

Mariana de Campos Françaço, *De Olinda a Holanda: O Gabinete de Curiosidades de Nassau*. Campinas, Brasil: University of Campinas, 2014. 288 pp. ISBN: 9788526810716. \$66.00.

After John Maurice had been named *stadholder* of Brazil by the West India Company he took the painters Frans Post and Albert Eeckhout with him on his Brazilian travels as members of his entourage of learned men to record what they saw in the country, both scientifically and artistically. The painters depicted almost everything they saw; Post painted mainly landscapes and Eeckhout people and their work. They thus made an important contribution to contemporary Europe's knowledge of Brazil.

Historians, art historians, and ethnologists have praised the authenticity of the Indians' portraits and at the same time their role in colonial representation. Although Dutch power in Brazil eroded and John Maurice returned to Holland in 1644, the more than one hundred colonial paintings by Post and Eeckhout coined the visual imagination of Brazil. The paintings commissioned by John Maurice can also be interpreted as princely representation since the patron, collector and founder of the "Mauritshuis" donated the major part of the Brazilian paintings to European princes, such as Frederick III of Denmark (1654), the Great Elector of Brandenburg (1652) and to King Louis XIV of France (1679). That is why the most important paintings are today preserved in Copenhagen and especially in Paris (Louvre), where they provided the model for French tapestries.

Although the story of the Post and Eeckhout paintings has been examined and told many times, Mariana de Campos Françaço's book provides new insights into Dutch Brazil during the rule of John Maurice.¹ Since she addresses a Portuguese-speaking readership, she also provides an introduction to the Dutch Atlantic trade and economy and the importance role of sugar production.

The author links the Dutch Atlantic commerce with an intensified circulation of "things," in which she includes commodities as sugar, capsicum, spices, tropical timber (redwood) and ivory. After the establishment of the Dutch rule, the interests in "strange things" were extended to animals, especially to parrots, feathers, and plumes. Parrots became desired objects in the collections of rarities of Holland. Transported on Dutch ships together with other goods, even those parrots, who did not survive, retained some value (as stuffed animals or cut into pieces). Parrots and other animals also figure prominently in the well-known travel reports by Hans Staden, André Thevet, Georg Markgraf and Johan Nieuhof and of course in the unpublished Thierbuch of Zacharias Wagener.

In the last chapter, Mariana de Campos Françaço links the objects in Europe to recent research on the history of collecting, especially the princely cabinets of curiosities. She tries to trace the circulation of John Maurice objects in Europe and elucidates on the importance of exotic objects and paintings in princely gift giving.

To sum up, this book is a stimulating new history of John Maurice's Brazilian collecting and its impact on early modern Europe.

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¹ Rebecca Parker Brienen, *Visions of Savage Paradise: Albert Eekhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).