Mapping Colonial Interdependencies in Dutch Brazil: European Linen & Brasilianen Identity

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Cover Page Footnote
I would like to thank Michael Zell, Jodi Cranston, Bill Hegman, Nancy Um, Marsely Kehoe, Erin Sassin, Leger Grindon, and Jenn Ortegren, who read and responded to earlier versions of this essay. I am also grateful to the Artl@s editors and anonymous reviewers, who provided generous and insightful feedback.

This article is available in Artl@s Bulletin: https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/vol7/iss2/7
Mapping Colonial Interdependencies in Dutch Brazil: European Linen & Brasilianen Identity

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Abstract
In Dutch Brazil, the Brasilianen were essential allies to the West India Company. To maintain this critical alliance, the Dutch presented them with gifts of linen, a fabric in high demand. Representations of Brasilianen wearing linen garments were pervasive and include an image on Joan Blaeu’s 1647 map of the Brazilian Captaincies of Rio Grande and Paraíba. Traditional interpretations of these linen-clad Brasilianen prioritize a center/periphery model; in contrast, I argue that these pictured linens document the interdependencies between the WIC and the Brasilianen, a position supported by digital maps plotting Dutch/indigenous exchanges.

Abstract
In Nederlands-Brazilia waren de Brasilianen belangrijke bondgenoten voor de West-Indische Compagnie. Om deze strategische alliantie te behouden, boden Nederlanders de Brasilianen linnen stoffen aan, een felbegeerd materiaal. Brasilianen werden dan ook vaak afgebeeld in linnen kleding, zoals de Braziliaanse kapteinschappen van Rio Grande en Paraíba op de landkaart van Joan Blaeu uit 1647. Traditioneel werd de linnen kleding van de Brasilianen geïnterpreteerd door middel van het centrum/periferie model. In dit artikel wordt echter beargumenteerd dat de linnen kleding de onderlinge afhankelijkheid tussen de WIC en de Brasilianen benadrukt, een hypothese die ondersteund wordt door digitale kaarten waarop uitwisselingen tussen Brasilianen en Nederlanders te zien zijn.

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In colonial Dutch Brazil, the *Brasilianen*—the term used by the Dutch to describe the Tupinamba, an indigenous Tupi-speaking group who lived in *aldeas*, or colonial villages—were critical allies to the West India Company (*Geoctroyeerde Westindische Compagnie*, or WIC). Capable and practiced in the handling of firearms, the *Brasilianen* were frequently included in the ranks of WIC militia, especially during the tenure of governor-general Johan Maurits (1637 to 1644). To keep these essential allies, the Dutch frequently presented them with gifts of linen, which—according to Caspar Barlaeus in his 1647 *History of Brazil*—was “the merchandise most sought after by the Brazilians.” As archival records attest, the WIC imported large quantities of the fabric to the Dutch colony in order to keep up with *Brasilianen* demand for it. Though these gifted fabrics are no longer extant, visual records suggest their enduring connection to the *Brasilianen*. Most famously, Albert Eckhout’s *Brasilianen/Tupinamba Woman* (1641) and *Brasilianen/Tupinamba Man* (1643) in Copenhagen (Figs. 1 & 2) wear impossibly white garments, which—although traditionally identified as “European cloth” or cotton—are likely made from linen.

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While the pristine garments of Eckhout’s painted figures are impossible to identify with certainty, the conspicuous importance of linen for the Brasilianen—and their ubiquitous visual pairing—deserves further consideration.

The now-lost models for Eckhout’s paintings were copied widely, resulting in the proliferation of linen-clad Brasilianen in drawings, texts, paintings, and maps, including Joan Blaeu’s well-known map of the Brazilian Captaincies of Rio Grande and Paraíba (Fig. 4), a subset of a larger map that shows all four captaincies of Dutch Brazil. Featured on this map in the region called the sertão (the Brazilian backcountry of which the Dutch had little knowledge), is an engraving showing a WIC officer leading a group of Brasilianen soldiers—identifiable by their linen garments—on an exploratory mission. Traditional interpretations of these images prioritize a center/periphery model, whereby the pictured linen garments signify a marginalized group’s acquiescence to the rules and decorum of a central colonial authority. In contrast, I argue that the linen garments pictured on Blaeu’s map indicate the mutual dependencies of the Brasilianen and the Dutch, and may also signify visually Brasilianen social cohesion, which was rooted in a desire for self-governance. This re-signification is reinforced by digital maps that plot the locations and quantities of gifts, including linen, given by the WIC to the Brasilianen onto Blaeu’s map, reasserting the importance of the social encounters that are often omitted or reimagined on colonial maps. This juxtaposition of archival and visual data makes possible the presentation of simultaneous narratives in a made digital space and demonstrates how digital mapping as a methodology can bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Alliances and Exchange in Dutch Brazil

When the Dutch first arrived on the shores of Salvador de Bahia, Brazil in 1624, they assumed that the inhabitants of the region, whom they believed to be under the tyrannical control of the Spanish, would welcome the enlightened authority of the West India Company (WIC) with open arms. Instead, the Dutch encountered unexpected resistance, not only from the Portuguese, the foreign occupants of the region who had been a part of the Spanish kingdom since 1580, but also from the Brasilianen, who were—initially—cautiously loyal to the Portuguese.

Frustrated by the initial resistance of the Brasilianen, the WIC sought recourse through diplomacy, believing they could win allies by appealing to a common sense of anti-Spanish injustice and also through the presentation of gifts. And so in 1635, after the Dutch definitively repelled the Portuguese from northeastern Brazil, the Political Council in Recife was instructed by the Heren XIX—the name given to the WIC board of directors—to initiate a policy of distributing gifts to the “most principal and capable among them,” as the Portuguese had done before them. This was a strategy with which the Dutch were quite familiar: not only had diplomatic gift presentations been employed with success by the Portuguese, but also by the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (East India Company, or VOC) in Asia and the WIC in New Netherland. A letter written by Isaac Rasière, a WIC officer posted in New Netherland, to the Amsterdam Chamber of the WIC on September 23, 1626 explains the Company’s strategy for sustaining relations with the Minquas, a local indigenous group with whom they traded for furs. He writes:

...In short, these people must, much like children, be kept on friendly terms by kindness and occasionally small gifts; one must be familiar with them and allow

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2 Translated in Meuwese, Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade, 149. For the original instruction, see OWC, 1.05.01.01, inv. Nr. 8, August 1, 1635 (instructions to the Political Council from the Heren XIX).

them to think that one trusts them fully, and meanwhile be on one’s guard, or else things are apt to go wrong. The relationship, however, was sometimes fraught with conflict and misunderstandings and the Dutch soon found that the Tarairiu were unpredictable allies. Furthermore, unlike the Brasilianen the Tarairiu were of limited use in battle against the Portuguese, as they were reportedly afraid of the loud noises produced by European weapons. Nevertheless, in order to remain in good standing with the Tarairiu, the Dutch regularly presented them with gifts, including objects like nails, fishhooks, axes, chisels, mirrors, musical instruments, and—occasionally—clothing.

The material most frequently sought by the Brasilianen as a form of compensation for their continued loyalty and military service was linen. Johan Maurits indicates as much in a 1638 report when he writes, “Indian men only work in order to obtain for themselves and their wives as much lijnwaet [bleached linen] as necessary to cover their bodies.” Caspar Barlaeus reinforces this claim in the laudatory 1647 book Rerum per octennium in Brasilia et alibi nuper gestarum, sub praefectura illustrissimi Comiti I. Mauritii...Historia (The History of the Recent Activities in Brazil and Elsewhere over a Period of Eight Years under the governorship of Count Johan Maurits) noting, “The merchandise most sought after by the Brazilians is linen cloth, not the kind made in Rouen, but that woven in Osnabruck.” Aware of Brasilianen desire for this European cloth, Maurits and other WIC officers frequently presented it as gifts intended to forge and maintain alliances and retain their military service.

WIC officers understood well that successful liaisons with local populations were essential for fruitful trade and had to be carefully nurtured. As the Dutch had already learned, indigenous allies could mean the difference between occupation and expulsion—a lesson they learned the hard way in 1624 when the Portuguese and their Brasilianen allies at Salvador de Bahia swiftly defeated WIC armies—only a year after the Dutch had first won the territory from the Portuguese. Initial resistance from the Brasilianen in the 1620s gradually yielded by the mid-1630s when the WIC secured allies in what became the Dutch captaincies of Pernambuco, Itamaracá, Rio Grande, and Paraíba. As the Dutch had earlier discovered in Salvador de Bahia, the Brasilianen were skilled mercenaries, who—thanks to the Portuguese—were both capable and practiced in the handling of firearms. In light of the constant shortage of soldiers in Dutch Brazil, Brasilianen auxiliaries proved critical for Dutch military success against the Portuguese, and they were frequently included in the ranks of WIC armies under the governance of Johan Maurits (1637 to 1644), during which time the Brasilianen acted as auxiliary soldiers in many battles. As the Portuguese had done before them, Brasilianen soldiers were compensated for their service, often being paid in accordance with their rank. Nevertheless, the fear that the Brasilianen might defect back to the Portuguese spurred the Dutch to supplement these salaries with additional gifts of linen, clothing, and various metal wares. The Dutch also sought out alliances with the so-called Tapuya, a word from the Tupi language adopted by the Dutch to describe non-Tupi speaking groups who lived in the Brazilian interior, away from the colonized coast. Of the groups that were identified as Tapuya, the Dutch developed a somewhat close relationship with the Tarairiu, who lived in the sertão, or backcountry, of Rio Grande. The relationship, however, was sometimes fraught with conflict and misunderstandings and the Dutch soon found that the Tarairiu were unpredictable allies. Furthermore, unlike the Brasilianen the Tarairiu were of limited use in battle against the Portuguese, as they were reportedly afraid of the loud noises produced by European weapons. Nevertheless, in order to remain in good standing with the Tarairiu, the Dutch regularly presented them with gifts, including objects like nails, fishhooks, axes, chisels, mirrors, musical instruments, and—occasionally—clothing.

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5 Meuwese, Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade, 126-132.
6 The role of Brasilianen auxiliaries, see ibid., 125-190.
7 Ibid., 161.
9 On the Tarairiu fear of firearms, see Van den Boogaart, “Infernal Allies,” 530. Though they were not skilled in the use of firearms, the Tarairiu were often used to frighten the Portuguese, who were terrified of them. Meuwese, Brother in Arms, Partners in Trade, 172 and 176.
10 Quoted in Meuwese, Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade, 161.
11 Barlaeus, The History of Brazil, 127.
The rhetoric around which such gift presentations were framed often elicited a sense of common purpose, Company loyalty, and reciprocal obligation. In *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia* Barlaeus describes Johan Maurits’s efforts to persuade *Brasilianen* leaders to fight with the Company against the Portuguese commander Dom Fernão de Mascarenhas, conde da Torre, and his armada in 1639:

> [Maurits] summoned the native Brazilian chieftains from all areas to persuade them to join the Company in this war and then told them the following: ... ‘Although the Europeans call you barbarians, a word full of contempt, you must show that unlike barbarians you are capable of loyalty, obedience, and support. You will help the people who, as you know, have helped you, and with our combined forces we will be victorious and gain praise both here and abroad for having defended our country rather than deserting it.’

Maurits’s speech begins with a backhanded compliment, a remark indicating that while much of Europe may believe the *Brasilianen* to be uncivilized, he—the enlightened Maurits—may think otherwise, pending their loyalty to the Company, of course. He then outlines the reciprocal terms upon which their alliance would be based, using first person personal pronouns to suggest co-ownership of a region the Dutch had forcibly usurped only a few years earlier. After the *Brasilianen* agree to fight with the Dutch, Barlaeus vaguely refers to “small gifts” that Maurits distributed to them. Archival documents describing this exchange are more specific, indicating that Maurits gave each aldea leader “a stack of clothes each”—perhaps linen clothing, although this is not specified.

In the years to follow, linen continued to be the gift of choice for the *Brasilianen*. In March of 1642, Maurits was faced with increasing pressure from indigenous leaders, who were concerned with the growing numbers of *Brasilianen* dying as a result of disease and dangerous military expeditions. In an effort to appease the leaders and preserve the WIC/*Brasilianen* alliance, Maurits again presented them with shirts, in addition to linen for their wives. After the Portuguese revolt in June of 1645, circumstances became quite dangerous for those *Brasilianen* who had been loyal to the Dutch; to make matters worse, the shortage of supplies made living conditions unbearable. During this period numerous shipments of linen crossed the Atlantic as charitable gifts for the *Brasilianen* at the request of sympathetic Dutch colonizers, who believed that the continued loyalty of the *Brasilianen* should be rewarded during these dire times.

The alliances forged and maintained through these gift presentations were fragile and complex, but ultimately mutually beneficial. In no uncertain terms, the Dutch benefitted from the labor, local knowledge, and military force provided by these indigenous groups. What scholarship often overlooks, however, is the way in which the *Brasilianen* may have used the benefits of their alliances with the WIC—which included not only gifts of linen, but also favored status—to advance their position within their local communities and the colony at large, an omission that obscures the mutual dependencies of these tenuous allies. These interdependencies were essential for the *Brasilianen* because they provided the necessary leverage for developing strategies of resistance against the authority of the WIC.

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16 Barlaeus, *The History of Brazil*, 150-151.
17 Translated in Mark Meuwese, “For the Peace and well-being of the Country: Intercultural mediators and Dutch-Indian Relations in New Netherland and Dutch Brazil, 1660-1664,” *PhD dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2003*,” 161. Quotation found in OWIC Inv. nr. 68, 15 July 1639.
20 On this point, there are some significant exceptions: the *Brasilianen* who allied with the Dutch early on (before Dutch settlement) were persecuted by the Portuguese. Also, after the WIC left Brazil conditions were quite poor for the *Brasilianen*. See Meuwese, “From Dutch Allies to Portuguese Vassals: Indigenous People in the Aftermath of Dutch Brazil,” in *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 59-76.
21 Marcus Meuwese is an important exception to this trend, as he asserts “the *Brasilianen* saw the strategic relationship with the WIC as a way to maintain autonomy in an unpredictable colonial world.” Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade*, 125. On the ways that the Tarairiu benefited from their relationship with the Dutch see Meuwese, "The Murder of Jacob Rabe," 147.
The best-documented Brasilianen resistance occurred during the governance of Johan Maurits (1637-1644), when complaints about WIC abuses—especially by those officers put in charge of Brasilianen aldeas—were taken very seriously, and eventually resulted in the embadgment of an envoy of Brasilianen leaders to the Dutch Republic to petition for self-governance. The outcome of this petition was the so-called “Letter of Freedom for the Brazilians,” a document that gave the Brasilianen “the privilege to appoint and nominate from among their own nation judges and governors,” subject, of course, to the approval of the High Council in Recife. In an unprecedented meeting held in the mission village of Tapisseria in Pernambuco in March 1645, which was attended by numerous Brasilianen aldea leaders and Johannes Listry, the Dutch “Director of Brazilians,” these limited freedoms resulted in the selection of Brasilianen magistrates (called regidors), who were eventually approved by the High Council. Brasilianen demands for self-governance were granted—albeit in a limited capacity—in part because the Dutch dependencies on these critical allies, but also because of the WIC’s fear of revolt, which had occurred in other provinces as a result of poor treatment and disease.

But such high-profile, official forms of resistance were not always possible or prudent. In the previous century under Portuguese rule, Brasilianen/Tupinamba resistance to colonial oppression more often than not took the form of migration away from the coastal territories, a pattern that recalled pre-contact responses to societal disruption. In other cases, santidade cults were established, the most famous of which was in Jaguaripe, a sugar producing region south of the Bay of All Saints. Established by the Tupinamba leader Antonio, the Jaguaripe movement combined Tupinamba traditions with the hierarchies of the Jesuit church, enabling the Tupinamba to resist oppression by “restor[ing] indigenous collective identity.”

Like the Jaguaripe-movement in the sixteenth century, I am proposing that the persistent requests for linens by the Brasilianen in seventeenth-century Dutch Brazil might indicate a subtle form of collective resistance, one built around the acquisition and cultural appropriation of European material culture—in this case linen. As with those connected to Antonio’s jaguaripe movement, the Brasilianen were also well aware of the strict hierarchies of Dutch colonial society—which manifested visually in the form of clothing—and may have used linen as a way to signify their place within the hierarchy. Through the acquisition and donning of linen garments, the Brasilianen could create a collective identity that would distinguish them from the “savage” Tapuya, who wore nothing, and also from African slaves working on the sugar plantations, who were known to wear checkered cotton cloth. Significantly—and this is an important distinction that will be elaborated upon in the following section—while the Dutch may have seen Brasilianen willingness to wear linen clothing as proof of their civilizing potential, the Brasilianen likely saw it as a marker of social agency and collective identity. That this persistent demand for linen happened concurrently with a sustained petition for self-governance suggests that dressing in linen played an important role in signifying the collective status of a group seeking autonomy. Nevertheless, despite the seeming importance of linen for the internal cohesion of Brasilianen identity, the fabric took on a contrary meaning in the images of Dutch Brazil distributed throughout Europe in the second half of the

23 Quoted in Mark Meuwese’s “Subjects or Allies: The Contentious Status of the Tupi Indians in Dutch Brazil, 1625-1654” in Bridging the Early Modern Atlantic World (London: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 123-124.
24 For more on this meeting and the Letter of Freedom, see Meuwese’s “Subjects or Allies”, 113-130. See also Schalffwijk, The Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil, 203-204.
25 Meuwese’s “Subjects or Allies,” 119-123.
28 There are many studies that point to examples of indigenous communities adopting and re-signifying European material culture. See, for example, Nicholas Thomas, Entangled Objects. Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Arnold Bauer, Goods, Power, History. Latin American Material Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
29 In archival documents, this cloth is referred to as negroskleeden or Guinees cattoen. See examples in West Africa in the Mid-Seventeenth Century. An Anonymous Dutch Manuscript, transcribed, translated and edited by Adam Jones (Atlanta, GA: African Studies Association Press, 1995), Appendix D.
seventeenth century, as will be discussed in the following section.

Picturing Linen: The Visual Legacy of Dutch-Brasilianen Exchange

When Johan Maurits arrived in Brazil he brought with him an entourage of artists and scientists who were charged with the task of recording many aspects of life in Dutch Brazil. This group of professionals included natural scientists Willem Piso (1611-1678) and Georg Marcgraf (1610-c.1644), as well as artists Albert Eckhout (1610-1666) and Frans Post (1612-1680). Willem Piso, Maurits’s court physician, specialized in tropical medicines,30 and Georg Marcgraf, a natural historian, made significant advancements in astronomy.31 Together Piso and Marcgraf co-authored *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae*, published in Amsterdam in 1648, which was the only publication dedicated to all matters of life in Brazil for many years to come.

Little is known about Albert Eckhout, who stayed in Brazil approximately for the duration of Maurits’s rule from 1636/7-1644.32 Nevertheless, it is Eckhout’s visual record of Brazil that has been credited with “largely determin[ing] in European minds the essential image of this part of the world.”33 The extant paintings securely attributed to the artist include his famous series of eight so-called ethnographic portraits, twelve still-lifes, and one large painting of a Tapuya dance, all dated between 1640 and 1643 and located in the National Museum in Copenhagen. The ethnographic portraits consist of four male/female pairs, ordered hierarchically according to their perceived level of civility: the so-called Tapuya were at the bottom of this hierarchy (Fig. 3), the Brasilianen/Tupinamba (Figs. 1 & 2) and African pair in the middle, and the mulatto and mameluque pair—terms used by the Portuguese and the Dutch to denote people of mixed race—at the top.34

30 For more on Piso’s medical accomplishments in Dutch Brazil, see F. Guerra, “Medicine in Dutch Brazil,” in Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, 1604-1679, 483-491.
32 For a biography of the artist before, during and after his time in Brazil, see Florike Egmond and Peter Mason’s “Albert E(e)ckhout, court painter,” in Albert Eckhout. A Dutch Artist in Brazil, 109-127. See also Rebecca Parker Brien...
certainly idealize the actual circumstance of life in Brazil under Dutch rule, which was plagued by shortages of supplies, disease, and death, making the pristine condition of the garments pictured on the bodies of the seemingly healthy Brasilianen pair an aestheticized version of actual conditions in Dutch Brazil.\(^{36}\)

Thus, although Eckhout’s paintings have in the past been praised for their sensitivity to cultural differentiation, they are far from objective records of Brazilian culture, having their roots instead in conventional European representations of the exotic. Since the mid-sixteenth century, costume books, travel journals and atlases provided visual formulas for representing non-European cultures.\(^{37}\) In these instances, material culture—or the perceived lack of it—could aid in identifying unfamiliar cultures; clothing and accouterments provided the most convenient means of distinguishing cultures both from each other, and from Europeans. The degree to which Eckhout’s figures engage with material culture is not simply a way of distinguishing ethnicity, then, but also a way of ordering levels of civility. A comparison between his Tapuya and Brasilianen women (Figs. 3 & 1) suggests how they were perceived differently in colonial society. Not only are the figures distinguished by the objects they wield—which range from severed limbs to hammocks—but they are also differentiated by the degree to which they are clothed: the Tapuya figure is noticeably naked with the exception of her scant foliage (likely painted to satisfy European notions of decorum), whereas the Brasilianen figures wear what I would argue must be understood as linen garments, based on the aforementioned evidence from archival sources. In the visual records of Dutch Brazil, the Brasilianen are distinguished by wearing clothing, in contrast to the Tapuya who were—notably (and uncomfortably) for the Dutch—naked.

Scholars have rightly explained these descriptive differences in terms bound to the European audience for whom this Brazilian material was intended. Anthropologist Peter Mason, for example, has suggested that the material objects decorating Eckhout’s figures serve to recontextualize them, making their exoticism legible to European viewers.\(^{38}\) Rebecca Brienen, on the other hand, suggests that Eckhout’s Brasilianen represent “a new Indian type,” identifiable by a change in iconography that came with long-term colonial presence.\(^{39}\) Virginie Spenlé and Ernst van den Boogaart have also argued that Eckhout’s Tapuya and Brasilianen figures are intended to demonstrate the civilizing potential of the indigenous people of Brazil.\(^{40}\) These theories no doubt explain the ways in which the paintings cater to European audiences, while simultaneously demonstrating how European iconographies evolved to incorporate peoples of newly “discovered” regions of the world. And yet, these interpretations do not consider the ways in which represented objects—in this case linen garments—may have acted as important signifiers of social cohesion and autonomy for the society that wore them, a fact that is suggested in the archives, but absent from the images.

Being open to the multivalency of material culture is paramount, given the lasting visual impact of Eckhout’s Brasilianen figures. The models on which Eckhout’s works were based are now lost, but the copies made after them engendered a slew of artistic responses. One of the earliest copies after Eckhout’s models can be found in the personal notebook of Zacharias Wagener, who acted as Maurits’s steward for four years in Brazil.\(^{41}\) Due to their similar subjects and compositions, his


\(^{37}\) For a fuller consideration of the role that costumes play in both “forging geographical boundaries” and “encouraging” viewers to reflect on their own identities and personalities,” see Brownen Wilson, “Reflecting on the Turk in late sixteenth-century Venetian portrait books,” Word & Image, Vol. 19, Nos. 1 & 2

\(^{38}\) Mason, Invisibility, see especially chapter 3.

\(^{39}\) Brienen, Visions of Savage Paradise, 117.


\(^{41}\) See Whitehead and Roseman, A Portrait of Dutch 17th-century Brazil, 48-51. The original is located in the Kupferstich-Kabinett in Dresden.
drawings are generally thought to be based on Eckhout’s now lost models. Like Eckhout’s finished paintings, Wagener’s Brasilianen are shown wearing white—presumably linen—garments. Caspar Schmalkalden, a WIC soldier who visited Brazil and Chile between 1642 and 1645, also includes drawings of Brasilianen in his Caspar Schmalkalden Reise von Amsterdam nach Pharnambuco in Brasil, an amateur volume describing his travels that includes a number of illustrations inspired by Eckhout’s compositions. Schmalkalden’s Brasilianen also wear what appear to be linens, although their postures have departed slightly from Eckhout’s compositions. Other copies exist, including a set of watercolors in the British Museum commissioned by the famous English philosopher John Locke. While these images likely had a limited circulation, Piso and Marcgraf’s 1648 Historiae Brasiliae Naturalis, which also includes images based on Eckhout’s paintings (or—more likely—the lost studies on which they were based), had a much broader impact. The connection between the Brasilianen and linen—a fabric that in colonial Brazil had signified WIC/Brasilianen alliances, but also Brasilianen identity—subsequently became, through its repeated visualization, an identifying attribute that visualized hierarchies for European audiences, losing its connection to Brasilianen negotiations for autonomy. The scholar of Dutch Brazil, then, is left, with a compelling paradox: on the one hand, as demonstrated in the first section of this article, there is a rich array of written sources (both archival and literary) that seem to indicate the importance of linen for the social cohesion of the Brasilianen; on the other hand, there is a powerful—and pervasive—visual legacy that uses linen garments to fit the Brasilianen into an encoded, hierarchical arrangement contingent only upon Euro-centric perceptions of civility. Both narratives are meaningful, and yet they are hard to reconcile in traditional scholarly spaces. The following section suggests how digital mapping might help to accommodate these conflicting narratives of indigenous identity in colonial Dutch Brazil.

Joan Blaeu, Colonial Maps & Digital Mapping

The relationship between the WIC’s linen gifts and the subsequent visualizations of linen-clad Brasilianen becomes further entangled in Joan Blaeu’s map of the Dutch occupied captaincies of Paraíba and Rio Grande (Fig. 4). Based on a 1643 map by Georg Marcgraf, Blaeu’s map was first published in 1647, both as part of a large wall map titled Brasilia que parte paret Belgis and also as a multipart illustration in Caspar Barlaeus’s 1647 Rerum per octennium. The majority of the labeled features on this map are restricted to the coastline and include the rivers, forts, towns, aldeas, and churches of which the WIC had direct or indirect knowledge. There is, however, one notable exception to this trend: an extensive exploration into the Brazilian backcountry marked on this map in light pink, which was the result of explorations made by WIC officer Elias Herckmans. In Barlaeus’s account of Herckmans’s mission, the author describes how the Dutch officer renamed landmarks in the sertão with Dutch place names. In one episode, the mission places the insignia of the WIC on a pillar on top of a mountain, overwriting—so to speak—the indigenous name for the mountain, “Irupari-bakei,” which the Dutch found “terrifying and made up of many syllables.” In another instance, they changed the name of the Tambuariry River to the Musk River “because of the strong smell of merchants selling Barlaeus’s text would have likely encouraged buyers to purchase additional sheets that would form a deluxe edition of sorts along with the maps included in the texts. This full version, Brasilia que parte paret Belgis, includes a number of vignettes by Post that were not illustrated in Barlaeus’s text.

For more on this map, see Zandvliet, Mapping for Money: Maps, Plans and Topographic Paintings and their Role in Dutch Overseas Expansion during the 16th and 17th Centuries (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 2002), 204-206; Whitehead and Bouman, A Portrait of Dutch 17th Century Brazil, 151-161; Bea Brommer and Henk den Heijer, Groote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie (Voorburg: Asia Maior/Atlas Maior, 2012), see esp. 154-415 for maps of Brazil. Ernst van den Boogaart, “A Well-Governed Colony,” 259-266. Van den Boogaart suggests

64 The original is located in the Forschungbibliothek in Gotha. See ibid., 58-64.

63 This volume is in the British library. See ibid., 85-88.

65 For more on this map, see Zandvliet, Mapping for Money: Maps, Plans and Topographic Paintings and their Role in Dutch Overseas Expansion during the 16th and 17th Centuries (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 2002), 204-206; Whitehead and Bouman, A Portrait of Dutch 17th Century Brazil, 151-161; Bea Brommer and Henk den Heijer, Groote Atlas van de West-Indische Compagnie (Voorburg: Asia Maior/Atlas Maior, 2012), see esp. 154-415 for maps of Brazil. Ernst van den Boogaart, “A Well-Governed Colony,” 259-266. Van den Boogaart suggests
crocodiles and snakes, which is like musk." They also named a mountain “Pyramideberg” because they found a number of large stones seemingly stacked by human hands. Landmarks from the journey are labeled on the map in Dutch with names like “Magasynberg” (Warehouse Mountain), the name given to the place where they had left behind their wagons and some supplies, and “Steenen Keerberg” (Stone Mountain Return), the name given to the point where they turned around to head back to the coast. Blaeu’s map and Barlaeus’s accompanying text exemplify the ways in which the renaming and relabeling of cartographic landscapes can narrate colonial authority while also silencing alternate autonomous voices. As Patricia Seed has argued, by inscribing names onto cartographic space, foreign occupiers like the Dutch made claims to the land, marking it as a site of possession.

Cartographic illustrations, of course, also have a profound impact on our understanding of the social encounters that happen in geographic space—especially on colonial maps, where space is always contested. This is certainly the case with the map of the captaincies of Paraiba and Rio Grande.
published in Barlaeus’s *Rerum per octennium* (the lower right subsection of *Brasilia que parte paret Belgis*), which includes engravings made after drawings by Frans Post.51 Here, the image above the mapped coastline and to the right of Herckmans’s mission features an engraving of a Dutch officer leading a group of linen-clad *Brasilianen* soldiers away from an *aldea*, perhaps commencing a mission to defend against the advances of the Count of Torre.52 Just as the renaming of the Brazilian landscape in Herckmans’s mission should be understood as a symbolic act of possession, so too should this vignette be seen as an effort to visualize the *Brasilianen* according to the colonizing mission of the Dutch: led by a WIC officer, the *Brasilianen* seem to acquiesce to Dutch authority, while their linen clothing underlines their willingness to adhere to European codes of decorum.

Early modern colonial maps such as Blaeu’s narrate encounters that are muddled by the richness of their rhetorical and iconographical expressions. On the one hand, maps facilitate movement through space by translating topographical features into a set of abstracted symbols, meaningful to the user, but often devoid of the kind of human presence that made its production possible. That is, maps that aim to describe and record phenomena and land features—like ocean currents, coastlines, and estuaries, for example—ignore but also, paradoxically, enable the kind of encounters with which this article is concerned. On the other hand, maps’ “decorative,” or non-cartographic, features, which include cartouches, descriptive vignettes, and inhabitants, assert narratives that imaginatively rewrite social encounters onto a geographic matrix.53 It is the capacity of maps to move so fluidly and messily between purportedly objective and purposefully subjective visualizations that make them rich objects of study for a range of disciplines. Elizabeth Sutton’s important study of Blaeu’s Brazilian map, for example, has demonstrated how pictorial motifs can have a significant impact on perceptions of colonial occupation.54

Studies like Sutton’s take for granted the fact that maps and the images that accompany them are ideologically motivated and privilege the experience and status of the maker, a critical position put forward by cartographer and historian J. B. Harley in the 1990s. Harley deals not just with the visible motifs on maps, like Post’s representation of Herckmans’s mission, but also its “silences,” for as he argues, “the absence of something must be seen to be as worthy of historical investigations as is its presence.”55 As I will demonstrate, digital mapping offers a compelling opportunity to juxtapose the rhetorical silences of early modern colonial maps with alternative narratives that can reanimate the discursive spaces of intercultural exchange. Making visible these moments of silence in a made digital map can reveal the powerful and opposing systems of rhetoric of which they are a part, as it can provide temporal simultaneity that is hard, if not impossible, to achieve through the linearity of text. As Todd Presner, David Shepard and Yoh Kawano have argued, the assumption that modern maps will yield positivistic results misses the point of the process of mapping, for “Mapping is not a one-time thing, and maps are not stable objects that reference, reflect, or correspond to an external reality.” Rather, “Mapping is a verb and bespeaks an on-going process of picturing, narrating, symbolizing, contesting, re-picturing, re-narrating, re-symbolizing, erasing, and re-inscribing a set of relations.”56 Digital mapping, then, offers a platform through which we can showcase the

52 Ernst van den Bogaart suggests that the *Brasilianen* auxiliaries may be setting out to defend against the Count of Torre. Van den Bogaart, “A Well-Governed Colony,” 265.
53 See, for example, Benjamin Schmidt, “On the Impulse of Mapping, or How a Flat Earth Theory of Dutch Maps Distorts the Thickness and Pictorial Proclivities of Early Modern Dutch Cartography (and Misses Its Picturing Impulse),” *Art History* November 2012, 1037-1049.
narratives that we assign—or could assign—to our data.

During a period when the Dutch presence in Brazilian lands was much contested, Blaeu’s map presents a single-minded narrative that stifles the voices of the indigenous allies to whom the Dutch were bound in a complex—yet ultimately symbiotic—relationship. While it remains impossible to recover these voices without again overwriting them with a foreign narrative, digital mapping can nevertheless prioritize indigenous agency by juxtaposing the story told by Blaeu’s map and text with an alternative narrative. With this in mind, the maps I created (Figs. 5 & 6) mark the locations of the WIC’s gifts to their indigenous allies, diplomatic presentations that, as I have argued above, demonstrate the mutually beneficial ties that bound them. By assigning these gifts a “place” on Blaeu’s map, the “silences” are now occupied by values that represent the fundamental intercultural negotiations between the WIC, the Brasilianen, and the Tarairiu. They offer a narrative that balances oppressive visions of colonial occupation with the indigenous voices that fought for their own place in a changing society.

These maps aim to bring greater balance to the voices that make up the Dutch colonial past by making visible the fundamental role played by the indigenous groups who assisted the WIC in securing a foothold in northeastern Brazil. The productive consequences of such an approach are exemplified in Figure 5, which maps the locations of the gifts given to Brasilianen and the Tarairiu during the last two decades of Dutch occupancy (1634-1654), a period marked by profound instability and change.57

The Tarairiu, represented by blue dots, are recorded as receiving gifts—such as small metal trinkets, tools, and occasionally garments—in both the sertão and, significantly, Fort Ceulen, the Dutch Fort on the coast in the Captaincy of Rio Grande. In the case of the semi-nomadic Tarairiu—reference to whom are conspicuously absent on Blaeu’s abridged map—the significance of assigning place names should be elaborated upon briefly. On the one hand, the location I have chosen to represent the sertão claims—or perhaps more appropriately, reclaims—for the Tarairiu a place on the map that has been left vacant by the mapmaker.58 Although selecting one place on a map to represent the location of the semi-nomadic Tarairiu fails to capture its itinerant lifestyle, it simultaneously asserts their presence in a region that is both unoccupied by and unknown to the Dutch, thereby complicating the narrative asserted by the original map alone. Equally noteworthy are the gifts received by the Tarairiu in the Dutch Fort Ceulen (in 1634 and 1637) for they demonstrate the WIC efforts to negotiate with the Tarairiu on Dutch turf, a practice that was largely abandoned after 1637 when the majority of the gifts were presented in the sertão. This shift may indicate Dutch willingness to please the Tarairiu by negotiating with them on their own territory, or it may indicate that the Dutch wanted to keep the Tarairiu away from colonial centers due to their frequent pillaging of Dutch farms and plantations. I suspect, however, that the impetus for the change in location may have come from the Tarairiu leader, Nhandui, who the Dutch were anxious to please and who had a reputation for being an astute negotiator.59

Unlike the variable locations at which the Tarairiu received their gifts, the Brasilianen consistently received gifts in the colonial villages, or aldeas. The locations marked in red on the map in Figure 5 each represent one of the aldeas in which these different indigenous groups lived, emphasizing their settled way of life and thereby distinguishing them from the Tarairiu in the eyes of the Dutch.

57 The data for these maps have been collected from both primary and secondary source materials. The following sources have been invaluable for identifying relevant archival sources: Mark Meuwese’s Brother’s in Arm, Partners in Trade; Ernst van den Boogaart’s “Infernal Allies”; Mariann Ebeling Koning. Documents consulted at the National Archيف were drawn from OWC 1.05.01.01, inv. nr., 8, 50, 68, 69, 72.

58 This location is just above a point labeled “Vervallen Tapuyer leger” (bedraggled Tapuya camp), which seems to correspond to a description of Herckman’s expedition in Barlaeu’s text in which his retinue runs into a group of “inhabitants of the sertão... who had been disturbed by our advance into the wilderness but were ready to return now that we were leaving.” Barlaeu, The History of Brazil, 215.

The Brasilianen and the Tarairiu were also distinguished by the types of gifts they received: in contrast to the small trinkets and tools given typically given to the Tarairiu, the Brasilianen would most frequently receive ells of uncut linen, as demonstrated above.\(^{60}\) In some cases, they would be given certain privileges within their aldea (such as holding a position of authority). It is noteworthy, of course, that the Tarairiu were never offered positions of authority, which is not surprising given the Dutch perception of them as unsuitably savage for such roles. One could argue, however, that this map encourages an alternate narrative that does not hinge on Dutch perceptions, but rather on which gifts had currency within Tarairiu culture. That is, whereas the Brasilianen could use colonial offices to negotiate their autonomy within Dutch Brazil, official appointments such as these had no value to the Tarairiu, whose status in the sertão had little to do with the hierarchies of European society.

Using historic maps to recreate social geographies offers distinct methodological possibilities, especially in the case of lavishly illustrated early maps.
modern maps. In maps such as Blaeu’s, this approach allows for the juxtaposition of quantifiable mapped archival data and the qualitative visual representations of that data. Figure 6, for example, maps all of the textile gifts given to the Brasilianen and the Tarairiu. At first glance, it is clear that the Brasilianen received the lion’s share of textiles gifts (in this case, all uncut linens), which are concentrated in the aldeas in and around Frederikstadt. But when this quantifiable data is juxtaposed to the linens worn by the Brasilianen in Frans Post’s engraving on Blaeu’s map, we can now read this pervasive iconography in a new light: no longer an indication of their willingness to conform to European codes of civility, these worn garments become a demonstration of their collective identity within colonial Brazil, a visual declaration of the WIC/Brasilianen interdependencies, and perhaps a signal of their desire for self-governance. In the


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61 Uncut linens are measured in ells (one ell is approximately 70 cm), quantities of which are typically divided up and given to multiple recipients. For this reason, I have counted each ell as one gift.
case of the Tarairiu, however, the display of raw data on Blaeu’s map also highlights the absence of that data as a form of visual social currency (Eurocentric, indigenous or otherwise), once again affirming how the silences on Blaeu’s map run deep.62

**Conclusion**

Scholars have traditionally identified the cloth garments in Eckhout’s paintings—and the copies after them, including Blaeu’s map—as “European cloth” or “cotton,” an assertion that undercuts the possible significance of linen for the *Brasilianen*. The suggestion that linen-wearing *Brasilianen* are conforming to European notions of decorum by wearing clothing—the traditional interpretation of this visual motif—overlooks the role that linen played in negotiating alliances and identities within Dutch Brazil. In this article I have tried to demonstrate that a digitally constructed map can play an important role in recontextualizing these colonial relationships by acting as a lens through which archival and art historical data can be interpreted. Digital maps such as such as the ones presented in this article can reveal rich discursive spaces that exist between the qualitative and the quantitative, opening up new ways to reexamine the complex relationships between material and visual culture during periods of colonial occupation.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Michael Zell, Jodi Cranston, Nancy Um, Marsely Kehoe, Catherine Walsh, Erin Sassin, Leger Grindon, Jenn Ortegren and Bill Hegman, who offered valuable feedback at various points during the development of this project. I am also incredibly grateful to the anonymous Artl@s peer reviewers for their generous and insightful comments.

62 In *Brasilia que parte part Belgis*, illustrations of “savage” Indians—presumably a reference to the Tapuya—are included at the upper section of the map. Conspicuously, the maps published in Barlaeus’s text do not include these illustrations, suggesting that the author wanted to emphasize Mauritius’s success in “civilizing” the inhabitants of Dutch Brazil.