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Patagonian Giants in West Africa? Two Versions of the First Dutch Attempt to Circumnavigate the World

[...] Each one may find here very diligently described
 How miraculously through storm and thunder
 In great peril, perhaps most through lack of supplies
 Captain De Weert was forced to return.¹

These are the final verses of the sonnet composed by the Amsterdam publisher Zacharias Heyns intended to persuade his customers to buy his most recent book. The central topic of this work, however, suggests that few readers needed this kind of encouragement. *Wijdtloopigh verhael van tgene de vijf Schepen [...]* *wedervaren is* (Comprehensive story of what happened to the five ships ...) was the eyewitness account of the fateful first Dutch attempt to circumnavigate the world. Having departed from Rotterdam in 1598 under Jacques Mahu and Simon de Cordes, the small fleet of five vessels made brief visits to Cape Verde (where Mahu died of fever) and Cape Lopez – just south of the equator in modern-day Gabon – before heading for the Strait of Magellan in search of an alternative route to the Spice Islands in the Indonesian archipelago. One ship, *de Liefde*, succeeded in passing through the Strait of Magellan and ultimately ended up on Kyushu, Japan, establishing the first official connection between Dutch merchants and the shogunate. The other four ships were dispersed by strong adverse winds in the Strait, three of which were never seen again. Only one vessel, *Het Geloof* under Captain Sebald de Weert, eventually returned safely to the United Provinces in 1600.

One of De Weert's crew members, the ship's surgeon Barent Jansz Potgieter, shared his story of the crew's encounters with indigenous groups in West Africa and Patagonia with Zacharias Heyns, who then turned it into a fashionable

¹ *Wijdtloopigh verhael van tgene de vijf Schepen [...]* *wedervaren is* (Amsterdam, 1600), [Arv]: *Elck een hier vinden magh heel sinnelijck beschreven // Oock med' hoe wonderlijck door onweer en tempeest / In groot ghevaer zijns lijfs, doch doort ghebreck wel meest / Den Capiteijn De Weert, weer werdt te rugh ghedreven*. This chapter is based on an article which appeared in Dutch entitled "Barent Jansz en de familie De Bry: Twee visies op de eerste Hollandse expeditie 'om de West' rond 1600", *De zeventiende eeuw* 21.1 (2005): 29–48.

publication. The interest in printed travel accounts was extremely high at the turn of the century, and Zacharias Heyns – a Southern Netherlandish publisher who in the 1590s had settled in Amsterdam – presumably hoped to use this narrative to break the *de facto* monopoly on spectacular travel accounts of his fierce local rival Cornelis Claesz.² In order to do so, Heyns designed eight woodcuts to embellish Barent Jansz' story, supposedly based on sketches made by Jansz himself, and emphasized the suffering of the Dutch sailors in a thinly-veiled attempt to copy the success of Gerrit de Veer's spectacular account of the Dutch wintering at Nova Zembla that Claesz had published two years before. The title-page of Heyns' attractive book promised readers "dangers and misery" so great that Captain De Weert had been forced to abandon the expedition and turn home. Because of Heyns' efforts, Barent Jansz' account became one of the canonical travel accounts of the early Dutch Golden Age, and would later be included in all the major compendia of early Dutch expansion.³

Interest in travel accounts of Dutch transoceanic adventures was not confined to the United Provinces. Across early modern Europe, readers – especially Protestant readers – were eagerly following Dutch efforts to damage Habsburg interests in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. In Frankfurt, the heart of the European book market, Johan Theodore and Johan Israel de Bry published a monumental collection of voyages, folio volumes containing travel accounts in German and in Latin. Their father Theodore de Bry had started publishing his *America*-series in 1590, and after his death in 1598, his two sons not only continued that series which by then had already expanded to seven books, but had also started their own *India Orientalis*-series in 1597 to reproduce the increasing number of Dutch travel accounts to the East Indies. Affluent readers across the continent cherished the De Bry collection for the high-quality copper engravings father and sons designed and included in a separate section at the end of each volume. In the highest echelons of early modern Europe – among princes and noblemen, clergymen and merchants – the collection of voyages became an important and influential coffee-table book.⁴

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- 2 On Heyns, see Hubert Meeus, "Zacharias Heyns, Sometime Apprentice to Moretus, Becomes the First Merchant/Publisher in Amsterdam", *Quaerendo* 38.4 (2008): 381–97; on Claesz, see Günter Schilder, *Monumenta Cartographica Neerlandica VII: Cornelis Claesz (c.1551–1609): Stimulator and Driving Force of Dutch Cartography* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 2003); Elizabeth A. Sutton, *Early Modern Dutch Prints of Africa* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 21–51.
- 3 Barent Jansz' account is included in Michiel Colijn's and Gillis Saeghman's collections of voyages (1617 and 1663 respectively), as well as in the famous compendium *Begin ende Voortgangh* (1648).
- 4 Michiel van Groesen, *The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages (1590–1634)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Johan Theodore and Johan Israel de Bry included Barent Jansz' *Wijdtloopigh verhael* in Volume IX of their *America*-series, which appeared in Frankfurt in German in 1601, and in Latin in 1602.⁵ Not only did they arrange for the translation of Zacharias Heyns' edition, they also made substantial and significant changes to the cycle of illustrations designed in Amsterdam. If possible, the De Brys for their collection relied on visual material in the original account, but as arguably the most talented copper engravers in early modern Germany, they invariably added engravings and modified existing ones. As a result, the De Bry collection painted a completely different picture of the first Dutch circumnavigation than the original printed account. This article explores how information from European eyewitnesses in the Americas underwent a complete transformation in a printing workshop in Frankfurt, why this was done and how it helped to legitimate European supremacy in the Atlantic world, and – perhaps most intriguingly – why indigenous inhabitants of tropical West Africa suddenly ended up in the cold and tempestuous climes of Patagonia.

Depicting the Other in West Africa

If contemporary readers of the De Bry collection would have compared the lavishly produced volumes to the original printed accounts (there is no reason to believe that they did), they would have noticed one major change right away. The title-page of Zacharias Heyns' Amsterdam edition presented readers with a rather crude view of the five ships which had departed Rotterdam with high hopes in 1598, perhaps appealing to the collective awareness in Holland of Mahu and De Cordes' maritime adventure at the turn of the century (Figure 2.1). The title-page of the De Bry volume was strikingly different, as was the size of the book – more than twice the size of Heyns' account. The attractive newly-invented image consisted of several figures which featured in the book, and was meant to be a preview persuading customers to purchase a copy (Figure 2.2). To the left and right of the extensive title in the middle of the classical tableau, two half-dressed native inhabitants can be seen, although from the title-page itself it is unclear which regions in the Atlantic world they represented. At the very top of the composition, usually reserved for deities or indigenous dignitaries, European readers were treated to a picture of the "king" of Gabon – one of the places the Dutch fleet visited on its way south towards the Strait of Magellan. The two penguins to the left and right of the African

5 *Neundter und letzter Theil Americae ...* (Frankfurt, 1601); *Americae Nona & postrema Pars* (Frankfurt, 1602).



FIGURE 2.1 Zacharias Heyns, *Wijdtloopigh verhael*. Amsterdam, 1600, title-page
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM O 60–571 (1)

ruler symbolized some of the “marvelous” aspects of nature the Dutch crew witnessed in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Only the llama at the bottom did not refer to Barent Jansz’ narrative, but to the other account in Volume 1X of the *America*-series, José de Acosta’s *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*.

The De Brys reserved the most meaningful modifications for the contents of the account. They began by putting the account’s paratextual sections to the service of their own commercial enterprise. This, for every volume of the collection, was a delicate affair. The De Brys decided they did not need the sonnet Heyns has used to announce the appearance of the travel account. Also, rather predictably, they omitted Heyns’ dedicatory letter at the start of the original printed account to the Amsterdam merchant Jan Andries de Jacomo, and replaced it with two dedications of their own – a German one to landgrave Ludwig of Hesse-Marburg, a Calvinist prince and trusted protector of the De Brys who were Calvinists themselves, and a Latin one to Elector Christian II of Saxony, an important political figure in Lutheran Germany, to whom the De Brys also dedicated multiple books. The dedications were part of a careful editorial strategy intended not to alienate any confessional groups in the Holy Roman Empire that was characterized by religious tensions. Despite their Reformed

persuasion, the De Bry brothers even occasionally dedicated books to Catholic princes in order to keep their business afloat. In the case of Volume IX, the inclusion of the Jesuit José de Acosta's work probably meant the De Brys did not feel the need to include a dedication to a Catholic ruler as an explicit appeal to a Catholic readership.⁶

The changes to the actual travel account at first glance seem to be minimal. The De Brys shortened the text by indiscriminately omitting brief paragraphs, mainly in the Latin translation.⁷ The reason for this must have been a practical one. The amount of paper used was an important factor in determining the price of a printed book around 1600, and the De Brys probably tried to fit Barent Jansz' account into as few pages as they reasonably could without disrupting the main story. In a few cases, however, the De Brys made significant changes to the text, occasionally with such surgical precision that these changes enable us to understand the intricacies of the Frankfurt publishers' editorial strategy. The most remarkable examples are provided by two passages describing the encounters between Captain De Weert and several Dutch crew members and the inhabitants of Cape Lopez. Barent Jansz relates how the Dutch were received in a hospitable manner, and were given a place to sleep by the local ruler. When De Weert woke up the first morning, "meaning to return to the King, an old woman approached him, looking up to the sky, carrying a box".⁸ In the workshop of the De Brys, the passage was altered to emphasize that the woman who approached the captain was "entirely naked". Both the German and the Latin translation emphasized the woman's nudity (*gantz nacket* / *tota nuda*), even though the original account did not provide any evidence for this – neither here nor elsewhere in the section on the Dutch visit to Cape Lopez.⁹

This small yet significant modification was not a coincidence. One of the woodcuts in Barent Jansz' original printed account had depicted the highlight of the Dutch visit to Cape Lopez, a diplomatic encounter between Dutch and Gabonese dignitaries (Figure 2.3). The contrast between the well-attired European visitors, carrying their ceremonial trumpets, and the half-naked African "nobleman", wearing feathered hats and sitting on the floor in a semi-circle,

6 For the two De Bry dedications, see *Neundter und letzter Theil Americae*, [(?)2^r-3^v]; *Americae Nona & postrema Pars*, [(?)2^r-3^v].

7 These sections are discussed, briefly and incompletely, in the modern edition of Barent Jansz' account entitled *De reis van Mahu en De Cordes door de Straat van Magalhaes naar Zuid-Amerika en Japan 1598–1600*, ed. F.C. Wieder (3 vols.; The Hague: Nijhoff, 1923–25), vol. I, pp. 179, 188–89, 192, 204–5.

8 *Wijdtloopigh verhael*, [C4^r]: "Des morghens de Capiteijn [...] van meyninghe weder na den Koningh te gaen, quam tot hem een out wijf, sterrelingsh op ziende, met een dose ...".

9 *Neundter und letzter Theil Americae*, [2C3^r]; *Americae Nona & postrema Pars*, [Cc1^v].



FIGURE 2.3 Anon., “Sebald de Weert meets the King of Congo”, in: Zacharias Heyns, *Wijdtloopigh verhael*. Amsterdam, 1600. [C3r]
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM O 60–571 (1)

must have been quite emphatic for readers of the Amsterdam edition. For the De Brys, however, the contrast between civilized Europeans and uncivilized non-European inhabitants of the Atlantic world was not yet striking enough. In their copper engraving of the same encounter, the Dutch visitors were carrying weapons alongside their trumpets, and the Gabonese noblemen had been – quite literally – undressed (Figure 2.4). Whereas in Heyns’ woodcut they had been covering their genitals with textile clothing, they were depicted stark naked by the De Brys, as if to underline the modifications made to the text. The change was confirmed in the lengthy caption that the De Brys added to the engravings, which once again included the words “*gantz nacket*” and “*in totum nud*” that the corresponding section in the original account did not provide. In the background of the De Bry engraving, the impressive Dutch fleet gave a different impression of the balance of power along the West African coast than the original woodcut had done. In a final textual adjustment, the De Brys in the captions employed the word “Barbaric” (*das Barbarische Volk / Barbari*) to describe the Gabonese elite, while their own translations had used

XVIII.
 QVOMODO HOLLANDI RE-
 GVLVM QVENDAM LITTORALIS
 tractus Guineæ inuiferint.
 IV.



POSTQVAM Hollandi cum maxima vnda potabilis rerumq; necessarium aliorum inopia cōsueti, multis suorum infirmatis & decumbentibus litius Guineæ attigissent, legatos suos cum interprete, ad loci eius Regulam amanderunt. Rex itaque de Hollandorum appulsu edocētus, habitu suo superbissimo ad illos prodit. Induerat enim se palla Gallica, & caligis ex purpureo panno factis, & tenis ex auro spurio constrictis, catero quin nec induto, nec tibialibus, nec calceis amictus. Caput illius longa, & caque in apicem desinente vitta, ex panno croceo, aut rubro carneeque, texta, opertum erat. Hoc habitum ante Hollandos pressi humilique scilla desidebat, pedibus eius ouina pelle substratis. Post ipsum omnes eius nobiles, in totum mundi considerant. Hollandico itaque praefecto ad Regulam ingresso, rex illum in consimili scilla florea instrata considere iussit. Quo facto quod opus erat, per interpretem tractabatur. Inter eā vero Admirans omnes infirmos ex nautibus in terram expositi ibidemq; probe curari iusserat, alium plerique rursus conualescerent. Illic mortuos, terra mandabant. Ipsi homines, ad Hollandorum quidem aspectum primum valde aegrestes & formidolosi erant. Postea autem assuescentes magis, ita miserebant, ut cum illis de omnibus probe tractari possent.

cc 3

FIGURE 2.4 Johan Theodore de Bry, “Sebalde de Weert meets the King of Congo (1)”, in: *America* vol. IX. Frankfurt, 1601/2, ill. 18
 SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM OF 63–732 (4)

the less derogatory terms “*die Mohren*” (the Moors) and “*Aethiopes*” (the Ethiopians) instead.¹⁰

Zacharias Heyns had opted to include only a single illustration of the visit of the Dutch sailors to Gabon, but the De Brys in Frankfurt decided to add a second one (Figure 2.5). Generally, throughout the De Bry collection, these newly designed engravings copied elements of images in the original account (if the original account contained any, of course), but the engraver also drew inspiration for the composition from the unillustrated sections of the travel account. In this case, the De Brys depicted another meeting between Captain de Weert and the “King” of Gabon. The juxtaposition between the civilized European visitors and their uncivilized hosts was once again at the heart of the engraving. In the background and to the right of the main scene, other stages of the encounter were depicted by the De Brys, creating an image with narrative quality which combined different episodes into one image. On the right-hand side, the De Brys decided to single out for depiction the “old woman” who had approached De Weert carrying a box. Predictably, she was “entirely naked” to underline the manipulative change to the text the De Brys had made. Changes to the text and changes to the illustrations, then, went hand in hand to create a systematically different representation of the “Other”, and of the nature of the encounter between the Dutch and the indigenous population of Cape Lopez.

From West Africa to Patagonia (and Back)

Other than emphasizing the “otherness” of the indigenous inhabitants of West Africa, the De Brys employed another strategy to increase the divide between Europeans and non-Europeans in the Atlantic world. Throughout their collection, they performed an ethnic homogenization of non-European populations – a process which may have partly been the result of a lack of credible visual material in the original travel accounts, but which was systematically executed and had a detrimental effect on the perception of ethnic variety in the Atlantic world. Here the De Brys’ adaptation of Barent Jansz’ *Wijdtloopigh verhael* provides an exemplary case. In the newly invented engraving of the encounter at Cape Lopez, the De Brys depicted another naked woman immediately to the right of the “King” of Gabon, bringing fish to the European and indigenous dignitaries during their meeting as the text described. The woman’s

10 *Neundter und letzter Theil Americae*, [2C3^r] vs. [3E4^r]; *Americae Nona & postrema Pars*, [Ccr^r] vs. [ee4^r]. In *Wijdtloopigh verhael*, the term ‘barbaric’ is not used either, the Dutch account prefers the word ‘Swerten’ (blacks).



FIGURE 2.5 Johan Theodore de Bry, “Sebalde de Weert meets the King of Congo (2)”, in: *America* vol. IX. Frankfurt, 1601/2, ill. 19
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM OF 63–732 (4)

hair style, with a distinctive combed-back forelock, and her necklace made of what appeared to be shells, which also served to hold up the remarkably hairy cape she was wearing, were particularly eye-catching. These distinctive elements of the woman's appearance were not invented in Frankfurt, however, but in Amsterdam, by Zacharias Heyns. The De Brys' West African woman was copied and pasted from a woodcut in the original Amsterdam edition which depicted the appearance of women along the Strait of Magellan (Figure 2.6). Intriguingly, the De Brys included the same woman in one of their own images of Patagonia too, enabling readers of their coffee-table book to witness the ethnic similarities between West Africa and Tierra del Fuego for themselves.

The homogenization of the "other" enabled the De Brys to develop a binary interpretation of the Atlantic world, where Europeans – here represented by the Dutch sailors under Sebald de Weert – were juxtaposed with non-Europeans who were made to look as if they shared some important ethnic features. This in turn formed the basis for the rhetoric of European supremacy overseas, which was introduced by the De Brys to the travel account of Barent Jansz in a stunningly manipulative, and probably highly effective, way. The main subject



FIGURE 2.6 Anon., "Patagonian woman and her children", in: Zacharias Heyns, *Wijdtloopigh verhael*, [Gir]
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM O 60–571 (1)

of these editorial manipulations were the mythical Patagonian Giants, who supposedly inhabited the shores of the Strait of Magellan. They were included among the creatures known in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe as the “Plinian races” (after Pliny the Elder’s *Historia Naturalis*), and the observations by the first European circumnavigators, like Antonio Pigafetta who took part in Magellan’s expedition, appeared to confirm that European visitors to the southernmost tip of the Americas could anticipate an encounter with human creatures who were more than nine feet tall.

Cosmographic literature in Renaissance Europe in particular played a key role in nurturing and shaping this story, and alerting European armchair travelers to the ferocious nature of these gigantic creatures. Sebastian Münster, the German cosmographer, wrote in 1550 that Spanish conquistadors – meaning Magellan and his chronicler Pigafetta – had encountered “terribly large women and even taller men of whom they were horrified, and if they had not reached their ships and their guns in time, they would have been in distress because of these ‘Giganten’ or ‘Heroes’”.¹¹ Münster’s *Cosmographia* was an extremely popular treatise in Renaissance Europe, going through as many as 46 different editions and translations before 1650.¹² The French royal cosmographer André Thevet noted in his 1575 *Cosmographie Universelle* that “these people are not to be handled with kid gloves, given the force that is natural to them. And moreover that they are so bloodthirsty, so skilful, so well-prepared for battle that it would take only twenty of them to defeat one hundred of ours, because in their fury they no longer fear death, and so they expose themselves to it, like a lioness or tigress whose cubs are taken away”.¹³ Even in editions of Abraham Ortelius’ *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* which appeared around 1600, just at the

11 Sebastian Münster, *Cosmographie oder Beschreibung aller länder* (Basel, 1550), [Kkk7^r]: “... mechtig große weiber und noch viel grösser männer, ab dennen sie sich entsetzten, und wo sie nit bey zeit it schiff zum geschütz kommenn were, were sie bey dißen Giganten oder Helden in not kommen”.

12 Surekha Davies, *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human: New Worlds, Maps, and Monsters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 107, 163–64; Matthew MacLean, *The Cosmographia of Sebastian Münster: Describing the World in the Reformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).

13 André Thevet, *La Cosmographie Universelle* (2 vols.; Paris, 1575), II, [Aaaa3^r]: “ces gens ne laissent prendre sans mouffles, veu la force qui leur est naturelle, & puis que avec cela ils sont si sanguinaires, adextres, bien combattans, si qu’il n’en faudroit qu’une vingtaine pour en accabler une centaine des nostres: car’estans en leur furie, ils se ne soucient non plus la mort, que de rien, ains s’y exposent, ainsi qu’une Lyonne ou Tygresse, á qui on desrobe des petits”. On Thevet, see Frank Lestringant, *Mapping the Renaissance World: The Geographical Imagination in the Age of Discovery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

time when Barent Jansz' account was published in Amsterdam, the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego were referred to as "Gigantes".¹⁴

Authors of travel accounts felt obliged to echo these well-known stories in their eyewitness reports, if only to stress the credibility of their narratives and to respect what Anthony Grafton has called "the power of tradition" that dictated European representations of the Atlantic world during the Age of Encounters.¹⁵ Barent Jansz was no exception. According to his observations, the Patagonian Giants were "ten to eleven feet tall", and it was clear from the ship's surgeon's narrative that the Dutch sailors were very impressed by the mythical creatures they had come across.¹⁶ The corresponding woodcut in the Amsterdam edition of Barent Jansz' account duly showed two impressive (and impressively large) people, a man in the foreground holding a spear, thus confirming the notions of belligerency which were doing the rounds in learned circles in early modern Europe, and a second man in a canoe in which a fire burned, probably an amalgamated image inspired by other sixteenth-century representations of indigenous life in the Americas (Figure 2.7).

The De Bry engraving which was derived from this woodcut placed the encounter between the Dutch sailors and the Patagonian Giants in a completely different light (Figure 2.8). Like the newly added engraving to the encounters at Cape Lopez, the De Bry composition was divided into three different segments, each depicting a different stage in the first encounter between the Dutch and the fearsome Giants. In the background – exactly like they had done in the newly invented Cape Lopez engraving – the De Brys once again added the Dutch fleet, still complete at the time because the hardships in the Strait of Magellan were still in the (near) future. The fleet of oceangoing vessels was meant to remind readers of the power of European technology and endeavor, and highlight the contrast with the distinctly less impressive seacrafts of the Patagonian Giants. The background of the engraving was connected to the foreground by a sloop of armed Dutchmen rowing towards the coast and using their firearms to deter a handful of Patagonians who had approached the ships in one of their canoes. The clash, as would have been immediately

14 Dennis Reinhartz, "The Americas Revealed in the "Theatrum", in: Peter van der Krogt, Peter H. Meurer, and Marcel van den Broecke, eds., *Abraham Ortelius and the First Atlas: Essays Commemorating the Quadricentennial of his Death, 1598–1998* (Houten: Hes & De Graaf, 1998), pp. 209–20, esp. 213–14. On Ortelius, see also Tine Meganck, *Erudite Eyes: Friendship, Art and Erudition in the Network of Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

15 Anthony T. Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992).

16 *Wijdtloopigh verhael*, [D4^v]: "10. oft 11. voet langh".



FIGURE 2.7 Anon. "Patagonian men", in: Zacharias Heyns, *Wijdtloopigh verhael*, [Eir] SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM O 60-571 (1)

clear to any European reader, was an unequal one, and the Patagonian Giants who had remained ashore started to panic. The extent of their anxiety could be witnessed in the foreground, where one Giant pulled a palm tree (!) from the ground – something which they tended to do, as Barent Jansz had observed, to channel their fear.

Even though the Patagonian Giants in the Frankfurt engravings were clearly modelled after their counterparts in the Amsterdam edition, the way the De Brys had selected separate episodes from Barent Jansz' story and combined them in a rhetorically powerful engraving stressed that the Patagonians were in awe of the Europeans, rather than the other way around. The same interpretation of the Euro-indigenous encounter in the Atlantic world was on display in the next two engravings, which also visualized the shifting power relations between the Dutch and the Patagonians. In the second Amsterdam woodcut devoted to Tierra del Fuego, the woman who had served as the template for the newly designed West African woman featured (see Figure 2.6). She too underwent a significant change in the Frankfurt workshop, because the corresponding De Bry engraving had added not only a Dutch ship to the composition, but also placed a much greater emphasis on the skirmish in the background

XXII
 HOLLANDI IN FRETO MAGEL-
 LANICO IUXTA INSULAM QUAN-
 dam grandes & portentosos homines in-
 ueniunt.
 VIII.



CVM aliquando Hollandi in freto Magellanico una aut altera scapha versus insulam
 quandam remos agerent, insperato ipsi septem luntres, vastis horrendisq; & illis nudis
 hominibus pleni occurrerunt, quorum longitudo decem vel undecim pedum erat. Cuius
 horum subsusca viscebar: ipse vero toti nudis capillos & capite longos promissisq; funde-
 bant. Hi ad Hollandos inuadendos, cum sese auide instruerent, animo eorum percipiente,
 Hollandi in eos Musquestis strenue desulmiserunt, & ex omni numero tres derepente
 morti dederunt. Quod videntes Barbari, remis incitatis, sese in terram se receperunt,
 cuiusq; e terra arboribus, contra Hollandos aduenturos sese obvallarunt, cum spiculis, tum saxu interim
 minit abundi. Attamen Hollandi, cum persequi hos Gigantes & frustraneum & nimis periculosum puta-
 rent, eos missos fecerunt. Barbari autem, cum tempore quodam tres ex Hollandis fortuito comprehensissent,
 inuisitata & miserabili lenitena eos commalarunt. Hac figura quoque scapharum, quas illi vsarpant, formam
 exprimit.

ff 3

FIGURE 2.8 Johan Theodore de Bry, "Patagonian men encounter Dutch sailors", in: *America* vol. IX. Frankfurt, 1601/2, ill. 22

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM OF 63-732 (4)

between Dutch sailors – well-armed just like in the previous illustration in the De Bry cycle – and the now markedly fearful Giants who fled from the Dutch onslaught towards the mountainous interior. In the foreground of the De Bry engraving, the woman and her two children were now joined by three Europeans. The contrast between the naked mother, her body stooped to reach out to her children, and the three Dutch soldiers, the most prominent of whom positioning himself as if posing for a contemporary costume book, could not have been greater (Figure 2.9).

Arguably the most striking transformation in the visual representation of the Patagonians, however, was reserved for the third and final illustration of the encounter in the Strait of Magellan. This image, the climax to the cycle of engravings in Volume IX of the De Brys' *America*-series, was once again based on a woodcut designed by Zacharias Heyns. The Amsterdam woodcut, an image not dissimilar to the archetypical costume book illustrations where a male and female member of a specific ethnic group were depicted together, each wearing standard local clothing and carrying attributes – often weaponry – used in that particular region of the world, was not particularly spectacular in the light of what Barent Jansz had described in his account (Figure 2.10). The only remarkable aspects on display were the feathered garments of the Patagonian man, which had not been depicted in the other two images, and suggested not only the distinguished nature and position of this particular man, but also his American roots, as by 1600 feathers were practically synonymous with the indigenous population of the American continent north and south in European iconography. In the background of the crude woodcut, Heyns depicted a circle of men, apparently Dutchmen, a man lying face down on the ground whose narrative purpose was unclear, and a Dutch ship and sloop, probably meant to emphasize that the crew of *Het Geloof* by now had lost track of the other four ships that were part of the Dutch fleet.

The De Bry engraving borrowed all its elements from the woodcut in the original edition, but used these to provide readers with a completely different conclusion to the Dutch-Patagonian encounter (Figure 2.11). The woman, mirrored as usual when copper engravers copied other illustrations, was still in the same position, but the feathered man was lying on the ground, face down, like the small figure in the Amsterdam woodcut. His hands were tied behind his back and his eyes were closed, suggesting that, at the very least, he had been subdued by the Dutch sailors, and – as was confirmed in the caption – that he had died during the Dutch visit to Tierra del Fuego. As the European viewers' attention was drawn to the Patagonian dignitary's face, they would have immediately seen the circle of Dutchmen which the De Brys had given added prominence. It could now clearly be seen that the men were praying,



FIGURE 2.9 Johan Theodore de Bry, "Patagonian woman and her children encounter Dutch sailors", in: *America* vol. IX. Frankfurt, 1601/2, ill. 23

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM OF 63–732 (4)



FIGURE 2.10 Anon., “Two Patagonian giants”, in: Zacharias Heyns, *Wijdtloopigh verhael*, [H2v]
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM,
OTM O 60–571 (1)

and it could be inferred that they thanked the Lord for making them come out on top of the clash with the fearsome Patagonian Giants. In the background, the same three Dutch soldiers who had been depicted in the previous engraving now appeared again in the company of the Patagonian woman, holding here and perhaps taking her back to Europe – although neither the account nor the captions in the two De Bry translations provided any further explanation. Finally, three Dutch sailors were depicted working on a sloop, probably to make their way back to the ship which, as readers already knew, would take them safely back to Europe.

The final engravings left no doubts about the transoceanic power balance, not even when Europeans came face to face with what experienced readers in the Old World estimated to be one of the most fearsome indigenous groups of the Americas. The triumph of European civilization, supported across the globe by Christianity, formed a marked departure from the stories of marvelous monsters and “Plinian” races that dominated ancient ideas of the world beyond the Pillars of Hercules. This myth had been carefully resurrected in Renaissance Europe by cosmographers like Sebastian Münster and André Thevet, and even by supposedly modern cartographers like Abraham Ortelius and eyewitnesses and their publishers who wanted to be believed by readers back home such as Barent Jansz and Zacharias Heyns. The fact that Christianity as a whole, and not just a single denomination in post-Reformation Europe, could recognize the simple juxtaposition between “us” and “them” allowed the De Brys to sell



FIGURE 2.11 Johan Theodore de Bry, "Patagonian giants", in: *America* vol. IX. Frankfurt, 1601/2, ill. 24

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM, OTM OF 63-732 (4)

their collection to both Protestant and Catholic readers, thus enhancing the scope of their representations. The shift in the narrative of what European adventurers were likely to encounter, achieved in a Frankfurt workshop by people who had never travelled, contributed to the emergence of a more aggressive approach to expansion, not only in the Atlantic world but also in Africa and in Asia. In a sense, it was this kind of rhetoric, systematically manufactured in both texts and images, that legitimated European colonialism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Conclusion: The Tools of Storytelling

The De Brys had one more card up their sleeve in order to impose the results of their editorial strategy on European readers. Every volume of their collection was structured in the same way, meaning that the illustrations that all readers at the time must have been eagerly looking forward to were not included in the text, but added at the end of the translated travel account. Each of the copper engravings was accompanied by a fairly long caption, a verbatim copy of the relevant section of the text or, more often, a tailor-made paraphrase of the text which condensed what the publishers estimated to be the highlights of the account into one short text. It is very likely that contemporary readers – like scholars interested in the De Bry collection today – immediately proceeded to the illustrated part of the volume, reading the cycle of illustrations as a *de facto* summary of Barent Jansz' narrative. The De Brys had brought the technique of including copper engravings into printed books to the German book market, and by 1601 – when *America IX* appeared – the novelty had almost certainly not yet worn off. They may well have used their knowledge of reading habits to enhance the impression that the cycle of illustrations did indeed provide a summary of the narrative, without of course emphasizing the various layers of manipulation that provided the groundwork for their visual representations of the Atlantic world. To understand the intricacy of the De Brys' editorial strategy, it is useful to look at the cycle of illustrations as a whole.

Whereas Heyns, in the original printed account, had included eight woodcuts, the De Brys expanded the number of illustrations to eleven. The first two were practically identical, representing the departure of the Dutch fleet and its arrival in Cape Verde. The third copper engraving, newly invented by the De Brys, displayed the same fleet. The first sentence of the caption, both in German and in Latin, emphasized the continuity between the previous and the current image by stating that "From Santiago [on Cape Verde, the subject of the second image] the Dutchmen sailed on to Brava", another island of the Cape Verde archipelago. It is here that Jacques Mahu, the fleet's commander,

died, and this fact too was mentioned in the caption to the new engraving – a requirement for understanding what was to follow at Cape Lopez and in Patagonia. For this reason the fourth copper engraving included in the background a view of a Christian funeral ritual, a detail not available in one of the original woodcuts, but a crucial element of the De Brys' strategy of turning the copper engravings *cum* captions into a summary of Barent Jansz' travel account. Since the fourth caption ended with the observation that the inhabitants of Cape Lopez were eager to trade with the Dutch after getting acquainted with them, the first sentence of the fifth caption explicitly made the connection to this observation by stating that "Now that the commander [De Weert] and the 'King' were entering into trade relations ...", another clear example of chaining together the consecutive chapters of the story. Readers were hence encouraged to understand the cycle of illustrations as a complete and representative summary of the original account.

It is for this reason that the selection and manipulation of the three images of the Dutch-Patagonian encounter at the conclusion of the cycle of eleven illustrations, and hence of the De Bry narrative as a whole, carried so much weight. While Heyns' woodcuts, dispersed through the account, ended with the ethnographic image of the Patagonian woman and man posing, as it were, for their European portraitist, the De Bry cycle of copper engravings concluded with the reassuring message – from a European perspective – that even the canonically most fearsome of indigenous inhabitants in the Americas could ultimately be subjugated by Europe's technological advantage, supported by God who unconditionally sided with the Christians against the heathen peoples of the New World. As a result, two contrasting visions of the first Dutch attempt at circumnavigation circulated in early modern Europe in the first decade of the seventeenth century. The original Dutch edition, printed by Zacharias Heyns in Amsterdam and based on the eyewitness observations of Barent Jansz Potgieter, emphasized the suffering of the Dutch crew to ride the wave of popularity for tales of disaster which had been created by the publication of Gerrit de Veer's account of the wintering at Nova Zembla two years earlier. The German and Latin translations published by Johan Theodore and Johan Israel de Bry in Frankfurt used the same information to tell a completely different story. This narrative enriched the contrast between Europeans and non-Europeans in the Atlantic world, and told a tale of European supremacy, founded on the mutually supportive "languages of Christianity and civility" that characterized so many European travel accounts of the Age of Encounters.¹⁷

17 The term "languages of civility and Christianity" I borrowed from Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India Through European Eyes, 1250–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. xv.