the African woman, linking these images to the fruits in Still Life with Pineapple and Papaya (fig. 66). Finally, the ripe cashew fruits hanging on the tree behind the mameluca, as well as the passionflower draped over the edge of her basket, are both represented in Still Life with Watermelons, Pineapple, and Other Fruit (plate 11).
The fact that Johan Maurits commissioned at least one other series of paintings ‘suitable for decorating a large room in the manner of tapestries’ also strongly suggests that Eckhout’s Brazilian paintings should be interpreted as a group.\textsuperscript{21} The inventory of Johan Maurits’s 1652 gift to the Elector of Brandenburg lists seven life-size oil paintings of Indians, depicting representative types from different provinces ‘\textit{nach dem Leben}’ and surrounded by the appropriate plants and animals.\textsuperscript{22} These images, which are addressed in the list of works attributed to Eckhout in the Appendix, were most probably painted between 1640 and 1650 in either Brazil or the Dutch Republic.

The seven large paintings were accompanied by nine smaller pieces ‘conforming to and after the proportions of the larger paintings’. These smaller images may have been still lifes or natural history representations; the inventory only says that they depicted ‘everything that is rare and nowhere else to be found in the world’. Although the artist is not named, it is hard to imagine that anyone except Eckhout, or perhaps someone working from his sketches, could have painted these works of art. This combination of life-size figural paintings of different Brazilian ethnic groups with smaller paintings is quite similar to Eckhout’s cycle of ethnographic paintings and still lifes from Brazil, although these, possibly later, compositions were considerably more crowded and as such may have looked more like the lost Schwedt paintings.\textsuperscript{23} Because the painting cycle mentioned in this inventory has been lost and the date of its creation is unknown, it is impossible to do more than speculate about its function, whether in Brazil, the Dutch Republic, or at the court of the Elector of Brandenburg, where it eventually came to rest. Unlike this series of paintings, Eckhout’s signed and dated ethnographic portraits and his still lifes were almost certainly commissioned by the Count for either Boa Vista or Vrijburg, the only official buildings in Dutch Brazil large enough to house them (\textit{fig}. 68).\textsuperscript{24}

A number of challenges, interpretive as well as technical, await scholars who wish to address the original venue for Eckhout’s paintings. Even if one believes, as I do, that Eckhout’s works were painted in Brazil, not Europe, the lack of evidence is admittedly frustrating. Beyond Wagener’s circa 1641 copies of Eckhout’s paintings, the first mention of these images comes in the 1654 inventory of Johan Maurits’s gift to the Danish king. In Brazil, all of Johan Maurits’s architectural projects have long since been destroyed, and little physical evidence remains. In addition, there is the problematic nature of the paintings themselves, whose large scale suggests a princely location and function, but whose subject matter demonstrates greater affinities with the types of works exhibited in early modern cabinets of curiosities. If one assumes that Eckhout’s paintings were intended for the latter type of collection, then it is logical to suggest that they could have been displayed as a group somewhere in Boa Vista, the second of the Count’s Brazilian palaces, where he had his ‘museum’ and ethnographic collection, and where he apparently retreated during his free time for pleasure.
and leisure. The other possibility is that the Count commissioned Eckhout’s works to impress European collectors of exotica, whose ranks included men with personal as well as financial connections to the Dutch West India Company. Certainly, they would have been eager to acquire such impressive images, which would have been additionally desirable for having been produced ‘after life’ in Brazil. One imagines that this was also part of the appeal of the casta paintings produced in colonial Mexico, many of which were exported to Spain in the eighteenth century.

With respect to princely venues for display, it is clear from Pieter Post’s plans for the interior decoration of the Mauritshuis, the Count’s Dutch palace, and the types of pictorial cycles recorded as having been displayed there, that Eckhout’s paintings were not intended for this venue. This brings us back to what I still find to be the most satisfying hypothesis: display of the paintings as a group in Vrijburg Palace in Brazil. The rest of the chapter will address this venue, how Eckhout’s works may have been displayed in it, and how the cycle as a whole can be interpreted.

Creating a Colonial Capital

After his arrival in Dutch Brazil in 1637, Johan Maurits spent the first years of his appointment living in a large but relatively modest house in Recife. Around 1639 Johan Maurits commissioned an architect, possibly Pieter Post, to design a new, more imposing residence, which would better project his position as colonial governor-general. The need was especially great due to the fact that his old residence had, according to Barlaeus, become uninhabitable. Vrijburg, which was completed circa 1642 (one tower was already finished in 1641) and Boa Vista, completed in 1643, were part of the Count’s larger campaign for improving the colony. Fundamental to this plan was the creation of a new capital, Mauritsstad, the plans for which were already drawn up by 1639. Mauritsstad, built on the island Antonio Vaz, was a carefully laid out city, with parks and orange groves, churches, government buildings, and market squares. Ronald van Oers has argued that the city was based on the principles and designs for an ideal city by the Flemish architect Simon Stevin (1548-1620). Little, however, remains of Mauritsstad, which did not survive the unrest following Johan Maurits’s departure and was largely razed by 1648.

Vrijburg was built to the north of Mauritsstad, facing east across the river to the port of Recife, as is seen in the illustration from Barlaeus. The palace presented the first manifestation of colonial authority to ships arriving from the sea, as befits the official residence of the governor-general. Before his arrival in Brazil, Johan Maurits had been a frequent visitor at the court of Prince Frederik Hendrik (stadholder from 1625 to 1649) in the Dutch Republic. He was accordingly familiar with contemporary
princely residences, such as Rijswijk and Honseelaersdijk, Frederik Hendrik’s palaces outside of The Hague. Palaces like these would surely have influenced the Count’s ideas both about modern architecture (in these cases, Dutch classicism) and about decorative cycles appropriate for official residences. As scholars have already noted, the plan of the Mauritshuis is essentially a simplified version of the plans for Frederik Hendrik’s palaces at Honseelaersdijk and Rijswijk. Boa Vista, on the western side of Mauritststad, while a large building, was less stately in form than Vrijburg, if we can trust the engraving in Barlaeus, which is the only surviving image of this structure. Its function is uncertain, although Barlaeus asserts that it was a private pleasure house and retreat for the Count.

To date, no documentation has been found that names the person responsible for the design of Vrijburg or Boa Vista, the former perhaps being the only tropical version of Dutch classicism built in the seventeenth century. Based on stylistic grounds and his long-term association with Johan Maurits, the Dutch architect and painter Pieter Post (brother of Frans Post) is nonetheless the most likely candidate for architect of Vrijburg. Pieter had been working on the Count’s Dutch palace (the Mauritshuis in The Hague) with Jacob van Campen since the early 1630s; a new discovery in the archives now places him in Dutch Brazil during the Count’s governorship as well, although no designs for Vrijburg have been found among his papers.

Vrijburg Palace has long since been torn down, although it was originally a rather impressive structure. According to Driesen (probably based on Nieuhof) the original building cost 600,000 guilders. But as Sousa-Leão has noted, this number may in fact derive from the 600,000 livres that the Jewish community of Mauritststad/Recife offered for the building upon the governor’s departure. Even if we cannot determine the original cost of this structure, in 1655 Johan Maurits attempted to get the WIC to pay him the sum of 500,000 guilders, specifically stating that the payment was compensation for his construction of Boa Vista, Vrijburg, and the bridge connecting the island Antonio Vaz to Recife.

The twin towers of Vrijburg (one housing Marcgraf’s observatory and the other functioning as a lighthouse) loomed well above the watery landscape and structures of the cities nearby and were apparently visible for a distance of six to seven miles from sea. This palace and the grounds surrounding it, which included ponds, coconut palm-lined avenues, an island for rabbits, a menagerie, a pleasure garden, and citrus groves, to name but a few of the highlights, were much admired by contemporaries. The drawings by Frans Post from 1645, and the engravings after them in Barlaeus, are the most important images of Vrijburg that survive from the seventeenth century (figs. 68, 69). They show a large T-shaped central structure with two towers and lower wings that extended to the sides and front in a series of lower, smaller rooms fronted by an arcade. The images further reveal that the main entrance was
elevated; a covered arcade connected it to the central part of the palace. This entrance was accessible via a return staircase.

Post’s images give a good general impression of the appearance of this building, although establishing the details of its construction and the layout of its interior are far more difficult. The plan as reproduced in Barlaeus provides only the most general outline of the building; nonetheless, one would expect that the central space was divided into at least two rooms, a large, rectangular-shaped central hall and a smaller, square room at the rear of the building. Contemporary observer Friar Manuel Calado describes the banquets and parties that Johan Maurits enjoyed giving as colonial governor, and it is impossible to imagine that his official residence would not have included a large ceremonial hall for such formal occasions.

The architectural historian J.J. Terwen has noted that the two engravings of Vrijburg after Frans Post are very difficult to interpret, especially the ground plan, which is both quite small and highly generalized. He has given a number of reasons why the reliability of these images should be questioned. For Terwen the width of the main building (around 12 meters) as depicted in these engravings meant that the central hall was too small for the needs of Johan Maurits, who had both a large staff and an extended retinue, and furthermore needed a large room for receptions and banquets. According to the ground plan, this building was less than half the width of the Mauritshuis, under construction in The Hague at exactly the same time. Both the Mauritshuis and Vrijburg (like most princely palaces) were dual-function facilities and were intended to provide living quarters as well as ceremonial spaces. Although the image of Vrijburg’s exterior in Barlaeus is more detailed than the ground plan, it is still difficult to determine the precise location of the twin towers. Are they behind the central part of the building, or do they flank its sides? Terwen further notes that neither one of the images reproduced in Barlaeus corresponds to the last known image of this structure before it was torn down in 1784. This lithograph shows a building with seven bays, while the images by Post present only five bays. According to Terwen, Post’s lack of precision may have been due to the fact that he made his drawings of Vrijburg in Europe, a year after his return from Brazil.

In search of a solution to the problems encountered in the engravings after Post, Terwen examined the archives in Staatl. Kunstsammlungen, Kassel, which include the ground plans for a number of structures built for Johan Maurits, primarily those in Germany, such as the Sonnenburg Castle or the Schwanenburg Castle in Cleves. In the Kassel Codex, Terwen discovered an unlabeled plan, which corresponds in a number of ways to what we know about Vrijburg and has since become widely accepted as the ground plan for the main structure of this palace. Like the nineteenth-century lithograph, this plan shows a piano noble with seven bays as well as a central platform with return stairs on the exterior. It also indicates two large towers, the
dimensions of which (6.2 by 5.8 meters or 20 by 18 Rijnland feet) correspond fairly closely to the size (6.2 by 6.2 meters or 20 by 20 Rijnland feet) of the towers as recorded by Georg Marcgraf in his plans for the Vrijburg observatory, which can be consulted among his astronomical papers in the Gemeente Archief, Leiden. This plan also displays what Terwen has labeled a central ‘princely hall’ measuring 13.64 by 7.44 meters (24 by 44 Rijnland feet), a ceremonial space whose size would have been appropriate to the official residence of a governor-general. For our purposes, one Rijnland foot is equal to 31 centimeters, based on the scale given by Pieter Post in his 1652 plans for the Mauritshuis.

Assuming that the drawing from Kassel is a ground plan for Vrijburg, the placement of a large hall in the middle of the building, and thus without windows to the outside, also helps explain the curious area with arches linking the two towers, as seen on Post’s image of Vrijburg’s exterior. According to Terwen, the central hall was probably two stories high, with its main source of light coming from above. The arched windows in the area between the towers thus provided the main source of light for the room below. High ceilings of this sort are a common feature in architecture built for tropical climates.

Terwen’s reconstruction of Vrijburg is based on a synthesis of Frans Post’s images in Barlaeus, the nineteenth-century lithograph, and the Kassel ground plan. It displays an elegant building with a large central structure, tall twin towers, and extended side wings (fig. 70). As Terwen notes, a number of these elements can be traced back to villas of the North Italian type designed by Palladio and his contemporaries. But most important for our concerns is the central hall, which according to Terwen’s plan is 13.64 by 7.44 meters, with a height of 12.4 meters. In the discussion later on the possible placement of Eckhout’s paintings in this interior space, I have relied on Terwen’s reconstruction. But even if it eventually turns out that the Kassel plan is not for Vrijburg, a large formal hall was a feature of all official residences like this one, and it is certain that Vrijburg had one.

Eckhout’s Paintings in Vrijburg Palace

As mentioned above, the size and the prominence of the large central hall in Vrijburg makes it the most logical location for the display of at least some – if not all – of Eckhout’s figural works and still lifes, all 21 of which are life size or over life size. In the detailed discussion that follows, I examine both how the ethnographic portraits, still lifes, the Tapuya Dance, and Johan Maurits with Brasilianen might have been arranged in this space, and what kind of unified pictorial statement they might have made to their contemporary audience.
In imagining how these works might have been arranged as a single decorative program in Vrijburg, it is useful to examine both their current installation in Copenhagen and Flemish painter Jan van Kessel’s *America* from 1666 (fig. 71), whose central image includes figures based on Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits. In the Nationalmuseet, Eckhout’s paintings are arranged so as to recreate the ‘Indiansk Kammer’ or Indian room in the Royal Danish *Kunstkammer*. In a small, narrow room with a low ceiling and subdued lighting, the ethnographic portraits are hung at eye level, which encourages close scrutiny of the figures and their attributes. A small group of still lifes is displayed over the figural works along one wall. Glass vitrines include contemporary examples of Tupinamba material culture, including sixteenth-century ceremonial clubs, which have been in the collection since at least 1674. Detailed labels further enforce the scientific, anthropological focus of the installation, an aspect that is unlikely to have been emphasized in the original *Kunstkammer* or in any other early modern venue for the works.

In contrast to the Nationalmuseet’s modern exhibition space, Kessel’s work presents a crowded cabinet of curiosities, which is far less institutional in tone and much more chaotic in its mode of display. Kessel’s painting *America*, completed in 1666, is one of a series of works in oil on copper depicting the four continents. Here Brazil is given center stage with a large, central image (48.5 cm x 67.5 cm), which displays an elegant space filled with exotic people, artificialia, and naturalia. Bordering the main image is a series of sixteen smaller panels with views of American cities (each 15.5 cm x 21 cm). Here the cities are largely overshadowed by the local plants and animals (including a unicorn!), which are prominently displayed in the foreground of each painting.

The *Kunst und Wunderkammer* of the central image is decorated with ‘statues’ in niches, which include a Tapuya man and woman, both directly inspired by Eckhout’s paintings, as well as Asian figures drawn from Linchoten’s *Itinerario*. The niche figures are painted in grisaille to suggest stone, but realistically painted landscapes unfold behind each one. The center panel is labeled ‘Paraiba in Brasil’, making a connection to the sugar-rich captaincy of northeastern Brazil, although objects and people from all over the world are included here. While we know little about the genesis of this particular work of art, it is possible that Van Kessel was familiar with the exotic paintings along the staircase of the Mauritshuis, the Brazilian birds painted on the ceiling, or its collection of dried, mounted animals and Brazilian artifacts. This painting nonetheless displays an imaginary scene rather than a real collection.

Despite their obvious differences, both the real exhibition space in Copenhagen and Van Kessel’s painted installation display the figural works along a wall with still lifes above them, which is consistent with what has been hypothesized to date regarding how Eckhout’s works were hung in Vrijburg’s central hall. Of the two examples, however, Van Kessel’s painting provides a more realistic model for display within a
spacious ceremonial space, although one imagines that Johan Maurits did not keep his natural history collection strewn about the floor! A number of visual clues in Eckhout's paintings demonstrate that they were intended to have been viewed from below, perhaps from an even greater distance than the ‘sculptures’ in Van Kessel's painting. For example, the feet of Eckhout’s figures in his paintings tilt upwards, which is most easily seen in the painting of the African woman. This characteristic is especially obvious with respect to the still lifes, which are considerably over life size, and were probably intended to have been viewed from an even greater distance than the figural works, which are only slightly over life size.

The angle from which Eckhout’s paintings were designed to be viewed, and the impressive size of the works, suggest that they were painted for a room with a very high ceiling. Given the spaciousness of the room and the abundant wall space of the princely chamber as recreated by Terwen, Eckhout’s paintings could have been hung over the doorways, which was not at all unusual in the seventeenth century. This kind of arrangement can be seen today in Johan Maurits’s Sonnenburg Castle, which was designed by Pieter Post and begun in 1662 for the Order of the Knights of St. John.

Here the central ‘knight’s room’ (18.6 by 12.8 meters) is also two stories high, just like Vrijburg’s central hall. This impressive chamber is still decorated with full-length, life-size portraits of former members of the order, including a painting of Johan Maurits by Pieter Nason.

It is likely that the still lifes were hung even higher on the wall and may have formed an continuous sequence of images, much like the insect paintings above the cornice in Kessel’s central panel of America. This type of installation was achieved on a grand scale with the ‘omgaende gallerije’ or continuous gallery of images that was installed in late 1630s high on the wall of the large upper chamber in Prince Frederik Hendrik’s palace, Honselaersdijk. The paintings were lost with the destruction of this building in 1816, but the original chalk drawings (ca. 1637) for part of this program display groups of merry makers, musicians, and actors, singing and playing music along a balustrade topped with decorative vases. The illusionism of these large-scale drawings is especially evident in the representation of the vases filled with vegetation, which assume a viewer from below. As noted by Bob Haak, this type of illusionistic representation was introduced into the Dutch Republic from Italy by the Utrecht painter and follower of Caravaggio, Gerrit van Honthorst. Unlike the gallery in Honselaersdijk, however, in Vrijburg Eckhout’s still lifes were almost certainly separated at intervals from each other by frames, and possibly by pilasters, which are featured in the interior decoration of Dutch classicist princely residences from the seventeenth century, including the Mauritshuis and Huis ten Bosch.

As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, this series displays a hierarchy of humanity, with the Tapuya at the bottom and the mulatto man and the mameluca at the top. As
FIG. 60 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Pineapples and Papaya*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 92 x 83 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
FIG. 61 – Albert Eckhout, Still Life with Vegetables, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 94 x 90 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
fig. 62 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Manioc*, ca 1640, oil on canvas, 93 x 90 cm.

Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
such it makes sense that the figures were arranged with the *Tapuyas* at the end of the hall closest to the *Tapuya Dance*, followed by the *Brasilianen*, the Africans, and finally the man and woman of mixed race. Thus, those peoples with a greater degree of civility were placed in greater proximity to *Johan Maurits with Brasilianen*, while the portraits of the *Tapuya* were nearest to the *Tapuya Dance* at the opposite end of the hall. Given the width of the still lifes and the figural works, and assuming a symmetrical and organized arrangement of the paintings, the still lifes were separated from each other by a distance of around 76.8 centimeters (2.48 Rhineland feet). The ethnographic portraits were separated by a distance of about 1.44 meters (4.65 Rhineland feet).

Like the later painters of the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch, Eckhout also appears to have been sensitive to the fall of natural light in the Brazilian palace, with the direction of the painted shadows allowing us to speculate further about the placement of the still lifes and ethnographic portraits. The ethnographic portraits probably decorated the long sides of Vrijburg’s rectangular central hall, but instead of hanging in male/female pairs, as has usually been assumed about the figural works in this cycle, Eckhout’s manner of painting suggests that they instead faced each other from across the hall. In all of the paintings of the men and in the *Tapuya Dance*, the light falls from the left. Similarly, in all of the paintings of the women, except the *African Woman*, the light falls from the right. Why both Africans share a light source to the left is uncertain, but it is possible that they may predate the rest of the series and were originally intended to hang side by side.

The still lifes show a similar pattern. The four still lifes with the light falling from the right, which include *Still Life with Coconuts*, *Still Life with Calabash, Fruits, and Cactus*, *Still Life with Pineapples and Papayas*, and *Still Life with Vegetables*, were probably placed above the women, with four of the remaining eight still lifes with a light source to the left placed over the images of the men (plate 12; figs. 59-61). Regarding specific works, *Still Life with Manioc* and *Still life with Palm Inflorescence and a Basket of Spices* are likely candidates for display above the ethnographic portraits of the men (fig. 62; plate 10). Manioc roots are depicted in the painting *Tupinamba/Brasilian Man*, and the black and red basket in the other still life is probably African, because it shares the same sorts of patterns as the Bakongo basket held by the African woman, visually linking both images of Africans to this painting (plate 5). Of the six remaining still lifes, *Still Life with Monkeypot Fruit* and *Still Life with Melons and Other Fruit* (figs. 63, 64) were probably displayed next to the two above-mentioned works on the side of the hall above the men. Although these paintings do not include fruits or vegetables represented in the portraits of the men, there is a consistent type of cloud formation throughout these four images, adding additional evidence that they were conceived of as a group. The sky and clouds in the figural works do not, however, share a consistent treatment with those of the still lifes.
Fig. 63 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Monkeypot Fruit*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 86 x 92 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
FIG. 64 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Melons and Other Fruit*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 91 x 91 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

FIG. 65 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Bananas and Guavas*, oil on canvas, 103 x 89 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
**Fig. 66** – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Calabash and Squash*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 95 x 90 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

**Fig. 67** – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Calabash*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 97 x 90 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
These same sorts of connections are present to an even greater degree between
the four still lifes with the light source to the right and the paintings of the women.
The Tupinamba basket in Still Life with Calabash, Fruits, and Cactus is echoed in the
basket containing flowers held by the mameluca (fig. 59, plate 9). The basket in this
still life also spills over with citrus fruits, like the basket held aloft by the African
woman. These same fruits grow on the plantation seen in the background of the
painting of the Brazilian woman (plate 4). The star-shaped passion flower with white
petals and the plant’s shiny green fruits displayed in the basket in this still life grow
on the tree behind the Tapuya woman (plate 2). Similarly, the coconuts and palm
inflorescence in Still Life with Coconuts are both from a coco palm, which is depicted
to the right of the African woman (plate 6). The fact that Still Life with Bananas and
Guavas is not included in this group, despite the banana tree behind the Brazilian
woman, nonetheless demonstrates that there is not always a one-to-one correspon-
dence between the figural images and what is represented in the still lifes (fig. 65).
Finally, like the still lifes over the men, the representation of the sky and clouds in
these works is painted in a similar manner, again forming a consistent view.

With respect to the four remaining images, Still Life with Calabash and Squash
and Still Life with Calabash clearly form a pair (fig. 66, fig. 67). Each is painted with a
fairly limited palette, especially Still Life with Calabash, and both paintings include cal-
abayes as their main subject. Again, the treatment of the sky is similar in these two
works, although the surface of Still Life with Calabash and Squash appears rather abraded,
and the clouds may have been overpainted at some point in the work’s history. In con-
trast to these dark, sober, and largely monochromatic images of gourds, Still Life with
Watermelons, Pineapple, and Other Fruit and Still Life with Bananas and Guavas are vibrant,
colourful images representing the full glory of fruits grown in Brazil (plate 11, fig. 65).

But where were these last four still lifes displayed? If we include the Tapuya
Dance and Johan Maurits with Brasilianen (the latter likely having a horizontal format
like the former because it was a multi-figure composition), it is most probable that
two of each were hung above the Tapuya Dance and Johan Maurits with Brasilianen,
which would have created the symmetrical kind of placement most often seen in con-
temporary decorative painting cycles. With the primary walls of the hall filled with
the ethnographic portraits, the Tapuya Dance and Johan Maurits with Brasilianen may
have been placed at opposite ends of the hall, each over a doorway leading to one of
the towers.54 For a number of different reasons, the largely monochrome still lifes of
gourds make more sense above the Tapuya Dance than above Johan Maurits with Brasi-
lianen, thus creating a strong contrast between still lifes displayed at each end of the
hall. A rich display of fruit above the representation of the colonial governor makes
more sense than displayed above the Tapuyas, who were known more for destroying
crops than cultivating them.

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Eckhout’s Still Lifes

Eckhout’s Brazilian still lifes functioned as visual declarations of pride in the fecundity of the land, a fecundity that resulted in this series of paintings depicting what the Dutch hoped would be an eternally successful colonial harvest. Like cornucopias, Eckhout’s still lifes have been properly interpreted as images of abundance. As such, they formed an entirely appropriate series for a chamber in which banquets and other official business took place. Eckhout’s fruits and vegetables are ripe, but display no evidence of imminent decay and carry no obvious vanitas associations. The fruits, vegetables, and tubers are in perfect condition and include various crops cultivated in the colony, from the manioc grown by the Brasilianen in the aldeas to the orange groves in the Vrijburg gardens. The manioc represented in the painting of a Brasilian man and the subject of a still life was a staple food in Brazil for the indigenous people as well as the colonists and employees of the WIC. Soldiers on expeditions into the interior were especially dependent on it. The presence of a still life featuring vegetables common in Europe nonetheless demonstrates that the still lifes are not devoted to exclusively native Brazilian produce. Still Life with Vegetables displays European cucumbers, turnips, and kale, likely corresponding to European crops that were cultivated in Johan Maurits’s kitchen garden on the grounds of Vrijburg (fig. 61). These same sorts of vegetables may also be found in the Antwerp kitchen pieces by Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaar from the sixteenth century.

But unlike the produce depicted in the works of Aertsen and his contemporaries, the fruits and vegetables in Eckhout’s paintings are not displayed in a market context. Brazilian fruits and vegetables could be purchased on the streets in colonial Dutch Brazil, as is evident in the idealized images of Frans Post. In his paintings black women sit in the open with baskets of fruit for sale, as seen in his painting Recife and Mauritsstad (1657), one of many works based on drawings he made in Brazil. Indeed, the baskets in Post’s painting resemble the one depicted in Still Life with Calabash, Fruits and Cactus (fig. 59). Yet in Eckhout’s still lifes this economic aspect has been removed from his analysis – there is no human presence in the still lifes to buy, sell, or consume this produce. Furthermore, despite their fundamental importance to the Brazilian economy, the cash crops of sugarcane and tobacco are not represented here. The overseas trade of the WIC was not the primary subject of these works; rather these paintings, like the fruit depicted in them, are local in significance.

Eckhout still lifes, while visually pleasing, are not arranged on platters or in bowls for immediate consumption. The fruits and vegetables are cut open, betraying a human presence, but they are not divided into bite-sized portions. These fruits are overwhelming, not inviting, in size. As displayed high on the wall in the palace Vrijburg, they were physically out of reach as well. Rather than making an invitation to
taste, the viewer was instead instructed to appreciate their healthy forms, their well-formed interiors – which echo the vigorous, well-formed bodies of the young men and women in Eckhout’s figural works, who are also captured in the prime of their lives. Here the perfect and beautiful fruit of the still lifes functioned almost like trophies of the Count’s triumph as a colonial administrator.

The fruit of the still lifes furthermore demonstrated not only the productivity of the colony, but of the human participants in the series as well. This is demonstrated by the inclusion of images of the farm and the field in the backgrounds of the ethnographic portraits, as well as by the representation of the main figures, whose labour made these riches possible. Behind the Brasilian woman, Indians and African slaves work on the grounds of a prosperous plantation, where orderly rows of citrus trees lead one’s eye to the main residence. Similarly, new manioc stems have been planted behind the Brasilian man, with the evidence of a recent harvest lying on the ground at his feet. Given their colonized status, it is not surprising that both paintings of the Brasilianen make references to the production of foodstuffs for the colony. It is nonetheless important to note that this element of labour has been relegated to the background; Eckhout’s Africans are not field slaves, even though every year thousands of slaves were imported into Brazil to work on the plantations and in the sugar mills.

Eckhout’s still lifes represent Brazil’s ‘natural abundance’. But here the gift is not given by Mother Nature but instead by Johan Maurits in his role as governor-general, surrounded and supported by his Brazilian subjects. As the cycle suggests, his presence ensures the stability of the colony; he is its benevolent leader, whose good government literally bears fruits and vegetables. The men and women in the ethnographic series offer gifts as well, although their homage is made to the governor, not the viewer. They are like the personification of America and her companions who bring gifts to the Dutch Maid, or personification of the Netherlands, on the bottom of frontispiece to WIC director Johannes de Laet’s 1630 Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien (Description of the West Indies) (fig. 72). Eckhout’s paintings of the men and women of Brazil and Africa, who represent the WIC’s holdings in Guinea and Angola, pay homage to Johan Maurits as the colonial governor of Brazil. All of the men carry weapons, supporting the governor and his colony with their strength, ability to hunt, and military prowess. All of the women carry baskets and make an offering to Johan Maurits – the African woman offers ripe fruit and the pleasures of her beautiful, fecund body – the mameluca, in her guise as a Brazilian Flora, carries flowers and flirtatiously lifts her skirt. The Brasilian woman offers her labour to the viewer, and last but not least there is the problematic Tapuya woman, who with a deceptively innocent expression offers the severed hand and foot of her most recent human victim to the governor and his colonial order. An appropriate present from an ethnic group thought to be cannibals! In a similar way, the figures in the Tapuya Dance can be interpreted as...

dancing in honor of Johan Maurits. The weapons carried by the men here and in the portraits and the baskets represented in the still lifes and carried by the women in the ethnographic paintings may also represent real gifts made to the governor by his African and Brazilian allies. Thus, the paintings may have visually testified to the alliances with the various groups depicted.

In this cycle of representations, the colonial governor brings civility and order to his colonial subjects, which also ensures the productivity and wealth of the colony. While the Tapuya are somewhat suspect as a group, it is important to remember that the Tarairiu Indians (also considered Tapuya) were the allies of the Dutch in Brazil. Their inconsistency, reputation for eating human flesh, and refusal to adopt Western ways insured that they would be ‘other’ and opposite (literally on the other side of the hall) to Johan Maurits and his Brasilianen allies.

Although one scholar has recently argued that Eckhout’s still lifes ‘incite us to colonize’ Brazil, the promised colonization had already taken place. Unlike the first representations of Brazil by Europeans, these were not hastily made drawings; these paintings are correctly called colonial works of art. Their existence and content as created in the 1640s bears witness to over 130 years of contact between Brazil and the...
West. During the sixteenth century, as the Portuguese presence in Brazil grew, colonists in Brazil had introduced animals and plants from Europe, Asia, and Africa, including citrus fruits, bananas, and cabbage. Eckhout’s figure paintings further represented this contact by displaying European weapons, showing plantations with slaves, and especially by representing the mulatto man and the mameluca, products of the most intimate kind of social interaction.

The status of these works as colonial images – which both reinforce a human hierarchy and display the agricultural products of the colony – is also supported by Eckhout’s style. The still lifes, for example, are painted in a remarkably straightforward manner. They depict idealized, mature specimens, lack moralizing overtones, and display a tendency towards a full description, cutting open the fruit for the viewer’s inspection and reproducing the flowers and sometimes the leaves of the plant. In this way they are close to the ideas regarding the criteria for scientific illustration as they were developing in the seventeenth century. The same can be said of the ethnographic images, with their youthful yet adult subjects, attention to costume and decoration, and the inclusion of offspring in two images. This emphasis on an accurate exterior description is characteristic of the Count’s interest in scientific illustration and is present to an even greater degree in the natural history drawings made for him by Eckhout and Marcgraf. The clarity of Eckhout’s depiction of the natural products and specimens in his still lifes is echoed in the descriptions made of the fruits and vegetables of Brazil in Marcgraf and Piso’s *Historia naturalis Brasiliae*, the first natural history of Brazil. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, the *Historia* was published with the Count’s financial support, and a number of the illustrations in this book are based on Eckhout’s drawings and still lifes from Brazil.

Like the plants and animals in Eckhout’s natural history studies in Kraków, which probably depict specimens from Vrijburg’s botanical garden and zoo, the ‘exotic’ in the still lifes and the figural works is represented as tamed, described, and fully understood. The Brazilian coconuts, pineapple, and manioc are depicted in exactly the same way as the Old World vegetables. This is appropriation at its most confident – there is no underlying anxiousness about the possession of Brazil. The natural resources and native peoples of Brazil and Africa have been fully incorporated into the Dutch colonial order under Johan Maurits. Only when these paintings travelled from America to Europe did they lose their specificity and become yet another group of exotic images circulating among the European elite. In Europe, Eckhout’s paintings were doubly exotic, having been created in Brazil and depicting produce (for the most part) that was generally rare or little known in Europe.

Johan Maurits had serious plans for Mauritsstad, the new capital of Dutch Brazil, and his ‘territorial ambitions’ are present in the grounds surrounding Vrijburg, which were divided into elaborately landscaped gardens with fruits and vegetables
FIG. 71 – Jan van Kessel, *America*, from the cycle *The Four Parts of the World*, 1666, oil on copper, 48.5 x 67.5 cm (centre image). Courtesy of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung, Munich.
from the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa. The grounds also included a lawn for bowling, fishing ponds, an island for rabbits, and a botanical garden. As argued in chapter 2, the gardens symbolized both the extent of the governor’s domain and his ecological control. According to garden historian Terry Comito, ‘throughout the sixteenth century, the changing forms of the gardens themselves reflect the growing absolutism of their owners’ claims upon the world, a greater and greater domination of the natural terrain’. Given the elaborate gardens surrounding Vrijburg, it is only logical that Johan Maurits would have commissioned an equally elaborate decoration for the interior of his colonial seat, Vrijburg Palace.

The ethnographic portraits represented the different nations encountered and ruled in Dutch Brazil, while the still lifes displayed the fruits and vegetables that were cultivated by both the Indians and the Europeans, representing a microcosm of colonial food production. This type of self-congratulatory display suggests that the subject peoples depicted in the paintings were not their intended audience; rather other WIC officials and servants, the occasional visiting Portuguese dignitary from Olinda, and ambassadors from abroad would have been the primary viewers as they attended banquets, receptions, and other ceremonial occasions, all of which were integral to the function of a governor-general’s palace.

While portraits of European royalty and noble ancestors were appropriate for the central reception areas of the Mauritshuis, Johan Maurits’s European palace, he chose a different type of decorative cycle for his official colonial residence, a cycle that called upon what was unique to Brazil. Here ethnographic portraits of the groups under the Count’s command and still lifes displaying the rich variety of agricultural products found in the colony graced the walls of this ceremonial space. These works supported his rule in Brazil by revealing the prosperous land and its fruits as well as his productive colonial subjects.

It is telling that in 1654, when the Dutch formally relinquished their Brazilian colony to the Portuguese, Johan Maurits gave these images to the king of Denmark. At that moment the paintings lost their function as a cycle endorsing the stability and prosperity of the colony and its peoples; Johan Maurits’s Brazilian empire was lost forever. The promise of Eckhout’s Brazilian cycle was discredited with Johan Maurits’s departure from Brazil in 1644 and exposed as false when the Dutch formally signed over their colony to the Portuguese in 1654. When the paintings arrived in Copenhagen that same year, the painting *Johan Maurits with Brasilianen* was separated from the cycle, the rest of which began a new life in the Danish king’s *Kunst und Wunder Kammer*. 
CONCLUSION

As governor of Dutch Brazil from 1637 to 1644, the German count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen created a princely domain that was modeled on the courts of his European contemporaries but was inevitably influenced by its location in the New World. He founded Mauritssstad, a fine new capital for the colony, and undertook other monumental projects, including the construction of bridges and the creation of Vrijburg, his new governor’s palace. Archaeologists have been unable to pinpoint the exact location of Vrijburg, and little else remains of this failed colonial experiment, with the notable exception of a fascinating corpus of drawings and paintings that were produced at Johan Maurits’s Brazilian court. Of these works, the natural history and ethnographic images made by the Dutch painter Albert Eckhout are of primary interest. Eckhout, along with Dutch painter Frans Post and the German naturalist-illustrator Georg Marcgraf, were part of a small group of artists and scientists that Johan Maurits gathered at his court. Their remarkable images of the human and natural resources of the colony are the direct result of the Count’s support for the study of natural history. This in turn was the principal dimension of his Brazilian patronage.

Johan Maurits supported the study of natural history (which at that time included the study of human beings as well as flora and fauna) as part of a program to document the different peoples and natural resources present in the colony. It is worth mentioning that such patronage was quite fashionable among his princely European contemporaries. From the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, natural history investigations and publications were commissioned by scholars, naturalists, and aristocratic elites throughout Europe. For the latter group, part of their interest in this type of patronage resulted from a humanist desire for learning and acquisition of knowledge, but additionally desirable was the social esteem one could acquire through this type of patronage, which connected its sponsors to an inter-
national network of like-minded intellectuals. While entry into the world of aristocratic supporters of science upon his return to Europe may have been a motivating factor in Johan Maurits’s pursuits, the study of natural history in Brazil was also firmly entangled with imperialistic aims. Expeditions into the Brazilian interior, for example, resulted in the mapping of resources and boundaries as well as trading routes.

The fact that Johan Maurits personally involved himself with this descriptive, courtly, and colonial enterprise can be demonstrated through Handbooks I and II, which include finely drawn watercolours of Brazilian animals and birds by Eckhout’s contemporary in Brazil, Georg Marcgraf. Many of these images include a handwritten description of the animal by Johan Maurits. The books functioned as personalized natural history primers for the Count, and were but one result of Marcgraf’s study of Brazilian nature. Eckhout’s natural history images are completely unlike the tiny watercolours produced by Marcgraf. His images, which were primarily created with oil paint on paper, are much larger and furthermore demonstrate the naturalism typical of contemporary Dutch still-life painters. Contemporaries nonetheless considered the natural history images by Eckhout and Marcgraf equally suitable for illustrating Marcgraf and Willem Piso’s Historia naturalis Brasilae, which was published in 1648 with the Count’s support. This work includes over 300 illustrations based on the images of plants and animals by both Eckhout and Marcgraf. The original drawings for these woodcuts were probably done after specimens from the Count’s Brazilian menagerie or from the elaborate gardens that surrounded Vrijburg. Like the images gathered in the Museum of Rudolf II, the natural history oil studies and watercolours by both Eckhout and Marcgraf recorded the rarities in their patron’s collection. Later, when woodcuts after these images were published in the Historia, the Count was able to advertise to his European contemporaries both the natural wealth of his former colonial domain and his status as a patron of natural history.

That human beings were also considered part of the colony’s natural resources is made quite clear in a recently discovered fragment from Marcgraf’s Brazilian diary, which details his expedition in Ceará. He undertook this journey into the Brazilian interior as a member of a slaving party, whose main purpose was the capture of the children of hostile Indian groups.1 In his description of this expedition, the wild ‘Tapuyas’, 50 of whose children were eventually taken prisoner, were considered enemies because they refused to accept Johan Maurits as their rightful ruler. Other members of the expedition included friendly Tapuyas and Brasilianen, both representing groups that had accepted (or were unable to resist) Dutch rule. Although he was interested in investigating the Indians’ way of life, Marcgraf made no known figural images. For representations of the groups or ‘nations’ that inhabited the Dutch colony in Brazil, we must turn to Eckhout’s life-size ethnographic portrait series.
Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits include paintings of Indians, Africans, a mulatto man and a mameluca, all representatives of the Atlantic empire of the WIC. The Indians represented the allies and subject peoples of the Dutch in Brazil, while the Africans embodied the primary areas of trade in both human beings and goods along the West African coast. As the term suggests, the ethnographic portrait is a pictorial form that is informed by both traditional portraiture as well as the ethnographic illustrations found in printed works. Eckhout’s attention to details of costume and physiognomy show his efforts to document visible physical difference. While less of an interest in the sixteenth century, such distinctions became codified into racial stereotypes by the end of the eighteenth century. In addition to a static frontal pose and an emphasis on accurately reproduced artifacts, one of the main features of such a portrait is the lack of ethnographic ‘self ascription’ for the person thus depicted. Images so made are intended for the visual consumption of an outsider, generally someone in a position of greater power. This hierarchy of power between Johan Maurits and his subject peoples is reproduced both in Eckhout’s ethnographic portraits series and in the suggested arrangement of these paintings in Vrijburg Palace.

With Eckhout’s twelve monumental still lifes of Brazilian fruits and vegetables, a lost painting of Johan Maurits with Brasilianen, and Eckhout’s painting of the Tapuya Dance, his eight ethnographic paintings may have created a unified pictorial cycle for the main ‘princely chamber’ of Vrijburg Palace. The paintings reproduced the fruits and vegetables that were cultivated in the colony – from Old World cabbage to Brazilian pineapple. These still lifes demonstrated the fertility and prosperity of the colony made possible by the good government of Johan Maurits. Investigation of the ethnographic portraits furthermore demonstrates that they reproduce a cycle of civility, with the mixed race couple at the top of the hierarchy, and the allegedly cannibalistic Tapuya couple at the bottom. The Africans are the second most civilized in this group, placed after the mulatto and mameluco and before the Brasilianen. The African woman in particular occupies a special place in this cycle, because she embodies several competing identities, including African nobility as well as New World slave. The importance of the African slaves in this context cannot be overestimated, because it was their labour that powered the sugar industry, the basis of the colony’s economy. This arrangement of ethnographic portraits both identified and arranged each of the primary non-European groups, creating a unified and ordered system. Their ruler, both in the series as well as in reality, was Johan Maurits, who appeared in the cycle as the manifestation of colonial civility and rule.

Eckhout’s ethnographic and natural history drawings and paintings comprise a unique corpus of work from a period before the codification of racial types and before scholarly consensus had been achieved regarding the pictorial mode appropriate for images intended to have a scientific function. His works demonstrate both the fluidity...
as well as the complexity of the relationship between ‘science’ and ‘art’ in the seventeenth century. Eckhout’s works, with their careful reproduction of the various skin colours of the peoples encountered in the WIC’s colonial empire, demonstrate the increasing interest in recording the visible, physical differences of different peoples. This trend, already present in these paintings from the 1640s, would eventually result in the splintering of human beings into a number of different ‘biologically determined’ races. For Johan Maurits, the paintings and oil studies by Eckhout and the drawings by Marcgraf had both practical and political uses as a documentation of Brazil’s resources and as a visualization of the ideal hierarchy of peoples in the colony.

Once in Europe, however, the oil studies and ethnographic paintings by Eckhout no longer served to represent or strengthen Dutch rule over the colony’s peoples; nor did they demonstrate the Count’s domination (either politically or scientifically) over Brazilian nature. Rather, their meaning was transformed by their new location. They became first and foremost rare and highly desirable images of the ‘exotic’ New World, whose connection to Johan Maurits was of secondary importance. By the end of the seventeenth century, the paintings and drawings of Brazil produced under Johan Maurits’s patronage had been acquired by high-ranking members of European aristocracy in Germany, Denmark, and France. These paintings and drawings, considered by many to be among the most significant achievements of the Dutch colonial adventure in Brazil, were not distributed to Prince Frederik Hendrik or, indeed, to any other Dutch collector. Johan Maurits, while a highly effective administrator, was recalled in 1643 by the WIC and returned to The Hague in 1644. Although he became popularly known as ‘the Brazilian’, to some degree his collection of Brazilian images could not help but become painful reminders of a failed colonial enterprise. While this may have made them less desirable to the Dutch, in other parts of Europe the images were met with fascination and praise. If we look at how Johan Maurits distributed his Brazilian drawings and paintings, it becomes clear that he quite deliberately employed his collection to enhance his relationships with powerful courts in northern Europe outside of the Dutch Republic. In this way he extended his personal sphere of social relationships and obligations far beyond The Hague.

The Distribution of the Collection

Between 1652 and 1678, Johan Maurits distributed his collection of Brazilian natural history and ethnographic representations to the Elector of Brandenburg, King Frederik III of Denmark, and King Louis XIV of France, and thus succeeded in raising his stature at these prominent European courts. As Nicolas Thomas has noted,
‘exchange is always, in the first instance, a political process, one in which wider relationships are expressed and negotiated in a personal encounter’. In the literature on Johan Maurits, these exchanges, especially those between the Elector and Louis XIV, have been described in monetary terms; Johan Maurits is said to have used his Brazilian collection to have purchased land or sold it to obtain debt relief. It is, however, inappropriate to describe these drawings and paintings as commodities; they are properly understood as gifts. While receipt of money may have been one of the desired results of Johan Maurits’s gift-giving, it was certainly not the most important aspect of this exchange, which operated on a fundamentally social and political level. I draw here on the influential work of Joppien, which includes one of the most complete analyses of these gifts.

My intention here is not to provide new theoretical approaches to gift exchange, but rather to use the ‘Maussian’ category of the inalienable ‘gift’ to illuminate the status of the Brazilian materials presented by Johan Maurits to European rulers in Germany, France, and Denmark. Inalienability is a key characteristic of the gift. As James Carrier has explained, the object that has been given is inalienable, because it ‘continues to bear the identity of the giver and of the relationship between the giver and recipient’. It is important to stress that a gift not only implicates one in a relationship, it requires one to make a similar offering or exchange. As Carrier argues, ‘fulfilling the obligation recreates it by reaffirming the relationship’. As will become clear in the discussion below, Johan Maurits engaged in an elite gift exchange with relatives, patrons, and other men who were in the position to assist him in his ceaseless quest for honour and influence. His gifts of Brazil, whether or not they were successful, were intended to bind Johan Maurits in closer relationships with the rich and powerful throughout northern Europe.

Johan Maurits’s collection of paintings and drawings of Brazil circulated among a highly elite aristocratic audience, for whom objects – both given and received – could demonstrate allegiance, express subservience, and strengthen both family and political relationships. Used in this fashion, the Count’s Brazilian collection can best be understood as cultural and social capital, as theorized in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. The fact that Eckhout’s paintings, for example, visualized the hierarchy of social groups in the colony and probably included representations of objects given to the governor by his subjects, ambassadors to his court, and political allies was less interesting to most of his contemporaries than the fact that these images were unique and represented images made after life in Brazil. They were largely cut off from the world of colonial social exchange and interaction and integrated into the world of the European nobility, replete with its rituals of gift-giving and social obligation. In Europe, the drawings and paintings embodied direct, naer het leven access to the ‘exotic’, objectified colonial property, and scientific endeavor.
In 1652, Johan Maurits made his first gift of Brazilian images to his patron, Friedrich Wilhelm I, the Elector of Brandenburg, receiving in turn land and other favours. This gift may have secured for Johan Maurits his elevation to Imperial Prince, which probably occurred under Friedrich Wilhelm’s sponsorship. Friedrich Wilhelm had already appointed Johan Maurits the stadholder of Cleves, Mark, and Ravensberg in 1647, a position he held until his death. In addition to a series of sixteen paintings by Eckhout now lost (see Appendix), the 1652 gift included ivory furniture carved with Brazilian motifs and over 700 drawings and oil studies on paper by Eckhout, Marcgraf, and other artists. These images, which are now in the collection of the Jagiellon University Library in Kraków, are the subject of chapter 2. These drawings became the centrepiece of Friedrich Wilhelm’s new library, which was open to ‘all students of Humanities and Art’. The Elector wanted to make his court, and his library in particular, a centre of scientific study. By aligning himself with other princely patrons of the arts and sciences, he too was able to increase his social status. Furthermore, the imperial implications of these drawings should not be underestimated during this period of expanding overseas activity by the Brandenburg trading companies.

In 1654, the same year that the Dutch officially handed over their colony in Brazil to the Portuguese, Johan Maurits sent twenty-six paintings to his cousin, King Frederik III of Denmark. This gift included all of Eckhout’s ethnographic paintings and still lifes, in addition to his life-size portrait of Johan Maurits and three paintings of Africans – a man in Portuguese clothing and his two servants. The portrait of Johan Maurits and Johan Maurits with Brasilianen are now lost; the rest of these images are in the collection of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, which was created in the nineteenth century following the dismantling of the Royal Danish Kunstkammer. Johan Maurits was made a member of the highly desirable ‘order of the elephant’ by King Frederik III, although recent research by Mogens Bencard has demonstrated that receipt of this honor took place in 1649, five years before the 1654 gift. Bencard has further noted that the Nassau-Siegen family sought political help from the Danish king in 1653, suggesting that Johan Maurits’s gift to him the following year should be interpreted in this context. In 1656 Frederik III sent Johan Maurits a team of seven horses, which Bencard argues was the reciprocal gift for the Brazilian paintings of 1654. Of course, the paintings and the horses represented only the physical objects that were given and received. The rest of the exchange included favours, political assistance, and titles, all items that are rarely listed in inventories, but whose importance was nonetheless enormous.

The gift made by Johan Maurits that often garners the most attention is, however, the large collection of paintings and other works that he assembled in 1678 and sent to King Louis XIV. This gift included twenty-seven paintings by Post, eighteen
of which were described as ‘small landscapes’ and may have been painted in Brazil. (The remainder were newly made representations of Brazil, part of Post’s Haarlem production.) Only four of these images are still in France, all in the collection of the Musée du Louvre in Paris. It is often said that Johan Maurits expected money in return. Despite the fact that Johan Maurits does not disguise his need for cash during this period, it is nonetheless unlikely that he anticipated such a mercantile response to his present. As demonstrated in the discussion above, at this level of aristocratic gift-giving, political and social favours were more likely to have formed payment than hard currency. In 1679, the Dutch had only recently ended their war with the French (1672-78), and it is possible that Johan Maurits’s gift should be interpreted in this context. Despite the magnitude and magnificence of this gift, Johan Maurits received no land, official titles, or political favours in return. In 1679 Johan Maurits died, an event that relieved the French king of any reciprocal obligation.

Before his death, Brazil was clearly on Johan Maurits’s mind. Indeed, he was filled with regret about the objects and images that he had given away a quarter of a century earlier. The flurry of activity that surrounded the preparation of the present for Louis XIV had clearly made him think a good deal about his governorship in Brazil. That spring he wrote a letter to the secretary of the Danish king asking if he could have Eckhout’s ethnographic series back if it was ‘not appreciated’. Unfortunately for him it was, so he ordered half-size copies made in Copenhagen, which have since gone missing. At the very end of his life Johan Maurits once again wanted to be surrounded by the ‘nations he had ruled’ in Brazil. The paintings, or at least their copies, which had followed a path from cultural capital in The Hague to ethnographic rarities in Denmark were transformed a final time – here into nostalgic representations of loyal subjects from his lost savage paradise.
COLOUR PLATES
PLATE 2 – Albert Eckhout, *Tapuya Woman*, 1641, oil on canvas, 272 x 165 cm.

Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 3 – Albert Eckhout, *Tapuya Man*, 1641, oil on canvas, 272 x 161 cm.
Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 4 – Albert Eckhout, *Tupinamba/Brasilian Woman and Child*, 1641, oil on canvas, 274 x 163 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 5 – Albert Eckhout, *Tupinamba/Brasilian Man*, 1643, oil on canvas, 272 x 163 cm.

Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
Plate 6 – Albert Eckhout, *African Woman and Child*, 1641, oil on canvas, 282 x 189 cm.

Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 7 – Albert Eckhout, *African Man*, 1641, oil on canvas, 273 x 167 cm.

Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
Plate 8 – Albert Eckhout, Mulatto Man, ca. 1643, oil on canvas, 274 x 170 cm.
Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 9 – Albert Eckhout, *Mameluca*, 1641, oil on canvas, 271 x 170 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 10 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Palm Inflorescence and Basket of Spices*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 82 x 85 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 11 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Watermelons, Pineapple, and Other Fruit*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 91 x 91 cm. Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.
PLATE 12 – Albert Eckhout, *Still Life with Coconuts*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 93 x 93 cm.
Courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

PLATE 16 – Georg Marcgraf, Lesser Anteater (tamandua tetradactyla), watercolour and body colour on paper, 31 by 20 cm, Handbook I, f. 84, Libri picturati A32. Courtesy of the Jagiellon University Library, Kraków.
APPENDIX A

Chronological Overview of Albert Eckhout’s Life

16 November 1606, Alberdtg (Albert) Eekholdt and Marryen Roeloffs marry in Groningen. In 1620, Albert senior is called ‘deser stat makelaer’ (this city’s broker).

ca. 1610, Albert Eckhout is born in Groningen.

March 1619, Albert senior borrows money from his brother-in-law, ‘schilder’ Gheert Roeloffs. Roeloffs may have been Eckhout’s first teacher.

ca. 1622-1629, apprentice to a master artist(s) in Groningen?

1630s, living and working in Amsterdam.

25 October 1636, he and Frans Post leave the Netherlands with Johan Maurits, arriving in Brazil on 23 January 1637.

1637-1641, creates the sketches for the images in the ethnographic portrait series and makes natural history sketches, many of which are copied by Zacharias Wagener before he leaves Brazil on 17 June 1641.

1641, paints African Woman, African Man, Tupinamba/Brasilian Woman, Tapuya Woman, Tapuya Man, Mameluca, and a portrait of the viceroy of Portuguese Brazil in Bahia.

1641-1644, continues to make images of Brazilian and non-native plants and animals, probably inspired by the collections in Johan Maurits’s new botanical and zoological gardens at Vrijburg.

1642-1643, completes the ethnographic portrait of the Tupinamba/Brasilian man (1643). Is likely he was also busy with the portrait of the Mestizo, the twelve still life paintings, the Tapuya Dance, and the portrait of Johan Maurits with Brazilianen.

1 April 1643, both Frans Post and Albert Eckhout are named among those who have free board at Johan Maurits’s Brazilian court. Their table includes Marcgraf and Piso (except for lunch).

1644, paints a life-size portrait of Johan Maurits in Brazil.
May 1644, returns from Brazil with Johan Maurits. 

30 October 1644, The Hague, lends 3,000 guilders to Christoffer Lindenov of Lindersvold (ca. 1612-1679). In 1646, the loan is guaranteed by a certain Martinus Tancken, resident van de Koning van Denemarcken. 

1644-1645, while still in Johan Maurits’s service, Eckhout paints Brazilian birds on the ceiling of a room in the Mauritshuis. He may also work on tapestry cartoons for the Nouvelle Indes series and the paintings along the staircase in the Mauritshuis. The nine life-size paintings of Amerindians and nine ‘window pieces’ probably also date from this period.

1645, returns to Groningen.

ca. 1646, marries Annetgan Jansen Wigboldi, native of Groningen.

July 1646, moves to Amersfoort, where he remains until 1653. Possible collaboration with Jacob van Campen on a series of paintings in Het Hoogerhuis (Beekhoven), Amersfoort, now on loan to the Flehite Museum in Amersfoort by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. During this period, four children are born: Maria Mauritia (25 June 1648), Albert (19 August 1649), Johannes (25 October 1650), and Geertruyd (17 October 1652). It is likely that Maria, Albert, and Johannes died before 1653.

1650, makes two half life-size canvases (?) representing Amerindians, Brazilian flora and fauna, and Africans. These paintings, which were both signed and dated, were in the possession of the sea captain Thomas Tobias in 1679, who believes they are worth 1000 guilders.

1653, becomes court artist to the Elector of Saxony in Dresden. Here his contracted duties were to include the painting of ‘counterfeits (portraits), history paintings, [and] landscapes’. The 9 April 1653 passport to Dresden for Eckhout includes his wife and one child, suggesting that the rest of their children had not survived.

In 1654, Christoffer Lindenov of Lindersvold negotiates Johan Maurits’s present of twenty-six paintings to his cousin, King Frederick III of Denmark. The paintings by Eckhout include twelve Brazilian still lifes, the eight ethnographic portraits, the Tapuya Dance, and two portraits of Johan Maurits, one in which he is surrounded by Brazilians.

29 August 1655, letter from Johan Maurits in Cleves to Johan Georg. Asks if Eckhout is free to make some Brazilian paintings for him.

1653-1663, while in the Elector’s service, paints Brazilian birds on the ceiling of Hoflössnitz (Museum Hoflössnitz). Other paintings from this period have not been identified.

19 June 1663, released from the Elector’s service; returns to the Netherlands.

June 1664, is reinstated as a citizen on Groningen; he and his wife become members of the local Reformed church. Pays nine guilders to become a member of the painting guild.

Late 1665/early 1666, dies in Groningen.

APPENDIX A
APPENDIX B

Works of Art by Albert Eckhout

EXTANT WORKS
BY ECKHOUT

Nationalmuseum, Copenhagen, Denmark

Signed and dated works:
- Tapuya Woman (1641)
- African Woman and Child (1641)
- Tupinamba/Brasilian Woman and Child (1641)
- Mameluca (1641)
- Tupinamba/Brasilian Man (1643)
- Tapuya Man (1641)
- African Man (1641)

Other Brazilian works, without a signature or date:
- Mulatto Man (ca. 1643)
- Tapuya Dance (ca. 1643)
- Twelve Brazilian still lifes (ca. 1640)

Graphics Department, Biblioteka Jagiellonska (Jagiellon University Library), Kraków, Poland

These drawings were made in Brazil between 1637–1644:

*Theatrum rerum naturalium Brasiliae*

(4 vol. Libri picturati A32–A35)

This four-volume work, compiled by the Elector of Brandenburg’s physician Christopher Mentzel, brings together hundreds of drawings and oil sketches on paper made in Brazil by Albert Eckhout. Also includes work by assistants and other artists in Brazil.

*Miscellanea Cleyeri (Libri picturati A 38)*

This small volume includes a number of chalk sketches that Eckhout used in making his series of still life paintings. There are also several oil studies by Eckhout, in addition to works by other artists.
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

These drawings were made in Brazil between 1637 and 1644:

Five chalk drawings of Indians. These drawings closely resemble those now preserved in the Miscellanea Cleyeri in Kraków.

Het Hoogerhuis (Beekhoven), Amersfoort, now in the collection of the Flehite Museum in Amersfoort

These paintings were probably made between 1645 and 1650:

The three fruit still lifes in niches can be attributed to Eckhout in this series of nine paintings, which originally formed a continuous frieze. Eckhout may also be responsible for the three traditional vanitas still lifes in this series, but it is unlikely that he painted the grisailles. The latter may have been painted by Jacob van Campen.

Hoflössnitz lodge (Weingergschloss), Radebeul, near Dresden, Germany

These paintings were made between 1653 and 1663, during Eckhout’s tenure as court artist to Johan Gregor:

Eighty ceiling paintings of Brazilian birds, based on sketches made by Eckhout and others in the Theatrum rerum naturalium Brasiliae from Brazil. The local German landscapes at the bottom of the paintings were possibly painted by another artist.

LOST WORKS
BY ECKHOUT

1641, painting of Dom Jorge de Mascarenhas, Portuguese viceroy in Brazil.

ca. 1643 portrait of Johan Maurits with Brazilian Indians, included in the 1654 gift to Frederick II and probably destroyed in the 1794 fire at Christiansborg.

1644, life-size painting of Johan Maurits, included in the 1654 gift to Frederick III and probably destroyed in the 1794 fire at Christiansborg.

1644-1645, Brazilian birds painted on the ceiling of one of the rooms in the Mauritshuis. Probably similar to what Eckhout later painted in Hoflössnitz lodge.

1640-1650 (painted in Brazil or The Hague), seven life-size oil paintings of Amerindians, depicting the peoples of the different provinces ‘nach dem Leben’, surrounded by the appropriate plants and animals. These images were accompanied by nine smaller paintings for under the window, depicting rarities found ‘no where else in the world’ (possibly natural history representations?). All sixteen paintings were given to the Elector of Brandenburg in 1652.

1650, two half-life size Brazilian paintings, one featuring Amerindians, pots, and fruits and the other displaying Africans, ‘wild people’, animals, and a view of Recife. Both signed and dated. Were last seen in 1679 in the possession of the Dutch sea captain Thomas Tobias.

1650s, ‘middle-sized’ (middelsoort) painting of a ‘black’ (Moriaen), mentioned by Johan Maurits’s secretary Jacob Cohen in 1678 among the paintings undergoing restoration for the gift to King Louis XIV.1

1650s, life-size painting with a watermelon, in the collection of Willem Piso’s widow in 1678.


APPENDIX B
Attributed to Eckhout

National Museum, Copenhagen
Portrait of a Congo envoy and his two assistants. These three paintings have also been attributed to the Middleburg painter Jasper Becx.

Private collection, U.S.A.
Portrait of an African king (see Whitehead and Boeseman, plate 85).

Attributed to Eckhout but probably not by him

Mauritshuis, The Hague
Twee Schildpadden
This image was attributed to Eckhout in 1960 by H.E. van Gelder, who did not have Eckhout’s other drawings available for comparison. The tortoises are not painted in Eckhout’s style. Furthermore, this type of interactive composition with fighting animals does not occur in any painting, oil sketch or drawing attributable to Eckhout.

Auction house Dorotheum, Vienna

Formerly attributed to Eckhout, but not by him

Schwerdt paintings (destroyed during WWII). The best reproduction of this series is in Whitehead and Boeseman (plates 62-66).

Painting of a young black woman wearing a hat and pearls, reproduced by Thomsen (fig. 72) and at that time in the Charlottenburg Castle, near Berlin, but destroyed during WWII. As Thomsen notes, this figure occurs in one of the Schwerdt images.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION


Usselincx, however, did not endorse a plan to seize existing colonial settlements.

He was the first and last governor-general of the colony.

Elected from the ruling House of Orange-Nassau, the stadholder was the governing leader of the Dutch Republic from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

The Dutch turned their Brazilian colony over to the Portuguese in 1654, and there are few material remains left in Brazil besides the forts they left behind. Nonetheless, the studies carried out at Johan Maurits’s court resulted in the first analysis and comprehensive reproduction of Brazilian nature and the first images of many of the country’s indigenous peoples.


See note 7 above. It is possible that their assistants in Brazil are the other three individuals intended. Other possibilities include Zacharias Wagener and Caspar Schmalkalden.

The development of natural history as an independent discipline occurred during the 1500s, with the first university chairs established during that century. See the essays in *Cultures of Natural History*, eds. Nicholas Jadine, James A. Secord, and Emma C. Spary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For New World natural history in the sixteenth century, see Antonello Gerbi, *Nature in the New World: From Christopher*


As argued by Homi Bhabha, ‘colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once “other” and yet entirely knowable and visible’. See The Location of Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 71.

My work may be allied with that of Beth Fowkes Tobin, who has been an important voice in recent scholarship on colonial imagery. See her book, Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting. (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 1999). With respect to colonial imagery, Anglo-American authors tend to emphasize works produced in British colonies, especially during the nineteenth century.


La Historia general de las Indias, as quoted by Schmidt in Innocence Abroad, p. 54.


Early Spanish/Nahuatl dictionaries are also a product of this type of project. Communication was essential to successful conversion to Christianity and acceptance of European cultural norms.


The Portuguese included images on maps and made written descriptions, but produced nothing as extensive as the works of art produced in Dutch Brazil.

The writers of these works nonetheless declared the representations to be accurate, which ensured their appeal to the wider European public.


CHAPTER 1


2 Ondertrouwboek DTB (1595-1811), 158 (1603-1611), GA Groningen. Van Gelder’s assertion that Eckhout’s parents married in Groningen on 16 October 1606 is incorrect.

3 Florike Egmond and Peter Mason recently proposed that a different couple, the baker
Albert Eeckhout and his wife Jantjen, could have been Albert Eeckhout’s parents, but they were unable to find additional information to support this suggestion. See ‘Albert E(e)ckhout, court painter’, in Albert Eeckhout: A Dutch Artist in Brazil, ed. Quentin Bavelot (The Hague: The Mauritshuis, 2004), pp. 109-127 (note 9).


5 Index op de namen der gildeleden wegens verschuldigd admissiegeld voorkomende in de rekeningen der stad Groningen, 1634-1809 (Index 275-9), GA Groningen.

6 Rechterlijk Archief (hereafter RA) (1619-1621), 326r (12 November 1620), GA Groningen. Van Gelder also mentions that he held this position (p. 15).

7 Rabbyvius may have been the product of Albert senior’s second marriage, which would make sense if Rabbyvius was the father of Maria Eckhout or Lucretia Eeckholts, both of whom married in Groningen in 1675. As Van Gelder notes, these two women could not have been born much later than 1654 (p. 17). For marriage records, see DTB 1571-189 (1595-1811), GA Groningen. Albert Eeckhout borrowed money from his brother-in-law Roelofs Gheerts, who was possibly related to Johan. See RA III x 4 (1619-1621), p. 340, GA Groningen.

8 DTB (1581-1811), GA Groningen.

9 See statements and notes of obligation in the debtor’s records on Albert Eeckhout in the RA III x4 (1619-1621), 23v-24 (14 May 1619), 66r/v (July 1619), 139r/v (3 Dec. 1619), 164r-165 (14 Jan. 1620), 287r/v (14 Aug. 1620), 326r/v (20 Nov. 1620), 340v-341 (3 Dec. 1620); RA III x 6 (1622-1624): 209r/v (Oct. 1623), RA III l part 3: 320r (21 Jan. 1621), RA III l (1626-1630) part 5: 231 (29 June 1628), GA Groningen.

10 ‘gelder hebben ontfangen...van haeren broeder Gheert Roeloffs schilder’. RA III x (1619-1621) part 4: 66r/v (July 1619), GA Groningen. See also van Gelder, p. 16.

11 H.E. van Gelder, p. 15.

12 There are other Gheert Roeloffs mentioned in the archives between 1647-1658, including a baker and a boat-builder. See Index op de namen der gildeleden, GA Groningen.


14 De Jager, pp. 69-70.

15 H.E. van Gelder, p. 19.


17 See also Poelenburch’s Landscape with the Judgment of Paris, 1645-50. The nude studies of Europeans in Eeckhout’s corpus of Brazilian drawings may represent work taken there to serve as models.

18 The municipal archives document the presence of other Eeckhouts and Eckholts in the city. Jan Eeckholt is recorded as the father of five children in the baptismal records for Amersfoort between 1597 and 1616. See Dopen Gereformeerde gemeente 1631, Van Royen 29 D, GA Amersfoort. See also H.E. van Gelder, p. 18.

19 Egmond and Mason, pp. 113-117.

20 Lidmaten registers 1621-1672; 73 (1621-1672), Archiven van de hervormde gemeente te Amersfoort (hereafter GA Amersfoort). On 4 July 1646, Eeckhout registered as a new member of the Reformed church in Amersfoort. The document notes that he came with an ‘attestatie van Amsterdam’, a letter from the church in Amsterdam where he was previously a member. It is unlikely he moved to Amsterdam following his return from Brazil, because in 1644 he was in The Hague where he lent money to Lindenov, and in 1645 a document regarding this loan notes that Eeckhout was ‘living in Groningen’. It was common practice for church registers to mention the last city where one had been a church member; in 1664 Eeckhout registered as a member of the Reformed church in Groningen, which mentions that he is ‘from Amersfoort’. Research in the municipal
archive in Amsterdam has not turned up any new information on Eckhout’s activities in the 1630s. No Eckhouts are registered in the birth or death records in Amsterdam between 1600 and 1650. There are a number of Eckhouts who registered their marriages in Amsterdam, but they did not settle there. Egmond and Mason have recently suggested that Amsterdam in this document refers instead to the affiliation of the Reformed church in Recife, to which Eckhout belonged (2004, p. 121). This seems unlikely.


23 Conversation with Dr. Rudi Ekkart, Director of the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorisch Documentatie (RKD), 23 March 2000, The Hague. The artists of the illustrations in such books generally remain anonymous.

24 ‘J’ai reçu en outre d’un certain jeune homme de nostre pais, asséz expert en l’art de peindre, trois pourtraicts poissons qui se prennent par tout en cette mer, desquibs, combine qu’il ne m’en ait donné que le nom & les figures, sans qu’il m’en peust declarer autrement la nature & les qualités’ (L’histoire, p. 509). When de Laet refers to ‘our country’, it is unclear if he means the northern or southern Netherlands, because he was a native of Antwerp.

25 While contracts rarely mention the content of the training, still life, landscape, and portraiture were the genres typically taught to apprentices in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century. It is also clear from Eckhout’s extant work that he had experience in these genres.

26 It has been suggested that Post also drew fortifications (reproduced in Barlaeus), but these could be the work of Marcgraf.

27 Joppien, p. 298.

28 These drawings are in the collection of the British Library, London.


30 His post-Brazilian works often borrow depictions of animals from the Historia (1648).

31 Examples of this phenomenon are addressed in the appendices of my dissertation. See Rebecca Parker Brienen, ‘Art and Natural History at a Colonial Court: Albert Eckhout and Georg Marcgraf in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Brazil’ (Northwestern, 2002).


34 Very little is known about this building, and there is nothing left of it in Brazil. See Barlaeus for an image and a description of this structure and its use (p. 210).


36 Colonel Cohen captured El Mina in Guinea (Ghana) in 1657, and Admiral Jol and Colonel Henderson captured Luanda in Angola in 1641. Both fleets originated in Dutch Brazil.

37 Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 62.

In the 1766–75 inventory of the Royal Danish Kunstkammer, it mentions ‘Ein grosses Gemälde mit dem Prinzen Moritz von Nassau in vollkommener Positur, menschlicher Grösse, dasselbe ist im Jahre 1644 in Brasilien von d’Acov verfertigt’, as quoted by Thomas Thomsen in his outdated but still useful study, Albert Eckhout, Ein Niederländischer Maler und sein Gönner Moritz der Brasilianer ein Kulturbild aus dem 17. Jahrhundert. (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1938), p. 15. Thomsen explains d’Acov as a corruption of Eckhout’s ‘AEckout’ signature. The 1674 catalogue of works in the Danish Kunstkammer lists a ‘Prindtz Mauritz Contrefei’, which may have been the same painting (as quoted in Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 172). According to Thomsen this painting was destroyed in the 1794 fire at Christiansborg.

Egmond and Mason, p. 121. They assume that the paintings were made between 1646 and 1653.


Berlowicz (Copenhagen, 2002), pp. 201–209.


Egmond and Mason, p. 110.

When Eckhout wrote his name as a witness, he used pen and ink on paper, and he wrote in cursive. The signatures on the canvas are formed using oil paint and a brush: they are also written using block letters, which was undoubtedly easier than cursive given the medium.

Egmond and Mason, p. 124.


‘Inwendig bewunderte man vorzugsweise zwei schöne Säle, wovon der eine äusserst kunstreich bit brasilianischen Vögeln bemalt war’, as quoted by Georg Galland, Der Grosse Kurfürst und Moritz von Nassau der Brasilianer (Frankfurt: Heinrich Keller, 1893), p. 24. Unfortunately he does not give a date or a source for this information.

See the description of the interior of the Mauritshuis from Hennin (1681). Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer assumes that the painting was a fresco, and puts forward the name Leonard Bramer as a possible candidate. See Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ‘The Mauritshuis as “domus cosmografica” I’, in Johan Maurit van Nassau-Siegen, p. 145. Some of these images may have been derived from Eckhout’s paintings in the ethnographic series.

This loan is mentioned in a document from 15 March 1645, drawn up by The Hague notary Lambert Rietaert. See Notariele Protocollen, Inv. 41 (1597–1842), f. 110, GA The Hague. The loan was at that time guaranteed by Martinus Tancken, ‘resident van de Koning van Denemarcken’, who agreed to pay the loan off with interest within six months. Lindenov was in Brazil with the Count, and it is likely that he and Eckhout knew each other from this period. See also H.E. van Gelder (p. 16) and Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 165.

H.E. van Gelder, p. 16.

‘Maria Mauritie dochter van schilder Eeckhout’. See Dopen Gereformeerde gemeente 1631–1650, van Royen 29 E, GA Amersfoort. See also H.E. van Gelder, p. 16.


There are four fruit or vegetable still lifes, three traditional vanitas still lifes, one image of Hercules fighting Cerberus, and another of Hercules (et al) fighting the centaurs.


W.J. van Hoorn, ‘Het Hoogerhuis te Amersfoort’, Flebite 13 (1981): pp. 24–31. Buvelot would nonetheless still like to attribute this structure to Van Campen based on its stylistic similarity to Randenbroek, the country estate outside of Amersfoort that he inherited in 1626 and rebuilt while he lived there (p. 38, 74).
These baskets have also caused some scholars to suggest a collaboration between Eckhout and Van Campen for the interior decoration of the Huis ten Fleite. Whitehead and Boeseman attribute the panels to Eckhout (p. 99).

I thank Roelof van Gelder for bringing this document to my attention and sharing his transcription with me. Kassel, Gesamthochschule, inv. no. Mss Hass. 69. See also Buvelot (2004), p. 147 n. 150.


Buvelot (1995), p. 76. Egmond and Mason have instead interpreted this brief description to be a reference to Eckhout’s still lifes and ethnographic images on canvas, suggesting that this is evidence that they were painted in the Netherlands (2004, p. 124).


Thomsen was the first to note the connection, pp. 173-175. Be also Joppien, pp. 340-342 and Beatrijs Brenninkmeyer-de Rooij, ‘Indische Exotika auf einem Gemälde des Jacob van Campen im Oraniersaal des Huis ten Bosch’, in Soweit der Erdkreis reicht.
Excerpts of these letters, which are now in the collection of the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Dresden, are reproduced by Thomsen, pp. 56-58. They are also reproduced by Hans Beschorner in ‘Die Hoflössnitz bei Dresden’, Dresdener Geschichtsblätter (1904): p. 219. 

Egmond and Mason incorrectly state the date as 1652.

Thomsen, p. 56. He was also ensured freedom of religion as a Calvinist.

‘Insonderheit aber soll er mit seiner Malerkunst sich in Unserem Dienst fleissig und unverdrossen erweisen, was wir ihn zu malen unter Händen geben, es seie Contrefacts, Histories, Landschaften’, quoted by Thomsen (p. 58) from the passport and contract for Eckhout, dated 19 April 1653.

‘Ich...etliche Brasilianische Stücke und Schildereyen vor Sein König. Majest. in Dennemarken wolte verfertigen lassen, wozu ich dan gerne gedachts Eyckhoutens, als welcher hiebevorn mit mir in Brasilien gewesen, undt deme die postures selbiger Leute und ander Lands Ahrtten, am besten bekant sind, gebrauchen wolte’, letter from Johan Mauritis to Johann Georg (29 August 1653), as quoted by Thomsen, pp. 58-59. See also Joppien, p. 342.

Whitehead and Boeseman give a useful overview of the literature on the ceiling paintings, pp. 55-58. See also Joppien, pp. 342-343. Beschorner’s article is still considered the best treatment of these images. See also Dutch Brazil, 1997.


‘Hab ihm auch befohlen, alles was er noch von Indien unter sich hat, mitzubringen, denn in den acht Jahren dass er mit mir da gewesen, viele fremde Sachen gesehen und gemalt hat’, as quoted by Thomsen, p. 56. Eckhout was Johan Maurit’s court artist; the Count may have claimed works made during service to him, including drawings made in situ.


Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 56.

See Thomsen, pp. 110-125; Whitehead and Boeseman give a detailed analysis of the natural history images in each painting (pp. 99-107).


Döry notes that the images reproduce Chinese figures from Nieuhof (1682) and Dapper, and a Greenlander after Olearius (see the entry ‘Exoten’, in the Nachtrag for the Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte (Munich, Alfred Drukenmüller, 1973): pp. 1496-1499. The Brazilian image is a bit larger than the rest of the paintings and may have had a place of greater importance in its original setting. See also Joppien, pp. 344-345.

Döry, p. 1499.

H.E. van Gelder, p. 25.

Furthermore, the Elector already had a large number of painters in his service.

H.E. van Gelder, p. 17.

H.E. van Gelder, pp. 17-18.

‘Albert Eckholt is de borgerschap geaccordereert, heeft t’recht deser toestaende betaelt met – syne een borgers soon ende buiten lands geweest, is hem de borgerschap op het nieuwe toegestaan, sonder yets te betalen, dus sijne Memoria’. Archief van het stadsbestuur van Groningen (1594-1816), Rekeninge voor den Jaar 1664 (Inv. 332 r 1164), 151r, GA Groningen.

In the records for the members of the guild of glass makers and painters (glasemakers en schilders) it states that ‘Albert Eekenholt is in deser Gilde geadmiteert heeft t’recht daer toestaende betaelt met 9’. See Rekeninge voor den Jaar 1664 (Inv. 332 r 1164), 153v, GA Groningen. H.E. van Gelder incorrectly states that the sum was 12 guilders (p. 18).
CHAPTER 2

An earlier version of this chapter (with a somewhat different emphasis) was published as ‘From Brazil to Europe: the Zoological Drawings of Albert Eckhout and Georg Marcgraf’, in Intersections: Yearbook for Early Modern Studies 6 (2006, in press). See also Brienen, ‘Art and Natural History at a Colonial Court’, (2002), chapter 2.

1 ‘...THEATRUM BRASILIENSII scil. RERUM, quas NATURA produxit, aluit atq’; enutrivit, ICONES Ipsis in Natalium suorum incunabulis ac Patria sua BRASILIA nempe coloribus ad vivum exactissimis depictas’, Christopher Mentzel, preface to Theatrum rerum naturalium Brasiliae, part 1, Icones Aquatilium, as reproduced in translation and the original Latin (in facsimile) in Brasil-Holandês/Dutch-Brazil, vol. 4, 18-19. In this translation, ad vivum, or after life, was translated into English as ‘bright’. I have restored this important term to the sentence, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this essay. One of the most important tools for research has been the reproduction in facsimile of the majority of Brazilian images in the Jagiellon Library in Kraków. See the 5 volumes of Brasil-Holandês/Dutch-Brazil (1995) series. The quality (colour, detail, scale) of these reproductions is, however, often misleading and it is best to consult the images in person.


4 He demonstrated that many of the chalk drawings in the Miscellanea Cleyeri were studies for Eckhout’s Brazilian still lifes, now in Copenhagen. The direct relationship between the paintings and the studies is clearly demonstrated by comparing Still Life with Manioc to his earlier chalk drawing of the same subject. Thomsen, chapter four, passim. Later authors have supplemented his findings. Elly [Albertin] de Vries’s MA thesis (UVA 1989) was one of the earliest attempts to address the images as a group, but her work was still hampered by difficulties in access.


7 An important early work on Dutch art and its relationship to contemporary scientific trends is Svetlana Alpers, The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983).


9 Another unsigned inventory of Johan Maurits’s gift to the Elector, written sometime after 1664, when Mentzel had completed his written contributions to the Theatrum, mentions the presence of these four volumes in the Elector’s library in Berlin. This same inventory also describes books in the Elector’s library that contained natural history images produced nach dem Lebem (after life) in Brazil: ‘Lijste derjenigen Meubelen undt Raritaeten welche Ihre Fuerstl. Gnaden Fuerst Moritz zu Nassau Churfurste Heer Stadthalter von Elser (?) und Manch (?) aus Brasilien mitgebracht, als auch andere Sachen so dieselbe an Sr. Churf. Durchl. Zu Brandenborch &.&. & aus derselber gnadig. Tgster gesinnen uveberlassen und zo morge gebracht haben’ as
See the inventory of the items (‘Verzeichnis derer im vorgedachten Akkord Uns von Sr. Lbd. Ueberlassenen Stuecken’) presented by Johan Maurits to the Elector of Brandenburg, which accompanied the contract for the transfer of these goods, dated 18 September 1652: No. 14. Ein gross Buch in Royal-Folio und eins etwas kleiner (in Folio), worin alles was in Brasilien (von Menschen, vierfuessigen Thieren, Gevoegel, Gewuermen, Fische, Baeume, Kraeuter, Blumen) zu sehen und zu finden ist, mit Miniaturen kuenstlich nach dem Leben abgebildet ist, mit beigefuegten (Beschreibung, Nahmen und Eigenschaften) Nahmen, Qualitaeten und Eigenschaften, No. 15. Noch ueber (etzliche) hundert andere (Indianische Schildereyen von Thieren und allerhand Sachen mit Oelfarben) Schildereyen is quite odd, suggesting that they were all removed as a group before these volumes and loose drawings reached the Elector’s hands in 1652. See Appendix B ‘Artists and Attribution: The Handbooks’, in Brienen, ‘Art and Natural History at a Colonial Court’, pp. 412-431.

‘Tandem accedebat ethoc, quod in Celsissimi Principis Iconibus aliae, & praeepilv duorum Librorum, coloribus quidem aquarivis, sed egregie per pinctulorum minutissima distinctae essent, quas conjungi cum illis majoribus nostris, olearibus coloribus depictis, summo accuratoq; Indicio vetabat, Serenissimus ELECTOR: Illas ergo, quae coloribus essent olearium, THEATRO suo non minus separatum atq; illas aquariorum colorum mandaret’, Mentzel C., preface to Theatrum rerum Naturalium Brasiliae, vol I., as reproduced both in translation and in the original Latin (in facsimile) in Brasil-Hollandês/Dutch-Brazil (note 7), vol. 4, 22-23.

I have relied on Whitehead and Boeseman’s discussion of the history of this collection (pp. 33-35). See also Whitehead, ‘The Treasures of’
The literature on collecting is vast. A useful introduction to the materials can be found in the Jagiellon Library, Kraków, Archives of Natural History 16/1 (1989): pp. 15–32.

Unfortunately, the rhinoceros did not make it to Rome alive, because its ship sank off the coast of Italy.

Although Maurits and Frederik Hendrik owned exotic animals, including Maurits’s famous talking parrot, the later menagerie of Stadholder Willem V may be the best documented of these Dutch princely collections. See Een vorstelijke diervenuin: De menagerie van Willem V, ed. B.C. Sliggers and A.A. Wertheim (Zutphen: Walburg Instituut, 1994).

Under his illustration of a Ta’im bugh (tabia), Wagener states ‘In 1640, a Portuguese called Antonio Robero brought one alive for his excellency’, as reproduced in The ‘Thier-buch and ‘Autobiography’ of Zacharias Wagener, trans. Álvaro Alfredo Bragança Júnior, Dutch Brazil, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Index, 1997), p. 120. This is a facsimile of Wagener’s Thierbuch, and all subsequent references will be to this translation.


Ellinoor Bergvelt and Renée Kistemaker (Amsterdam: Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1992), and Paula Findlen’s Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).


As discussed by Claudia Swan in ‘From Blowfish to Flower Still Life Paintings: Classification and Its Images, circa 1600’, in Merchants and Marvels, pp. 109–137.

See the discussion of botanical gardens in C. Swan, Jacques de Ghey, pp. 158-231 and in Comito.


Grove, pp. 16-72.

Hendrix, p. 162.

This practice was far more common in the Southern Netherlands. The only other contemporary Dutch artist who also made oil studies on paper with any frequency was Dirk Hals, the brother of Frans Hals.

Pieter Boel’s work for the king has been the subject of a recent exhibition at the Louvre in Paris. See Elisabeth Foucart-Walter, Pieter Boel: Painter of Louis XIV’s Animals (Paris: Musée de Louvre, 2001).

Given this label by Boeseman et al in their discussion of the Leningrad drawings, but identified by Lichtenstein as Lophsus Vesper-tilia (1822), p. 273.


Suggested by Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 36.

As mentioned above, included among Eckhout’s works in the Theatrum are drawings by at least two other artists, whose work is stylistically quite distinct from Eckhout’s. See Appendix A-B in Brienen, ‘Art and Natural History at a Colonial Court’ (2002).

Arnout Balis, ‘Naar de natuur en naar model’, in De Albums van Anselmus de Boodt (1550–1632): Geschilderde natuurobservatie aan het

Regarding Van Mander’s use of naer het leven, Swan notes ‘he often combines a description of the work done nae t’leven with its characterization as naer heel leven ("naturalistic"). For example, he commends Pieter Aertsen for having painted ‘kitchens with all sorts of goods and foods after the life, so accurately capturing all of the colors that it appeared to be natural’. See Swan, Art, Science and Witchcraft, especially pp. 36-39.

CHAPTER 3


2 This pamphlet describes Vespucci’s voyages of 1501, during which he may have encountered Tupinamba peoples along the coast of Brazil. Although his name appears on the pamphlet, scholars have disputed Vespucci’s authorship, which I nonetheless retain here for convenience. The first images of Indians were published with Columbus’s letter of 1493, which went through several printings and editions in 1493 and 1495. See, for example, Giuliano Dati’s La letter dell isole che ha trovato nuovamente il Re di Spagna, 1493.


4 Hugh Honour, ‘Science and Exoticism: the European Artist and the Non-European World before Johan Maurits’, in Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, p. 277. According to Honour, the idea of the feather skirt may have been based on a misapprehension of the function of various types of indigenous feather work, including headdresses and mantles.


6 OED, p. 512; p. 425.


9 For border images of figures on maps, see Traub, ‘Mapping the Global Body’.

10 Hodgen, p. 213.


12 As noted by Braude.


14 Braude, p. 115.


16 Ibid.


22 Arens, pp. 8.


25 This is the definition according to Oviedo (see Hulme, p. 63).

26 Lestringant, *Cannibals*, p. 15.

27 Lestringant, *Cannibals*, p. 15; Hulme, p. 63.

28 Hulme, pp. 45-87. On his first voyage to the New World, Columbus heard about, but did not encounter, the Carib, whom he preferred to characterize as servants of the Great Khan. Only as a result of his second voyage did the Carib become identified as an eater of men.

29 In 1555, they are described in an English text as ‘the wylde and myscious people called *Cannibales or Caribis, whiche were accustomed to eat mannes flesche*. As quoted in the *OED*, p. 835.

30 Ibid.

31 Hulme, pp. 47-50.

32 Columbus, p. 24.

33 For example, Spanish friar Bartolomé de las Casa’s positive characterization of the Indians in his *Brevissima relaciôn de la destrucçion de las Indies* (Brief History of the Destruction of the Indies, Seville, 1552-3) makes the barbaric and cruel practices of the Spanish that he details seem all the more inexcusable.


37 This is the same configuration seen on T-O maps.

38 Ortelius commissioned Adolf van Meeterken to write a poem explicating the frontispiece for the first Latin edition of the atlas. This poem is discussed by both Van den Boogaart and Ziegler.

39 Ziegler, pp. 135-136.

40 Ibid.

41 Ziegler, p. 137.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid, 139. Her nudity, frontal pose, and demure expression make one think more of an odalisque than a ‘savage’ cannibal.

44 Ziegler contrasts the depictions of Terra Incognita (the bust) with America, setting them up as a contrast between ‘untamed or tameable’ (p. 140). It is difficult, however, to see America as ‘resistant’ when she is displayed in such an obviously sexualized (as recognized by Ziegler) but submissive manner.

45 As Ernst van den Boogaart has stated, ‘descriptions of ‘native’ customs were used to justify conquest and domination and were
of a means to devise a hierarchy of contempt between rulers and subjects'. Ernst van den Boogaart, ‘Infernal Allies: The Dutch West India Company and the Taraririu 1631-1654’, in Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, pp. 519. This concept of the hierarchy of contempt, which also functions as a hierarchy of civility, structures much of Van den Boogaart’s writing.

46 Hodgen, p. 396.
47 Jahoda, p. 32. See also Hodgen, chapter 10.
48 Hodgen. p. 396.
49 Ibid.
50 Rowe, p. 7.
51 See Ernst van den Boogaart, Het verbeven en verdorven Azie: woord en beeld in het Itinerario en de Icones van Jan Huygen van Linschoten (Amsterdam: KITLV, 2000), pp. 26-27. If a group did not cook their food, for example, they were designated more primitive, whereas cooking food made them closer to ‘true men’. This classic opposition of the ‘raw and the cooked’ has been addressed in detail by Claude Levi Strauss in his highly influential works on structural anthropology.
52 Mason, In Felicities, p. 52.
54 Pagden, p. 24.
56 Francisco de Vitoria, as quoted by Pagden, p. 33.
58 See chapter 3 in Pagden, p. 43.
63 Linschoten described Asia and its peoples in his Itinerario (1596). See Van den Boogaart, Het verbeven en verdorven Azie, p. 27.
64 Rotem Kowner, ‘Skin as Metaphor: Early European Racial Views on Japan, 1548-1853’, Ethnography 51: 4 (Fall 2004), 752.
65 See Evans, pp. 15-43. There are a large number of important studies on race and racism. See, for example, the essays in ‘Race, Writing and Difference’, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), which includes Abdul R. JanMohamed, ‘The Economy of the Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature’, pp. 78-106.
66 The exception being hand-coloured images.
67 Filipo Pigafetta, De beschryvinghe vant groot ende vermaert coninckrijck van Congo (1596).
68 See, for example, J.D. Herlein, Beschryvinge van de volk-plantinge zuriname (Amsterdam, 1718).
69 This has been noted by many scholars of the period. For example, in her discussion of sixteenth-century images of Turks, Bronwen Wilson argues that ‘costume was charged with articulating geographical differences’ (p. 38).
As Bronwen Douglas argues, towards the end of the eighteenth century, ‘the concept of “race” began to shed its venerable, if by no means undisputed, connotations of “variety” within the divinely ordained singularity and the unity of mankind, and to congeal into its grim modernist dogma of permanent heredity, possibly originary physical differences between groups. With respect to Oceania the shift was marked by an increasingly rigid, a priori hierarchical division of indigenous people into racial types’. See Bronwen Douglas, ‘Art as Ethno-historical Text: Science, Representation and Indigenous Presence in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Oceanic Voyage Literature’, in Nicholas Thomas and Diane Losche, ed. Double Vision: Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 65.

An earlier version of this discussion on the ethnographic portrait was published as part of my article, ‘Albert Eckhout and the wilde natien of Brazil and Africa’, NKJ 53 (2002), pp. 106-137.

Bernard Smith argues for a much longer presence of ‘ethnographic convention’ in the representations of exotic peoples in Western art from Greece to the present, stating that the foreigner is defined ‘by means of costume and adornment’. See Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 80.


Brilliant, p. 107. He goes on to state: ‘But if ethnography, as a social science, involves the scientific description of men and woman, their customs, habits, and differences, then most portraits would qualify for ethnographic analysis’.


Mason, Infelicities, p. 3.

See Mason, Infelicities, especially chapter 2, ‘the Exotic Genre’.

Ibid, p. 2.

This use of indeterminacy appears to draw on Homi Bhabha’s discussion of the ambivalence and indeterminacy of the ‘colonial discourse’.

Ibid, p. 46.


Svetlana Alpers, The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 119. As she argues, ‘Mapmakers or publishers were referred to as “world describers” and their maps or atlases as the world described. Though the term was never, as far as I know, applied to a painting, there is good reason to do so. The aim of Dutch painters was to capture on the surface a great range of knowledge and information about the world’ (p. 122). This assertion, while quite applicable to the case of Eckhout, has provoked a number of counter studies, which have demonstrated that not all Dutch painters were focused on the pictorial reproduction of information.


Traub, p. 51.

Pratt notes that the ‘initial ethnographic gesture is one that homogenizes the people to be subjected’, pp. 63-64.

See Mason, Infelicities, p. 46.

Pratt, pp. 64-65.
CHAPTER 4


2 Six of these drawings may be found in the *Libri picturati* collection of natural history illustrations in Kraków. Two images are in volume three (A34) of the *Theatrum rerum naturalium Brasiliae* and four are included in the *Miscellanea Cleyeri* (A38). Five other drawings, which are consistent with those in Poland in terms of support, materials, and style, are in the collection of the Kupferstickkabinett, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

3 Johan Maurits to Resident Le Maire in Copenhagen, 26 July 1679, A4, 1477, KHA, The Hague. Resident Le Maire to Johan Maurits in Kassel, 2 Sept. 1679, A4, 1477, KHA, The Hague. Le Maire responded to Johan Maurits’s request for the return of the ethnographic portrait series or for the creation of half-size copies, if return of the images was not possible. Le Maire noted that he had spoken with the king about the images of the Brazilians, Tapuyas, Mulatos, and Mamelucos (Ick hebbe met den coninck van denemarcken [over de] brasilianen, tapoyers, molaten, en mamaluken gesproken...).


6 Whitehead and Boeseeman, p. 203.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid, p. 178.

9 Despite the recent interest in Eckhout and the public exhibition of his work, there has been little attempt to fit him into a more inclusive view of Dutch visual production in the seventeenth century.


13 For additional examples of the critical approach now taken with respect to Eckhout’s naturalism, see Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, ‘Rhetorik der Hautfarben’, in *Wahrnehmung und Repräsentation in der frühen Kolonialgeschichte Europas* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2003) and the work of Denise Daum (who is currently writing a dissertation on Eckhout’s paintings and their representation of skin colour and ‘cultural difference’: ‘Brasilianische Heterogenität. Albert Eckhouts Visualisierung kultureller Differenz’).

14 Ernst van den Boogaart, ‘The Dutch West India Company’, pp. 319-338. This was expanded upon in his article, ‘The Slow Progress of Colonial Civility: Indians in the Pictorial Record of Dutch Brazil, 1637-1644’ in *La Imagen del Indio en la Europa Moderna* (C.S.I.C., Seville, 1990), p. 395.


17 Baumunk, p. 194. The Tapuya woman, was connected (by witch-fearing men) to the ‘toothed vagina’ of the wild woman.
18 Vandenbroek, p. 38.
21 Ibid., p. 59.
22 Ibid., pp. 56-59.
23 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
24 ‘Ondanks het ogenschijnlijke hyperrealism is de ethnografische weergave incorrect: de ‘Tarairiu-vrouw’ wordt met ‘sensationele’ details...als kannibale gekenschetst, hoewel het Tarairiu-volk niet kannibalistisch was’ (Vandenbroek, p. 38). Ignoring the evidence presented in Eckhout’s chalk drawings, Mason states: ‘the allegation that they slept on the ground and not in hammocks is another feature which is not borne out by the early sources’ (‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, pp. 51-52.) Neither author cites his source, but it is likely that this information comes from John Hemming’s Red Gold, in which he simply states that the ‘Tapuía’ were not cannibals (p. 297). For another point of view see Robert Lowrie, ‘The Tarairiu’ in The Marginal Tribes, vol. 1, Handbook of South American Indians (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1946-1959).
25 Pagden, p. 4.
28 Métraux, p. 95.
29 This event has been addressed by a number of scholars, including Steve Mullaney, ‘Strange Things: Gross Terms: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance’, Representations 3 (Summer 1985): pp. 40-67, and Frank Lestringant, Cannibals, pp. 41-42.
31 See Pratt’s discussion of ‘survival literature’, pp. 86-87.
32 Janet Whatley notes this about Thevet’s images, but this can be applied to the entire group. See her introduction to Jean de Léry, History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America, trans., Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
33 Hans Staden, The True History of His Captivity, 1557 (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928), p. 136. All subsequent references will be to this translation.
34 Staden, p. 145.
35 This has been most closely analysed in the work of Frank Lestringant.
36 André Thevet, The new found worlde or Antarctike (London, 1568), p. 16r [note that there was a printing error: this should have been 42r]. The original French reads: ‘Elle a esté & est habitée pour le iourd’huy, outré les Chrestiens, qui depuis Americ Vespuce l’habitent, de gens merveilleusement estranges, & sauvages, sans foy, sans loy, sans religion, sans civilité aucune, mais vivans comme bestes irraisonnables, ainsi que nature les ‘a produits, mangeans racines, demeurans tousiours nuds tant hommes que femmes, jusques à tant, peut estre, qu’ils seront hantez des Chrestiens, dont ils pourront peu à peu despouiller ceste brutalité, pour vestir une façon plus civile & humaine,’ André Thevet, Les Singularités de la France antarctique (Paris, 1557), p. 51v. Unless otherwise indicated all subsequent references will be to the English translation.
37 Thevet, p.36r.
38 Lestringant, Cannibals, pp. 44-46.
39 Thevet, 59r.
40 Cousins later illustrated Thevet’s La Cosmographie universelle (Paris, 1575).
42 Thevet, p. 47.
43 Chapter 54 (‘De la riviere des Vases, ensemble d’aucuns animaux qui se trouvent là environ, & de la terre nomée Morpion). See also chapter 33 (D’un arbre nommé paquovere) and chapter 59 (‘Comme la terre de
l’Amerique fut decouverte, & le bois Bresil trouvé...)

44 Ter Ellington, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). He identifies the Frenchman Marc Lescarbot as the inventor of the myth, although it takes a rather different form when revived circa 1850.

45 Claire Farago calls this work pivotal in the establishment of ‘the noble savage as a utopian theme in modern thought’. See her essay, ‘Jean de Léry’s Anatomy Lesson: the Persuasive Power of Word and Image in Framing the Ethnographic Subject’, *European Iconography East and West*, p. 109.

46 Lestringant, *Mapping the Renaissance World*, p. 57. See also Whatley, p. xvi.

47 Jean de Léry, *History of a voyage to the land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, trans., Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 56. All quotes from de Léry in English will be from this translation.

48 Whatley, p. xxxiii.


50 Léry, p. 163.

51 Léry, p. 158.

52 Léry, p. 64.

53 Later editions included additional representations after Thevet.

54 Léry, p. 56.

55 Ibid, p. 57.

56 Chapter 44.

57 Farago, p. 113

58 Ibid, pp. 118-119.

59 Jean de Léry’s illustrations appear to have had little direct influence on his contemporaries, although echos of Thevet’s elegant Tupinamba can be traced into the seventeenth century, in books like Hans Weigel’s *Habitus Precipionarium populorum* (1630). See the illustration: ‘Brasiliensium vel Hominum in Peru habitus’.

60 Bucher, p. 49. She also notes that most Amerindians are displayed as young adults.

61 Hemming, pp. 83-85. This was ordered by Mem. de Sá, who governed Brazil from 1558-1572.

62 Quoted in Hemming, p. 107.

63 Hemming, p. 297. He had been the director of these *aldeas* under the Portuguese.


65 Barlaeus notes that when the Portuguese left, the *aldeas* were left in the lurch (p. 43).


67 De Laet, *Het Iaerlyck Verbael van Johannes de Laet*, ed. S.P.L’Honore and J.C.M. Warnsink (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1937), p. 435. All subsequent references will be to this edition. This work was originally published in 1644 as *Historie ofte jaarlijck verbael van de verrichtinghen der Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie*.

68 According to Métraux, the ‘Tupinamba Potiguara, ‘banded with the Dutch and waged war against the Portuguese until 1654’ (p. 95). See also Hemming, pp. 161-182.


70 Herckmans’s original report is in the records of the Dutch West India Company in the ARA in The Hague. See Herckmans, ‘Generale Beschrijvinge van de Capitanie Paraiba’, *Bijdragen en Medelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 2 (1879): pp. 319-167. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references will be to this edition of the report.

71 Herckmans, p. 339.

72 Vincent Joachim Soler, *Cort ende Sonderlingh Verbael* (Amsterdam, 1639), translated as Brief and Curious Report of Some Peculiarities of Brazil, vol. 1, *Documents in the Leiden University Library, Dutch Brazil* (Rio de Janeiro, Editora Index, 1997.), p. 41. All subsequent references are to this translation. Ernst van den Boogaart states that less than 10,000 Amerindians lived in the ‘provinces’ of
The earliest images of Amerindians, showing men with beards and other types of facial hair were created by European artists who clearly viewed the peoples of the New World through the veil of the ‘wild man’ tradition.

88 X-radiography carried out by the Nationalmuseum Conservation Department has revealed another bird, which Eckhout later covered up. Both birds correspond to sketches in the *Libri picturati*, but they are probably the work of Eckhout’s assistant, whom I call the copy artist. See Appendix A in Brienen, ‘Art and Natural History at a Colonial Court’, for a discussion of his contributions.

89 Whitehead and Boeseman identify the boat’s occupants as two Europeans and a ‘native servant’ (p. 69). However, when I examined this painting in June 1999, all three figures appeared European.

90 As suggested in correspondence with Claudia Swan, April 2002.


92 Despite her light skin colour, clear kinship to the Brasilian baby in the painting of the Brasilianen women, and the fact that she wears the white cloth covering of the Brasilianen, this image is usually labeled ‘Negro’.

93 Located on an island off the coast of Madagascar. See *Om de Zuid: De Eerste Schipvaart naar Oost-Indië onder Cornelis de Houtman, 1595-97, opgetekend door Willem Lodewycksz*, trans. Vibeke Roeper and Diederick Wilde- man (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997), pp. 72-75. Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to this modern Dutch edition.

94 This group’s peaceful trading relationship with the Dutch, like the relationship between the Brasilianen and the Dutch, may have inspired Eckhout to use her figure as a model.


97 See Harris, pp. 351-390.


101 Hemming, 297.


103 Hemming, p. 297.

104 Lowrie states ‘There is no “Tapuya” culture: except in quoting old writers on otherwise undefined groups so designated, the term should be eliminated from scientific usage’ (‘Tapuya’, p. 556).

105 It is of course very difficult to determine what was their ‘true’ name and what was imposed on them by outsiders. For example, Johannes de Laet, *Historic ofte iaerlyck Verbael* (1644, part 4) states that the Tapuya under Jandovi are called ‘Tararyuck’ by other Americans and their Tapuya neighbors, p. 49.

106 De Laet’s *Historic ofte iaerlyck Verbael* (1644) is an important primary resource, as are the documents in the ARA in The Hague. See Ernst van den Boogaart, ‘Infernal Allies’, pp. 519-538.

107 This is based on Purchas, who in turn uses Cardim as his source.


110 Herckmans’s description of the *Tapuyas* was reproduced by Barlaeus in 1647, and in 1648 de Laet had also used it and Raab’s report for his descriptions of Amerindiens in Brazil, included in the *Historia*. The original report by Herckman is in the archives of the WIC in The Hague. For the sake of convenience, I have used a published transcription of this document from 1879. See Herckmans, pp. 318-367. Unless otherwise indicated, all references will be to this edition of the report.

111 See Ernst van den Boogaart, ‘Infernal Allies’, p. 528. Rabe was married to an indigenous woman, although her ethnicity remains unclear. Most sources claim that she was a *Tapuya* Indian. However, Ernst van den Boogaart states that she was Tupinamba.

112 Herckmans, p. 359.

113 ‘For leyden zij een ganz natuurlijk leven’ (p. 362). Herckmans begins his ethnography with the sentence ‘The above mentioned people are strong of body’ (Dit geseyde volck is kloeck van lichaem) making it unclear whether he means the Tarairiu or the Tapuya as a group. However, because he says at the beginning that this is a description of the *Tapuya* and uses this word later in the text, I have assumed that his report describes characteristics of the *Tapuya* nation in general.

114 ‘Dit geseyde volck is kloeck van lichaem, groot van sature, groff ende sterck van gebeenten, dick ende groot van hoef; sijn van cleur uit de natuer bruynachtich, swart van haer opt hoofd. (p. 359) Haere mannellickheyt halen sij ’t vel over, ende bindet het met een bandeken toe...dit snoerken is het vijgenbladt, waer mede hare beschaemte bedect is’ (p. 359). ‘Sij dragen gansch geen baerden noch haer op eenige gedeelte des lichaems’ (p. 360).

115 Herckmans, p. 359. (...swart van haer opt hoofd, inde neck gemeenlijk neerhangende, maet voor tot over de orren gelijck afgecort, al offse een bonet opt hoofd hadden... (p. 359)... boven de kin inde benedenste lip, daer sij dan een groen, wit, swart ofte coleurt steetegen in setten... (p. 365).

116 ‘Men steeckt haer in yder wang een gat, daer sij stockens off witte beentgens in dragen, in fatsoes al waren ’t stucken van afgebroeken tobaxpijpen’ (p. 363).

117 ‘Sij gaen geheel moeder naect...hare mannellickheyt halen sij ’t vel over, ende bindet het met een bandeken toe...dit snoerken is het vijgenbladt, waer mede hare beschaemte bedect is’ (p. 359). ‘De vrouwen...gaen oock gansch naecckt, uytgesondert voor haer schamelheyt ende acter behangen met groene bladeren’ (p. 363).

118 Herckmans, p. 359.
119 ‘Het zijn onwetende ende ongeleerde men-
schen, geen kennise hebbende vanden
waren Godt ofse sijne geoden, meart integen-
deele dienen den Duyvel often eenigerhande
boose geesten.’ (p. 360). ‘Voor leyden sij
een gansch beestachtich en sorgeloos leven’
(p. 362).

120 Herckmans, pp. 365-366.

121 He also discusses the ‘ostrich’ feathers worn
by the men in a circular arrangement over
their buttocks and their diet, which includes
snake meat. As discussed by Barlaeus, pp.
329-330.

For a detailed analysis of this text, see
Ernst van den Boogaart and Rebecca Parker
Brienien, Information from Ceará from Georg
Maregraff (June-August 1639). Vol. 1 of Brasil
Holandés/Dutch-Brazil, eds. Cristina Ferrao
and Jose Paulo Monteiro Soares. Rio de

123 Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 67.

124 As noted in Whitehead and Boeseman.

125 Correspondence with Barbara Berlowicz,
conservator, National Museum of Denmark,
Copenhagen. See also Berlowicz
(Copenhagen, 2002).

126 R. Klessmann, ‘Unbekannte Zeichnungen
von Albert Eckhout’, Oud Holland 80 (1965):
pp. 50-52.

127 Thevet (1971), 101r. The Amazons are
represented as fully naked with bows and
arrows in Thevet’s illustration for chapter 63.

128 Baumunk, p. 194.

129 See Dog-headed Cannibals, which illustrated
Underweisung und uszlegung De Cartha Marina
(1530). It is reproduced as illustration 138 in
Hugh Honour’s ‘Science and Exoticism’.

130 Lestringant, Cannibals, p. 19.

131 Pagden, pp. 81-82. Pagden notes that dogs
are ‘symbols of unselective eating habits’,
citing Arab merchants of the Sudan who
described the Azande (African cannibals) as
having dog-faces, dog-teeth, and dog tails.
See also Morse, pp. 132-133.

132 As of 1630, this map was reproduced in his
world atlas. See Blaeu, de grote atlas van de
wereld in de 17e eeuw, trans. S. Brinkman
(London: Royal Geographical Society,
1997), p. 156.

133 The very earliest reports on Brazilian
Tupinamba Indians mention their tendency
to stain their legs with juice of the Jennip
tree. See Jean de Léry et al.

134 According to conservator Barbara Berlowicz,
they had been covered up by previous
restorers, probably because the splotches are
not particularly attractive and suggest the
appearance of dirt more than any kind of
discernable pattern.

135 Technical examination of these spots was
carried out by the conservation staff at the
National Museet, Copenhagen.

136 While better known for his book on Asia,
this posthumously published work, largely
based on Barlaeus and others, includes some
original information that the author gath-
ered during his years in Brazil. Niehoff’s
artist takes a few liberties and also applies
spots to the skin of the Tapuya
man, although there is no evidence that he was
similarly spotted in the original painting.
I thank Barbara Berlowicz for bringing my
attention to this source.

137 Baumunk, p. 194. Mason follows this argu-
ment in his 1989 article, ‘Portrayal and
Betrayal’.

138 Léry, p. 140.

139 See ‘Der Teuffel Aygnan schlegy die
Wilden’, in de Bry, Dritte Buch, Americae,
Darinn Brasilia durch Johann Staden...1593),

140 Herckmans, p. 360. In English accounts
witchcraft is mentioned in association with
Amerindians.

141 See, for example, the discussion by Jose de
Acosta, Historie Natuurael ende morael vand
de westersche Indien, Dutch translation by
Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, 1598. Beyond
their nudity, Baumunk points to the inclusion
of armadillos in this painting, which were
used by indigenous witch doctors in Brazil,
according to Willem Piso. Baumunk notes
that the armadillo pictured in the fore-
ground of this painting is mentioned by
Piso as an animal used by Brazilian ‘witches’
in their spells, p. 194. See also Mason,
‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, p. 50. Nonetheless,
armadillos were in collectors’ cabinets
throughout Europe by this time. They were
known to come from Brazil and were often included as a main attribute in allegorical images of America.

142 Mason, ‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, p. 58.

143 Only one figure in the Tapuya Dance has the same sort of facial decorations.

144 See Ehbu3 and Ehbu 24 in the collection of the Nationalmuseet. These objects are not listed in the inventories until the eighteenth century, making a connection to Johan Maurits less likely.

145 Baumunk notes the biblical implications of the snake and the Garden of Eden. See also Mason, ‘Portrayal and Betrayal’.

CHAPTER 5

1 The part of this chapter that addresses Eckhout’s Africans was previously published in an earlier version as ‘Albert Eckhout’s paintings of the ‘wilde natien’ of Brazil and Africa’, NKF 53 (2002): pp. 107-137. See also chapter 5 of Brienen, ‘Art and Natural History’.


3 The glossary includes a number of different terms for racial mixtures in Brazil.


5 On the ‘contact zone’, see Pratt, pp. 6-7.

6 Bhabha, p. 36-37.


8 Ibid., p. 9.


10 See Johannes Menne Postma, The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade (New York: Cambridge U. Press, 1990), p. 57. There are currently two countries that claim the name ‘Congo’: the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly called Zaire, and the Congo, both of which fall into the area formerly indicated by the title Angola.

11 Baumunk argues that the gesture is meant to be read as erotic (p. 193). Mason states, ‘the ear of corn points literally toward the woman’s vagina in an unmistakably phallic gesture’ (‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, 1989, p. 54). Whitehead and Boeseman call the bird a ‘red-faced lovebird (Agapornis pullaria)’, p. 75.

12 Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 74.

13 The cloth now appears to be black and white, but the pigments here include smalt, suggesting that the original colour was blue and white (conservation report, Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen). Blue and white striped cloth is described by various travelers to Africa in the early modern period.

14 Her palm tree is identified as a Brazilian wax palm (Copernicia prunifera) in Zo wijd de wereld streckt (The Hague: Stichting Johan Maurits van Nassau, 1979), p. 137 and by Whitehead and Boeseman (p. 75). His African date palm (Phoenix dactylifera) is identified as such by Whitehead and Boeseman (p. 73). Only Valladares and Mello Filha insist that her location is Africa, because they recognize the water behind her as ‘belonging to an estuary of the Congo river’. See Albert Eckhout, pintor de Mauríco de Nassau no Brasil 1637-1644 (Rio de Janeiro: Livroarte Editora, 1981), p. 137.


16 Dante Martins Teixeira, introduction to The ‘Thierbuch’ and ‘Autobiography’ of Zacharias Wagener.

17 The full title reads: ‘Animal book in which are many different kinds of fish, birds, quadrupeds, worms, fruits of the ground and trees such as you can now and again find and see in the Brazilian region and lands of the West India Company, and which are therefore foreign and not known in German lands. They are depicted in precise manner and in natural color, together with their proper
names and underneath a short description. All were drawn as seen by myself to please and to oblige inquisitive minds. In Brazil under the Honourable Government of His Excellency and Lord Johan Moritz of Nassau etc. Governor Captain and Admiral by Zacharias Wagener of Dresden, as quoted in translation by Whitehead and Boesemen (p. 49).

Wagener, p. 218. Whitehead and Boeseman call this image ‘a masterpiece of protest art’ (p. 75). Although Wagener may have had an anti-slavery agenda, his comments about the ‘stubborn and obstinate nature’ (hartnäckiger endt wiederwärtiger Natur) of the black African slaves in Brazil suggests that his sympathy was limited. See Wagener, p. 174. The German is from an earlier reproduction of this work (Zacharias Wagener, Zoobiblion, livro de animais do Brasil, vol. 4, Brasileiro Documenta, ed. E. de C. Falcão (São Paulo, 1964), p. 218.)

Wagener, p. 174.

This is one of seven surviving paintings that Post made in Dutch Brazil under Johan Maurits’s patronage.

Like the Tupis/Brasilianen, the male slaves are often dressed in white shorts or pants, and the women wear white skirts and often carry baskets on their heads. The overlaps are especially apparent in the engravings, based on drawings by Post, for Barlaeus's 1647 history of Dutch Brazil, Rerum per octennium in Brasilia.

During the seventeenth century, the Gold Coast denoted a region along the coast of present-day Ghana, in between Senegal and the Cameroon (Postma, p. 57). Further information may be found in Ray A. Kea, Settlements, Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins U. Press, 1982) and Kwame Yeboa Daaku’s Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720 (Oxford, Claredon Press, 1970).

The first military operation on foreign soil undertaken by Johan Maurits after he became the governor of Dutch Brazil was the conquest of this Portuguese fort of Elmina on the Gold Coast of Guinea. Johan Maurits wanted to ensure a steady supply of slaves for the colony. However, the slaves from this region did not prove satisfactory, resulting in the 1641 Dutch conquest and occupation of the important slave depot Luanda, whose African slaves (drawn from the Congo region) were considered to be more suitable for work in the sugar plantations in Brazil.
37 Pieter de Marees, Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea, trans. Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Unless otherwise indicated, all references will be to this translation.

38 The region received its name from the highly lucrative European-African trade in gold. However, this area also supplied slaves to European traders. Another important early account is the Italian Filippo Pigafetta’s Relatione del reame di Congo (1591) based on interviews with the Portuguese explorer Duarte Lopez. This illustrated account was translated into a number of European languages quite early, including Dutch. A useful English edition is A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the Surrounding Countries, trans. Margarite Hutchinson (London: Frank Cass, 1970).


40 See the illustration for chapter thirty-nine for the illustration of the woman; the man is shown on the left in the illustration for chapter six.

41 Cape Lopez is located on the coast of what is now the African nation Gabon, which was part of ‘lower Guinea’ or Benin in the seventeenth century. It was not part of the Gold Coast, although it was an area frequented by Dutch traders.

42 He is described as a ‘common inhabitant as he goes about every day and trades with foreigners, bringing elephant tusks for sale’ (p. 236), but his status is left unclear.

43 Eckhout’s African man may also make reference to the central male figure in the illustration of the inhabitants of Madagascar, included in chapter 10 of Willem Lodewycksz’s description of the voyage to the East Indies under Cornelis de Houtman, published in 1598 as Historie van Indien, waer inne verhaelt is de aventuren die de Hollandtse Schepen bejegent zijn. In the text, the inhabitants are described as ‘black’, and the cloth they wear is striped. An abridged version of this account was published by de Bry in his Petit Voyages, which includes a reversed copy of this image. For a translation in modern Dutch see Om de Zuid: De Eerste Schipvaart naar Oost-Indië onder Cornelis de Houtman, 1595-97, opgetekend door Willem Lodewycksz, trans. Vibeke Roeper and Diederick Wildeman (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997), p. 7.

44 De Marees states that the people of Guinea are ‘very clever at making weapons, such as long Poniards [swords], an Ell long, without a cross-bar, they are four fingers broad, double-edged, with a wooden hilt and pommel at the end; they cover the hilt with gold leaf or the skin of a kind of Fish...they make their scabbards of Dog- or Goat-skin, and at the top of the Scabbard, near the opening, they tie a big red Shell, about a hand broad, which is also held in great esteem amongst them’ (1987, p. 92). Van Dantzig and Jones note that the fish skin was probably a ray, like that represented in Eckhout’s painting and used for the sheath of the Akan sword, possibly owned by Johan Maurits, and now in the collection of the National Museum in Copenhagen. The shells in this painting were identified by Boeseman and Whitehead (p. 73).


46 Earlier restorers of this painting suggested that his hair represents a later addition, which is disputed by conservator Barbara Berlowicz of the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, who asserts that Eckhout painted the ethnographic portraits in stages, incorporating changes and additions as he went along. Furthermore, the slaves in the woodcut of the sugar mill in the Historia naturalis brasiliae have exactly the same hair style, as does Wagener’s copy from circa 1641. For information on the conservation of these works and the painter’s methods, see Ruth Baier, Barbara Berlowicz,

47 I agree with Whitehead and Boeseman (p. 73) who assert that while the African palm tree had possibly already been introduced into Brazil, the tree here does not appear to have been painted from a living example. This type of palm is also represented in the background of Crispijn de Passe de Oude’s engraving of Africa, discussed below.

48 De Marees, 1987, p. 231. It is nonetheless possible that de Marees may also have been a source for this choice of hairstyle. An illustration for his chapter on Benin shows eight different hairstyles for men, including hair that is worn below the ears, which is labeled the hairstyle worn by men who are soldiers or captains.

49 Johan Maurits also had a private collection of ivory tusks and furniture made from ivory, which he shipped back to the Netherlands in 1644. Whitehead and Boeseman assert that the tusk refers to this ivory. While the tusk may have belonged to Johan Maurits, I am not convinced of an intended connection. The exchange of gifts was part of the standard negotiation process as practiced by both the VOC and the WIC during this period.

50 These African objects were probably included in Johan Maurits’s gift to his cousin King Frederick of Denmark in 1654, a gift that also included all of the paintings by Eckhout now in the collection of the National Museum in Copenhagen, formerly the Danish Royal Kunstkammer. For discussion of this gift, see Thomsen (pp. 1-19) and Joppien (pp. 322-325). See the Akan sword with a ray skin sheath (ECb8), on display in the ‘ethnographic treasure room’ in the National Museum, Copenhagen. This sword, which lacks the oyster shell decoration, is illustrated by Dam-Mikkelsen and Lundbæk (p. 56).

51 Thomsen refers to him this way, and in the exhibition catalogue, Zo wijd de wereld streekt, he is called a ‘negro warrior’ ( negerstrijder), p. 136.

52 Whitehead and Boeseman note the formal dress of other African dignitaries depicted by Eckhout (p. 74). See also de Marees (1987), p. 92.

53 In the caption for his image of the Brazilian slave market, Wagener refers back to his illustration of the African man, which he calls ‘the image of a black from Guinea’ (der Figur eines Guineschen Mohrens). See Wagener (1964), p. 224; (1997), p. 195.


55 Iconologia of Uytbeeldingen des Verstandst van Cesare Rips Van Perugien (Amsterdam, 1644), pp. 604-605. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references will be to this edition.

56 This is a long-held stereotype that continues into the present day. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). See also Sander L. Gilman, ‘Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature’ in ‘Race,’ Writing, and Difference (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 223-261.

57 Leo (ca 1492-ca 1555) was a converted Muslim. His description of Africa, first published in Latin and French in Antwerp in 1536 and translated into English in 1600 as A Geographical Historie of Africa, was both popular and highly influential throughout western Europe. It was reprinted in various editions and forms into the 19th century. For a discussion of his influence, see Kim Hall, Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 28-40. In a series of prints of the four parts of the world
reproduced by Adriaen Collaert after Maarten de Vos, Africa makes the following statement: ‘Ik doe de scheepsels zich vermenigvuldigen, breng steeds iets nieuws ter wereld, en bevrucht zonder regen mijn zaad’ (as quoted by Vandenbroek, p. 22).

Baumunk has suggested a connection between this illustration in Ripa and Eckhout’s painting of the African woman, suggesting that a similar gesture is made by the child in Eckhout’s painting. See, for example, the illustration of Lust in the Dutch edition of Ripa, p. 143. Baumunk p. 108, n. 32. I am not convinced of this connection. Baumunk cites E. de Jongh’s article ‘Erotica om vogelperspectief. De dubbelzinigheid van een reeks 17de eeuwse genre voorstellingen’. Simiolus (1968-69): pp. 22-74. Mason also suggests that the bird may refer to the early modern Dutch term ‘vogelen’, meaning to fornicate (‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, pp. 54-55).

Each of the four continents has an animal attribute. For example, America is usually shown with an armadillo, although an alligator occasionally replaces the armadillo. This is similar to the relationship between America and the armadillo, often of gigantic proportions, which accompanies the continent in many contemporary illustrations.


Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish Etchings, vol. XV, plate 599.

For an eighteenth-century example of this kind of stereotype, see Edward Long’s views as reproduced in his multivolume History of Jamaica (1774). An overtly racist text, he maintains that African women are ‘libidinous and shameless as monkeys’.


See the entry for ‘Demeter’ in Jane D. Reid, The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990s, vol. 1 (New York, Oxford U. Press, 1993), p. 337. The Roman goddess Ceres (also Demeter) was the goddess of corn and agriculture and was therefore associated with fertility in general. See Crispijn de Passe’s version, (Hollstein, vol XLVI, p. 165) in which a nude Venus is fondled by an amorous male companion, while Bacchus pours wine and Ceres looks on. ‘Ohn wein und broth leidt Venus noth’ is written upon the wine barrel behind Venus.

Dam-Mikkelsen and Lundbæk state that the design of these baskets suggests that they were from an area around the mouth of the Congo river (p. 50). See also Whitehead and Boeseman, pp. 74-75. The basket held by the woman is very similar in design to the two baskets (Ehc37; Ehc38) in the collection of National Museum in Copenhagen, which are also illustrated in Dam-Mikkelsen and Lundbæk, p. 50. Although one of these baskets was part of Olé Worm’s collection in 1653, a connection to Johan Maurits for the other basket does not seem improbable.

Since 1980, scholars have repeated Dam-Mikkelsen and Lundbæk’s assertion that the hat she wears is ‘of an oriental type which Dutch merchants had brought from Asia to their allies in the Sohio kingdom at the mouth of the Congo’ (p. 42), a statement based on evidence of Dutch trade in peacock feathers from the East Indies with Sonho (I would like to thank Torben Lundbæk for clarifying this point for me). It is far more probable that the hat is of indigenous African manufacture, given its pattern and mode of its construction, with the peacock feathers added to address the cosmopolitan tastes of the ruling elite in the Congo region. There are close similarities between the colour and patterns of this hat and those worn by the African dignitaries represented in other oil studies by Eckhout, now in volume 3 of the Theatrum Rerum Naturalium Brasiliæ (A34) in the Libri Picturati collection in Krakow. Thomas Thomsen also draws attention to the similarities in the beehive-shaped headdresses worn by the figures in Eckhout’s oil studies and the one worn by one of the king’s wives from the kingdom of Juda, in the Guinea region, as illustrated in Voyage du Chevalier des Marches de Guinée, ed. Père Labat (Paris, 1739), vol. 2, plate 243. For discussion and representations of African hats in general, see Daniel P. Biebuyk and
Contemporary documents attest to the preference for slaves from Africa, especially Angola. See ‘Sommier Discours’, p. 292. Here it states, ‘De slaven van Africa of van Angola werden hier van de beste gehouden, deels om datse beter willen wercken, deels om datse, nieu overgecomen sijnde, beters vande oude Negers leren, alsoo sij malcanderen van tale verstaen’.

See a WIC document from 1642 among Johan Maurits’s papers that addresses gift-giving and the appropriate manner in which to receive the King of the Congo (A4, Johan Maurits Archive, vol 1454, p. 203; Koninklijk Huissarchief (KHA), The Hague).

Barlaeus, p. 316. In a letter dated 12 May 1642, Dom Garcia, the King of the Congo, made a gift to Johan Maurits of two hundred slaves and a silver platter, now used as a baptismal pattern in the Evangelische Nikolai-Kirchengemeinde in Siegen. As cited in Zo wijd de wereld streekt, p. 147, fig. 166.

Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 75.

This is taken from his 1647 map of Brazil, which is also included in Johannes Blaeu’s world atlases from this period.

See plate 104 in Wagener’s Thierbuch.

Mason, ‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, p. 55. See also Ivan Gaskell, ‘Tobacco, Social Deviance, and Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century’ in Looking at Seventeenth Century Dutch Art, p. 75. This article points to a connection between smoking and sexual license, noting the prominent display of pipes in the comic and moralizing works of artists like Jan Steen.

I would like to thank E. Kolfin for pointing out the connection between pipes and black slaves during the early modern period.

See, for example, Wagener’s images of pipe-smoking slaves carrying a Portuguese woman in his Thier Buch and other images of pipe-smoking Africans by Frans Post. In Valkenburg’s Slave Dance (1707-1709), tobacco pipes are also prominently displayed. See also the discussion of tobacco and representations of blacks, mostly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in Pieterse, pp. 188-192.

Her basket contains a melon, citrus fruit, and bananas, which connects this image to Eckhout’s still lifes of Brazilian fruits, flowers, and vegetables. However, bananas and citrus fruits had already been introduced into Brazil as well as West Africa by the seventeenth century. Clay pipes from Gouda dominated the pipe market in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century and were exported to various Dutch overseas colonies and trading posts. For a general introduction to the subject, see Benedict Goes, 25 eeuwen roken, de verwonderlijke vormgeving van de pijp (Leiden: Stichting Pijpenkabinet Leiden, 1993).

See Pieter de Hooch’s Music Party (n.d.) in the collection of the Statensmuseet, Copenhagen. Two of the women in this genre scene wear pearl necklaces and pearl drop earrings with red bows.

Whitehead and Boeseman state that this African bird species can be found in both present-day Angola and Ghana (p. 75). His body is quite similar to that of the child in the de Marees illustration of the peoples of Cape Lopez. Corn was one of the first crops introduced into Europe from the New World,
The other image that has extant studies is the painting of the Tapuya woman.

These images may be found in volume 3 of the *Theatrum versum Naturalium* (A32-35) in the *Libri Picturati* in Kraków.

 Scholars have suggested that these images were made during a visit by the ambassadors to Dutch Brazil in 1642/1643. However, the connection with Eckhout’s painting suggests an earlier date, between 1637 and 1641. Christianity was the dominant religion of the upper classes in the Congo, adopted through trade contacts with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, which explains the crosses and rosary beads that most of these figures wear.

Most of the paper used for the oil studies is irregular in size. This image measures 35.5 x 24 x 36 x 24 cm.

As Mason notes, this object is unidentifiable (*Infelicities*, p. 45), although it has been called various things in the literature, including a ‘pot’ (Ehrenreich, p. 85) and a ‘sugar loaf’ (Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 171).

During the 1660s, Mentzel, physician of the Elector of Brandenburg, arranged Eckhout’s drawings into albums.

Ehrenreich agreed she was Indian, but said that she was a ‘küsten Tupiweib’ (p. 85). In his reproduction of this drawing, Glaser kept the Mentzel’s title ‘Tapuya woman’.

I noted in 1996 that they shared the same leg position, during my first examination of these drawings at the Jagiellon Library in Kraków. See also Mason, *Infelicities*, pp. 44-45.

However, the burnt orange colour of her closely cropped hair is certainly in contrast with both the blackish brown hair of the Amerindians and the black hair of the Africans.

Mason suggests that this image prepares ‘the way not for one composition but for a series of compositions...this implies a high degree of indeterminacy, a relatively unspecific form that becomes increasingly specific through the addition of further detail (the jewelry, the child, the vegetation, the basket, etc.’).


Andrew Battell states, ‘The children of this country [Africa] are borne white, and change their colour in two days to a perfect blacke’ (as cited by Purchas (1625), vol II, p. 98c).

De Marees (1987), p. 26. The Dutch reads: ‘de ionghe kinderen eerst gheboren synde sijn niet geheel swart, maer rosachtich, als de Bresillianen’. See Pieter de Marees, *Beschryvinhe ende historische verhael van het Goat konincrijk van Guene anders de Goat-Custe de Mina genaemt liggende en het deel van Afrika*, ed. S.P.L’Honore Naber (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1912), p. 25. Contemporary discussions of the blackness of African skin assert that the black colour is the result of the intense sunlight of Africa. Barlaeus cites this argument, but disagrees with it (pp. 75-76). The variety of skin colour among the African slaves in Brazil is recorded by Wagener in this image of a ‘Slave Dance’ in which the woman right of the center has much lighter skin than the rest of the figures (plate 105 in *Thierbuch*).

Wagener notes that black children born in Brazil are called ‘Creoles’.


See Young, pp. 1-28.

See C. R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire* (1415-1825) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) and Freyre. Similarly, Hemming insinuates that the Portuguese set out to ‘breed’ half-caste mamelucs (p. 93), although he asserts that after the sixteenth century, most mixing occurred between white men and black women (p. 175). Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century travel accounts also suggest that the Portuguese encouraged contact between the...
'native' women and the colonists. In Andrew Battell's account of travel to Africa from 1589, reproduced by Samuel Purchas in Purchas his Pilgrimage (London, 1625), he states that 'they [the Portuguese] rejoice when they have a Mulatto child, though it be a bastard' (vol. II, p. 98).


Naturally, the forts along the west coast of Africa that were established by the Portuguese provided venues for social and sexual contact with the local inhabitants, resulting in groups of mixed Portuguese/African children.

Forbes, p. 149.

Forbes argues that for the Spanish this term was not limited to African/European mixtures but was also applied to the children whose parents were Amerindian and African.

My retranslation of a quotation reproduced by Forbes, p. 174. The English translation given by Forbes leaves out the important gender distinctions. This quote is taken from C. Oudin, Den Grooten Dictionaris en Schat van Drij Talen (Antwerp, 1639-40). 'Moor' is a term long used in Europe to describe 'negros' and those with black skin; there are cognates of this word in every major European language.

Ibid.

Barlaeus, p. 76.

De Marees (1987), p. 36. The Dutch reads 'A is een Portegueseen vrouw, wonende op het Casteel d’Mina, die half swert ende half wit van wesen is, ende gheelachtich, die sy noemen Melato, ende meest tot hunnne vrouwe houdende zijn, want de witte vrouwen daer niet aerd en mueghen, dese chieren haer lichaem heel fray met cleedinghe, en behannghen hun lyf met veel Coralen, Paternosters, sy scheren hun hayr opt hooft heel kort af, als de Mans doen, meynende dat het hun heel verciert' (de Marees, 1912, p. 36).

De Marees (1987), p. 217. In Dutch it reads, '[The Portuguese] nemen tot hunnen Wyven veel cloecke swertinnen of Melatos, half witte ende half swerte (te weten geel-achtighe) doen de Porteguesen seer veel af houwen, dan deur dien dat sy die niet heel vast trouwen en moghen, so coopense dese Vrouwen, ende achtense also veel als hun eyghen Vrouwen te zijn, nochtans moghen sy doen afscheyden als hun ghe-lief, ende mogen wederom andre vrouwen coopen als het hun te pas comt: Dese Vrouwen onderhouden sy seer practich, ende fray in haere cleedinghe, de selve altijt meer oppronckende ende uytstekende als eenighe andre Inlantsche vrouwen, so datse haest te keenen zijn' (de Marees, 1912, pp. 224-225).


See Whitehead and Boeseman, pp. 73-74 and Valladares and de Mello Filho, pp. 135-136.

Other images offer a better view of the sword, which exactly matches the one held by Eckhout’s mulatto man and was probably standard issue to all musketeers. The caption for this image, the first illustration of ‘Schutten’, explains that the gun must be carried on the left shoulder and held in the left hand.


undt in verborgenen Sträuchern Menschen zu treffen, wie solches genügsamb bekandt undt offenbar, beydes unter den Portugiesen also den unseren, dess wegen sie undt allwegs für leichtfertige, falsche undt verrätherische Buben geacht undt gehalten werden. Sein Excell. hat dieselben für dieses, weil sie von Christlichen Gebüthe herrühren, alzumahl freygeben wollen; wie er aber hernach von ihren bösen, untreuen Leben besser unterrichtet worden, hat ihm, solches zu thun, Bedenken geben’ (as quoted by Thomsen, p. 163).

114 See Kolfin’s discussion of eighteenth-century images of slaves in Surinam.
115 Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 73.
116 Or, as Freyre puts it, ‘White woman for marriage, mulatto woman for f-, Negro woman for work’ (p. 13).
117 Forbes, p. 129.
118 Ibid., p. 103.
120 ‘de gracieuze mestiezenvrouw met een totaal affunctioneel bloemenmandje’ (Vandenbroek, p. 38).
121 This is the Heliconia, a plant related to the bird of paradise (Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 73).
122 Although it has been suggested that a streak of white paint on her left hand represents a ring, this seems unlikely after closer examination.
123 Whitehead and Boeseman say that it is a blue hat, but it appeared green when I made a close examination of this painting in June 1999.
125 ‘Een Maeghdeken met een witte dunne sluyer gekleet, met een vrolijck opsicht, hebbende in de rechter hand een Roose, en op ’t hooft een krans met bloemen’ (Ripa, p. 38).
126 It includes images of queens, young noble women, and wives and daughters of outstanding citizens, all represented as shepherdesses.
127 Reid, p. 434.
128 As reproduced by Held (see below).
130 Ibid., p. 213.
131 Ibid., p. 212.
132 ‘Cuniculorum Brasiliensis variae species,’ Historia, p. 223.
134 Ripa, p. 579.
135 Held, vol. II, p. 73, fig. 20.
137 Mason, ‘Portrayal and Betrayal’, p. 49.
Mason argues that the image of the mameluco conveys a ‘more Europeanised sensuality’ ('Portrayal and Betrayal’, p. 55).

In comparison to the Amerindians, these paintings, especially those of the Africans, have received relatively little scholarly attention.


See Ernst van den Boogaart, ‘The Empress Europe and her Three Sisters’, pp. 121-128.

CHAPTER 6

1. An earlier, much shorter version of this chapter was published as ‘Albert Eckhout’s Paintings and the Vrijburg Palace in Dutch Brazil’, Albert Eckhout returns to Brazil, 1644-2002 (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2002), pp. 81-91. A more extensive early version is included as chapter 6 of my dissertation (Brienen, “Art and Natural History”, 2002).

2. For a more complete discussion regarding why the Maurtishuis was an improbable location for these works of art see chapter 6 in Brienen, “Art and Natural History”, 2002.


4. See Buvelot’s discussion, pp. 32-33.


6. Whitehead and Boeseman, pp. 65, 79.


9. Ibid.

10. Egmond and Mason, p. 110.


15. As addressed by Sousa-Leao, the paintings of the Africans were traditionally ascribed to Eckhout until the discovery in 1959 by J.A. Gonsalves de Mello of a document from the Zeeland chamber of the WIC that suggested that they were actually painted by Jasper Bex (p. 13, n. 6). A contemporary copy was made of the main figure; it was formerly in private hands in Germany and has now been sold to a Brazilian collector. S. Nystad reviewed the evidence and argued that Eckhout was in fact the author of these works. See S. Nystad, ‘Johan Maurits, Albert Eckhout en de gezant van Sonho’, Tableau Museaal-Kunsthandel-Exposities 20 (1980): pp. 80-85. Nystad reproduces excerpts from the essential documents in this short article.

16. Christensen, pp. 211-212. See also Baier, Berlowicz, and Christensen.

17. Given the colonial location, such a system may also reflect the economical use of canvas. I thank Claudia Swan for making this suggestion.

18. However, the seven other still lifes demonstrate two other forms of preparation, which suggests that they were made in different batches. See Christensen, p. 213.

19. Bananas were widely cultivated along the Guinea coast. Recent research on bananas has demonstrated that the wild species had a much wider area of origin than previously thought; they were present in both Indonesia and India. The yellow banana is a cultivated version of the wild species, which are red or green in colour. See the entry for ‘banana’ in Alan Davidson, Oxford Companion to Food (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 54-55.

20. Berlowicz (Copenhagen, 2002).

21. My emphasis.

22. ‘Sieben grosse Stueck Schildereyen mit Oelfarben, 7 brabantsche Ellen hoch, womit als mit Tapeten ein grosser Saal behaengt werden kann, worinn Indianer nach dem Leben und (nach dem Leben und in Lebensgroesse gerepraesentiert werden, die Indianer in unterschiedlichen Provincien mit allen in
jetweder) Groesse und sonst allen darinnen befindlichen vierfussigen und anderen Geithiert, Fischen, Vogel, Schlangen, Gewuerm, Baume, Fruechte, Kraeuter, Blumen (alles) in eine Ordinatio (Ordinanz) gebracht seyn. Item noch 9 kleine Stuecke, unter die Fenster, konform und nach proportion der grossen (drin) welches alles rar und in der Welt nirgends zu finden ist. (Und ist dergleichen niemals noch in der Welt zu finden, dahero es von Kunstverstaendigen inaestimabel geachtet wird'. As quoted by Driesen, p. 203.  

Given the specificity of the description, which includes worms and fish, and the fact that the number of Indians was nine and the number of smaller images was nine, it seems unlikely that this series copied the one produced for Vrijburg. See the paintings formerly at Castle Schwedt an der Oder, discussed and reproduced in Whitehead and Boeseman.  

Boa Vista was completed in 1643, but little is known about this building.  

This house is illustrated by Wagener in his Thierbuch.  

Barlaeus, p. 203.  


Terwen, p. 59.  

Larsen suggested that Pieter Post also went to Brazil with Johan Maurits in 1636, although this possibility was discounted by Sousa-Leão, who said that Post could have sent plans instead (p. 16).  

Leonardo Dantas Silva, p. 70.  


Sousa-Leão, p. 48.  


Barlaeus, p. 203.  

Other plans and views of Vrijburg exist, but they are either based on the Post images in Barlaeus or offer no additional information.  

As such similar to other structures built by Post and other buildings built in Europe by Johan Maurits after 1644.  

Fr. Calado, O valeroo indidemo e triumpho da liberadade (Lisbon, 1648), as quoted in Boxer, p. 116.  

Terwen, pp. 89, 95. Of course, many of these persons could also have been housed in Boa Vista after its completion. Terwen did not, however, include the side wings in his assessment. As noted by Sousa-Leão, the scale in Barlaeus is given in Rijnlandse Roede, which measure 378 cm.  

Terwen, p. 89.  

It is, however, also quite possible that this lithograph actually shows the altered remains of Boa Vista rather than Vrijburg. This lithograph was published in 1821.  

Terwen, p. 95.  

Terwen, p. 96.  

Terwen’s plans are a bit unclear regarding the height of this central space, but I have assumed that each room had a height of 20 Rijnland feet, with this central hall then having a height of 40 Rijnland feet.  

This is based on my examination of the paintings in the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen in the 1990s (1996, 1999).  

Berete Due, ‘Brazilian Artefacts in the Royal Kunstkammer’ in Albert Eckhout volta ao Brasil (Copenhagen, 2002), p. 189.  

In a recent discussion of these works, Dante Martins Teixeira also notes that Fort Keulen appears behind the Tapuya man. See his ‘Allegory of the Continents’, by Jan van Kessel ‘The Elder.’ A Seventeenth Century View of the Fauna in the Four Corners of the Earth, vol III, Dutch Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, Index Editora, 2002).  

Less likely is the possibility that he had seen the contents and arrangement of the Royal Danish Kunstkammer and drew upon it for this image, which was probably painted in the 1660s.
CONCLUSION

2. Johan Maurits had earlier presented small groups of naturalia to various people and institutions in the Dutch Republic, but images do not seem to have figured in these gifts.
3. The reasons for this recall are not entirely clear, although scholars have long suggested that the directors of the WIC were displeased with Johan Maurits’s princely expenditures in Brazil.
5. Joppien, p. 325.
6. Here I invoke Marcel Mauss’s classic study of gift exchange, in which he makes a distinction between the ‘gift’ and the ‘commodity’. See Marcel Mauss, The Gift: the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies, trans. W.D. Halls (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990). Although Mauss focused on ‘archaic’ and ‘primitive’ societies in his study, scholars such as James Carrier have applied these categories of ‘gift’ versus ‘commodity’ to patterns of exchange in the West, and I draw upon his work in particular in this discussion. See Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism since 1700 (London: Routledge, 1995). Anthropologists have challenged many aspects of Mauss’s theoretical framework, but his work is still an important touchstone for any discussion of gift-giving. For critiques, see Claude Levi-Strauss, Pierre Bourdieu, and Nicolas Thomas. Regarding a gift’s inalienablity, you cannot return or reject it without damaging your relationship with the giver.
7. Carrier, p. 24. The commodity is, by contrast, alienable. Generally speaking, the commodity transaction is not about building relationships, and the object thus exchanged does not carry the history of the person who sold it to you. Return or rejection are both acceptable responses to the purchased commodity.
8. Carrier, p. 23. While the commodity transaction assumes independent parties, the gift

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transaction assumes related, interdependent parties.

9 Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 241–258. In this case the drawings, paintings, and other objects collected in Brazil represented cultural capital in its ‘objectified state in the form of cultural goods’. These two forms of capital are different from economic capital, ‘which is immediately and directly convertible into money’. Social capital, the result of the gift exchange, results in or reinforces membership in the group (in this case, European nobility), with its ‘network of connections’ and ‘social obligations’. ‘Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital’. Bourdieu, p. 243, 249.

10 This gift is discussed by Joppien, among others; see his ‘Dutch Vision of Brazil’. Important documents related to this gift are reproduced by Larsen.

11 Joppien, p. 323. As Bourdieu notes, ‘the title of nobility is the form par excellence of the institutionalized social capital which guarantees a particular form of social relationship in a lasting way’. See Bourdieu, p. 251.

12 The list of objects given to the Elector is reproduced in Larsen, pp. 252–253.

13 See Thomsen for excerpts from important documents related to this gift.

14 These last three images are often attributed to Eckhout, although it is not certain that he painted them.


16 Bencard mentions that the family desired the influence of the Danish king with respect to a debate over the Nassau-Siegen family in the Imperial Diet in 1653.

17 See the discussion of this gift in Joppien, ‘The Dutch in Brazil’, and Sousa-Leão, *Frans Post*.


**APPENDIX A**

1 Ondertrouwboek DTB (1595-1811), 158 (1603-1611), GA Groningen.

2 Rechterlijk Archief (1619-1621), 326r (12 November 1620), GA Groningen.

3 H.E. van Gelder, p. 16.

4 ‘gelde hebben ontfangen...van haeren broeder Gheert Roeloffs schilder’. RA III x (1619-1621) part 4: 66r/v (July 1619), GA Groningen.

5 H.E. van Gelder, p. 16.

6 Lidmaten registers 1621-1672; 73 (1621-1672), Archiven van de hervormde gemeente te Amersfoort.

7 They departed from Texel with four ships, arriving in Brazil with two. See Boxer, 69.

8 Letter from Dom Jorge to Johan Maurits, 13 May 1641, A 3 1545, KHA, The Hague, as quoted by Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 164.

9 ‘ein Stück mit dem Prinzen Mauritz darauf und einige Brasilianer’, from the 1673/4 inventory of the Danish royal *Kunstkammer*, as cited by Thomsen, p. 15.


11 Thomsen, p. 15.

12 This loan is mentioned in a document from 15 March 1645, drawn up by The Hague notary Lambert Rictaert (Notariele Protocollen, Inv. 41 (1597-1842), f. 110, GA The Hague

13 As noted by contemporary observer Jacob van Campen: ‘Inwendig bewunderte man vorzugsweise zwei schöne Säle, wovon der eine äusserst kunstreich bit brasilianischen Vögeln bemalt war’, quoted by Georg Galland,
APPENDIX B

1 It seems safe to assume that this image was by Eckhout. See the 8 Dec 1678 letter from Jacob Cohen to Johan Maurits (A4, vol. 1643, folio 76, KHA, The Hague.)

2 I would like to thank R. Ekkart for bringing this image to my attention.

3 Whitehead and Boeseman, p. 230.
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