The Resources of Others

Dutch Exploitation of European Expansion and Empires, 1570-1800

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Abstract

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Historiography pertaining to the study of European colonial empires can generally be defined in two different strands: on the one hand, the nationally geared scholarship that zooms in on the development of specific 'national' empires and their relationships to non-European individuals, groups and polities and, on the other hand, narratives that privilege the focus on the colony and the colony's links to the outside world. What neither of these strands does, however, is to question the role foreigners played in the capturing of resources within the logic of a foreign empire and how those resources were transferred to the places of origin of these individuals and groups. This article provides an overview of Dutch participation in the empires of others (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese) by underlining the important role that Dutch merchants, investors and labour specialists played in the exploitation of other, often competing, European empires. While some of the acquired resources remained in the host society where Dutch merchants and firms settled, some of the colonial resources and by-products were sent back to the merchants' and firms' places of origin, more often than not through complex transnational networks of contacts and divergent groups of interests.

Keywords: foreigners, foreign empires, economic exploitation, Dutch entrepreneurs, tax farming

The histories of empire reflect two specific approaches. On the one hand, narratives that privilege the link between a specific colonial and imperial expansion and a specific state. This strand has often been associated with a nationalist view of empire, in which the relationships between the European metropolises and the colonies remain central. Even if many of these narratives were never meant to be part of – or feed into – nationalist movements, nationalists have commonly used

these narratives in order to fulfil and attain their own (contemporary) political goals.[1] On the other hand, and in a more recent historiographical development, historians have privileged the perspective of the colony in relation to its direct region, often leaving the connection to the metropolis as an afterthought.[2] This approach has been able to refocus local area studies and elevate considerations regarding cross-imperial interactions in the peripheries of empire and reclaim the importance of the non-European elements in the tale of empire.[3]

In this article, we follow the attempts to examine cross-imperial interactions, albeit focused not on the periphery, but rather on the core of empire in Europe. We question the role that foreigners played in the capturing of colonial resources within the logic of a foreign empire.[4] We also look at how those resources were transferred to foreign groups' places of origin, focusing specifically on the Dutch case. After an overview of Dutch participation in multiple empires, within diverse schemes and fulfilling different functions, we zoom in on the case of the firm De Bruijn & Cloots in Lisbon, basing our empirical analysis on the firm's private archive held in the Portuguese National Archive in Lisbon. In this case study, we witness how Willem de Bruijn and Paulo Cloots, in addition to engaging in European import and export trade, interloped the Portuguese colonial trade and, as well as organizing commercial ventures to Portuguese

1 Charles Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (London 1965); J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (ed.), *Britain and the Netherlands in Europe and Asia: Papers Delivered to the Third Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference* (New York 1968); G.V. Scammel, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion c. 1400-1715* (London 1989); Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London 2003); João Paulo Oliveira e Costa and Teresa Lacerda, *A interculturalidade na Expansão Portuguesa* (*séculos XV a XVIII*) (Lisbon 2007).

2 The results of the TANAP program (Towards a New Age of Partnership) are exemplary of this approach. For more insights into specific case studies, see: http://www.brill.com/publications/tanap-monographs-history-asian-european-interaction, 4 July 2017.

3 Examples include Robin Law, *Ouidah. The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port', 1727-1892* (Athens 2004); Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea. Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (New York 2007); Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York 2008); Alison Games, *The Web of Empire. English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (New York 2008); David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Organization of the Atlantic Market, 1640-1815* (New Haven 2009); Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire. Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge 2009); Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade. Dutch-Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595-1674* (Leiden 2012); Alison Games, 'Conclusion: The Dutch Moment in Atlantic Historiography', in: Gert Oostindie and Jessica Roitman (ed.), *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800. Linking Empires, Bridging Borders* (Leiden 2014) 357-373.

4 Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603-1746* (Boston/Leiden 2006); Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley 2011); Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1850* (Cambridge 2014); Felicia Gottmann, *Global Trade, Smuggling, and the Making of Economic Liberalism: Asian Textiles in France 1680-1760* (Basingstoke and New York 2016); Meike von Brescius, *Private Enterprise and the China Trade: British Interlopers and Their Informal Networks in Europe, c. 1720-1750* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Warwick, 2016). On illicit exchanges in the Dutch context see special issue, *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 13.1 (2016).

America, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, participated in tax farming and functioned as a link between multiple European networks with specific colonial interests elsewhere in Europe.

This incursion into the Dutch participation in foreign empires in general, and in the Portuguese empire in particular, emphasizes the historiographical need to understand the role that individuals and their networks played in the informal and formal circuits of empire, both in Europe and beyond. It also calls for a reflection on the mechanisms of acquisition and transference of resources across multiple borders (empire, state, culture, and so on) and, in so doing, showcases the entanglement, interconnectedness, and transnationality of empire.

Dutch Participation in the 'Empire of Others': Pulling Resources

The study of the Dutch participation in foreign empires faces two serious conceptual challenges. The first of these is the challenge of defining who was considered Dutch, given that, before 1648, the international community in general (with the exception of England) did not recognize the Dutch Republic as a sovereign state. It was thus normal for the Dutch to be accounted for as 'Germans' or, more commonly, as 'Flemish'. Interestingly, the Portuguese and Spanish sources were the first to make a clear distinction between men from the Northern and the Southern Netherlands by stating the towns, cities or provinces where specific individuals had been born, and this trend was later followed by other countries.

The second challenge in tracking down the Dutch serving in other empires is that many so-called Dutchmen were not originally from the Northern Provinces of the Netherlands, but instead were first- or second-generation immigrants from Germany, the Southern Netherlands, or the Baltic or Scandinavian hinterlands. Since the Dutch Republic encapsulated perhaps the best known Early Modern pool of human mobility, ascertaining someone's 'Dutchness' remains a challenge. For the purposes of this article, however, these are not necessarily negative challenges because our interest lies with the men who departed from or served from the Dutch Republic to manage other empires, using their Dutch and non-Dutch networks to succeed in their endeavours. In turn, the Dutch Republic and their social and economic networks were able to enjoy the returnable profits of many of these endeavours by becoming repositories of knowledge and information that could afterwards be brought to the Dutch market, at a premium, and thus contribute, directly or indirectly, to Dutch successes overseas.

Dutch participation in empires other than the Dutch empire was a widespread phenomenon that has justifiably attracted some, albeit not broad-ranging, attention from historians. Evidence shows that individuals (mostly men) arriving from the Low Countries participated, in varying roles, in the English, French, Habsburg, Iberian and Scandinavian empires. Generally, these men can be divided into three specific categories: labour specialists, investors, and merchants. While sufficient evidence is available on the relationships they maintained with their places of birth and, at times, the roles they played in

specific social and economic networks, their relationships with institutionalized 'Dutch communities' *in situ* are generally unknown, although signs of contention between the two groups seem to have been the norm.[5]

While the group of labour specialists is diverse, it has one common feature. These were men who served in foreign empires, where they offered their specific labour skills in sectors directly linked to the real and symbolic exploitation of empire. Possibly the largest group was that of men with professions directly linked to maritime activities. Skippers, sailors and soldiers were hired, either individually or in groups, and sent to deploy their skills for a specific empire. The cases of the Dutch crews serving the Portuguese Crown in Brazil against the Dutch West India Company or the Dutch captains sailing under the flag of the Swedish Africa Company are perhaps iconic examples of how participation in foreign empires impinges on one's personal identity and raises questions about one's loyalties.[6]

Bureaucrats constituted a second tier of labour specialists vested in the functioning, rather than the exploitation, of foreign empires. Many served as factors in Asia, Africa and America through their personal networks in specific regions, usually resulting from marriage to non-Europeans, and their knowledge of local languages, uses and customs. The case of Hendrik Carloff, a German-born Amsterdammer and Dutch West India Company (WIC) employee in Brazil, São Tomé and the Coast of Guinea, who moved to found and serve the Swedish West India Company and, for a short period of time, the Danish West India Company may seem to constitute an extraordinary case of cross-imperial service.[7] However, many like him were also active, for longer or shorter periods of time, in the empires of others. While Carloff contributed war, trade and shipping skills, other Dutchmen in this category were valued for their knowledgeable administrative skills. They included the perhaps iconic case of Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a citizen of Enkhuizen, who decided at the age of sixteen to learn the colonial trades in Portugal and Spain. Later, at a still early age, he became secretary of the Archbishop of Goa, and the knowledge he gathered in the capital of the *Estado da Índia* resulted in his *Itinerario*, a compilation of geographical, ethnographic and maritime knowledge of overseas territories that was widely used in the Dutch Republic

5 Ana Crespo Solana, *El comercio marítimo entre Amsterdam y Cádiz, 1713-1778* (Madrid 2001); Cátia Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern Period: The Economic Relationship Between Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640-1705* (Amsterdam 2004) 141, 181 and 187; M. Bustos Rodríguez, 'Consulats et consuls à Cadix au XVIIIe siècle: une approche', in: J. Ulbert and G. le Bouëdec (ed.), *La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne. L'affirmation d'une institution économique et politique, 1500-1800* (Paris 2006) 259-277.

6 György Nováky, *Handelskompanier och kompanihandel: Svenska Afrikakompaniet 1649-1663. En studie i feodal handel* (Uppsala 1990) 80-85; Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern Period,* 142-146.

7 Henk den Heijer, 'Een dienaar van vele heren. De Atlantische carrière van Hendrik Caerloff', in: J. Thomas Lindblad and Alicia Schrikker (ed.), *Het verre gezicht. Politieke en culturele relaties tussen Nederland en Azië, Afrika en Amerika* (Franeker 2011) 162-180. For more specific information, see: Kaarle Wirta, *Dark Horses of Trade. Overseas Entrepreneurship in the Seventeenth Century Trade in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans* (in preparation as PhD dissertation, Leiden University).

and elsewhere for 'national' projects of overseas expansion.[8]

Although often dissociated from labour definitions, Dutch Catholic clergymen were also prominent in serving within the spheres of Catholic empires, either individually or as constituents in internationally organized religious orders. The Spanish empire in particular was the recipient of a fair number of Catholic clergymen from the Northern Provinces of the Netherlands, especially after the radicalization of certain Protestant groups during the Dutch Revolt. Although some general knowledge about their participation in the Spanish American empire is available, mostly from Flemish historians, and we can account for their general role in circulating books and written knowledge between the Northern and Southern Low Countries and the Spanish American colonies, little information is available about specific individuals and their view of the roles they fulfilled within the Spanish empire.[9]

One other group of specialists were the so-called Jewish planters, with many of those who became planters leaving towns in the Dutch Republic, especially in the maritime provinces of Holland and Zealand, to start plantations on the Wild Coast and in the Caribbean.[10] In this group, we can identify three specific circulation strands. The first of these comprises those people who left the Republic directly for the Caribbean and the Wild Coast to start their plantations in the Dutch colonies. Many of these were first- or second-generation migrants from Portugal or the Portuguese colonies, some already born in the Netherlands, and were generally labelled as Sephardic Jews. These migrants looked for economic opportunities in the Dutch colonies within the nexus of the plantation complex. And while some remained within the Dutch sphere, others moved to islands and territories under the sovereignty of other empires, such as those of the Danish, the English or the French. The second strand of planters arrived as refugees in the Dutch Republic or the Dutch colonies in North America after the fall of Dutch Brazil. Although many had been born in Brazil and were thus Portuguese and claimed by the Portuguese king as his subjects, the fact that they publicly worshipped as Jews prompted them to take refuge in the Dutch sphere. Their status as refugees, however, was a disadvantage, and many were rejected by the

8 Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Reys-gheschrift van de navigatien der Portugaloysers in Orienten* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1595); Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Beschrijvinge vande gantsche custe van Guinea, Manicongo, Angola, Monomotapa en tegen over de Cabo de S. Augustijn in Brasilien* (Amsterdam 1596); H. Kern (ed.), *Itinerario: voyage ofte Schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naar Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (The Hague 1910-1939 (5 vols), 1955-1957 (3 vols)); C.A. Davids, *Zeewezen en wetenschap. De wetenschap en de ontwikkeling van de navigatietechniek in Nederland tussen 1585 en 1815* (Amsterdam 1986).

9 Werner Thomas, 'Misioneros flamencos en América Latina', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* IV-7 (1994) 451-478; Werner Thomas and Johan Verberckmoes, 'The Southern Netherlands as a Centre of Global Knowledge Concerning the Iberian Empires in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', in: S. Dupré, B. Demunck, W. Thomas and G. Vanpaemel (ed.), *Embattled Territory. The Circulation of Knowledge in the Spanish Netherlands* (Ghent 2015) 161-197.

10 David Graizbord, 'Who and What was a Jew? Some Considerations for the Historical Study of New Christians', *Anais de História de Além-Mar* 14 (2013) 15-44; David Graizbord, 'Religion and Ethnicity among "Men of the Nation". Toward a Realistic Interpretation', *Jewish Social Studies. History, Culture, Society*, 15.1 (2008) 36-65.

Dutch authorities, the Jewish community, and the Dutch colonial authorities. In response they decided to employ their skills and knowledge of the plantation complex in the periphery of the Dutch Atlantic, especially in Suriname. The third strand of planters were second or third generations of Amsterdam-born, Portuguese Sephardic Jews who had moved to England after Menasseh Ben Israel's petition to Cromwell to allow for a Portuguese Sephardic community in London, and from there moved to the English plantation colonies in the Caribbean, especially to Barbados.[11] Even if historians remain adamant in analysing the mobile groups as Portuguese Sephardic Jews for community purposes, the States General determined in 1651 that members of the Portuguese Sephardic community born in Amsterdam were subjects of the States General, albeit not necessarily burghers of a specific Dutch town or city. As a result of a unilateral declaration by the state, therefore, these people were, perhaps, the first 'national citizens' in the whole of Western Europe.[12]

Labour specialists stood personally to gain from the outputs of their labour through individual labour contracts in the service of a specific king or lord, or by succeeding in using their knowledge and skills to improve specific activities. Most of the earnings they generated also remained personal and were kept locally rather than impacting on the wealth or functioning of the empires they served. However, a different tale can be told regarding financial investors.

Investors from the Dutch Republic, both Dutch and foreign, committed their capital to four specific activities related to the development and exploitation of the empires of others. The first activity they privileged was that of maritime insurance. Improving on the Italian Medieval and Renaissance traditions of maritime insurance, investors in the Republic invested broadly in the intra-European trading routes, while often also venturing into the Atlantic, and especially into the slave, commodities and cash crop trades. They often insured ships, crews and cargoes leaving ports in the Low Countries to operate mostly in the Iberian and French empires, although they were also active in insurance practices at a distance, offering their services directly in Iberian and French ports.[13] Since insurance was a transmissible contract for the communities operating from the Dutch Republic,

11 Jonathan Israel, 'Jews and Crypto-Jews in the Atlantic World Systems, 1500-1800', in: Richard L. Kagan and Philip D. Morgan (ed.), *Atlantic Diasporas. Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Baltimore 2009) 3-17; Wim Klooster, 'Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs: The Founders of the Jewish Settlements in Dutch America, 1650s and 1660s', in: Kagan and Morgan (ed.), *Atlantic Diasporas*, 33-49; Holly Snyder, 'English Markets, Jewish Merchants, and Atlantic Endeavours: Jews and the Making of British Transatlantic Commercial Culture, 1650-1800', in: Kagan and Morgan (ed.), *Atlantic Diasporas*, 50-74.

12 Cátia Antunes and Jessica V. Roitman, 'A War of Words: Sephardi Merchants, (Inter)national Incidents, and Litigation in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1640', *Jewish Culture and History* 13 (2015) 1-23.

13 Leonor Freire Costa, *O transporte no Atlântico e a Companhia Geral do Comércio do Brasil (1580-1663)*, vol. 1 (Lisbon 2002); Daniel Strum, *The Portuguese Jews and New Christians in the Sugar Trade: Managing Business Overseas – Kinship and Ethnicity Revisited (Amsterdam, Porto and Brazil, 1595-1618)* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009); Cátia Antunes and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, 'Cross-Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Atlantic: Africans, Dutch and Sephardic Jews in Western Africa, 1580-1674', *Itinerario. European Journal of Overseas History* 35.1 (2011) 49-76.

it became a speculatory means of investment, even for those with few connections to the shipping sector. This development geared the Dutch institutions, especially in Amsterdam, to develop institutional means of controlling these transactions, as argued by Sabine Go in her work on the Chamber of Insurances in Amsterdam.[14]

The dawn of the eighteenth century also witnessed the development of new financial instruments in the Dutch Republic. Already known to most operating from the Dutch markets, mortgages for the acquisition of urban and rural property became common in the Republic itself. The system was then exported to the Dutch plantation colonies of Suriname, Demerara and Essequibo, where the instruments were quickly bundled into investment funds that not only mortgaged the future plantation, but also absorbed expenses necessary for the functioning of the plantation complex. These included the costs of acquiring a labour force (slave imports), of purchasing tools to start the plantation and then dealing with the cash crops, building a house for the plantation owner and dwellings for the slaves, acquiring enough stocks of food and clothes for the owner and the labour force, transporting the crops to the nearby ports and exporting the crop outputs back to Europe.[15] These credit bundles were sold in the Republic to common investors, ranging from small private investors to large institutions. Interestingly enough, capital from the Netherlands started similarly to pour into mortgage funds in London that supported the development of the plantation complex in Barbados and, to a lesser extent, Jamaica.[16] Although different in character and organization from the Dutch-run funds, the English version was equally attractive to investors in the Dutch Republic seeking opportunities to invest the capital they had accumulated during the Dutch Golden Age of the seventeenth century. For planters who originated in the Dutch Republic and sought to exploit the economic opportunities in Barbados, the choice for a British fund was often partly supported by capital from the Netherlands, and this provided a degree of certainty that social networks back in the Dutch towns could be called on if things were to take a turn for the worse.

Investors from the main Dutch market places also showed increased interest in investing in competing foreign chartered and joint stock companies. The crystallization and, to a certain extent, oligarchization of the WIC and the Dutch East India Company (VOC), accompanied by the poor economic results of the former, led many investors to look beyond the borders of the Republic for their institutional investments in colonial enterprises. By heavily investing in the English East India Company (EIC), the South Sea Company and the state-run French companies, investors from the Netherlands not only acquired the right to partake in a share of

14 Sabine Go, *Marine Insurance in the Netherlands, 1600-1870. A Comparative Institutional Approach* (Amsterdam 2009).

15 Gert Oostindie, *Roosenburg en Mon Bijou: Twee Surinaamse plantages, 1720-1870* (Dordrecht/Providence 1989); Alex van Stipriaan, *Surinaams Contrast. Roofbouw en overleven in een Caraïbische plantagekolonie, 1750-1863*) (Leiden 1993); Bram Hoonhout, *Subprime plantation mortgages in Suriname, Essequibo and Demerara, 1750-1800. On Manias, Ponzi Processes and Illegal Trade in the Dutch negotiatie system* (Unpublished MA thesis, Leiden University, 2012).

16 Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies. London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660-1700* (Cambridge 2010).

the return profits of the British and French empires, but also heavily participated in the public debt of these two countries since these companies, alongside the Bank of England, were known to filter the income from the sale of shares to the central state. These companies thus became major stakeholders in the relevant countries' public debt, a position they, in turn, filtered back to their foreign investors. According to Larry Neal, about 40 per cent of British public debt by the mid-eighteenth century was in the hands of foreigners, many of whom operated from the main investing outlets in the Low Countries.[17]

Seasoned investors in the Netherlands were willing to look beyond the opportunities provided by chartered and joint stock companies organized elsewhere. They themselves became the main initiators of and principal shareholders in chartered endeavours that challenged not only the VOC and the WIC, but also claimed a large share of the British returnable profits. Perhaps the best known examples of this were the Ostend East India Company, the Genoese East India Company and the Swedish Africa Company.[18] What these companies had in common is that they were started by the proposition or direct influence of investment parties based in the Dutch Republic. These parties, representing the core of a broad pan-European network of investors, focused their interests in these endeavours on challenging and defeating the Dutch-backed companies and, in doing so, contributed to an increase in the imports of colonial products into the Netherlands, thus serving an ever-growing market for the transformation of colonial raw materials. This system seems to have been generally successful because although the Dutch state had declared a mercantilist approach to its colonial exploitation, the Dutch domestic market remained open for traders and thus exempt from mercantilist restrictions. While this liberal approach to the domestic market brought positive inputs for the transformative manufactures by delivering a broader range of products (both in terms of quantity and quality), from traders' perspective the liberalization translated into a lack of protection in a competitive market, a situation that resulted, overall, in lower wholesale and retail prices for manufacturers and general consumers.

The network of investors was often coincident or complementary to that of merchants. When, for example, the system of factories for the import of colonial products into Western Europe collapsed around the final quarter of the sixteenth

17 Larry Neal, *The Rise of Financial Capitalism: International Capital Markets in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge 1993); Oscar Gelderblom and Joost Jonker, 'With a View to Hold: The Emergence of Institutional Investors on the Amsterdam Securities Market during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in: Jeremy Atack and Larry Neal (ed.), *The Origins and Development of Financial Markets and Institutions. From the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Cambridge 2009) 71-98.

18 Jan Parmentier, 'The Private East India Ventures from Ostend: The Maritime and Commercial Aspects, 1715-1722', *International Journal of Maritime History* 5.2 (1993) 75-102; Jan Parmentier, 'From Macau to Rio. The Flemish-Portuguese Relations in the East Indies and Brazil, 1715-1745', in: *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis 'Société d'Émulation' te Brugge* 132-3 (1995) 373-400; Jan Parmentier, *Oostende & Co: het verhaal van de Zuid-Nederlandse Oost-Indiëvaart, 1715-1735* (Ghent/Amsterdam 2007) 79-103; Giorgio Tosco, *La Compagnia Genovese delle Indie Orientali e i rapporti fra Genova e le Province Unite* (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Pisa, 2014).

Tower of Belém (part of the Tagus estuary defence system), Lisbon. Print by Pieter van den Berge, 1694-1737.
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

century, private firms moved in to take a share of the foreign colonial imports. These included firms such as Cunendorf, Snel and Janssen, who took over the role of importing colonial goods directly from Portugal and Spain into their network in Northern Europe (including their correspondents in Antwerp, Lubeck and Hamburg) when the Portuguese factory of Antwerp withered in the aftermath of the civil war raging through the Low Countries. Firms like this quickly moved from being importers into being direct participants, opening up offices in Iberia and fitting out ships, often with a letter of privilege by the king(s), to acquire specific colonial products.[19]

Merchants also took more covert positions in exploiting the empire of others by, for example, moving as supercargoes on company ships, acting both for themselves and for their principals in the Republic. In this role, they travelled to multiple colonies and were able to establish their own personal networks that later served as bridges of entry when some of them decided to start operating on their own.[20] What many of these men had in common is that they were able to conciliate their work as supercargoes with that of smugglers and illicit traders as, more often than not, they were able to trade on the side or transport illegal, small-sized, but

19 Cátia Antunes, 'Failing Institutions: the Dutch in Portugal and the Tale of a Sixteenth-Century Firm', *Storia Economica* 32.2 (2015) 331-347.

20 Von Brescius, *Private Enterprise and the China Trade*.

high-value goods such as diamonds, gold and ivory artefacts as compensation for their efforts. The men subsequently used these resources as start-up capital for establishing their own firms or buying into existing partnership.[21]

However, merchants also resorted to far more complex ways of entering other empires by simultaneously investing in, subcontracting, and acting as agents for exchanges. The case of the Spanish *Asiento de Negros* is perhaps the best studied example of this. In the 1660s, the Genoese company Grillo & Lomellino contracted the Spanish *Asiento* directly from the Spanish Crown.[22] As the company did not have access to the slaving markets in West Africa, nor the shipping capacity to fulfil the terms of the *Asiento*, it outsourced the slave supply to the WIC. Incapable of gathering enough ships and personnel to ensure a steady supply of skippers to a plentiful slave market in West Africa, the WIC, in turn, was compelled to subcontract private merchants in the Republic, often former employees, shareholders or knowledgeable men with previous experience in the slave trade, to fulfil the premises of the outsourcing agreement with Grillo & Lomellino in return for a reasonable recognition fee. Interestingly enough, merchants from the Republic were simultaneously investors, merchants, supercargoes and speculators, resulting in great fortunes for the individuals and their networks, but in a poor performance by the WIC and in increasing contractual defaults by Grillo & Lomellino. The firm De Bruijn & Cloots operated along similarly complex lines in Lisbon in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The Case of De Bruijn & Cloots of Lisbon

Willem de Bruijn and Paulo Cloots arrived in Lisbon from Amsterdam shortly after Christmas 1712 and, in the weeks that followed, went on to establish a business of their own.[23] Although, formally, they set up an independent trading house, all indications suggest that their establishment in Lisbon was part of a strategy of the merchant banker firm of Jean-Baptiste Cloots & Paulo Jacomo Cloots of Amsterdam to expand business operations in Portugal.[24] This goal could hardly have been more timely as the discovery of Brazilian gold in the late 1690s meant Lisbon was by then developing into a leading port city, supported by a thriving colonial market that paid in gold. Lisbon's rising importance in European and global trade also owed much to its status as the staple port city for Portuguese colonial trade, a position

21 See Special Issue on illegal and smuggling trade, *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*, 13.1 (2016) (guest editors: Karwan Fatah-Black and Matthias van Rossum).

22 Alejandro García-Montón, *Génova y el Atlántico (c. 1650-1680). Emprendedores mediterráneos frente al auge del capitalismo del Norte* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, European University Institute, 2014).

23 This firm's business archive is currently held in the Portuguese National Archive of Torre do Tombo. It comprises merchant account books, correspondence and diaries for the period from 1713 to 1741. In-depth research on this business archive is currently underway.

24 On this merchant banker family, see I. de Stein d'Altenstein, *Annuaire de la noblesse de Belgique*, vol. 16 (Brussels 1862) 278-282 and François Labbe, *Anacharsis Cloots le Prussien francophile. Un philosophe au service de la Révolution française et universelle* (Paris 1868) 29-30.

that dated back to 1649, when trade flows with the three major Brazilian ports (Pernambuco, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro) were placed under a compulsory convoy system of protection.[25] Hence, for foreign merchants, establishing in Lisbon at this particular juncture entailed expectations of obtaining Brazilian gold in exchange for supplying foodstuffs and all sorts of manufactured goods that were in high demand in the colonial market. Like many other foreign merchants (English, Dutch, Italian, French and German) who established in Lisbon in the early decades of the 1700s, De Bruijn & Cloots also aimed to use the extensive European network of the Cloots' Amsterdam firm to take advantage of the new opportunities created by the vitality of the Portuguese colonial trade.[26]

By the 1710s, the network of business partners and agents of the firm Jean-Baptiste (1670-1747) and Paulo Jacomo Cloots (1672-1725) encompassed Hamburg, London, Antwerp, Paris, Nantes, Madrid, Genoa and Venice.[27] A third brother, Egidio Cloots, had taken up residence in Cadiz, probably in the early 1700s, thus expanding the family's network in the Iberian Peninsula.[28] In the case of Lisbon, the family connection was ensured by a nephew, Paulo Cloots, who opened up a *comptoir* in the Portuguese capital at the age of 22.[29] Even though he had not yet completed his training, he became De Bruijn's junior partner in Lisbon, with his uncles' blessing. Willem de Bruijn had also been born into a family of merchants in Amsterdam, probably in 1687. Before moving to Lisbon, he had worked as a business clerk at the *comptoir* of the Cloots in Amsterdam, where he gained experience in trading and developed an extended network of business contacts, which he later used to operate independently in Lisbon.[30]

25 See Leonor Freire Costa, Pedro Lains and Susana Münch Miranda, *An Economic History of Portugal, 1143-2010* (Cambridge 2016) 125-126, 194-195 and H.E.S. Fisher, 'Lisbon as a Port Town in the Eighteenth Century', in: Simonetta Cavaciocchi (ed.) *I Porti come impresa economica. Atti della Diciannovesima Settimana di Studi, 2-6 maggio 1987* (Neuilly-sur-Seine 1988) 703-729.

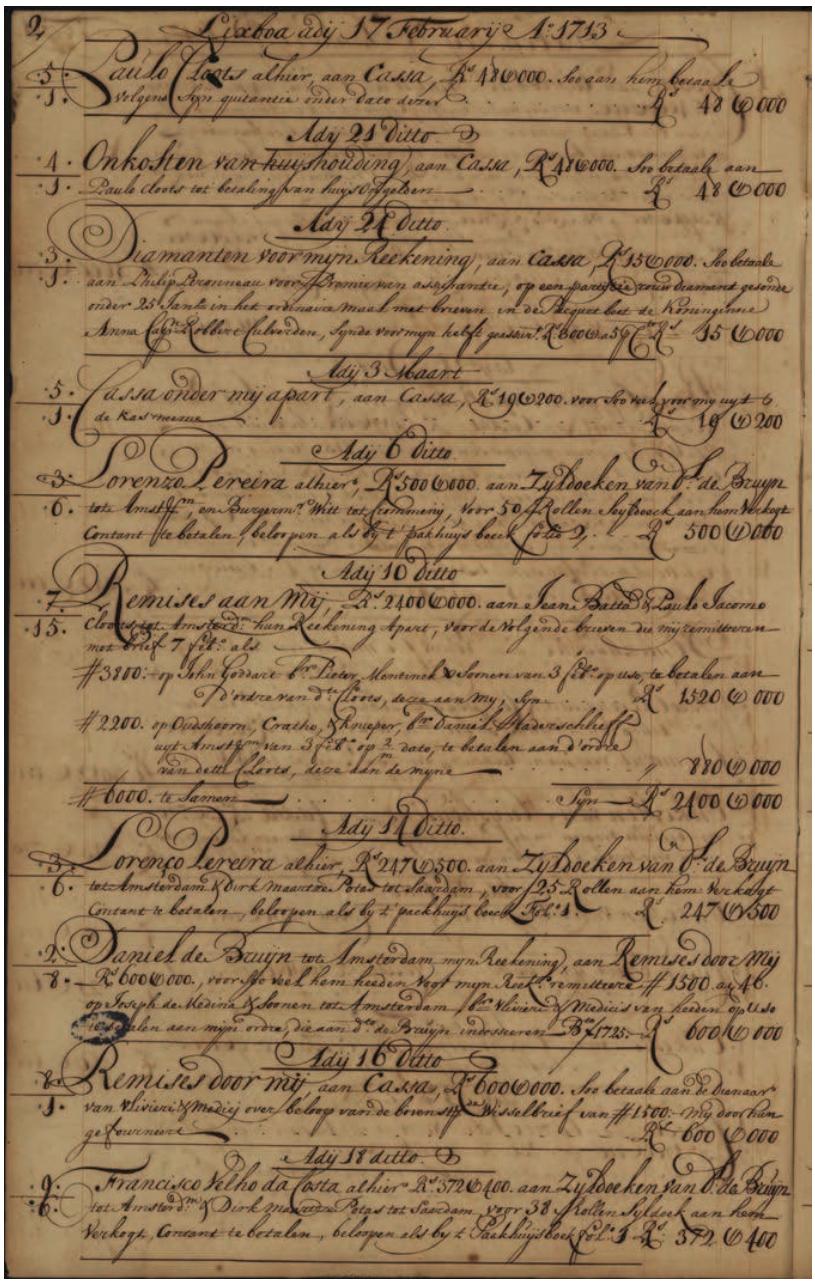
26 Lisbon's pivotal role in European and global trade from the 1690s is mirrored in the vitality of its foreign merchants' communities. On the Dutch, see Cátia Antunes, *Globalisation in the Early Modern Period*; on the English, see Sir Richard Lodge, 'The English Factory at Lisbon: Some Chapters in Its History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 16 (1933) 211-247 and H.E.S. Fisher, *The Portugal Trade: A Study of Anglo-Portuguese Commerce, 1700-1770* (London 1971); on the French, see Jean-François Labourdette, *La nation française à Lisbonne de 1669 à 1790. Entre colbertisme et libéralisme* (Paris 1988).

27 The rise of the Cloots family dates back to Paulo Cloots (1633-1705), a Catholic burgher originally from Maastricht and who married Catherina de Pret, from a well-off family in Antwerp, in 1662. The connection to Antwerp deepened in 1717, when Paulo Jacomo Cloots settled there after marrying his cousin, Jeanne de Pret, sister of Jacomo de Pret, a large-scale merchant banker. Paulo Jacomo later became one of the first investors in the Ostend East India Company, founded in 1722. See Jan Parmentier, *De holle compagnie. Smokkel en legale handel onder Zuidnederlandse vlag in Bengalen, ca. 1720-1744* (Hilversum 1992) 11; Ruud Paesie, *Voor zilver en Zeeuws belang: De rampzalige Zuidzee-expeditie van de Middelburgse Commercie Compagnie, 1724-1727* (Zutphen 2012) 22.

28 On Egidio Cloots, see Ana Crespo Solana, *El comércio marítimo entre Amsterdam y Cádiz, 1713-1778* (Madrid 2000) 38.

29 Paulo Cloots, born on 24 November 1690, was the second son of Thomas Cloots (1663-1699) and his wife Maria Anna Clock. Following the premature death of his father, Paulo was taken under his uncles' wings.

30 Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Junta da Administração do Tabaco (JAT), bk. 193, fol. 7 and 12.



Page of the Invoice Book (*Factuurboek*) of the Firm De Bruijn and Cloots in Lisbon, February 1713.
Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (*ANTT*), *Junta da Administração do Tabaco* (*JAT*), *Book 188, folio 6*

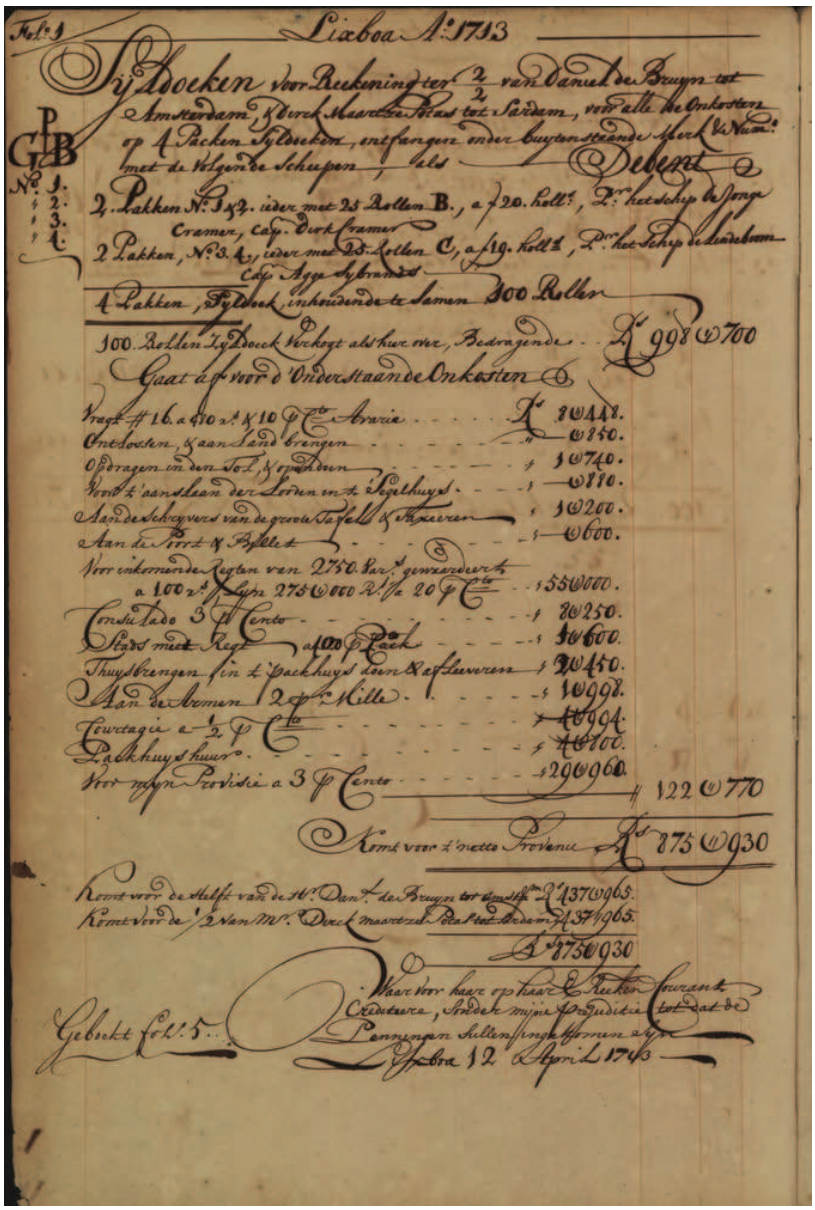
While engaging in wholesale trade may have been their initial goal, De Bruijn & Cloots ended up managing a broad-ranging portfolio, encompassing tax farming, financial transactions and shipping, with varying degrees of success. In wholesale trade, the firm took on the traditional role of intermediaries in importing mostly Northern European goods and re-exporting Portuguese domestic and colonial goods. They handled a wide range of commodities, including wool, olive oil, sugar, tobacco, tea, naval supplies, linen goods, and all sorts of fabrics. As was usual in the eighteenth century, they traded not only for their own account, but also engaged in commission business for a wide network of business partners across Europe. By the 1720s, this international network extended to Archangel, Hamburg, London, Bristol, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Paris, Nantes, La Rochelle, Bayonne, Lyon, Bilbao, Madrid, Badajoz, Seville, Cadiz, Turin, Genoa and Livorno, while their domestic market comprised dealings with merchants in Porto, the second largest city in Portugal, as well as in Beja, Elvas and Estremoz (in the southern province of Alentejo).

While partaking in the European import and export trade, De Bruijn & Cloots also started seeking, shortly after their arrival, to establish connections with their Portuguese counterparts in order to interlope the protected colonial markets.[31] At the time, and under a restriction dating back to the 1590s, trade with colonial offshoots in Asia and in the South Atlantic was exclusive to Portuguese subjects. This restriction was formally extended to commercial relations with Brazil in 1605 and remained a central feature of Portuguese colonial trade until 1810. Having Portuguese business partners was, therefore, key if De Bruijn & Cloots were to circumvent the laws that excluded them from trading with Brazil or Portuguese Asia directly. Operating in these two geographical areas posed a variety of challenges, given the distinct trade rules and differing financial requirements associated with the specific patterns of trade.

In the Portuguese Atlantic trade, De Bruijn & Cloots maintained business connections with Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, two of the three main Brazilian ports at the time. To interlope this protected market, De Bruijn & Cloots resorted mostly to two types of agency. In the first type, itinerant traders (*comissários volantes*) travelled back and forth in the Brazilian fleets, mainly carrying fabrics and haberdashery, which they dispatched as their own in the Lisbon customs house, and bringing back trade earnings in gold and colonial goods.[32] In the second type, trading houses in Rio de Janeiro and Bahia were responsible for redistributing products with slower turnover (gunpowder, guns and pistols) in the colonial market of textiles

31 As early as January 1714 they had an agent in the royal court who promised them access to Brazil and Asia. ANTT, JAT, bk. 193, fl. 257.

32 In the Portuguese Atlantic trade, foreign merchant houses regularly used these itinerant traders as commission agents to interlope the Brazilian market. For that reason, they were banned by royal decree of 6 December 1755 from engaging in colonial trade. See Jorge Pedreira, *Os Homens de Negócio da Praça de Lisboa de Pombal ao Vintismo, 1755-1822. Diferenciação, Reprodução e Identificação de um Grupo* Social (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Lisbon, 1995) 71.


Fol: 1 Lisboa A:o 1713

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f 122 ℳ 770

Komt voor t' nette Provenu L 875 ℳ 930

Komt voor de Helft van de H.r Daniel de Bruyn tot Amst.m L 437 ℳ 965.
Komt voor de 1/2 van M.r Direct Maarten de Pous tot Amst.m L 437 ℳ 965.
L 875 ℳ 930

Waar voor hare op haar Rekeninge Courant Crediteure, Sonder myne Prejuditie tot dat de Penningen tullen Jongh Komen &.

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Lisboa 12 April L 1713

Page of the Journal (*Journaal*) of the Firm De Bruijn and Cloots in Lisbon, 1713 (regarding credit to Daniel de Bruijn).

Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (*ANTT*), *Junta da Administração do Tabaco* (*JAT*), *Book 179, folio 26*

and commodities in return for commission of around three to four per cent.[33]

Neither of these forms of agency, however, could be used to interlope the Portuguese Asian trade, not only because of the latter's stricter legal framework, but also because it required higher levels of capital investment. Here, entering into a partnership with a Portuguese merchant was paramount for circumventing the restrictions that excluded foreigners. Indeed, only a Portuguese subject could request a licence (passport) for a ship to navigate outside the *Carreira da Índia* (Cape Route) and to call on ports under Portuguese jurisdiction, whether in the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, or the South China Sea.[34] Between 1715 and 1721, De Bruijn and Cloots organized two commercial voyages to Asia under the name of Manuel Castro Guimarães, son of a Lisbon wholesale trader with well-established connections to the royal court of King John V. Navigating under a Portuguese pavilion provided access not only to port cities under Portuguese rule, but also to those under the jurisdiction of the EIC and the VOC.[35]

The first voyage (1715-1719) touched Mozambique before setting sail to Madrasta (Coromandel Coast) and Calcutta (Gulf of Bengal), where ivory, slaves and gold were exchanged for tea, textiles and porcelain. During the inbound voyage, the ship called at Rio de Janeiro and remained there for several months, before finally returning to Lisbon in January 1719 with a cargo that included green tea, pepper, porcelain and gold. On the occasion of the second voyage, which took place between 1719 and 1721, their Portuguese partner obtained permission for their ship to call at Macao. This voyage entailed capital investments amounting to 86.4 million *réis,*[36] which De Bruijn and Cloots raised through two partnerships they set up: one for outfitting the ship (eleven investors) and another for the cargo (seventeen investors). Not surprisingly, almost fifty per cent of the shares in the first of these partnerships were held by Dutch merchants (established in Lisbon and Amsterdam), followed by French, English and German businessmen. In the cargo partnership, by contrast, the capital contributed by

33 On these forms of agency, see Cátia Antunes, Susana Münch Miranda and João Paulo Salvado, 'Between Brazil and Asia: The Global Business of De Bruijn & Cloots of Lisbon, 1713-1737', paper presented at the Economic History Society's Annual Conference 2016, University of Cambridge, April 2016.

34 On the *Carreira da Índia*, see C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825* (London 1991) 205-227 and Stuart Schwartz, 'The Economy of the Portuguese Empire', in: Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto (ed.), *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion*, 1400-1800 (Cambridge 2007) 19-48.

35 The VOC charter forbade Dutch subjects and residents from engaging in trade with Asia outside the company. For that reason, Dutch traders and investors used licences, shareholdings and employment in other companies to access Asian and VOC resources. Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Jan Company in Coromandel, 1605-1690: A Study in the Interrelations of European Commerce and Traditional Economies* (The Hague 1962); Jan Parmentier, *De Holle Compagnie*; Jan Parmentier and Karel Degryse, 'Kooplieden en Kapiteins: een Prosopografische Studie van de Kooplieden, Supercargo's en Scheepsofficieren van de Oostendse Handel op Oost-Indië en Guinea (1716-1732)', *Collectanea Maritima* 6 (1995) 119-241; Karel Degryse, *De Antwerpse Fortuinen: Kapitaalsaccumulatie, -investering en -rendement te Antwerpen in de 18de eeuw* (Antwerp 2005); Ole Feldbæk, 'The Danish Trading Companies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 34.3 (1986) 204-218.

36 The equivalent of 216,000 guilders. Conversion based on 1 guilder = 400 *réis*, as in N.W. Posthumus, *Nederlandse Prijsgeschiedenis*, deel 1, Leiden, 1943, LVI, 443, 584, 590-594.

Dutch investors came only third, after Portuguese and English capital, while the rest comprised contributions from German and French investors. The purpose of this voyage was mainly to bring back tea (black and green), given that demand for this commodity in the Northern European markets had risen rapidly in the first two decades of the 1700s and far exceeded the quantities able to be supplied by the VOC and the EIC.[37] When the ship anchored at Lisbon in October 1721, three quarters of her cargo was composed of tea (bohea and green), with porcelain, raw silk and drugs making up the rest, and the voyage was considered a success.[38] Zooming out of the Lisbon market, it is hardly surprising that De Bruijn & Cloots invested in imports of bohea tea, which was classified by the VOC and the EIC as unmarketable in Europe and thus left unsold in the Canton market. This market opportunity prompted private traders in the Southern Netherlands to invest in fitting out fleets to sail to China and buy up as much tea in Canton as possible. Two of the men behind this bold move were none other than Paulo Jacomo Cloots and Daniel de Bruijn, uncle and brother to Paulo Cloots and Willem de Bruijn of Lisbon respectively, and two of the main driving forces behind the chartering of the Ostend East India Company, the main trade of which remained massive imports of bohea tea into the European markets.

In addition to trade, De Bruijn & Cloots also successfully engaged in the business of issuing and discounting bills of exchange. Using both their network of agents and the parent firm's connections in Amsterdam, they took advantage of the opportunities presented by an expanding market economy, where financial services were in high demand. At this point, it should be stressed that, following the protectionist legislation passed by the Portuguese crown in the early 1600s, Portuguese merchants tended to specialize in colonial trade circuits and, therefore, to forego financial services, which were usually performed by foreign merchants settled in Lisbon.[39] In the early 1700s, against the background of the Brazilian gold cycle and the expanding commercial ties between Portugal and Europe through the Atlantic and the Asian trade, demand for financial services to fuel overseas trade was high, and De Bruijn & Cloots were well-positioned to satisfy this demand. They cleared bills not only for Portuguese merchants, but also for other foreign trading houses with offices in Lisbon, thus benefiting from their knowledge of the 'anonymity' of the financial markets, a practice that was widespread in Amsterdam and growing in use in London, allied to the levels of liquidity that their main partner, Jean-Baptiste, could provide from the Amsterdam market and through his agents in London.[40]

Ten years after emerging in the Lisbon business scene, De Bruijn & Cloots extended their portfolio to tax farming. By then,

37 See Chris Nierstrasz, *Rivalry for Trade in Tea and Textiles: The English and Dutch East India Companies, 1700-1800* (London 2015).

38 See Antunes et al., 'Between Brazil and Asia'.

39 See Pedreira, *Os Homens de Negócio*, 119.

40 Marjolein 't Hart, Joost Jonker and Jan Luiten van Zanden (ed.), *A Financial History of the Netherlands* (Cambridge 1997); Christiaan van Bochove, *The Economic Consequences of the Dutch. Economic Integration Around the North Sea, 1500-1800* (PhD dissertation, Utrecht University, 2008), especially chapter 5: 'Dutch Foreign Investment in a Broader Perspective', 126-153.

they were already running a successful business and had well-established connections with the local Dutch through the marriage of Paulo Cloots to Maria Luísa van Zeller (1705-1777), daughter of Jan van Zeller, the most prominent and influential Dutch businessman in Lisbon.[41] On 16 November 1721, they and Arnaldo van Zeller, Paulo's brother-in law, farmed the Portuguese tobacco monopoly, for which they paid an annual fee of 720 million *réis*[42] in return for the exclusive right to process and sell Brazilian tobacco in the domestic market (including the Atlantic islands of the Azores and Madeira) for a period of three years (1722-1724).[43] Sure enough, they took on responsibility for collecting the single most valuable royal revenue at the time, representing 19 per cent of the crown's total revenue, on the assumption that this would be a highly lucrative business.[44] In addition to expecting that the rents extracted would by far exceed the fee and the operating costs, the Dutch merchants also expected to benefit from other sources of profit derived from privileges usually granted to the tobacco monopoly holders. The most lucrative of these privileges was the prerogative annually to dispatch a ship to Brazil outside the convoy system; this allowed them to obtain better prices, owing to the lack of competition, both when selling domestic and European commodities and when buying colonial goods, mainly tobacco.[45] For De Bruijn & Cloots, this prerogative also entailed the opportunity to openly participate in the Brazilian trade.

Despite the enticement of high returns, running the tobacco monopoly was a challenging enterprise. De Bruijn & Cloots and their partner were expected to manage the five royal manufactures where the tobacco leaves were processed into powder and snuff, an activity that, among other things, required the acquisition of tobacco rolls to be effectively coordinated with the transformation process. Furthermore, they had to organize the distribution of snuff or leaves to local businessmen in the domestic market, which was ensured through the sub-farming of the 21 fiscal districts (*provedorias*) into which the territory was divided for the purpose of the monopoly.[46] The scale and scope of the monopoly consequently required a high degree of coordination and monitoring of tobacco sales, given that regular inflows of cash from the regional subfarmers were of paramount importance. Otherwise, the monthly payments due to

41 Jan van Zeller was born in Amsterdam and established himself as a businessman in Porto in the late seventeenth century before moving to Lisbon. He eventually became Resident Minister of the King of Prussia (1717-1734). See Pedreira, *Os Homens de Negócio*, 227 and Luiz de Mello Vaz de São Payo, 'Uma linhagem cosmopolita do Porto', in: *Congresso internacional de las ciencias genealógica y heraldica*, vol. 3 (Madrid 1983), 91-127, maxime 105-106.

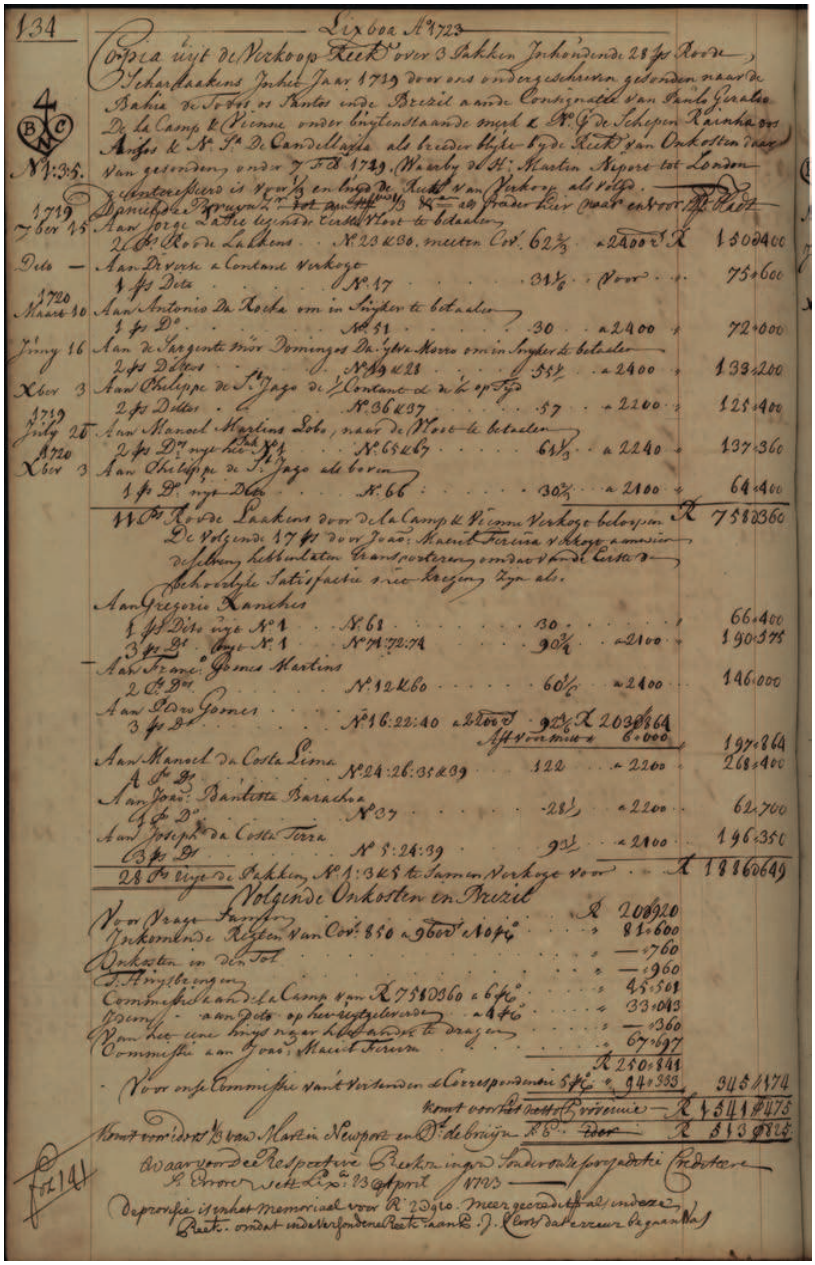
42 The equivalent of 1,800,000 guilders.

43 Susana Münch Miranda, 'Risk and Failure in Tax Farming: De Bruijn & Cloots of Lisbon and the Portuguese Tobacco Monopoly, 1722-1727', *Itinerario* (under review).

44 See João Paulo Salvado, 'O estanco do tabaco em Portugal: contrato-geral e consórcios mercantis, 1702-1750', in: Santiago de Luxán (ed.), *Política y hacienda del tabaco en los imperios ibéricos, siglos XVII-XIX* (Madrid 2014) 133-153, maxime 145.

45 Miranda, 'Risk and Failure'. On the convoy system, see Costa et al., *An Economic History of Portugal*, 125-126.

46 On these fiscal districts, see António Manuel Hespanha, *As Vésperas do Leviathan: instituições e poder político. Portugal* (*século XVII*) (Coimbra 1994) 208 and 213.



Page of the Invoice Book (*Factuurboek*) of the Firm De Bruijn and Cloots in Lisbon, 1723 (transaction of cloths and exchanges in Brazil).

Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (*ANTT*), *Junta da Administração do Tabaco* (*JAT*), *Book 248, folio 152*

the royal treasury would be hard to meet, thus compromising the possible success of the contract.

De Bruijn, Cloots and Van Zeller held the Portuguese tobacco monopoly between 1722 and 1727, having been granted a second period of three years in 1724. During these six years, their participation in Brazilian colonial trade widened considerably, both in scale and scope. The six ships that they dispatched allowed them to strengthen their position as suppliers of European and domestic goods in the colonial market, and also as wholesale traders of tobacco. From being one of many players in the tobacco trade, they rose to become major importers, given that they and a Portuguese partner together supplied 70 per cent of the raw product processed in the manufactures during the six years of their contract, thus adding another source of profit to their business. For the same reason, they were also able to secure a dominant position in the re-exporting of tobacco rolls, mainly to Italian port cities and to Spain.[47] But while their exploiting of the benefits inherent to the position of tax farmers may have been a success, the running of the tobacco monopoly marked the beginning of their downfall.

By the end of the second tax farm in 1727, the Dutch syndicate was insolvent, with outstanding debts to the royal treasury amounting to over 140 million *réis*,[48] an exorbitant amount for any business, a situation that did not at all relate to their status as foreigners. Although explaining their collapse as farmers of the tobacco monopoly is not an easy task, it seems to have been caused by a combination of conjunctural and contingent factors that adversely impacted on tobacco sales. As this was a state-owned monopoly with administered prices, tobacco sales declined steeply in the first year following a 20 per cent increase in the retail price. This was further aggravated by the dumping of a large quantity of tobacco by the previous monopoly holder.[49] While consumption subsequently rose slightly in the following years, it was insufficient to cover the significant financial loss that the firm had incurred by the end of the first contract, while the impact of short-term debt and liquidity problems resulted in difficulties in securing further credit, especially as the second contract drew to a close. By 1741, still burdened with significant debts both to the king and to other creditors, business operations in Lisbon became increasingly difficult and, seeing no prospect of any improvement, Willem de Bruijn and Paulo Cloots fled the country.

The Resources of Others: Final Considerations

Although illustrative, the successes and failures of the firm De Bruijn & Cloots of Lisbon in the first half of the eighteenth century encapsulate a widespread phenomenon across Early Modern Europe. Subjects of monarchs and citizens of republics participated actively and willingly in exploring resources in the colonial

47 See Antunes et al., 'Between Brazil and Asia'.

48 The equivalent of 350,000 guilders.

49 The new prices were set by the monarchy in August 1721, weeks before the firm's decision to bid for the contract. A total of 200,000 pounds (in weight) of snuff was dumped, representing 23 per cent of total domestic consumption (Miranda, 'Risk and Failure').

domains of other states, including making use of opportunities for employment, as well as trading in specific bulk and luxury items, financial services and tax farming. Although this article showcases the tale of Dutch citizens, we suggest that similar phenomena also happened in other Early Modern 'nations', either through specific groups or particular individuals. The case of the Portuguese in the Spanish Atlantic, the Scots in the Nordic Empires, the Genoese in the Spanish domains, and the Dutch in the North Sea area are but a few examples.[50] The historiographical consequences of these findings are straightforward, although difficult to encapsulate within existing historiographical trends. In the first place, it seems unreasonable to consider the possibility of pursuing the lives and experiences of these communities and individuals, using the nation as the unit of analysis, within the constraints imposed by the historiography of a specific empire or state. However, the theoretical and methodological principles of transnational or global history may offer solace to anyone pursuing such themes. In the second place, the need to 'de-nationalize' the study of empire building and colonial exploitation requires an intellectual investment to create the new concepts and typologies that may facilitate the understanding of the economic, social, political, and even cultural consequences of foreign acquisition of the resources of others. In the third place, historians of 'foreign communities' and 'merchant nations' may have to question the role played by these organized institutions *vis-à-vis* the men and women from similar backgrounds, acting in the same market places, and who temporarily remained outside the group, while still being able to integrate with the host society. In this sense, the study of empires needs to embrace a re-conceptualization of its own dogmas and move towards entangled and transnational analysis, breaking, once and for all, with the national paradigm.

50 Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*; Murdoch, *Network North*; Bochove, *The Economic Consequences of the Dutch*; García-Montón, *Génova y eal Atlántico.*

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