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**Colonial careers : Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, Rijckloff Volckertsz. van Goens and career-making in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Empire**  
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## 4. Becoming ‘The Brazilian’

*Johan Maurits as a military commander in Brazil, 1636-1640*

This chapter will explore the tenure of Johan Maurits in Brazil in the period 1636-1640, with a special focus on his performance as a military commander. The start of the period under examination is marked by his appointment to the governor-generalship of Brazil by the XIX in the summer of 1636, while the end of the period is marked by the Portuguese assertion of independence from the Habsburg crown in 1640. This event had enormous repercussions for the entire South Atlantic system in general, and the position and future prospects of the Dutch colony in Brazil in particular. Johan Maurits’ final years in Brazil (1640-1644), including his dismissal in 1642, will be dealt with in chapter eight. This chapter thus deals with what is commonly seen in the literature as the ‘good’ period of Dutch Brazil, and on which scholarly attention for Johan Maurits’ tenure in Brazil has tended to focus. As Johan Maurits arrived in Brazil with an entourage of scholars, scientists and artists, scholars have generally chosen to concentrate on his cultural projects, including the first paintings of the New World, by Frans Post and Albert Eckhout, which attracted great attention in Europe.<sup>294</sup> These projects also included the first astronomical observatory in the Americas, which was built by Georg Marckgraf, who also cooperated with Willem Piso and Johannes de Laet on the monumental *De Historia Naturalis Brasiliae*, which remained the standard work on Brazilian flora and fauna until Humboldt’s work in the nineteenth century.<sup>295</sup> Towards the end of this period, Johan Maurits initiated some of the building projects for which he became well known: two palaces near Recife, bridges connecting the peninsula of Recife proper with the island of Antônio Vaz, and the construction of a new city on that island. This new city was intended to provide more space for (cheap) housing as Recife was overcrowded and, at the time, one of the most expensive locations on earth.<sup>296</sup> It was built on part of the former *Grootkwartier*, the military camp established after the conquest of Recife in 1630. Johan Maurits extended the urban plan of this town further south and dubbed the whole ensemble *Mauritsstad*, or *Mauritia*, for obvious reasons. It was reported to have been designed by famous Dutch architect Pieter Post, who had also worked on the Mauritshuis in The Hague along with Van Campen and the brother of the famous painter Frans Post.<sup>297</sup> The urban design of this city has also been studied extensively,<sup>298</sup> with the aptly named *Jodenstraat* (Jews’ Street) having, for example, the first synagogue in the Americas. Maurits’ *Vrijburg* palace contained in its grounds a botanical garden, as well as the first zoo in the

<sup>294</sup> J.D. North, ‘Georg Marckgraf: An Astronomer in the New World’, in: E. Boogaart, H.R. Hoetink and P.J.P. Whitehead (eds.), *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679* (The Hague 1979) 394-423, 394, 403, 408-416.

<sup>295</sup> P.J.P. Whitehead, ‘Georg Marckgraf and Brazilian Zoology’, in: *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679*, 424-471, 424.

<sup>296</sup> Wätjen, *Das Niederländische Kolonialreich*, 244-245.

<sup>297</sup> There is some debate as to when Pieter Post went to Brazil and how long he stayed there. See: J.J. Terwen, ‘The buildings of Johan Maurits’, in: *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679* (The Hague 1979) 54-141, 87-88.

<sup>298</sup> There is a large amount of literature on the design of Mauritsstad, including H. van Nederveen Meerkerk, ‘Eine neue Stadt in der Neuen Welt. Wie die Idee zur Stadt wuchs’, in: G. Brunn and C. Neutsch (eds.), *Sein Feld war die Welt: Johan Moritz von Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679): Von Siegen über die Niederlande und Brasilien nach Brandenburg* (Münster, New York, Munich and Berlin 2008) 105-122, and the chapter on Recife in the (flawed) R. van Oers, *Dutch town planning overseas during VOC and WIC rule (1600-1800)* (Zutphen 2000) 139-149.

Americas.<sup>299</sup> There are thus a large number of 'firsts' connected to Johan Maurits' stay in Brazil, most of which have been well studied in isolation.

However, this scholarship – focusing on art, urban design, architecture, botany and other sciences and religion, particularly religious toleration – is almost completely disconnected from the 'other history' of Dutch Brazil as there are, as yet, very few works on the actual governance of the colony or, perhaps more crucially still, the conduct of war in the colony. For almost its entire existence, the WIC colony in Brazil was a warzone, and a plantation economy dependent on the large-scale employment of enslaved African labor. By focusing on the fine arts and sciences, we thus run the risk of ignoring the fundamentally violent nature of the WIC's colonial project in Brazil. This matters deeply to the study of the career of Johan Maurits. Chapter two asserted that his position in Brazil can best be understood as that of a stadholder, with his title – captain-general of the army and admiral-general of the fleet – mimicking that of the stadholder in the Netherlands. In judging the success or failure of Johan Maurits as a governor-general, the XIX thus looked firstly at the success of military operations in Brazil. The point is not to ignore the artistic, architectural and scientific achievements in Brazil. Given the fact that Johan Maurits took the trouble to establish a circle of artists and scientists around him, this was important to him. The point is rather to connect these affairs to the governance of the colony. I argue that the artistic projects, especially the architectural achievements were important as they became symbols of the power of 'the Count in Brazil'. The artistic and scientific achievements of Dutch Brazil should thus be seen as an integral part of Johan Maurits' attempt to recreate an acceptably nobleman's court and entourage in Brazil.<sup>300</sup> This aspect will be returned to in chapter six, when the bridge-building efforts of Johan Maurits are reexamined.

Ultimate success in the colony depended on three interlinked sets of operations. The colony could firstly only be made profitable if the countryside was pacified and cleared of bands of rebels, and guerilla fighters were defeated or expelled from WIC-controlled territory. This would require operations in the south of the colony to establish a feasible border with Portuguese Brazil ruled from Bahia. Secondly, only by occupying Bahia itself could the WIC break Luso-Brazilian resistance once and for all. Thirdly, profitability of the colony depended on the sugar plantations, which could operate only if provided with an enslaved African workforce. To maintain the viability of the sugar industry thus required capturing one or more of the ports from which these enslaved Africans were transported across the Atlantic; either in Guinea, but preferably in Angola. As military success was crucial to the economic success of the colony and the profitability of the entire WIC, we can reasonably assume that Johan Maurits would be judged first and foremost on the conduct of the war. It is surprising, therefore, that there is hardly any literature on the conduct of the war in Brazil, with notable exceptions being an article by Benjamin Teensma on the WIC's intelligence network in Brazil, and the text of a much older address by S.P. L'Honoré-Naber from 1930.<sup>301</sup> Given the vast amount of literature on the figure

<sup>299</sup> The gardens of Johan Maurits are studied in detail in: W. Dienenhofen, 'Johan Maurits and his Gardens', in: *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679* (The Hague 1979) 197-236, with 197-200 discussing the garden at Vrijburg. See also: M.A. da Silva and M.M. Alcides, 'Collecting and Framing the Wilderness: The Garden of Johan Maurits (1604-79) in North-East Brazil', *Garden History*, 30:2 (2002) 153-176.

<sup>300</sup> For a brief discussion of the importance of architectural details for defining status in Europe's nobility, see: J. Duindam, *Myths of Power* (Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam 1995) 13-15.

<sup>301</sup> B. Teensma, 'Nederlands-Braziliaans militair inlichtingenwerk van de West-Indische Compagnie, 1629-1654', 277-312. S.P. L'Honoré-Naber, *De West-Indische Compagnie in Brazilië en Guinee: De verrichtingen harer Zeemacht. Haar Ondergang in Brazilië bij gebrek aan Strijdmiddelen te Water* (Speech delivered to the *Onze Vloot* society, March 13, 1930).

of Johan Maurits – who, it must be remembered, served as a soldier for most of his life – it is surprising to find not a single article focusing on his performance as a military commander. Although art and architecture have tended to 'crowd out' warfare as a point of focus, Johan Maurits in Brazil should be seen firstly as a military commander, and was certainly seen as such by the XIX. He himself would have seen his military role as part of his overall identity as a nobleman. For Johan Maurits, therefore, warfare and the establishment of his court in Brazil went hand in hand.

The previous paragraph used the term 'court' to describe the household of Johan Maurits in Brazil. And this seems the correct term to use, given that much of what is unique about Dutch Brazil in comparison with other contemporary Dutch colonies derives from the fact that the governor-general of Brazil was a nobleman (in itself quite rare in the Dutch case) who established himself in courtly fashion, surrounded by a retinue of followers and supporters. As the previous chapter on Johan Maurits argued, the main reason for him to accept the job in the first place was probably his inability to support proper courtly style in The Hague. Once established in Brazil, therefore, he lost no time in establishing a proper nobleman's court. A thorough analysis of his career in Brazil should thus synthesize the courtly aspects, of which support for the arts and sciences was a part, with the military and economic life of the colony. Overshadowing all of this was the difficult relationship between the Dutch leaders of the colony and the majority of its population, who were still Catholic Portuguese. An important question, therefore, is whether the ostentatious display of a nobleman's patronage and splendor had an effect in placating the Portuguese inhabitants of the colony?

This chapter will thus focus on two aspects of Johan Maurits' tenure in Brazil in the period 1636-1640: the creation of his court, and his performance as commander-in-chief of the WIC's South Atlantic forces. Together, these two aspects of his early tenure reveal much of his career trajectory, as well as the colony's specific history. The creation of a nobleman's court in Brazil explains many of Johan Maurits' reasons for taking the position in the first place, even though this inevitably brought him into conflict with the WIC directors, as well as the formal WIC hierarchy in Brazil. The second aspect concerns Johan Maurits' performance as a military commander. This will require examining a number of different aspects of command: not only his personal and tactical command of troops (and ships) in the field (or at sea), but also his strategic direction and operational leadership, as well as grasping the importance of logistics management, and Johan Maurits' willingness and ability to delegate tasks to subordinates. A closer examination of the 'Artichewsky affair' will make clear that this last point could prove especially problematic.<sup>302</sup> As these questions are very poorly covered in the literature, they must be answered primarily by turning to the sources themselves. This aspect contrasts with the establishment of Johan Maurits' court, for which the vast literature on his art, architecture, gardening and urban design can be fruitfully consulted, albeit with a different focus. Rather than looking at these cultural projects themselves, I will study their social impact on the WIC elite in Brazil and argue that the creation of a nobleman's court in Recife allowed Johan Maurits to take on a different role from that of governor-general of the WIC. In the competition between the two, Johan Maurits, Count of Nassau-Siegen, with a court in Recife, increasingly won out over Johan Maurits, Governor-General of Dutch Brazil on behalf of the West India Company. This

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<sup>302</sup> In referring to the Polish nobleman Christoffel Artichewsky, I have chosen the spelling of the name that seems most used, alternatives used in the literature and the sources include Atichefsky, Arciszewski, Artichofsky.

tendency continued in the second half of his tenure in Brazil, which is dealt with in chapter six. In a final section of this chapter, I will examine the relations between the various branches of the WIC's administration in Brazil, and the changing relations between the High and Secret Council (including Johan Maurits) and the XIX in the Netherlands.

### **Establishing a nobleman's court in the New World**

Fundamental to any understanding of the governorship and career of Johan Maurits must be the realization that once in Brazil, he set about to recreate a European nobleman's court in the New World. Within the seventeenth-century Dutch colonial context, this was a unique experiment, although comparisons with the symbolism and style of Iberian colonial governors may reveal interesting parallels. The creation of a court – at the expense of the WIC – on a scale that Johan Maurits could not possibly hope to afford back home (whether in The Hague or Siegen) is highly indicative of his social aims. The court he established served a variety of ends. On the one hand, it has been argued, it helped to appease the Portuguese inhabitants of the colony, who are thought to have been more accepting of noble rule, a form of government that they at least recognized. On the other hand, it also served to promote Johan Maurits as a politician in his own right, independent of his role as governor-general in the service of the WIC. The courtly entourage also strengthens the interpretation, as argued in chapter two, of Johan Maurits' office in Brazil being modeled on that of the stadholder in the Republic. In terms of style and symbolism, there was a very clear difference between the *court* of the governor of Brazil, and other centers of colonial governance, such as that set up by Van Goens in Colombo in the 1660s and 1670s (examined in chapters five and seven).

Johan Maurits' court in Brazil comprised various different aspects. Artistic patronage, as already mentioned, was one, and this has received its due share of scholarly attention. Another aspect, and perhaps more importantly for Johan Maurits' performance in Brazil, was the fact that the 'free table' allowed Johan Maurits to act as patron to important individuals in the colony. Article eleven of the contract between Maurits and the XIX stipulated a monthly salary of 1500 guilders, along with 6000 guilders in one-off equipment costs, and a '*free table for his Grace [Johan Maurits] and his retinue*'.<sup>303</sup> Although this last condition seems like something of an afterthought in the contract, it would cost the company dearly. A list drawn up in November 1641 clearly shows the supplies consumed by Johan Maurits' court, with forty-two specified entries, ranging from French and Spanish wines, beer and brandy, to raisins, various spices and almonds.<sup>304</sup> In all, the court of Johan Maurits consumed supplies worth 9000 guilders per month, which was six times the monthly salary he received and clearly shows the importance of the contractual agreement for the company to pay Johan Maurits' expense account. This small line in the contract enabled him to keep a much grander court than would have been possible if he had been required to pay for it himself. This huge outlay on food became a matter of contention between Johan Maurits and the XIX as the latter found this sum to be excessively high. For the social construction of a court, however, the free table was crucial as it allowed Johan Maurits to tie individuals to him as a private person, rather than to him in his official capacity. This in turn helped him to subsume the government of Brazil within the sphere of his private court, which

<sup>303</sup> '*de vrije tafel soo voor sijn Gen als sijn gevolg*', NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 2 page 255 and following.

<sup>304</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 56, unfoliated piece 248b, scan 1469-1470.



was itself a subsidiary of the stadholderly court.<sup>305</sup> Johan Maurits was thus able to support a large following at the expense of the WIC and so reinforce his own position in the colony.

The next step in building a court was the construction of accommodation fit for a nobleman-governor. Initially, Johan Maurits found accommodation in one of the houses in Recife itself. This house was recorded by Zacharias Wagenaer in his *Thierbuch* (see Figure 8).

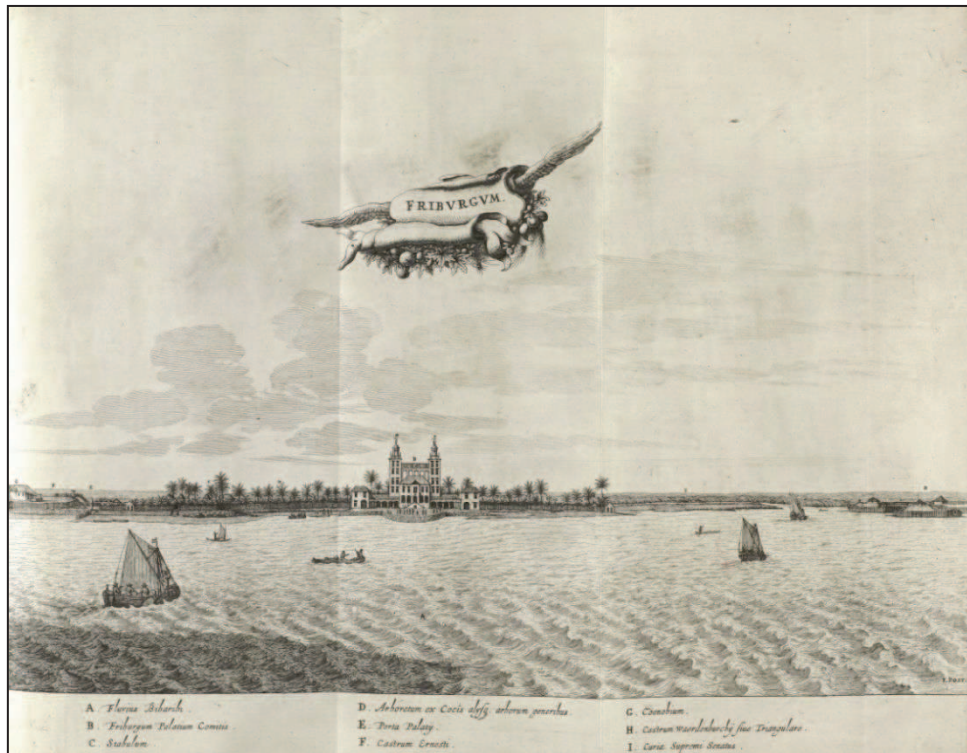
**Figure 8: Johan Maurits' house in Recife**



Source: Zacharias Wagenaer, *Thierbuch*.

This accommodation proved, however, to be too small – partly because the meetings of the High Council were held there – and not stately enough for the needs of Johan Maurits. Rather than a modified town house, he wanted a true palace, complete with gardens and zoo. As Recife itself was too crowded to build anything on this scale, Johan Maurits' palace became part of the new city to be constructed on the island of Antônio Vaz, across the river from Recife. Starting in 1639, construction thus began on a new palace, named *Vrijburg* (see Figure 9).

<sup>305</sup> Johan Maurits, for example, later referred to Constantijn Huygens, the powerful secretary of the stadholder, as 'always having been his patron': J.A. de Worp, *De briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens 1608-1687*, Johan Maurits to Huygens, 31-1-1645, part 4, p. 123. J. Adamson (ed.), *The Princely Courts of Europe*, introduction.

**Figure 9: Vrijburg Palace**

Source: *Gezicht op paleis Vrijburg*, ca. 1636-1644, Jan van Brosterhuyzen, after Frans Jansz. Post, 1645-1647. Rijksmuseum: BI-1892-3415-41.

This would be a true nobleman's palace and proved a suitable setting for a courtly display of power. Although the actual design of the building has been the center of some debate, the analysis by J.J. Terwen will be followed here as it is still the most thorough reconstruction of the building.<sup>306</sup> The actual design need not concern us here; the costs of construction, however, are another matter. J.J. Terwen mentions that the costs of building Vrijburg amounted to 600,000 guilders.<sup>307</sup> Terwen argues that Johan Maurits would have paid for this himself, with 2% of the plunder from military campaigns. This hardly seems realistic: a 2% yield of 600,000 guilders presupposes a total yield from plunder of no less than thirty million guilders. To place this sum in context: the famous 'silver fleet', the *Flota* captured by Piet Hein at Matanzas in 1628, yielded an estimated eleven or twelve million guilders. Even if the company's books showed this amount of plunder to have been taken from the enemy (which is by no means certain), most of these spoils of war were not in ready cash in the form of valuable metals, but rather in land, sugar mills and slaves. These could not easily be turned into useful products or revenue for building a palace. It is likely, therefore, that the company had to bear the costs of Johan Maurits' construction efforts, either directly or by forwarding the cash to him. This interpretation is borne out by a later letter from the XIX dated August 3, 1643, in which the directors of the company wrote the following: 'We find our missive of June 19, 1642 on the use of materials and labor of the company for his Excellency's

<sup>306</sup> J. Terwen, 'The buildings of Johan Maurits', in: *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679* (The Hague 1979) 54-141, 89-98.

<sup>307</sup> H. Wätjen, *Das holländische Kolonialreich in Brasilien: Ein Kapitel aus der Kolonialgeschichte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (The Hague and Gotha, 1921) 123; E. Larsen, *Frans Post: Interprète du Brésil* (Amsterdam and Rio de Janeiro 1962), 21-22.



*private use not followed satisfactorily.*<sup>308</sup> I will argue in chapter eight that Johan Maurits returned from Brazil in 1644 virtually bankrupt because of the costs of his building projects. The disputes over the payment of his share in the prize money from Brazil, and which led him to pursue a court case against the company in the 1650s, will be discussed later on.

Besides a physical court with palaces, gardens and a zoo, the creation of a true nobleman's court required the creation of social mechanisms of control so that the Count of Nassau-Siegen could tie the colonial elite to himself, rather than to the official hierarchy of the WIC. Building stately palaces, gardens and a zoo underlined the elevated position of Johan Maurits in Brazil. These were the symbols of his power and, though unproductive from the company's point of view, crucial for Johan Maurits. In this case, the roles of Johan Maurits, the Governor-General of Brazil, clashed with those of Johan Maurits, the Count of Nassau-Siegen (residing in Recife). By surrounding himself with artists and 'scientists', Johan Maurits made a powerful statement about his social position and aspirations. This clash of roles became a problem for the company, however, as Johan Maurits drew other company officials into his private orbit. This will be illustrated later in this chapter, when the 'Artichewsky case' will be discussed. First, however, I will discuss the performance of Johan Maurits in what was perhaps his most important role: that of commander-in-chief of the WIC's armed forces in Brazil.

### Commanding the army of Brazil

Perhaps the most important task for Johan Maurits in Brazil was the command of the company's armed forces stationed there. As argued in chapter two, Johan Maurits had been appointed to the position because the XIX needed an experienced soldier to take over and win its war against the Habsburg crown in Brazil. Although Johan Maurits was a professional soldier throughout his career, it is striking to note that there are no studies of his performance as a military commander. Hoetink and Van den Boogaart stated in their introduction to the 1979 work *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679: Essays on the tercentenary of his death* that 'The absence of an article on Johan Maurits as a military commander is particularly regrettable.'<sup>309</sup> This lack of serious scholarship on his military career is replicated in virtually all other works. The 2004 collection *Johan Moritz von Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) der Brasilianer: Aufbruch in neue Welten* presents a very general review of his military career before and after his departure for Brazil,<sup>310</sup> while Olaf van Nimwegen provides a more detailed review of his performance as a military commander during the 'Munster War' in 1664-1666.<sup>311</sup> There is no scholarship, however, on Johan Maurits' performance as a military commander in Brazil, which is somewhat surprising as this was his most important task. Indeed, there is very little work at all on the actual conduct of the war in Brazil. The recent volume in the NIMH series on Dutch military history, *Oorlogen overzee*, admittedly provides a handy overview of operations in Brazil, but is still quite minimal, based as it is on available secondary literature.<sup>312</sup> A

<sup>308</sup> NL-HaNA 1.05.01.01 OWIC, inv. no. 9, page 112-113. Dutch original: 'gene voors. is, soo vinden wij onse voors. missive vanden 19 junij 1642 niet ten genoeye voldaan te weeten over de materialen en arbeidsluijden vande Com.ie die sijne Ex.tie tot sijnen particulieren dienst gebruijct...'.  
<sup>309</sup> H.R. Hoetink, E. van den Boogaart 'Foreword', in: *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen 1604-1679* (The Hague 1979), 5.  
<sup>310</sup> Wolfgang Degenhardt, 'Eine Karriere in den Niederlanden' 16-25 and Wolfgang Degenhardt, 'Im Dienst des Kurfürsten und der Republik der Niederlande' 38-49, in: *Johan Moritz von Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) der Brasilianer: Aufbruch in neue Welten* (Siegen 2003).  
<sup>311</sup> O. van Nimwegen, 'Deser landen crijchsvolck': *het Staatse leger en de militaire revoluties (1588-1688)* (Bakker: Amsterdam 2006) 347-354.  
<sup>312</sup> G. Knaap, H. den Heijer, *Oorlogen overzee: militair optreden door compagnie en staat buiten Europa 1595-1814* (2015) 286-289.

possible explanation for this absence may be that most of the scholars working on Johan Maurits and Dutch Brazil have been more interested in the architectural and art history perspectives than in his military performance. For my purposes, however, the performance of Johan Maurits as commander-in-chief, or 'Captain- and Admiral-General of Brazil', as his contract puts it, is crucial, given that the conduct of the war was the primary basis on which the XIX assessed his performance. And although the WIC achieved some notable successes during Johan Maurits' tenure in Brazil, it was the conduct of the war that resulted in the first tensions between the directors and their governor.

*Operations: from Porto Calvo to the Siege of Bahia, 1637-1638*

Arriving in Brazil in January 1637, Johan Maurits found the colony to be in a precarious military situation. Immediately after the occupation of Recife in 1630, the Portuguese had retreated inland and were waging a guerrilla war against the WIC forces in Recife, and this stranglehold could only gradually be broken. The Brazilian-Portuguese forces were using a combination of light troops for lightning attacks on the inland sugar mills and coastal forts. These forts provided the troops with rallying points and, more importantly, served as the logistical 'anchors' for the guerilla operations that were effectively coordinated from the Arraial do Bom Jesus, inland from Recife. This inland fortification was resupplied from Portuguese forts on the coast: Reis Magos on the Rio Grande and Joao Pessoa on the Paráíba river to the north, and Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Porto Calvo in the south. Effective suppression of the inland warfare was required in order to secure the sugar lands (and these lands were the reason the WIC was interested in Brazil in the first place), and this demanded a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, mobile forces were needed to round up and pursue bands of guerillas inland and to secure the important sugar mills. This mobile warfare against the lighter-equipped Brazilian-Portuguese forces, who had a better understanding of the local topography, could only succeed, however, if accompanied by simultaneous efforts to reduce the Portuguese coastal fortifications that functioned as logistic bases for the inland warfare. Supplies, men and weapons from Bahia were funneled through these forts to the inland areas. The northern flank of Recife had been secured in 1633-1634, with the capture of Fort Reis Magos (renamed Fort Ceulen by order of the WIC director in Brazil Matthijs van Ceulen) and the fort at the mouth of the Paráíba river (renamed Frederiksstad).<sup>313</sup> These successes were followed in 1635 by the siege and capture of the Arraial do Bom Jesus by Christoffel Artichewsky.<sup>314</sup> The attention of both the WIC and the Brazilian-Portuguese forces then turned south to the forts at Cabo de Santo Agostinho, Porto Calvo, Rio d'Alagoa, Rio São Francisco and, ultimately, Bahia.

Even before the arrival of Johan Maurits, WIC forces under Von Schoppe and Artichewsky had operated in the area and had captured – and lost – the fort at Porto Calvo, while retaining fortifications at Paripueira and Santo Agostinho. Porto Calvo now became the fulcrum of the fight in the south. It was the supply base for the Brazilian-Portuguese forces operating in

<sup>313</sup> J.C.M. Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky, Poolsch krijgsoverste in dienst van de West-Indische Compagnie in Brazilië 1630-1639: een proeve tot eerherstel* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague 1937) 10-11. This account by Warnsinck of the fight between Johan Maurits and Christoffel Artichewsky was published at the same time in: J. de Laet, S.P. L'Honoré-Naber and J.C.M. Warnsinck, *Iaerlijck Verhael van de Verrichtingen der Geootroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie in derthien Boeken. Vierde deel, boek XI-XIII (1634-1636)* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague 1937) XXV-LXXII. For clarity's sake, I will refer only to the separately published book. M. Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade. Dutch – Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595-1674* (Leiden 2012) 143.

<sup>314</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky*, 11-13.

the rear of the Dutch coastal forts as far north as Recife. Artichewsky spent much of the summer and fall of 1636 chasing these guerillas, but could not convince the Political Council in Recife that the only lasting way to pacify the countryside was to capture the supply base at Porto Calvo. Instead of composing a concentrated striking force, the Political Council preferred to scatter the army in garrisons and smaller counter-guerilla operations. This changed, however, with the arrival of Johan Maurits in Brazil in January 1637.

When Johan Maurits arrived, he placed the new troops he brought with him in the existing garrisons and combined the more experienced troops into a mobile force, and then moved south against Porto Calvo.<sup>315</sup> This was the only militarily viable way to deal with the guerilla warfare. As the WIC's troops could not capture the small bands of Luso-Brazilian troops inland, it was only by applying the aspects of warfare in which the WIC had an advantage – siege warfare and naval operations – that the WIC could hope to win. Operations against the fort started on February 18, 1637, and on March 3 the fort capitulated.<sup>316</sup> The Brazilian-Portuguese (Spanish) forces under Bagnuolo quickly retreated south, a retreat that turned into flight.<sup>317</sup> This effectively cut off the guerilla fighters in the north from reinforcements and forced them to retreat south. Large stocks of war-making material were captured at Porto Calvo, including the heavy weapons needed for siege warfare. The list of the loot included three 24-pounder cannons, two 22-pounders, one 18-pounder, nine 10-pounders, four heavy siege mortars, large supplies of gunpowder and shot, and a total of 372 mortar grenades.<sup>318</sup> The WIC's forces also marched south and erected a fort at Penedo on the Rio São Francisco to mark the southern border of the WIC territory.<sup>319</sup> This fort was named *Fort Maurits*, after the new governor-general. For the time being, this secured the border of the WIC's Brazilian domains in the south. Ultimately, however, only the capture of Bahia could end all Portuguese resistance in the north of Brazil. In summer 1637, therefore, Bahia was at the center of much intelligence-gathering, with Dutch spies trying to ascertain the strength of the troops and the disposition of fortifications in the area.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>315</sup> NL-HaNA States-General, 1.01.02, inv. no. 9217, unfoliated, page 1.

<sup>316</sup> See the articles on the capitulation in: NL-HaNA, States-General, 1.01.02, inv. no. 9217, page 6..

<sup>317</sup> Wätjen, *Das holländische Kolonialreich*, 80.

<sup>318</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.0.5.01.01, inv. no. 53, item 6.

<sup>319</sup> Maurits and Hoge Raad to the XIX, May 6, 1637 NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 52, piece 58, page 2.

<sup>320</sup> B.N. Teensma, 'Nederlands-Braziliaans militair inlichtingenwerk van de West-Indische Compagnie, 1629-1654', in: V. Enthoven, H. den Heijer and H. Jordaan, *Geweld in de West: Een militaire geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Atlantische wereld, 1600-1800* (Leiden and Boston 2013) 277-311, 295.

Figure 10: Map of northeastern Brazil showing the important forts and cities



Source: Erik Odegard, 2016.

Another point of interest was the Portuguese forts on the Gold Coast and Angola. Castelo da Mina ('Elmina'), which had already twice been attacked in vain by Dutch forces, was the focus of a large expedition of a thousand men sent from Brazil in July-August 1637.<sup>321</sup> This, it was hoped,

<sup>321</sup> For earlier attempts to capture Elmina, see: H. den Heijer, 'Het 'Groot Desseyn' en de aanval op Elmina in 1625', in: *Geneld in de West*, 217-243. See also: Meuwese, *Brothers in arms*, 300-301.



would reinforce the WIC's position in the trade of enslaved Africans to Brazil. Without the regular shipment of enslaved African labor, the sugar plantations and sugar mills could not operate and the WIC would never be able to make a profit. Although, in our perception, the stimulation of the transatlantic slave trade does not fit well with the idea of Johan Maurits as an enlightened, benevolent ruler, this would not have solicited censure or opprobrium at the time. Rather than reflecting upon Johan Maurits, the lack of attention for his role in setting up the Dutch slave trade reflects more on his biographers, who have always been uncomfortable with his role in this trade. Benjamin Teensma has shown that this tendency even stretches back to Barlaeus: the *Rerum per octennium* puts the percentage of enslaved Africans who died during the Middle Passage at 1525 out of 64,000, or 2.38 per cent, and this figure is also quoted in Johan Maurits' *Vertoogh* of 1644. A comparison with the original shows, however, that the percentage there was put at 25. However, this apparently did not suit Johan Maurits' publication strategy.<sup>322</sup>

The successes of the Siege of Porto Calvo and the expedition to the Rio San Francisco in summer 1637 were achieved with Johan Maurits at the head of the WIC's field army. This shows him in a guise – field commander – not seen after the failure at Bahia the following year. At the time Johan Maurits was still assisted by the 'old guard' of WIC commanders: Sigismund von Schoppe, Christoffel Artichewsky and Admiral Lichthart, all experienced in warfare in Brazil and Brazilian waters.<sup>323</sup> His arrival in Brazil proved the breakthrough for a strategy that these men had been advocating for years: concentrated offensive warfare intended to seize the Portuguese coastal strongholds. Though it is doubtful whether Johan Maurits was responsible for the logistical and operational planning of these expeditions, he is credited with breaking the impasse between the military commanders and the Political Council, and recognizing the sense of the strategy proposed by the above commanders. But the Porto Calvo campaign also saw the beginnings of discontent between Johan Maurits and one of his military officers, Christoffel Artichewsky.<sup>324</sup> Johan Maurits was eager to take the credit for the success of the Porto Calvo campaign, mentioning the siege, the captured artillery and the construction of the fort at Penedo in a letter to stadholder Frederik Hendrik on April 18, 1637.<sup>325</sup> The year 1637 was the year of great successes, with the fall of Porto Calvo and the extension of the company's lands to Rio São Francisco enabling a pacification of the hinterlands of the more northern captaincies under WIC control. In August of that same year, a nine-ship expeditionary force also succeeded in capturing Elmina on the other side of the Atlantic, thus making the WIC, at a stroke, the dominant European power on the Gold Coast.

After the successes at Rio Grande and Porto Calvo, some directors urged Johan Maurits to make an attempt at Bahia itself.<sup>326</sup> He set about this in April 1638, with a total force of 4600 men (including a thousand Amerindians) on thirty ships. As the garrison of Bahia actually outnumbered the attacking force, hermetically sealing the city off from the outside and starving it proved ineffectual, while, rather surprisingly, there were not enough heavy siege weapons – heavy mortars and guns – available to bombard the city into surrender. This resulted from a lack of

<sup>322</sup> Barlaeus and L'Honoré-Naber, *Nederlandsch Brazilië*, 407. B. Teensma, 'Nederlands-Braziliaans militair inlichtingennetwerk', 294.

<sup>323</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky*, 25.

<sup>324</sup> B. Brommer, H. den Heijer (eds.), *Grote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie, Deel I: De Oude WIC, 1621-1674* (Atlas Maior, Voorburg 2011) 270.

<sup>325</sup> G. Groen van Prinsterer, *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, deuxième série, tome III* (Utrecht 1859) 93-96.

<sup>326</sup> C. Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil* 85-86.

planning and foresight as there were sufficient numbers of heavy guns available in Recife, not to mention the guns that had been captured at Porto Calve earlier that year. Johan Maurits decided on a storm attack – always the most uncertain undertaking in siege warfare – in the night of 17-18 May 1638. Although coming close to succeeding, this attack ultimately failed, and the WIC forces retreated the following week.<sup>327</sup> The failure to take Bahia was perhaps the most serious military blow during Johan Maurits' tenure in Brazil as the fall of this city would have resulted in the collapse of Portuguese Brazil. Charles Boxer described the period from 1637 onwards as a struggle between the two cities of Bahia and Recife. The fall of Bahia was the only way for this struggle to end in a WIC victory. Failure at Bahia consequently meant that the war continued, and sustaining this war effort meant that logistical efforts became an increasingly pressing problem. To make matters worse, a joint Spanish-Portuguese fleet was being prepared in 1638 to sail concurrently with the large armada under Oquendo.

### Force size and logistics

The strength of the WIC's army in Brazil varied somewhat over the period owing to combat and other losses, the repatriation of troops who had served their contracts, and the arrival of reinforcements. Although its actual strength briefly reached 6000 men shortly after the arrival of Johan Maurits in Brazil, and Adriaen van der Dussen listed the available troops as 6191 in his document to the XIX composed upon his return to the Netherlands in 1639,<sup>328</sup> even the smaller force size of some 3000-5000 men available in Brazil throughout the late 1630s and into the 1640s proffered persistent challenges to the WIC in terms of logistics. This exposes a very different aspect of command from the direct tactical direction of battles or sieges, or the relations with subaltern commanders. Logistics was indeed the persistent Achilles heel of the WIC's operations in Brazil, and things got steadily worse during the late 1630s and into the 1640s.

Recife was the main port of Dutch Brazil and housed the central stores of ammunition, food, building materials and so on. Its port was the main node in the WIC's shipping network connecting the colony to the Netherlands. Food, clothing, money, weapons, ammunition and building materials all had to be transported from Recife to the outlying garrisons. Dutch Brazil could not actually feed itself; forcing the planters to plant sufficient manioc failed after the High and Secret Council lowered the price paid to planters in the late 1630s.<sup>329</sup> Food thus had to be supplied all the way from Europe, along with everything else; even wood for construction came from Europe. Although this may seem puzzling, labor shortages meant it was probably difficult to obtain local wood. On both legs of this journey – the long-distance one from the Netherlands and the shorter run from Recife to the outlying garrisons – the WIC encountered difficulties. The main problem on the transatlantic leg of the journey was the poor condition some ships were in when leaving the Netherlands, with the result that many of the naval stores brought to Recife promptly had to be used to repair those ships themselves, thus giving the directors a completely wrong perspective on the actual level of supplies available in Brazil. And this was compounded

<sup>327</sup> Ibidem, 87.

<sup>328</sup> Miranda, *Gente de Guerra*, 191, states there to have been 4500 men in Brazil in 1635; to these would be added the 1200 men that Johan Maurits brought with him on his arrival to Brazil in early 1637. The attrition rate is clearly shown by the fact that, by February 1639, there were barely 4000 troops in Brazil. 6000 names in 1637: NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.0.5.01.01, inv. no. 52. Van der Dussen: NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 46.

<sup>329</sup> 'Apologie van Artichofsky tegen de beschuldiging van den Raad van Brazilië, ingeleverd aan de Staten-Generaal in Augustus 1639', *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht*, 25 (Kemink en Zoon, Utrecht 1869) 351-393, 358.

by a lack of proper administration in Recife itself. It is striking that many authors have noted the problems in the warehouses (embezzlement, and loss of supplies due to aging), but no-one has addressed the fact that it was the responsibility of the High and Secret Council to oversee proper administration of the colony. Chapter eight will elaborate on some of the issues concerning graft and corruption. However, it is entirely feasible and consistent, from a theoretical point of view, that Johan Maurits would grant offices in the army magazines to faithful followers who were allowed to partake of the spoils as part of his courtly project. Most authors agree that 'corruption' became a steadily worse problem in the late 1630s and early 1640s, but argue that this was *despite* the governor-general's best efforts, rather than *because* of the social effects of his courtly project.

Supplying the army in Brazil was in any event a daunting prospect. As Wim Klooster argued, the Luso-Dutch War in Brazil was the largest interimperial conflict in the Americas in the seventeenth century. A good indication of the army's requirements in Brazil is given by a list of required supplies from March 1639.<sup>330</sup> Although this list states only the requirements for arms, ammunition and tools, it still gives a good indication of the scale of the transatlantic logistical link. Among other things, the army needed the following in March 1639: 800 harquebuses, 300 muskets, 1000 pikes, 600 swords and 300 swivel guns, but also 1000 wheelbarrows, 300 heavy axes, 600 spades, 6 copper forms for casting musket balls, and 2 large bellows for the smithy. On top of all this, there was a large requirement for gunpowder and ammunition, with at least 40,000 pounds of gunpowder being requested, as well as at least 80,000 fuses (for guns and muskets), 200 sheepskins for making bore-snakes (used to clean guns after firing) and 18,500 rounds of shot for various bores of cannon.

Distributing supplies from Recife to the garrisons required a different fleet and thus ran into different problems. Most of the outlying fortifications, except for Itamaracá, were on rivers that were inaccessible for seagoing vessels. Fort Maurits on the Rio São Francisco, for example, lay several miles inland, and while the river was of a good depth there, its estuary was much shallower and silted. What was required, therefore, was a capable small-ship fleet of vessels seaworthy enough to make the passage from Recife to the various river mouths, yet shallow enough to pass the bars on the rivers, as well as sufficiently well-armed for riverine warfare. This was sorely lacking as the WIC did not operate any shipyards in Brazil. In marked contrast to the multiple VOC shipyards at Onrust (Batavia), Cochin, Galle and Colombo, the WIC proved unable to operate a single yard in Brazil. Consequently, there was a great lack of small vessels able to resupply the outlying garrisons.<sup>331</sup> Even the smaller force of 3000-5000 men available in Brazil posed imposing logistical, organizational and operational problems for the military staff there; as a result, increasing numbers of complaints were received from the late 1630s onwards about the supply of food to outlying garrisons.

Even before the news of the failure of the attack on Bahia had arrived, the XIX had taken the initiative to send sizable reinforcements to Brazil. The person chosen to lead a regiment of 1200 men was Christoffel Artichewsky, who had returned to Brazil the previous year. This seemed a fortunate choice for many reasons; Artichewsky and Johan Maurits had worked together before, and the former was one of the company's most experienced field commanders. However, Artichewsky's mission caused a falling-out between the two men and probably played a large part in the souring of relations between the governor-general and the XIX.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>330</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01, inv. no. 54, *Lijst van't gene alhier opt alderspondigste gerequireert werde.*

<sup>331</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 54.2, Johan Maurits and the High Council to the XIX, March 5, 1639

<sup>332</sup> Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, 90-91.

### The Artichewsky case

Even before the news of the failure at Bahia had percolated through to the company directors in the Republic, they had been concerned about the state of the army in Brazil. Johan Maurits had sent scathing reports about the size of the forces available to him in his first letters back to the XIX, and the directors were now planning to rectify these defects. Once again it was Albert Coenraetsz. Burgh who took the initiative and came up with the idea of approaching Christoffel Artichewsky, the experienced officer who had returned from Brazil, for the second time, in 1637.<sup>333</sup> Originally a Polish nobleman, Artichewsky served with the Dutch Republican army at the siege of 's Hertogenbosch in 1629. He may even have met Johan Maurits there, since the latter also served in the army at 's Hertogenbosch, although there are no records of a meeting of the two future rivals. Artichewsky had sailed with the original invasion fleet that captured Olinda and Recife in 1630. Although he was repatriated in 1633, he returned in 1634 and was appointed commander-in-chief of the army in Brazil by the XIX.<sup>334</sup> Once in Brazil he was confronted with the fact that Sigismund von Schoppe had just been appointed by the Political Council in the same rank (colonel) and with the same prerogatives as Artichewsky. The latter unhesitatingly fell into the role of subordinate to the former until August 1637, when he railed against the management of the colony and the war effort by the Political Council. Lucia Warner Xavier has argued that the policy of religious toleration was actually introduced by Artichewsky in the conditions he stipulated on the surrender of Itamaracá in 1634.<sup>335</sup> In 1637, Artichewsky, together with Von Schoppe and Lichthart, assisted Johan Maurits in the campaign against Porto Calvo. Departing after this notable success, Artichewsky left behind a lengthy memoir containing advice on managing the colony for the new governor-general.<sup>336</sup>

The discord between Artichewsky and Johan Maurits cuts to the core of the problems faced by Dutch Brazil, as well as highlighting the challenges facing Johan Maurits in his role as the WIC's governor-general in Brazil. The crisis that ensued upon Artichewsky's return in 1639 was described in detail by Warnsinck, and also mentioned by Werner Xavier.<sup>337</sup> The *Historisch Genootschap Utrecht* published Artichewsky's *Apologie* in the nineteenth century.<sup>338</sup> Authors such as Boxer, Wätjen and Netscher all put the blame for the discord between the two men on Artichewsky, who is described as having been ambitious, jealous and spiteful towards Johan Maurits.<sup>339</sup> What is missing from these accounts so far is an understanding of the way the conflict impacted on Johan Maurits' career. To understand this, and so also to understand how the conflict affected the WIC and, at the same time, reflected its position in Brazil, a brief account of

<sup>333</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky*, 23. This account by Warnsinck of the fight between Johan Maurits and Christoffel Artichewsky was published at the same time in: J. de Laet, S.P. L'Honoré-Naber and J.C.M. Warnsinck, *Iaerlijck Verhael van de Verrichtingen der Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie in derthien Boecken. Vierde deel, boek XI-XIII (1634-1636)* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague 1937) XXV-LXXII. For clarity's sake, I will refer only to the separately published book.

<sup>334</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky*, 7-8.

<sup>335</sup> L.F. Werner Xavier, 'Het gebruik van egodocumenten en Nederlands Brazilië: de Memorie van kolonel Christoffel Arciszewski', in: M. Wiesenbron (ed.) *Brazilië in de Nederlandse archieven/O Brasil em arquivos neerlandeses (1624-1654): Mauritiana, vol. 3* (CNWS, Leiden 2008) 128-149, 134.

<sup>336</sup> Published in: 'Memorie, door den Kolonnel Artichofsky, bij zijn vertrek uit Brazilië in 1637 overgeleverd aan Graaf Maurits en zijnen geheimen Raad', *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht*, 25 (Kemink en Zoon, Utrecht 1869) 253-350.

<sup>337</sup> Werner Xavier, 'de Memorie van kolonel Christoffel Arciszewski', 136.

<sup>338</sup> 'Apologie van Artichofsky tegen de beschuldiging van den Raad van Brazilië, ingeleverd aan de Staten-Generaal in Augustus 1639', *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht*, 25 (Kemink en Zoon, Utrecht 1869) 351-392.

<sup>339</sup> For example, Netscher, *Les Hollandais*, 101. 'ce Polonais nourrissait une vieille haine contre Maurice'.



the discord between Artichewsky and Johan Maurits first needs to be provided. Artichewsky's admonitions against the Political Council's rule in Brazil have been dealt with in chapter two. His criticism helped convince the WIC directors that a more unified command structure was needed for the colony to flourish. This interpretation is strengthened by Artichewsky's later close relations with two of the most important directors, Albert Coenraetsz. Burgh and Johannes de Laet. The latter made grateful use of Artichewsky's reports on the inland warfare in 1634-1636 in his *Jaerlijckx Verhael*.<sup>340</sup> Burgh, as we have already seen, was the driving force both behind Johan Maurits' appointment in 1636 and Christoffel Artichewsky's new appointment to Brazil in 1639. These three men, the two directors of the Amsterdam chamber and the Polish nobleman, also found each other in their views on free trade. In his lengthy report on the state of Brazil, written shortly before his departure in March 1639, Artichewsky advocated opening the trade with Brazil to all comers. This aligned perfectly with the trade debates between Amsterdam and Zeeland of 1636-1638.<sup>341</sup> Artichewsky's report may even have influenced Johan Maurits in his decision to support free trade. But it is also entirely possible that Johan Maurits may have come up with this support by himself. In any event, the directors of the Amsterdam chamber had every reason to look kindly on their Polish colonel. By 1638-1639, however, Johan Maurits had a number of reasons for disliking the successful commander and actually wrote to the directors in 1637 asking them not to return Artichewsky to Brazil.<sup>342</sup>

What then were Johan Maurits' reasons for disliking Artichewsky and arguing against his return to Brazil? Traditionally, blame for the conflict between the two men has been laid on Artichewsky's shoulders. It has been argued that, in his arrogance and ambition, Artichewsky tried to usurp Johan Maurits' position, although a number of authors dispute this.<sup>343</sup> My interpretation aligns with the latter and argues that Johan Maurits wanted to be rid of Artichewsky because the colonel's presence played on Johan Maurits' own insecurities as a military commander. To understand this view, we need to return to the Porto Calvo campaign. Artichewsky, Von Schoppe and Lichthart had convinced Johan Maurits of the necessity of attacking Porto Calvo, which they had been advocating throughout the previous year. The fort subsequently fell, and in March Christoffel Artichewsky returned to the Netherlands. It was during the Porto Calvo campaign, however, that the first signs were seen that Johan Maurits was not the skilled tactician that he had been made out to be. These included the mentioning by the writer of the anonymous coast description of Brazil that:

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<sup>340</sup> De Laet, Naber and Warnsinck, *Iaerlijck Verhael, Vierde deel*, XXXVI, 142-149. The map used by De Laet was based on an original drawn by Artichewsky himself.

<sup>341</sup> Of which more in: H. den Heijer, 'Het recht van de sterkste in de polder. Politieke en economische strijd tussen Amsterdam en Zeeland over de kwestie Brazilië, 1630-1654' in: D. Bos, Ebben M.A., Velde H. te (eds.) *Harmonie in Holland. Het poldermodel van 1500 tot nu* (Bert Bakker, Amsterdam 2007) 72-92.

<sup>342</sup> As mentioned in B. Brommer, H. den Heijer and J. Jacobs, *Grote Atlas van de WIC, deel I* (Atlas Maior: Voorburg 2011) 270.

<sup>343</sup> There is a disagreement between Netscher, Wätjen and Boxer on the one hand, and Warnsinck and, more recently, Werner Xavier on the other hand. The latter has argued, correctly in my opinion, that Dutch Brazil was more than just Johan Maurits.

*Approximately a musket shot between the two forts [of Porto Calvo] His Excellency ordered the construction of a third work, beneath the hills on the river on an island in the river. Because this location could be covered by musket shot from the heights above, the same was neglected.*<sup>344</sup>

Henk den Heijer has argued that the author of the coast description was in fact Admiral Lichthart, another of the crucial military commanders in Brazil. Artichewsky's period in the Netherlands in 1637-1639 coincided with the failed attack on Bahia in 1638, during which campaign Johan Maurits' younger brother died. Soldiers in the force also apparently grumbled that such a fiasco would have been avoided if only Artichewsky had been present. This reflects later complaints that Johan Maurits was not a tactically sound commander.<sup>345</sup> Crucially, the campaign against Bahia was the last time that Johan Maurits took to the field in Brazil at the head of the troops. In later campaigns he always sent lower officers to head expeditionary forces. This can be explained in two ways: either simply because no target other than Bahia warranted the personal presence of the governor-general of Dutch Brazil, or because Johan Maurits had learned the lesson that it was better to avoid personal command. In the event of a failure, the expedition commander could be blamed, while a success would still reflect on Johan Maurits' leadership in Brazil. In itself, this would not have been a problem. Selecting capable commanders was surely an important task, and most governor-generals in the VOC did not lead in person either. But Johan Maurits was a nobleman and, what is more, a professional soldier. Owing to a lack of the money needed to bring him up in a more courtly setting and send him to university, he had been trained as a soldier from childhood. Surely, then, these complaints about his leadership must have rankled. In addition, an undermining of his position as a soldier could potentially threaten his position in Brazil. It is also noteworthy that Artichewsky left Brazil in March 1637, immediately after the fall of Porto Calvo in February of that year. This raises the possibility that the two men had already clashed. Regardless of this, Johan Maurits proudly boasted of his success at Porto Calvo to Hendrik Casimir van Nassau-Dietz, detailing the stores captured at Porto Calvo.<sup>346</sup> In another matter, we see Artichewsky also referred to in a conflict between the governor-general of Brazil and the company directors. Johan Maurits had requested a pay raise for Colonel Koin, who had captured Elmina, to the same level enjoyed by Artichewsky before his departure. This request was turned down by the directors.<sup>347</sup> In the letters from Brazil to the Netherlands from May 1637 onwards, Johan Maurits began to moot the idea that the army in Brazil was now strong enough to venture an attack on Bahia itself. At the same time he complained about the state of the army magazines and stores. Apparently spurred on by some individual directors, but without the consent of the full company leadership, Johan Maurits proceeded to command his disastrous venture on Bahia in spring 1638, during which campaign his younger brother died.

In the meantime, Artichewsky had returned to the Netherlands and had made his sketches of the Siege of Porto Calvo available to various Dutch publishers and mapmakers. This

<sup>344</sup> NL-HaNA, Kaarten Leupe, 4.VEL, inv. no. Y. This source was published as: H. den Heijer, *Nederlands-Brazilië in kaart : Nederlanders in het Atlantisch gebied, 1600-1650 : den corte beschrijvinge inhoudende de cust van Brazil ende meer andre plaatsen* (Walburg Pers: Zutphen 2011).

<sup>345</sup> G.N. van der Plaat (ed.), *Gloria Parendi: Dagboeken van Willem Frederik, stadhouder van Friesland, Groningen en Drenthe 1643-1649, 1651-1654* (Nederlands Historisch Genootschap: The Hague 1995) dagboek 1647, 392. On May 26/June 3, Willem Frederik noted that stadholder Willem II was displeased with Johan Maurits' performance in the field, complaining he did not put out scouts or understand cavalry operations.

<sup>346</sup> Groen van Prinsterer, *Archives ou correspondance inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, 93-95. Johan Maurits to Hendrik Casimir, April 1637.

<sup>347</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01 inv. no. 52, unfoliated, scan 723-724. Johan Maurits to the XIX, 15-12-1637.

resulted in a map by Willem Bleau of the siege, as well as the news-map shown in Figure 11. This map is notable for showing small portraits of both Johan Maurits and Christoffel Artichewsky in the upper corners, as well as giving Artichewsky pride of place in the map itself, where he is shown on horseback, spurring on the troops, in the lower right-hand corner. The lively market for Brazilian news and printed maps and imagery in the Republic, as studied by Van Groesen, could thus also be used by officers in Brazil to build their own reputations.<sup>348</sup>

Figure 11: News-map of the Siege of Porto Calvo



Source: B. Brommer, H. den Heijer (eds.) *Grote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie, deel 1: de oude WIC, 1621-1674* (Atlas Maior: Voorburg 2011) 273.

If news of this had reached Johan Maurits, it might have turned him further against Artichewsky and led him to believe that the latter was trying to steal his successes. It is noteworthy that

<sup>348</sup> Laid out in the introduction of: Van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic*, 1-13.



although Artichewsky's role in the Siege of Porto Calvo is mentioned in Caspar Barlaeus' account, the beautiful map of the siege contained in the book (Figure 12) does not show his positions at all, even though it does show the movements of the troops under Von Schoppe, Lichthart and Johan Maurits himself.<sup>349</sup>

**Figure 12: The Siege of Porto Calvo according to Johan Maurits**



Source: L'Honoré-Naber, Caspar Barlaeus, *Nederlandsch Brazilië onder het bewind van Johan Maurits, Grave van Nassau 1637-1644* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1923), between pages 46-47.

Although Barlaeus' account obviously postdates the later fight between the two men, the rival maps perhaps indicate that the two strong personalities had already clashed during the Siege of Porto Calvo. This would align well with Johan Maurits' apparent request for Artichewsky *not* to be sent back to Brazil in 1637. Strangely, in the letter to stadholder Frederik Hendrik quoted in Barlaeus, Artichewsky is mentioned as the bearer of the letters and tidings from Brazil. This means that even if the two men clashed, Artichewsky may not have been aware of the fact and was in fact sent to the Republic on a pretext.<sup>350</sup> This was also a common event in VOC Asia, as

<sup>349</sup> L'Honoré-Naber, Caspar Barlaeus, *Nederlandsch Brazilië onder het bewind van Johan Maurits, Grave van Nassau 1637-1644* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1923), map between pages 46-47.

<sup>350</sup> I L'Honoré-Naber, Caspar Barlaeus, *Nederlandsch Brazilië onder het bewind van Johan Maurits*, 52.



will be made apparent in the next chapter. A possible explanation for this could be the frequent clashes between Artichewsky and the Political Council, which now functioned under Johan Maurits and which was praised for its efforts in the *Rerum per octennium*.<sup>351</sup>

In the knowledge, however, that a strong fleet was being readied in Spain and Portugal to recapture lost territories in Brazil, the XIX were looking, by early 1639, for an experienced officer to lead the reinforcements to Brazil. They naturally thought of Christoffel Artichewsky, by far the most experienced when it came to warfare in Brazil. But Artichewsky would not consent lightly to serving the company again. Negotiations started during 1638, even before the XIX had received news of the debacle at Bahia. The procedure to recruit Artichewsky shows considerable parallels with the appointment procedure of Johan Maurits himself. Once again, the initiative was taken by the Amsterdam chamber, while the negotiations were led by none other than Albert Coenraetsz. Burgh, assisted by Johannes de Laet.<sup>352</sup> This is remarkable: the same men who had not only supported, but also initiated Johan Maurits' appointment to Brazil also favored sending back an officer with whom Johan Maurits had difficulty cooperating. This could indicate that certain important directors had growing doubts about the wisdom of appointing Johan Maurits. The contract between Artichewsky and the XIX seems to support this idea as, in effect, it created a check on Johan Maurits' powers. Other directors, meanwhile, had approached the stadholder himself to seek his approval. The initiative was taken after news of Johan Maurits' planned voyage to Bahia was received. This news shocked the XIX as they had not ordered him to undertake this voyage. It later turned out that two chambers had individually written to Johan Maurits and urged him to attack Bahia. This undermined the authority of the XIX. The States-General urged the WIC chambers, in June 1638, not to write to the governor-general of Brazil separately, but instead to leave this in the hands of the XIX.<sup>353</sup> This muddling of the lines of command would have been unthinkable in the case of the VOC. This lends strong support to the idea that it was unresolved deficiencies in the institutional formation of the WIC that made it vulnerable to infighting and strife. By September 1638, the XIX had decided to send reinforcements of '2000 to 3000 men' to Brazil.<sup>354</sup>

### *The conflict in Brazil*

The contract ultimately signed between the WIC and Artichewsky gave the latter a high degree of independence from the other layers of Brazilian administration. The wish for this was hardly surprising, given his poor relations with the Political Council during his previous service in the colony. Artichewsky was appointed to lead a whole regiment to Brazil; this was to be kept united under his command and separate from the regular chain of command in the army in Brazil. In addition, he was awarded the title of 'General of the artillery', with orders to undertake a proper inspection of the army magazines in Recife so that the XIX would finally know what was actually available in the colony.<sup>355</sup> Artichewsky's appointment can be explained as an attempt by the XIX to rein in an overly powerful governor-general, or at least provide for a check on his actions and reports. It was, thus, a solution to a pressing principal-agent problem. Johan Maurits' announcement that he planned to attack Bahia had shocked the XIX. Clearly, he was not under

<sup>351</sup> Ibidem, 60-61.

<sup>352</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.05.01, OWC, inv. no. 39, entry for August 13, 1638. De Laet, Nicolae and Huijch negotiated with Frederik Hendrik, while Burgh contacted Artichewsky.

<sup>353</sup> NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv. no. 4845.

<sup>354</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 39, folio 155.

<sup>355</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky*, 31-34.

control, and the High and Secret Council could not rein him in, or maybe the Council was even colluding with him. A powerful military commander with a position independent of Johan Maurits could help reassert the primacy of the XIX over its colony.

The appointment of Artichewsky did, however, undermine the position of Johan Maurits as captain-general of the WIC's armed forces in Brazil. It can be said that in devising the mission by Artichewsky, the XIX did not sufficiently consider the very realistic possibility that the two figures would clash in Brazil. I have already argued that there may have been some residual acrimony between the two men, resulting from the Porto Calvo campaign. Another possibility is that the Political Council, which now operated under Johan Maurits, had vented its frustration about Artichewsky. When the latter left Brazil, he had written to Johan Maurits, '*We have been at loggerheads here for a long time*'.<sup>356</sup> After the failure at Bahia in 1638, there was also another reason for Johan Maurits to resent Artichewsky. Reportedly, both during and after the failure at Bahia, soldiers had complained that if only Artichewsky had been present, the expedition would have been a success.<sup>357</sup> But even without pre-existing tensions between the two men, a conflict would have arisen as a result of the differing privileges agreed in their contracts.

Artichewsky arrived at Recife on March 20, 1639.<sup>358</sup> He left the colony again with the outbound ships in late May, barely two months after his arrival, leaving his regiment behind in Brazil. What had gone wrong? Even at time of Artichewsky's arrival, the tensions between the existing power holders in Brazil – including Johan Maurits – and Artichewsky were made painfully clear: the flag denoting the latter's rank as admiral of the fleet was shot down off the mast of the flagship *Groot Christoffel* on the orders of the High and Secret Council. In Artichewsky's telling of the tale, he was denied a private audience with Johan Maurits, while his former lodgings in Recife had been vacated by Elias Herckmans shortly before Artichewsky's arrival and were bare of furniture and even doors and windows.<sup>359</sup> Artichewsky became ill shortly after arriving in Brazil and remained bedridden for most of his stay. He was thus hampered in his attempts to inspect the artillery magazines. Worst of all, his regiment was quickly dispersed over the many garrisons, while new officers were appointed by Johan Maurits and soldiers given consent to apply for other jobs without Artichewsky's approval. This undermined the latter's entire vision of bringing over a coherent regiment as the core of a field army for offensive operations. Since neither the Council nor Johan Maurits responded to his repeated attempts to discuss these issues, Artichewsky resorted to using his leverage with the WIC directors – especially Burgh – to force the Council and Maurits to accept his position. In May 1639, Artichewsky wrote a draft letter, complaining about his treatment in Brazil, to Albert Coenraetsz. Burgh, and this was presented to a meeting of the High and Secret Council on May 16, 1639. His objective was to allow the Council to formally acknowledge his complaints and to draft a formal reply. The outcome, however, would be rather different.

There are various sources providing a possible explanation of what happened after the meeting of the Council on May 16, 1639. Firstly, there is the draft letter itself, with remarks penned in the margins, probably by Johan Maurits himself. There is also a file containing remarks by Balthasar van de Voorde, a member of the Political Council, on the draft.<sup>360</sup> The personal

<sup>356</sup> 'Memorie door de Kolonnel Artichofsky', 253.

<sup>357</sup> Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, 91.

<sup>358</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichefsky*, 35.

<sup>359</sup> 'Apologie van Artichofsky', 357.

<sup>360</sup> NL-HaNA 1.05.01.01 OWIC, inv. no. 54, fol. 129.

archive of Johan Maurits includes an anonymous French document defending Johan Maurits and putting the blame on Artichewsky. This document was probably written by the Calvinist minister Soler,<sup>361</sup> who mentioned the affair briefly in his letters, noting that Johan Maurits was affronted that the inspection of the artillery magazines was entrusted to someone else, when he had been arguing for years that this should be done.<sup>362</sup> Then there are the minutes of the meeting of the High Council of Brazil and the joint meeting of the High and Political Councils on the matter. Finally Artichewsky presented his case to the States-General in 1640, after gaining information from the minutes of the Council. This means that one of the directors must have provided this information to him, possibly Burgh or De Laet, to whom Artichewsky dedicated a book in 1643.<sup>363</sup>

Artichewsky noted that Johan Maurits initially reacted furiously to his letter, but calmed down later in the meeting and undertook to look into the matter. By the end of this initial meeting, Artichewsky had good hopes that the problems would be resolved and, as he was still ill, he went back to his lodgings. Two days later, however, he was placed under house arrest for 'insulting his Excellence'. In his study of the affair, Warnsinck argues that it was the Council that had really wanted to get rid of Artichewsky. He argues that its members tried with all their might to rid themselves of this intruder, who had received such notable powers from the directors in the Netherlands.<sup>364</sup> The minutes of the High Council meetings present another picture, however. In the meeting of May 20, Johan Maurits argued that Artichewsky had been sent to spy on him and that the Council needed to choose: Johan Maurits or Artichewsky. This is best understood in Johan Maurits' own words:

*No-one gifted with reasonable intelligence would dare to plan, much less put into practice, such affronts against his government unless he had a great and solid foundations on which he relied. Christoffel Artrishoskij [sic] is held by many to be a wise and careful man, so his actions, taken with such pre-determination, can only have been taken with such support. Which leads me, for my part, to think that Their High Mightinesses, the Prince of Orange or the General West India Company, have developed some mistrust towards my person or my service [...]. From these and such things it is easily deduced what I have mentioned before, and that he Artochofkij [sic] was not just sent to take this charge [General of artillery], but also to check upon my every act, which would have been very pleasant to me, if he Artochofkij had been an honest man and not such a villainous honor-thief, which has not only shown itself now, but also in earlier times.*<sup>365</sup>

<sup>361</sup> Koninklijk Huisarchief, Collectie Johan Maurits, inv. no. 1454, fol. 242-244. *Apologie pour très Magnifique et très excellent Jean Maurice, Conte de Nassau, Gouverneur, Capitaine et Admiral Général en Brésil.*

<sup>362</sup> B. Teensma, *Dutch-Brazil: Vincent Joachim Soler's seventeen letters, 1636-1643* (Editora Index, Rio de Janeiro 1999) 57.

<sup>363</sup> Warnsinck, *Christoffel Artichewsky*, 48.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibidem*, 43.

<sup>365</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 68, fol. 0385. *Niemandt met redelijck vernuft begaeft soude sich durven gedencken veel min int werck te stellen, sulcke affronteuse actien teegens sijne overicheijdt aen te vangen ten ware hij een groot ende vast fundament hadde waer op hij sich verliete, ende steunde, nu wert den Christoffel Artishoskij bij veelen voor een wijs ende voorsichtich man gehouden derhalven oock sulcke actien met sulcken voordacht bij hem niet anders als op sulcken fundament aengevangen sijn, daerim in mijn reguardt, grootel. te bedencken staet dat haer Hoogh Mogentheeden sijne Hoocheijdt den Heere Prince van Orangien ofte immers de Generale Westindische Comp. eenig groot misvertrouwen, op mijn persoon ende onsen dienst moeten gescheept hebben[...]. Uyt dese ende diergelijcke dingen, is lichtelijck aff te nemen tgeene ick hier vooren verhaelt hebbe, ende dat hij Artichofkij niet alleen gesonden is om dese chaergie te beceden, maer oock om alle mijn doen ende late te Controlleuren, het welcke mij van berten seer aengenaem soude weesen, ende mij geluckich achten, dat deselve aenden dach gebracht, ende mijne meesters bekend gemaect wierden, Indien bij Artichoskij een eerlijck man ende gennen soo villainen eeren dieff ware, het welcke niet alleen nu maer in alle sijne voorgaende tijden gebleecken heeft.*

Tellingly, Johan Maurits thus suspected – reasonably – that some elements of the group that had seen him instated had now turned against him. Artichewsky's appointment had been approved by the States-General and the stadholder himself. It is surprising, therefore, that Johan Maurits expressed his discontent with his superiors so freely. Artichewsky was also accused of fomenting insubordination among his troops and of the crime of *lesé-majesté* against Johan Maurits. This is striking as it suggests that Johan Maurits saw himself as *majesté* in Dutch Brazil. Given this explosive situation, the High and Secret Council ordered the members of the Political Council to attend a joint session to decide what should be done. The Council's minutes record that a reconciliation between the two men was attempted, but that Johan Maurits insisted that no apology from Artichewsky could be sufficient to entice him to stay in Brazil with him. Presented with this situation, the High and Political Councils decided in a joint session to send Artichewsky back to the Netherlands.<sup>366</sup> The picture portrayed in the minutes thus differs from Warnsinck's interpretation of the affair, whereby Johan Maurits was determined from the outset to send Artichewsky home. Warnsinck put most emphasis on the role of the members of the two councils, and it must be remembered that Artichewsky had clashed with the Political Council before. We can question, therefore, whether the council members were really serious in their attempts to reconcile the two men, or whether they were more concerned with putting on a show for the directors in the Republic, given that they often mentioned that they were not inclined to keep Artichewsky in Brazil on his own merits, but rather because some directors had such high regard for him.<sup>367</sup> Johan Maurits' frustration with Artichewsky's insistence that his contract in Brazil be honored is palpable from his letter of May 25, 1639 to the directors of the chamber of Zeeland, when he noted: '*...but no reason could take hold; it was as ever 'my conditions, my conditions', as if his conditions should be maintained even at the detriment of the company*'.<sup>368</sup> Artichewsky was ordered to leave with the ships departing the next Monday, May 23, and arriving in the Netherlands on July 22.<sup>369</sup> Johan van der Dussen left with the same fleet. He had served his contracted time in the High and Secret Council and was appointed by that Council to present its version of events, as well as its view on the state of Brazil, and to pressure the XIX into appointing new councilors so that Matthijs van Ceulen and Johan Gijselingh could return, too. The appointment of new councilors will be dealt with in chapter six.

#### *The aftermath of the conflict in the Netherlands*

The WIC directors, and especially the Amsterdam chamber, which had contracted Artichewsky, were unpleasantly surprised when he returned to the Netherlands in the summer of 1639. The dismissal of a colonial official specially empowered by the company's management, and whose contract was supported both by the States-General and by the stadholder, was of course a dangerous act of insubordination on the part of Johan Maurits and the High Council. Although their actions ostensibly carried no consequences, a study of the aftermath of the affair in the Netherlands will show that the affair did in fact have a substantial impact on the WIC. Artichewsky continued to address lengthy letters and memoranda, making his case, to the XIX,

<sup>366</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 68, May 20, 1639, unfoliated, scan 1137-1143. High and Political Council to the XIX.

<sup>367</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>368</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 54, piece 131. Johan Maurits to the chamber of Zeeland, May 25, 1639. *Maer geene redenen konnen platse grijpen, het is al weder bet oude, [']mijne conditien, mijne conditien['], als off sijne conditien moesten onderhouden werden selffs tot ondiens vande Comp.a...*

<sup>369</sup> Artichewsky Apologie, kroniek Utrecht, 374. and NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 55, item 2.



the States-General and the stadholder. His first response was his lengthy *Apologie*, written in August 1639, shortly after his arrival in the Netherlands, and in which he requested the XIX to accept his version of events and offer recompense of damages, restitution of honor and an attestation stating that he had always acted loyally to both the company and the state.<sup>370</sup> Since Artichewsky had been appointed by the company and the States-General (with the approval of Frederik Hendrik), he needed the consent of both parties to be relieved of his contract and duty. The company, or rather the Amsterdam chamber, needed to issue him with a passport to release him from service. Artichewsky tried to present his *Apologie* to the States-General on August 21, accompanied by WIC director Wilmerdonck, but he was turned down since the States-General had been forewarned by 'the governor-general of Brazil' that this would happen, thus illustrating Johan Maurits' annoying tendency – for the WIC – of keeping the States-General up-to-date on developments in Brazil.<sup>371</sup> When the Amsterdam chamber tried to resolve matters with Artichewsky and issue him with a passport releasing him from service, they were called back by the States-General.<sup>372</sup> In the meantime, Artichewsky had gained insight into the letters sent from Brazil and the copies of the minutes of the High and Secret Council dealing with the case. These prompted him to write another rebuttal, which was presented to the States-General in March 1640. This rebuttal is interesting primarily because of what it exposes of the relations between the WIC chambers, between the WIC and the States-General, and between the Council and Governor-General in Brazil. Artichewsky's complaint was simply added to the archives of the WIC and, puzzlingly, inserted among the letters and papers received from Brazil.<sup>373</sup>

After returning to the Netherlands, Artichewsky turned first to the Amsterdam chamber, asking it to hear his case. Surprisingly, the chamber members refused to make a decision and directed him to the States-General, which, as we have seen, had also refused to hear him in August 1639. The XIX, too, refused to hear him during two consecutive sessions, until he sent the letter to the States-General in March 1640. Despite this poor treatment by the company's directors, Artichewsky was still quite mild in his verdict about them: '*Yet these same people who treat me this way are on the whole honorable fellows, who approve of my actions and who are well-inclined towards me in private. They would gladly do all they could if only they knew that Your High Mightinesses and His Altesse [Frederik Hendrik] would approve.*'<sup>374</sup> This analysis is actually quite likely to be correct; Artichewsky had maintained close ties with the Amsterdam directors by, for example, supporting their push for free trade with Brazil. Later, in 1643, he also dedicated a book to Johannes de Laet. The Amsterdam chamber initiated the attempt to issue him with a passport, while a director of that chamber had also accompanied him when he first approached the States-General in August 1639. His claims about the inner workings and motivations of the directors of the Amsterdam chamber are thus not merely idle speculation. The fact that the States-General had refused him an audience in August – because of information received from Brazil – backs up the claims made by Artichewsky. Since the appointments of high WIC personnel in Brazil, both in the case of Johan Maurits and that of Artichewsky, depended on the permission and cooperation of the States-General and the stadholder, the WIC was hardly in a position to act unilaterally. This was all the

<sup>370</sup> 'Apologie van Artichofsky', 389-390.

<sup>371</sup> NL-HaNA, States-General, 1.01.02, inv. no. 4845, fol. 33 recto.

<sup>372</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01.01, inv. no. 55, item two.

<sup>373</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>374</sup> Ibidem, 'Nochtans deselve die mij soo tracteeren, zijn meest eerlijcke lieden, die van mij gedaene diensten, voor goed achten, ende voor deselve in prive wel geaffectioneert zijn, oock alles gaern doen souden als sij wijsten, dat Uwe Hoogh Mogentheeden, ende Zijn Altesse een wel gevallen daeraen hebben souden.'

more so since the company was by then heavily reliant on subsidies granted and promised by the Generality. Only if the political alliances supporting the pro-war party in power broke down could the WIC reassert its own policy-making powers. Johan Maurits, for his part, was cleverly able to use this dependent position of the XIX and the chambers of the company to consolidate his own position in Brazil. However, the affair certainly had an impact on the support for Johan Maurits among the WIC directors as the very same men who had taken the decision to nominate Johan Maurits had also initiated Artichewsky's mission. It is unlikely that Burgh, De Laet or Wilmerdonck would have looked kindly on this act of insubordination by the High Council and governor-general in Brazil. This case also underlines the consequences for the WIC of nominating a candidate so enmeshed with the political life of the Republic as Johan Maurits. The role of the stadholder in this entire debacle remains unclear: he had approved both the appointment of Johan Maurits and that of Artichewsky. Although his support for sending Artichewsky back to Brazil in 1639 could be construed as a snub of Johan Maurits, there is no documentary evidence of a rift between the stadholder and Johan Maurits at that point. What is clear, however, is that conflicts in Brazil that threatened the position of Johan Maurits had immediate political repercussions in the Republic itself, thus undermining the independent policy-making powers of the XIX.

### Trade and government

As governor-general of Dutch Brazil Johan Maurits had to deal not only with the company's multitude of servants, soldiers, clerks, merchants, scribes, clergy and sailors, but also with the inhabitants of the colony. These can be divided into two general groups: the 'Portuguese', or those people of European (or mixed) descent, who were already present in the colony before the WIC's arrival, and those who arrived after the WIC captured Pernambuco in 1630. This latter category obviously included all the company's personnel, gathered from all over (predominantly Protestant) Europe. One of the major challenges facing the company's government of the colony was, therefore, the need to maintain a religious peace between the various groups comprising the population of the colony: Catholic Portuguese-Brazilians, Reformed Dutchmen, Lutheran German soldiers, Calvinist Scots and Jewish inhabitants of (mainly) Recife. Even before the arrival of Johan Maurits, the directors Van Ceulen and Gijsselingh had imposed a system of religious 'toleration', in the sense that no-one was to be prosecuted for their beliefs.<sup>375</sup> The Portuguese Catholics were granted permission to attend their religious services, as were the Jewish inhabitants of Recife. Interestingly, Protestants of denominations other than Dutch Reformed were not granted this privilege, thus creating the odd situation whereby the nominally conquered Portuguese-Brazilian Catholics enjoyed more religious rights than some Protestant soldiers in the service of the company.<sup>376</sup>

This religious pluralism did not go unchallenged, however. On the Dutch side, there were numerous complaints, both in the Republic and in Brazil, by Reformed clergymen that the WIC's struggle was not just with an enemy state, but also comprised a spiritual fight against the Catholic church and that religious privileges should, therefore, be withdrawn. On the other hand, letters and papers sent from Brazil contained numerous complaints from Portuguese-Brazilians and Dutchmen alike about the position of the Jews in the colony. One such letter, signed both by

<sup>375</sup> J. Israel and J. Schwartz, *The Expansion of Tolerance: Religion in Dutch Brazil (1624-1654)* (Amsterdam 2007) 19.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibidem*, 21-22.

Dutchmen and Portuguese-Brazilians, complained that '*As a consequence the Christians here have already become more spectators of the trade of the Jews than being traders themselves*'. The letter's authors then added:

*Which would not be the case if Your honors would consent to limit the Jews to what is allowed in the fatherland, where they are allowed to live and trade, but certainly not to open any shops or sell anything to the detriment of the Christian community. So it is in all other countries with less freedom [than the Republic] where they are made to wear red hats or yellow eyes on their chest and many other badges so that everyone will be forewarned and will not be robbed or cheated by them.*<sup>377</sup>

The letters and papers from Brazil also include requests in Portuguese to the same effect.<sup>378</sup> It is to the credit of the WIC government of Brazil, and Johan Maurits as well, that it did not give in to this pressure and maintained liberties, both religious and economic, for Jews. Rather than being a principled defense of 'toleration', however, the main reason for tolerating these religious differences was for practical reasons of state. Jewish merchants from the Dutch Republic were one of the few groups actually willing to migrate to the Brazilian colony and were thus important to the company, bringing trade and connections with them. As the WIC could not hope to make the colony profitable without the cooperation of the Portuguese planters, the company realized that the latter should not be antagonized by restricting their religious liberties.<sup>379</sup> Interestingly, the reverend Soler, who was fiercely anti-Jewish, mentioned in his letters that Johan Maurits privately 'hated' the Jews, but could not do anything against them. Though this may not actually have been the case, it would at least show that Johan Maurits was not hesitant to make others believe he agreed with them if that served his own ends.

### **Bookkeeper and manager: the economy of Brazil and the High Council**

The arrival of Johan Maurits in Brazil coincided with a heated debate among the various chambers of the company on the best way to conduct trade with the colony. The newly found stability in the lands of Pernambuco served to focus the minds of the company directors in the Republic on profit, a matter that had until then played second fiddle to the overarching demands of war. In the period 1636-1639 a great debate raged between the chambers on the question of whether trade to Brazil should be open or closed to all except the WIC itself. Free trade in this context was a qualified free trade, with two different types of proponents wanting to allow private merchants access to Brazil. On the one hand, there were those who were willing to give merchants access to Brazil, provided they shipped their products on WIC vessels and paid 'recognition fees' for the privilege. On the other hand, a more radical faction favored giving private merchant ships unrestricted access to Brazil. The latter position was held mostly within

<sup>377</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01 inv. no. 56, unfoliated, item 241. '*In volgen dat de Christenen alreede hier meer spectateurs vande negotie der Jooden geworden sijn als negocijanten*'. '*Het welck soo niet en soude, alst U Ed. gelieven sal de Jooden alleen te bepale inde limiten vant vaderlandt daer het de Jooden wel gepermiteert is te woonen, ende te traficqueren, maer verre ist daer dat haer soude toegelaten worden eenige winckels te oopenen ofte iets met den cleijnen te vercoopen tot nadeel vande christen gemeente, ende soo ist gelijk in in alle andere landen met so veel minder vrijheijt dat mense op de eene plaetse doet dragen roode hoeden, op de andere geel oogen op de borst ende meer andere kenteecken en om dat een tijder gewaerschout mach sijn tot te sien om van haer niet bestolen off bedroogen te worden.*'

<sup>378</sup> NL-HaNA, OWIC, 1.05.01, inv. no. 52, unfoliated, item 137.

<sup>379</sup> Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Epilogue', in: M. van Groesen (ed., *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2014) 312.

the Amsterdam chamber, and it was the Amsterdam directors who remained the most vociferous defenders of the right of free trade with Brazil. Proponents of open trade argued that the company was far from able to send enough supplies to Brazil in support of its armed forces. The company consequently needed the cooperation of private merchants and had to offer them something in return. Taxed trade by private merchants had the added advantage of removing the risk of conducting business from the WIC and placing the risk of losing valuable stock on the private merchants. Open trade would also be in the interests of the colony's inhabitants and thus help persuade them to stay loyal to the WIC. The Amsterdam chamber was opposed by a coalition of chambers (Zeeland, De Maze, and Stad en Lande), with Zeeland being the principal opponent. These chambers argued that in the years during which private trade had been allowed, too much profit had been earned by private merchants, to the detriment of the company and the inhabitants of Brazil.<sup>380</sup> These opponents argued that the company would make more profit by enforcing its monopoly and that it was, in fact, able to supply its colony in Brazil. Additionally, the smaller chambers felt that their interests would be better served by keeping the commercial and industrial activities associated with WIC shipping in their ports. Free trade was likely to move to Amsterdam. Since the directors were often important local political figures, these local interests cannot be ignored when studying the decision-making on free or closed trade.

Initially, the Amsterdam chamber was able to force through free trade despite Zeeland's objections, but this began to change in 1637. The letter that Christoffel Artichewsky sent to the government and High Council in Brazil in July 1637 provides important insight into these discussions and an inside view on how this question was debated within the company.<sup>381</sup> Artichewsky sent a long report back to Brazil upon his arrival in the Netherlands in summer 1637. He arrived in the middle of heated debates on the issue of trade and was initially loath to make his own views known: *'I was also fearful to insult one or the other of the two sides (both being good friends).'*<sup>382</sup> He was quick, however, to argue in favor of open trade. The numbers that the adherents used in arguing against free trade were fictitious and not based on any understanding of the real situation in Brazil. The Zeelanders projected future incomes from *engenhios* that had long since been burned by the Portuguese or the Dutch. Zeeland had waged a crafty lobby against free trade among the Generality and the stadholder, using complaints from Brazil about Amsterdam merchants and seeking to paint the Amsterdam directors as self-interested. Artichewsky was particularly outraged by this and argued that men such as De Laet, Arnhem and Conradus (Burgh) were not merchants, but were among the wisest of the directors. This is interesting as it shows Artichewsky's network within the Amsterdam chamber.<sup>383</sup> The lobby against free trade quickly made it known that Artichewsky should not speak his mind about the issue and, to his disappointment, he had no opportunity to talk directly to either the Generality or the stadholder. He was particularly enraged that the anti-free trade lobby had taken its case outside the company, *'as if they did not have a XIX, a senate.'*<sup>384</sup> His comparison of the XIX to the Roman senate is interesting, and typical of the heavily classically-influenced Artichewsky, who used many Roman writers to back up his opinions. He urged Johan Maurits and the Council to make their views on

<sup>380</sup> 'Missive van den Kolonnel Artichofsky aan Graaf Maurits en den Hoogen Raad in Brazilië, 24 Juli 1637', *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht, vijf-en-twintigste jaargang, 1869* (Kemink en Zoon: Utrecht 1869) 221-248, 231.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>382</sup> 'Missive van den Kolonnel Artichofsky', 234.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibidem*, 231.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibidem*, 230.



the topic known to the directors in the Republic so that they could still influence the debate. The letter hints at the start of a trend that would have deleterious effects on company management in the coming decades: infighting between the different chambers. In the discussion on whether to allow free trade, Zeeland convinced the States-General and the stadholder of its point, with the result that the latter two parties intervened, and Johan Maurits received direct orders from the Generality in 1638 to the effect that the trade would henceforth be closed.<sup>385</sup> The reason given for the Generality's intervention was that the XIX could not come to an agreement. This was hardly surprising, given the Zeelanders' conscious blocking of any possible deal. The political process in the Republic thus became involved in the internal management of the company and, once in place, this involvement could not be reversed.

Johan Maurits, to his credit, quickly realized the dire effects of a restrictive trade policy and argued forcefully against closing the trade. In a letter to the States-General in January 1638, he argued that limiting the freedom of commerce, both for Dutch shippers and for the colony's inhabitants, would make the Luso-Brazilian planters long for liberation from the Dutch. Only by carefully minding the interests of the planters could the WIC hope to pacify the colony. Additionally, and rather interestingly, Johan Maurits argued that trade should be free '*according to the law of nations*', an interesting line of argument to take for the most powerful servant of the fiercely monopolistic WIC.<sup>386</sup>

## Conclusion

Johan Maurits was appointed to lead the WIC's armed forces in Brazil. To assess the trajectory of his career, and to see how his principals would have judged his performance, we thus need to look first and foremost at his performance as a military commander. This performance is somewhat difficult to assess since there are different ways to judge military success. As a field commander, Johan Maurits' record was mixed, with success at Porto Calvo and the journey to the Rio São Francisco being offset by failure at Bahia. The complaints by soldiers in the field and the field commanders have also been noted. However, the early period of Johan Maurits' tenure was indubitably successful, with the borders of the WIC's Brazilian colony being extended southward and solidified on the Rio São Francisco. This success proved instrumental in consolidating the WIC's – tenuous – grasp on the sugar-producing lands of Pernambuco. On the other side of the Atlantic, the Portuguese stronghold of Elmina was also taken, thus giving the WIC a more stable foothold on the Gold Coast. These successes would have reflected well on Johan Maurits' performance, and he himself was eager to claim credit for them.

On other fronts, however, there were problems and setbacks. Although the setback at Bahia in 1638 is perhaps the most eye-catching, it is the conflict with Artichefsky that reveals most about the difficulties that would plague Dutch Brazil in the years to come. In the first place, this was, of course, a question of command hierarchies. Could the XIX appoint an officer whose purview encroached upon the privileges extended to Johan Maurits? The directors evidently thought they could. Johan Maurits disagreed, and his dismissal of Artichewsky shows that he was able to back up his position in Brazil with support from members of both councils.

The other element hinted at by Artichewsky's appointment is the XIX's mistrust of how stores and supplies in Brazil were managed by the governor-general and the High and Secret

<sup>385</sup> NL-HaNA, States-General, 1.01.02, inv. no. 12564.5.2.

<sup>386</sup> NL-HaNA, States-General, 1.01.02, inv. no. 12564.6, unfoliated, Johan Maurits and the High and Secret Council to the States-General, 16 January 1638. '*uijt het recht der volkeren*'.

Council. The logistics of the WIC's war in Brazil presented a substantial challenge. Not only did most supplies have to be shipped from Europe, but they also had to be stored in Recife, and then distributed among the WIC garrisons along the Brazilian Coast and in the interior. These latter challenges seem in fact to have been the most problematic and to have prompted the XIX to send Artichewsky to Brazil to inspect the artillery stores. Johan Maurits' subsequent dismissal of Artichewsky, however, caused great problems in his relationship with members of the Amsterdam chamber. Influential directors such as Burgh and De Laet had remained in touch with Artichewsky and were instrumental in his appointment. They will not have looked kindly upon this act of insubordination by their colonial governor-general.

The other aspect on which this chapter has focused is the creation of Johan Maurits' nobleman's court in Recife. This is a theme that has attracted much attention in the literature, especially from the perspective of the unique artistic output that this court generated. The court of Johan Maurits – 'his Excellency' in the sources – has thus been well studied and celebrated in terms of architecture, paintings, ethnography and botany. However, the courtly project of Johan Maurits also had significant consequences for his position as governor-general of Brazil. This effect was twofold: it changed both his position within the company's Brazilian hierarchy, as well as his relationship with the directors in the Netherlands. In Brazil, Johan Maurits was able, to a considerable extent, to subsume the official WIC hierarchy within the orbit of his court. By making senior personnel – the members of the Political and Secret Councils in the first place – part of his courtly retinue, he was able to counteract their ability – or indeed willingness – to act as a 'check and balance' to his considerable powers. The discussion of the conflict between Johan Maurits and Christoffel Artichewsky shows that the former did not wish to be checked by the authorities in the Republic. The courtly project thus represented an acute principal-agent problem for the directors. Dutch colonial governance was always a collective rather than individual responsibility. Governors and councils made decisions as a collective, and the governor was often no more than the first among equals. But by ensuring that officials, who were theoretically sent to take decisions with him and to check his actions, became tied to him personally, Johan Maurits caused this structure to break down. This may indeed have been a reason for the directors of the Amsterdam chamber to send Artichewsky to Brazil with such wide-ranging powers in 1639. His authority to check the stores of the artillery magazines was considered especially disgraceful by Johan Maurits. This may have been because, in order to tie the WIC's elites to him personally, the governor-general may have turned a blind eye to sales of company goods for personal gain. Indeed, the literature states that the late 1630s was a period of increasing corruption in Dutch Brazil.

Another mechanism by which Johan Maurits was able to construct a colonial elite beholden to him was his clever use of the article in his contract stipulating a free table for him and his retinue. By wining and dining his followers he was able to reward them for good conduct in a city where foodstuffs were famously expensive, and all at the expense of the company. It will come as no surprise, therefore, to hear that when it was ultimately decided to dismiss Johan Maurits, the directors immediately took the opportunity to put an end to his use of company funds for this purpose. While strengthening his position within Brazil, therefore, his courtly project actually undermined his stature among the WIC directors. Theoretically, it would perhaps have been possible for him to use the output of his court to gain the favor of at least some directors by, for example, donating some paintings or sketches or by sending botanical samples to directors who collected art or were interested in botany. However, this does not seem to have

taken place at all. Indeed, Johan Maurits later traded much of his collection in return for royal favors from Denmark and France; in other words, he does not seem to have had any inhibitions about parting with his collection, providing the price was right. This would seem to suggest that Johan Maurits did not see the directors as equals with whom he had to wheel and deal in the same way as he would later do with Louis XIV. This points to the difficulty created for the company by the appointment of a high nobleman to its highest colonial function.

Lastly, by appointing a Nassau as governor-general in Brazil, the WIC had closely attached itself to the party politics of the Dutch Republic. This was in marked contrast to practice in the VOC, where, as we have seen, appointments of colonial personnel followed factional rather than party political lines. This link became increasingly difficult to maintain when the relatively harmonious relationships between the stadholder and urban regents of the 1630s became ever more oppositional during the late 1630s and 40s. By appointing a governor-general whose appointment required the consent of the stadholder and States-General, the WIC had opened the doors for these parties' more direct involvement in management of the colony. These problems will be taken up in chapter six, which will analyze the process leading to the decision to dismiss Johan Maurits in 1642.