FIRST SPACES OF COLONIALISM: THE ARCHITECTURE OF DUTCH

EAST INDIA COMPANY SHIPS

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FIRST SPACES OF COLONIALISM: THE ARCHITECTURE OF DUTCH
EAST INDIA COMPANY SHIPS

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This dissertation is an inquiry into spatial aspects of control, resistance and communication in the Dutch East India Company (VOC), as revealed by the architecture of its ships. The architectural type of the *retourschip* or "homeward bounder" is described and the history of its development, 1602-1795 is traced, with special attention paid to the period 1740-1783, when the richest records concerning ship design were produced and the ships reached their most standardized forms.

The *retourschip* was one of the highest technological achievements of its day and was used as an emblem for military and mercantile power by the VOC. The ship's role and meaning as an armature for the VOC's ideological constructs is examined. Ships also, in Paul Gilroy's words, constituted "microcultural, micro-political systems," with their own social and spatial orders. These orders are explored, along with their ideological uses as structuring models for VOC society. Changes to the spatial design of the *retourschip* through the period of the VOC's operation are linked to changes in the social structure aboard and to changes in the status of VOC mariners, officers and captains.

Finally, the effects and effectiveness of the *retourschip* as a structuring model are interrogated using several mutinies, with special attention paid to the 1763 mutiny on the *retourschip Nijenburg*. The role of shipboard space in structuring mutinous actions is explored, as is the role of mutinies in forming the society of VOC mariners. Through the records of Admiralty and colonial court trials the socio-spatial order aboard the *Nijenburg* is closely examined both under the command of its VOC-appointed captain and under that of the mutineers, and the two conditions compared. Mutineers are shown to appropriate and subvert the VOC's socio-spatial organization, while trial records are shown to reconstruct the social categories of the ship, incorporating mutiny into the Company's dominant discourse.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Guy holds a Bachelor of Fine Art degree from the University of Oxford and a Master of Arts from Cornell University, his master's thesis being awarded the Richmond Harold Shreve Outstanding Thesis Award. During the production of this dissertation he has been awarded a graduate fellowship at the Society for the Humanities and a Citation of Special Recognition from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts as part of the 2010 Carter Manny Award program. Parts of this work have been presented at conferences dedicated to history, art history, and maritime and area studies.

In addition to his work as an architectural historian Richard has produced award-winning art and interactive design work for the American Museum of Natural History and independent software companies.

To Aleksandra, Oliver and Katarina, without whose patience and support this would not exist.

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If I were to list everyone who has helped me with this dissertation it would be considerably longer than it already is. My gratitude goes out to all those who have answered my questions and given freely and generously of their time. Of particular note, I would like first to thank the members of my committee, Christian Otto, Eric Tagliacozzo and David Powers, who have enabled me to pursue a topic that falls between their disciplines and who have guided me with patience and great consideration. I would also like especially to thank Ab Hoving, Jerzy Gawronski, Femme Gaastra, Martijna Briggs, Marcus Rediker, Jaap Jacobs, Robert Parthesius, Herman Ketting, Tim Murray, Christopher Monroe, Jenny Gaynor and Magnus Fiskesjo, without whose extraordinary help and kindness this dissertation would certainly be poorer, and might not exist at all. The mistakes are, of course, entirely my own contribution.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AN   Netherlands National Archives.

VOC   Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India
                Company).

WIC   West-Indische Compagnie (Dutch West India Company)

MMPH   Collection of the Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrick,
                Rotterdam, Netherlands.

DAS   Bruijn, J. R, Gaastra, F. S. & Schoeffer, I: *Dutch-Asiatic
                Shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (The
                Hague, 1979), vols. I, II & III.

INTRODUCTION

In truth, a man-of-war is a city afloat, with long avenues set out with guns instead of trees, and numerous shady lanes, courts, and by-ways. The quarter-deck is a grand square, park, or parade ground, with a great Pittsfield elm, in the shape of the mainmast, at one end, and fronted at the other by the palace of the Commodore's cabin.

Or, rather, a man-of-war is a lofty, walled, and garrisoned town, like Quebec, where the thoroughfares are mostly ramparts, and peaceable citizens meet armed sentries at every corner.

Or it is like the lodging-houses in Paris, turned upside down; the first floor, or deck, being rented by a lord; the second, by a select club of gentlemen; the third, by crowds of artisans; and the fourth, by a whole rabble of common people.

For even thus is it in a frigate, where the commander has a whole cabin to himself and the spar-deck, the lieutenants their wardroom underneath, and the mass of sailors swing their hammocks under all.

And with its long rows of port-hole casements, each revealing the muzzle of a cannon, a man-of-war resembles a three-story house in a suspicious part of the town, with a basement of indefinite depth, and ugly-looking fellows gazing out at the windows.

Herman Melville: *White-jacket or, The World in a Man-of-war* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

When I began my research into Dutch East India Company (hereafter VOC) ships, I was fortunate to be guided around the replica of the *Batavia* by Ad van der Zee, who at the time was wrapping up his part in the ongoing building of another replica, of the seventeenth century warship *Zeven Provincieen*.[1] Ad had shown me around the many interior spaces of the *Batavia*, which were largely empty and undecorated, and had patiently answered my naïve questions about construction, timber, seaworthiness, the research underpinning the project and the prospects for building further replicas. Finally I approached the question on which I thought I might be able to bring some analysis to bear: I asked him about the use of space aboard, regarding which I had only been able to glean a few clues from the replica. He replied that, as I had observed, the *Batavia* was largely an empty shell and he hoped one day to be able to change that: to present the ship as HMS *Victory* is presented at Portsmouth, filled with the equipment its crewmen needed to carry out their tasks—charts in the captain's cabin, saws and medicines in the doctor's and, unlike the *Victory*, a rabbit warren of bunks throughout the lower deck, giving some impression of how the crew would have lived aboard on the way to the Indies.

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[1] VOC stands for *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (United East India Company): it appears on some of the Company's documents as its logotype and has become the standard abbreviation for the Company used in historiography. Some historical sources also use O. I. C. (Oost-Indische Compagnie or East India Company) or refer simply to the *loffelycke Compagnie* (honorable company). Both the *Batavia* and the *Zeven Provincieen* are projects of the Bataviawerf, a shipbuilding facility for replica seventeenth century ships, using traditional methods, based in Lelystad, Netherlands. The former takes as its inspiration the *Batavia* built in 1628, one of the largest VOC ships of its time, which was made famous by the bloody mutiny among its crew following its wrecking on the Houtman Abrolhos in 1629. The *Zeven Provincieen* was the flagship used by legendary Admiralty commander Michiel de Ruyter during the Second Anglo-Dutch War.

The goal of presenting the ship as a living, working environment, or rather as a kind of ethnographic village useful for discussing the lives of historical mariners, has been a common one in maritime history for a long time. The works of Richard Dana and Herman Melville provide daunting antecedents for such an ethnographic approach, filled with individuals and their stories, their interactions and professional dispositions, their territories and domains and myriad negotiations with the formal structures of discipline that bound them all together into ships' crews.[2] *White Jacket*, a portrait of a nineteenth century warship in action drawn from Melville's own experiences, offers a model for what an ethnography of American maritime military life could be, seen through the eyes of an exceptional observer, philosopher and writer, for all that it is presented as a work of fiction. A similar impulse can be seen in those books and museum exhibits concerned with the social milieu and history of the VOC, which commonly attempt to bring the ship to life through its equipment and functions, or through cutaway diagrams that people the ships with representative figures, such as sailors, musicians and craftsmen.[3]

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[2] Dana, R. H: *Two Years Before the Mast: a personal narrative of life at sea*, (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1964). Melville: *White Jacket*. Bercaw Edwards, M. K: "'An Old Sailor's Lament': Herman Melville, the Stone Fleet, and the Judgment of History" in Melville the Poet, special issue ed. Elizabeth Renker and Douglass Robillard. *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies*, 9 (October 2007), 51-64.

[3] Jacobs, E: *De Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*. (Amsterdam: Teleacnot, 1997). Ketting, H (Sr.): *Prins Willem: Een Zeventiende-Eeuwse Oostindiëvaarder*. (Bussum: De Boer Maritiem, 1979). Akveld, L: *The Colourful World of the VOC: national anniversary book VOC 1602 2002*. (Bussum: THOTH, 2002). The best-known examples of these cutaway diagrams depict vessels of the Royal Navy: Lavery, B: *Nelson's navy: the ships, men, and organisation, 1793-1815* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1989).

The reasons for this approach are clear: it enables the viewer to see that the living, working environment is an important part of the social history of mariners or, conversely, it adds a human voice to an otherwise mute replica ship. It can also bring the ship into multiple contexts: VOC ships were home to a great variety of skilled professionals and vital functions, from sail-making and gunnery to smithing, carpentry, surgery and cooking. Each of these functions had its own proper "workroom," which could be represented by its particular collection of tools. The juxtaposition of such workrooms reveals the ship as a miniature city of professions and specializations.

Such presentations harbor several dangers, however. First, they tend to describe without asking questions. Joe Flatman has remarked on the lack of theoretical concerns applied to maritime archaeology in general: with a few exceptions the same has been true of the studies of VOC mariners' life.[4] Such studies typically present the culture and environment of seamen as self-contained and self-evident, traditional and eternal. This criticism has been aimed, with some justification, at the foundational work of J. De Hullu; it is partially answered in the more critical ethnographic studies by Ketting and van Gelder, which focus on the society and culture of VOC seafarers.[5] Even

[4] Flatman, J: "Cultural Biographies, Cognitive Landscapes and Dirty Old Bits of Boat: 'Theory' in Maritime Archaeology," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 32. 2, (November 2003), 143-157.

[5] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: vijf artikelen studie over de werkgelegenheid bij de VOC* (Groningen, 1980). Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen, 1997) Gelder, R van: *Naporra's omweg: het leven van een VOC-matroos (1731-1793).*

these last studies have a timeless quality to them, however: they accept the categories of shipboard life and VOC ships in particular rather uncritically, taking for their ethnographic village all ships of the VOC indiscriminately. They also assume a certain set of environmental constants: the social space and design of the ships is embedded but largely uncommented in their stories of a holistic, distinct, floating culture.

The shipboard spaces through which VOC servants moved underwent significant changes over the two centuries of the Company's operation. This dissertation is an inquiry into those spatial changes and their effects on the role the spatial environment played in forming the character and world of the VOC. It treats the ships of the VOC as works of social architecture: living, working, society-reproducing environments that both expressed and constituted the institution of the Company. The dissertation also problematizes the category of "the ships of the VOC," comparing the characteristics and discourses of this category with case studies involving individual ships under highly particular circumstances.

(Amsterdam: Atlas, 2003). Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk en rebellie aan boord van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-1650)* (Aksant, Amsterdam, 2002).

Herman Ketting has stated that his intention in writing his book on VOC mariners' life was to provide for the Company something like Knut Weibust's *Deep Sea Sailors* , an ethnographic portrait of seamen that encompasses memoirs, anecdotes and sayings. Herman Ketting, Jr: personal communication. Weibust, K: *Deep Sea Sailors: a study in maritime ethnology* (Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1969).

In some ways this study is a response to Miles Ogborn's book *Indian Ink,*
which traces a variety of ways in which practices around documents,
document-making, and place-making combined to shape the English East
India Company, its outlook and its image.[6] The present work attempts a
similar exercise on a more modest scale: it investigates how the VOC
conceived its ships and how the ships themselves helped define the Company,
its culture, its ambitions, its networks and its public face, creating a distinct
entity, Jan Compagnie, that mediated between Europe and the East Indies
without really reflecting either. Where Ogborn's study ranges from letters of
embassy, carried aboard literal ships of state, to the merchant's ledger and
office, policing a boundary between private and corporate trade, and even to
the stock market report and its home in the coffee houses of the City of
London, this study explores the various meanings and identities of ships as
symbols, as living and working spaces, and as cultural environments that
encoded a mode or method for understanding and interacting with the Indies
world, which had a profound effect on the development and conduct of the
VOC through two centuries.

The commonly-deployed category of "the VOC's ships" is not as clear or
simple as it first appears, however: as soon as I started to ask questions
regarding individual vessels I found it unraveling into distinctions and
exceptions. The more I researched the more I came to see the category as both

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[6] Ogborn, M: *Indian Ink: script and print in the making of the English East India Company.*
(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

deeply problematic and unexamined in literature on the VOC. "The

Company's ships," in sources such as Van Dam's *Beschryvinge van de Oost-*

Indische Compagnie were neither specific ships nor the gamut of ships the

Company operated but rather a "typical" image of a particular subset of ships:

the *retourschepen* or "homeward bounders," which served the routes that

accounted most directly for the VOC's profits, shuttling between the ports in

the Dutch Republic and the principal factory ports in the East: Batavia (now

Jakarta), on the north coast of Java; Galle, in Sri Lanka; Hughly, in Bengal; and

Canton, in China.[7] This "typical" view pervaded popular literature, paintings

and the Company's own records and ledgers. The category further stood not

only for a certain kind of Company ship, it also represented a certain static,

iconic view of it and its society, and an attitude to seamen and ships in

general. I realized that, if I were to write about a subject as diaphanous and

difficult to pin down in concrete records as the relation between space and

society, I would have to deal with the implications of this category and read

specific shipboard situations in light of, or against, the "typifying" view in

entailed.

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[7] A wide variety of terms have been used to describe the ships that shuttled on the "return" or "homeward" routes between Europe and the East Indies, including "East Indiamen," "homeward bounders" and a number of technical classifications based on the ships' lines, sizes, armament and functions. Such ships typically combined heavy armament with large cargo capacity and crew complement, falling somewhere between shorter-range traders and warships in their construction. I have chosen to use the terms *retourschip* (singular) and *retourschepen* (plural) for these vessels, following the usage of the resolutions of the Company's ruling council. Dam, P van: *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie: uitgegeven door Dr F. W. Stapel.* ('s-Gravenhage, 1927).

The Company operated at various times an enormous variety of kinds and sizes of ships for many different purposes, both on the "homeward" routes and in an extensive intra-Asian trade web.[8] Information regarding most of these kinds of ships is both extremely scarce and rather slippery; names of ship types, such as *pinas, fregatschip, spiegelschip, oorlogschip* and *retourschip* were applied inconsistently: a single ship might be given different classifications in different places, and the terms themselves appear to have shifted in meaning over time.[9] The simple fact of the ships' variety, however, is not apparent in most histories of the Company, which have followed the lead of the Company's own records in treating them as interchangeable modules of transport in a trading system or, more often, as instruments of power and therefore implicitly as the largest classes of *retourschepen*: those which were used to displace the Portuguese during the expansion of the seventeenth century and which were eventually overmastered by the ship/weapons of other East India Companies during the eighteenth century. Where ships have been invoked in the teleological account of the Company's rise and fall, it is as weapons or as long-haul bulk transports, they have been

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[8] I owe this insight primarily to Robert Parthesius' study of intra-Asian VOC voyages and to Herman Ketting's *Fluitschepen voor de VOC,* which offers some differentiation of the home-constructed fleet. Parthesius, R: *Dutch ships in tropical waters: the development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) shipping network in Asia 1595-1660.* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010). Ketting, H (Jr.): *Fluitschepen voor de VOC: balanceren tussen oncostelijckheijt en duursaemheijt.* (Zaltbommel: Aprilis, 2007).

[9] Parthesius: *Dutch ships.* Daalder, R: *Schepen van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam, Zutphen: Stichting Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum, Walburg Pers, 2005).

considered either neutrally, as mere carrying capacity, or as signs of the

Company's decline, locked in a fossilized stasis, failing to keep up with

developments in shipbuilding among the Company's competitors.[10]

I have, rather reluctantly, likewise come to focus on these *retourschepen,* partly

in recognition of their historical significance and partly because the richest,

most detailed sources—those necessary for investigating space—almost

always concern them. *Retourschepen* represented the highest technological

achievements of their day. They were accordingly used as emblems for the

military and mercantile strength of the Dutch Republic. As symbols of the

VOC's power, its methods and its ambitions they fulfilled one of the common

functions of architecture: they supported an ideological program, presenting

the Company to its own servants, its directors, its shareholders, its

competitors and sometimes unwilling trade partners. *Retourschepen* were also

the most socially and spatially complex of the Company's ships: memoirs and

other accounts of shipboard life are rich with spatial details. It is evident that

considerable thought went into their spatial design and division and that

efforts were made to replicate such designs across their class. We may

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[10] Gaastra states that the Company's shipping network operated well and did not contribute significantly to the VOC's decline. The more nuanced account of shipping history in the introductory volume of Bruijn, Gaastra and Schoffer's catalogue of Dutch-Asiatic voyages lists a number of advances used on other companies' ships and notes that the VOC failed to adopt the same measures, resulting in comparatively longer voyage times and higher per-voyage costs. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company: expansion and decline* (Leiden: 2003). Bruijn, J. R Gaastra, F. S, Schoeffer, I: *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (The Hague, 1979) [hereafter DAS I].

therefore speak of a spatial idiom that was, indeed, typical to *retourschepen*. Sociospatial aspects of their design have often been overlooked, however, since, as machines, their hulls and rigging were already shaped both by the inflexible demands of wind, sea, and construction materials, and by the need for adaptability, to multiple missions and uses of their spaces, to house men, animals, cargo, weapons and other materiel as any particular voyage demanded. This dissertation is, therefore, partly an attempt to bring attention to such design, to differentiate it from the anti-analytical, non-category of "tradition."

Ships as architectural history

Ships have been curiously absent from the historiography devoted to architecture since the eighteenth century, although they were clearly considered a branch of architecture by important writers from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries: Alberti started but did not finish a treatise on ships; closer to the period of interest for this dissertation, Joseph Furttenbach showed no qualms regarding including a whole volume dedicated to ships in his three-volume study of Universal Architecture.[11]

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[11] According to Anthony Grafton, Alberti's unfinished and lost manuscript was titled *Navis* (the ship). Grafton, A: *Leon Battista Alberti: master builder of the Italian Renaissance*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 249. Furttenbach, J: *Architectura Martialis, Architectura Navalis, Architectura Universalis*. (1629-1635. Reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1975). Wegener Sleeswyk, A: "Joseph Furttenbach en de 'hollandische Nave'," *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis* 17.1 (1998), 3-15.

Shipbuilders have also been keen to identify themselves as architects. The Portuguese "naval architect," João Baptista Lavanha quoted Alberti's definition of an architect as one capable of uniting building with discourse, and claimed this status for the shipwright in the introduction of his treatise.[12] seventeenth century works on shipbuilding by Witsen and Van Yk adopted a format and genealogy familiar from contemporary architectural treatises. Where the latter might trace the roots of architecture to the building of the first Temple of Solomon, Witsen and Van Yk adopted Noah's Ark as their progenitor, and followed the same trajectory through Greek and Roman antecedents to their contemporary world, differing from the architectural pattern only in that they also devoted sections to "Indian" ships, including Chinese junks and the royal dragon boats of Siam.[13]

Architecture and shipbuilding both underwent a contested and gradual transition from craftsmanship to draftsmanship between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.[14] This process seems to have pulled the two disciplines in different directions: naval architecture came to be defined as a branch of

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[12] Lavanha's First Book on Naval Architecture. Lavanha, J. B: *Livro Primeiro da Architectura Naval*, trans. R. A. Barker, (Facsimile edition: Academia de Marinha, Lisbon, 1996). Barker comments that Lavanha appears to be the first author to use the term "naval architecture."

[13] Yk, C. van, Voorstad, A, Claesz ten Hoorn, J. & Luiken, J: *De Nederlandsche Scheeps-bouw-konst Open Gestelt.* (Rotterdam, 1697, reprinted Delft: SPD, 1981). Nicolaas Witsen. *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum. Ofte Aaloude en Hedendaagsche Scheeps-bouw en Bestier* (Amsterdam, 1671, reprinted Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1994).

[14] McGee, D: "From Craftsmanship to Draftsmanship: Naval Architecture and the Three Traditions of Early Modern Design" *Technology and Culture* 40.2 (1999) 209-236.

hydrodynamic engineering during the eighteenth century, following the publication of Bouguer's "Treatise on Ships" in 1746 and Euler's "A Complete Theory of the Construction and Maneuvering of Vessels" in 1773.[15] Treatises on shipbuilding had, since Lavanha, been principally concerned with proportions and engineering concerns, with relatively little attention paid to interior spatial division. After Euler, however, the focus on engineering rendered all other concerns extraneous to the profession of the naval architect. Perhaps because naval architecture became defined in this way, those aspects of the design of ships devoted to the social use of space, communication, presentation and spatial experience have tended to evade discussion, among both architects and naval architects, with some notable exceptions. The vogue for ocean liners around the turn of the twentieth century extended into architecture schools: liners symbolized a world of progressive, built wonders in the era immediately before the jet-liner and airport took over this role. According to Jean-Louis Cohen's introduction to Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*, Corbusier adopted "the ocean liner" as a nick-name, and was

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[15] Bouguer, P, Murray, M: *A treatise on ship-building and navigation: in three parts....* (Paris: Jombert, 1746, trans. Ann Arbor Mi.: UMI Books on Demand, 2004). Euler, Leonard. *Theorie Complete de la Construction et de la Manoeuvre des Vaisseaux ...* (St Petersburg: Academie Imperiale des Sciences, 1773). Ferreiro, L. D: *Ships and Science: the Birth of Naval Architecture in the Scientific Revolution, 1600–1800* (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2007). The implication that naval architects ceased to consider non-engineering problems is of course false. Nonetheless, Ferrreiro makes a compelling case that engineering became the naval architect's chief focus, first in France and later in the rest of Europe. Ships had also appeared in Italian treatises on machines, principally as supports for various kinds of ingenious devices. Di Giorgio, F: *Treatise of Architecture and Machines* (ca. 1480, Facsimile edition: Giunti, Florence 1979). Marcus Popplow: "Why Draw Pictures of Machines? The Social Contexts of Early Modern Machine Drawings" in Lefèvre, W: *Picturing Machines 1400-1700* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), 17-51

inspired by Camille Mauclair's *Trois Crises de l'Art Actuel* to praise the liner's

"honest expression," identifying it with his vision of the house as a machine.[16]

Liner companies have also advertised the luxury of their ships by employing

famous architects to increase their interiors: Renzo Piano's designs for the

Regal Princess provide a recent example, while Gio Ponti's features on liner

interiors in the magazine *Domus,* between 1929 and 1957, showed them as

examples not only of fine architecture but also of the emergent discipline of

industrial design.[17]

In one regard, the question of the relationship between shipbuilding and the

profession of the architect is clearly important for an architectural history of

the ship. If, however, we regard architectural history more broadly as the

study of the built domain—if we adopt something like Spiro Kostof's

definition of architecture as "the act of making places" and architectural

history as a part of "the study of the social, economic, and technological

systems of human history"—then professional distinctions, or even intentions,

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[16] "…cette maison a locataires se presente comme… un paquebot prêt a partir" ["this house for rental presents itself… as an ocean liner ready to depart"] Mauclair, C: *Trois Crises de l'Art Actuel*. (Paris: E. Fasquelle, 1906), 222. Quoted in Jean-Louis Cohen's Introduction for Corbusier, Cohen, J-L & Goodman, J*: Toward an Architecture* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 14 .

[17] Piano's interior designs are cited at the Regal Princess' information webpage: http://www.cruiseweb.com/PRINCESS-SHIP-REGAL.HTM Accessed 1 June 2011. "Gio Ponti published our ships in Domus for almost 30 years… believing strongly that ship interiors represented ground for experimentation and inspiration for the most beautiful earth-bound architecture and a launch pad for "Industrial Design"." Caterina Frisone*: "*The Architecture of the Great Ships," *Domus,* 5 December 2008. http://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/the-architecture-of-the-great-ships/ Accessed: 7 June 2011.

become secondary to addressing the places so made and their roles in "shaping communities."[18]

The question of whether architecture, or "place making," actually affects social formation remains open. The point has been assumed or argued extensively over the past century and more, with recourse to phenomenological, sociological, ethnographic and ethno-archaeological approaches.[19] Although interesting, thoughtful, inspirational work has come out of phenomenological approaches I find my own efforts influenced principally by theories of social production and practice, since these seem to me most likely to yield some attestable results (with the caveat that attesting such results in a milieu more than two centuries in the past poses its own challenges).[20] What is not in doubt is that architecture is used to communicate social behaviors and expectations, from prisons designed to terrorize or discipline to stores designed to train the

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[18] Kostof's definition or some variation on it has become widely accepted. Kostof, S: *A History of Architecture: settings and rituals* (Oxford, New York: OUP 1985), 7, 15.

[19] Lawrence and Low have provided a useful survey of this enormous field of literature. Lawrence, D. L. & Low, S. M: "The Built Environment and Spatial Form" *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1990) 19, 453-505. Much recent phenomenological work has been influenced by Heidegger and Yi-Fu Tuan. Schatzki, T. R: *Martin Heidegger: theorist of space* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007). Yi-Fu Tuan: "Place: An Experiential Perspective" *Geographical Review*, 65.2 (Apr., 1975), 151-165.

[20] Gieryn, T. F: "What Buildings Do," *Theory and Society*, 31.1 (Feb., 2002), 35-74. King, A. D: *Buildings and Society: essays on the social development of the built environment* (London: Routledge, 1984). Turner, T: "The Social Skin," in J. Cherfas & R. Lewin (eds.), *Not Work Alone: A Cross-cultural View of Activities Superfluous to Survival* (London, Temple Smith, 1980). Lefebvre, H. *The production of space*. (Oxford, Cambridge Mass.: Blackwell, 1991). Bourdieu, P: *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

associations and categories of their customers.[21] The focus of the dissertation

has therefore been more on those discourses that the Company propagated

through its ships than on the social milieu or experience of mariners.

As closed, hierarchical environments with rich traditions, ships offer a strong

and highly articulated case for the part space might play in what Dell Upton

has described as "shaping and… 'annotating' social action."[22] Accounts of

shipboard life offer means for examining how habitus, occupation and place-

making affect the ways architectural spaces are apprehended and understood,

how the built domain relates to exercises of power and authority, and how

various kinds of space are represented. Vilhelm Aubert has drawn a parallel

between ships and other highly regimented, institutionalized settings, in

which status is often explicitly correlated with access to and ownership of

particular spaces, as in military and ecclesiastical orders, hospitals, prisons,

factories, and workplaces generally.[23] To this interpretation of institutional

space I should like to add theoretical lenses provided by Anthony King and

Upton, regarding the formation of global spaces of identity and capital, and

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[21] Halliday, S: *Newgate: London's prototype of hell*. (Stroud: Sutton, 2006). Foucault, M: *Discipline and Punish* (New York, 1979). Weinberger, D: *Everything is miscellaneous: the power of the new digital disorder* (New York: Times Books, 2007). Weinberger begins his exploration of searchable media with a discussion of the spatial design and testing of Staples stores, to the end of suggesting to customers all those products which might be necessary to using the one product they already knew they needed, through the paths customers use to navigate the stores.

[22] Upton, D: *Architecture in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

[23] Aubert, V: *The Hidden Society*. (Totowa, N. J.: Bedminster Press, 1965).

the relationship between architecture and everyday life as elements in the constitution of culture.[24] By examining shipboard space as a factor in the development of the VOC, this dissertation will attempt to provide a "spatialized history," such as that which Henri Lefebvre and Stuart Elden have called for.[25] The development of the VOC ship as a type created a novel genre of space, which played an important part in the history of industrial capitalism and labor, of European expansion and of colonialism.

Significance for the history of European expansion

In addition to architectural history several other fields of historical inquiry have informed the present work, which is intended in turn to contribute to these fields.

First, VOC shipboard order is of obvious interest to the burgeoning fields of oceanic history, or what Marcus Rediker terms "history on the sea," and of maritime-focused historical geography, as outlined by Lambert, Martins and Ogborn.[26] The omission of the ship from most histories of global capital is

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[24] King, A. D: *The Bungalow. The Production of a Global Culture* (London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984). Upton, D: "Architecture in Everyday Life" *New Literary History*, Vol. 33, No. 4, Everyday Life (Autumn, 2002), pp. 707-723.

[25]Lefebvre: *Production of Space.* Elden, S: "Between Marx and Heidegger: Politics, Philosophy and Lefebvre's The Production of Space" *Antipode* 36.1, (Jan. 2004).

[26] Rediker, M. B: "Toward a People's History of the Sea," in Killingray, D, and National Maritime Museum (Great Britain). *Maritime empires: British imperial maritime trade in the nineteenth century* (Woodbridge, Rochester; Boydell Press & National Maritime Museum, 2004). Lambert, D, Martins, L & Ogborn, M: "Currents, Visions and Voyages: historical geographies of the sea" *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006), 479-493.

bizarre, since it played a central role in organizing labor along industrial lines, prompting the formation of standing pools of skilled and semi-skilled mariners in Europe and elsewhere, while maritime workers occupy an important place in the history of the working class and radical labor movements.[27] Ships were the backbone of the VOC and other European East India Companies: as the primary means of doing business they both mirrored and helped form the particular institution of the chartered company and more generally that of "the mercantile system" of capitalism.[28] Ships did not only form the physical links that tied economic centers and peripheries together, they also provided a prototype for systems of migrant labor and a portable working culture, distinct from the "home" cultures of all those who participated in it, which facilitated novel organizations and labor relations.[29] The East India ship, then, represents a novel social formation created for the purpose of supporting emergent global trade, giving it great importance both to the history of European expansion and to that of globalization.

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[27] Thompson, E. *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth Penguin, 1968). Linebaugh, P & Rediker, M. B: *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

[28] Smith, A: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by Sálvio M. Soares. (MetaLibri, 2007), v.1.0p. http://metalibri.wikidot.com/title:an-inquiry-into-the-nature-and-causes-of-the-wealth-of Accessed 5 July 2011.

[29] Ewald, J. J: "Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other Migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1914" *American Historical Review*, 105. 1 (Feb. 2000) 69-91. Rediker, M. B: *Between the devil and the deep blue sea: merchant seamen, pirates, and the Anglo-American maritime world, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987).

Second, the ship is vital to a "history of infrastructure" approach to European expansion: one which pays attention to those concrete forms into which capital was poured and which in turn shaped its development, complementing histories of ideas and of economic relations in explaining the construction and logic of mercantile and colonial systems.[30] The first ships sent from the Netherlands to the East Indies, between 1595 and roughly 1610, followed Portuguese routes and replicated something of the Portuguese experience of exploration: their mortality rates were high, they ran afoul of reefs and strong currents, and they took four or five years to execute a round trip, dealing with producers of pepper and other spices on an ad hoc basis.[31] By 1660 this haphazard scheme had been transformed into a regular business, capable of feeding Amsterdam's markets with a constant flow of Indies products. More efficient routes had been discovered and formalized, supply depots had been established at Batavia and the Cape of Good Hope, voyage times had been reduced (with some exceptions) to a two year round trip, and shipboard mortality had been reduced to less than 5% per voyage.[32] The VOC's ships mobilized capital and persons on a massive scale. Considering only the routes from Europe to the Indies, between the so-called *voorcompagnieen* ("pre-companies") that began sailing in 1595 and the final VOC sending of 1795, 4722 voyages set out from the Netherlands, carrying a

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[30] For the term "history of infrastructure" I am indebted to Andrew Cooper, of the British Library department of India Office Records.

[31] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*.

[32] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*

total of roughly one million persons to the East.[33] These voyages were

conducted on 2219 separate vessels, of which 1450 were built in the

Company's shipyards.[34] Building the ships was itself a mammoth project,

made possible only by industrial methods of production and resource

gathering, which had been developed in the Netherlands during the sixteenth

century, when the country had built a reputation as Europe's single most

important supplier of ships and seafarers.[35] The VOC expanded the existing

shipbuilding capacity enormously: the largest of the Company's shipyards, at

Oostenburg in Amsterdam, was Europe's biggest manufacturing facility at the

time of its construction in 1660.[36] By the end of the eighteenth century it

employed up to 1300 people, while the Company as a whole was the single

largest employer in the Dutch Republic.[37]

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[33] The term *voorcompagnie* ("pre-company") carries an unfortunate teleological connotation, reducing early Dutch efforts at Indies sea trade to a mere anticipation of the VOC. It has, however, become the standard term for referring to the period 1595-1602, originating with the VOC's directors to designate those companies which predated and were later consolidated into the VOC. Bruijn, J. R Gaastra, F. S, Schoeffer, I: *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (The Hague, 1979), II [Hereafter DAS II]. Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 66 (25 Feb 2005): 12-39.

[34] DAS II, Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.*

[35] Barbour, V: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping in the Seventeenth Century" in Emmer, P & Gaastra, F. S. (eds): *The organisation of interoceanic trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996).

[36] Kist, J. B et al: *Van VOC tot Werkspoor. Het Amsterdamse industrieterrein Oostenburg* (Utrecht 1986).

[37] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.* Kist, J. B: *Van VOC tot Werkspoor.*

The ship, as the fundamental infrastructural unit of the VOC, had a profound effect on the Company's development and generally that of European expansion. Ships have long been recognized as representing an important moment in the development of labor and "working class history," as places where collective work was disciplined into repetitive, ritualized schemes, while the laborers who worked them formed a mobile class, to be deployed wherever the emergent colonial network required them.[38] A detailed understanding of the distinctive shipboard space and society of the East Indies *retourschip*, formed to deal with long voyages and special hazards, is important to understanding both the micro-networks of relations that composed the ship as a working unit and the proto-colonial, world-spanning networks in which ships acted.

John Law has explored the role a set of reefs off the west coast of Africa played in producing the Portuguese as master mariners with a world-wide reach during the late fifteenth century: passing these reefs required advances in navigation and adjustments to ship forms away from small, shallow coasting vessels toward large hulls that could support long voyages out of sight of land.[39] The reefs constituted thresholds of technology, of scale and of unit cost,

[38] Schaeffer, R. K: *The Chains of Bondage Broke: the proletarianization of seafaring labor, 1600-1800* (unpublished diss., SUNY Binghamton, 1984). Ewald: "crossers of the sea."

[39] Law, J: "On the Methods of Long Distance Control: Vessels, Navigation and the Portuguese Route to India" in J. Law (Ed.) *Power, Action and Belief: a new Sociology of Knowledge?* (Sociological Review Monograph 32. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). 234-263.

i.e. of centralization of resources. Beyond these thresholds the whole maritime world lay open: the ships that finally made it into the Indian Ocean were incidentally equipped for bulk trade, warfare and voyages to any point on the globe. The East India trading ship likewise can be said to have played a role in creating a global system of trade and capitalism centered on Europe, and to have laid the foundations for colonial expansion.

In some regard we can say that the large trading ship invented the chartered East India company. Its capacious hold made a system of profitable maritime bulk trade possible, which could not have been supported or systematized by land-based methods of transport, while its capacity as a firing platform for guns allowed for an extension of the powers of European states onto the sea that had no equivalent among the states that lined the Indian Ocean.[40] On the other hand, the large scale commerce it permitted also scaled its demands: in requiring great quantities of supplies and manpower the ship gave rise to a certain size and complexity of support organization, comparable in size to that of the largest of the Dutch admiralties and greater in the variety of its needs. A fleet of East Indies ships, capable of displacing the Portuguese and resisting English incursions, demanded an unprecedented basis in capital, while the skills it demanded (of shipbuilding, navigation, cartography, metalworking and coordination) required a level both of industrialization and management that would test even the Dutch Republic through the first half of the

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[40] Pearson, M. N: *The Indian Ocean* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003).

seventeenth century. The problem of raising the required capital and organizing industries in order to support a regular supply of ships led directly to the development of the European joint-stock corporation. As massive repositories of capital and labor power, we may suppose that ships also demanded a certain pace of trade: the behemoth, once built, required constant feeding, its empty hold a scourge to merchant captain-generals tasked with bringing back hundreds of tons of spices to fund the Republic's economic and war efforts.

The physical dimensions of the VOC ship (especially the draft but also the length and required maneuvering space) also determined the set of possible port locations and anchorages in Patria and in the Indies, thereby fixing the nodes of the Company's networks and yielding further demands, for repair yards and ship parts, for cargo transfer and warehouse facilities. A certain self-sufficiency was required of ships in the Indies because of the costs of developing infrastructure around them from materials that were themselves largely shipped from Patria. The earning potential of a VOC *retourschip* was great enough to prompt the creation of novel support industries in the Republic, however, including the semi-submersible ship "camels," which floated *retourschepen* and warships constructed in Amsterdam over the shallows and sandbanks of the Zuiderzee, at a cost comparable to the construction of the ships themselves.[41]

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[41] Yk, C. van: *De De Nederlandsche Scheeps-bouw-konst.* Hoving, A.J. 1991. "Ship Camels and Water Ships." *Model Shipwright* 76: 32-36.

Moreover, the ability of the ocean-going ship to move hundreds of tons of goods from the Indies to Europe without intermediate landfall gave rise to a novel approach to supplying European markets, especially for high value, low bulk goods such as spices. Steensgaard notes that in the early 1750s 'exotic' commodities from the Americas and Asia made up roughly 46% of imports and exports in Britain, and perhaps 20-25% in the Netherlands, of which roughly half in each case came from Indian Ocean suppliers.[42] On the one hand , in the environment of Europe in the sixteenth century, of competing states and expansionist economies, the opportunity to make money through the transport of valuable goods quickly turned into a competitive necessity, such that the East India ship developed a self-sustaining momentum as a tool of economics and statecraft. On the other, the ship offered the potential for a radical reconfiguring of European markets.

Rene Barendse has shown that spices and other Asian goods continued to be carried successfully overland through the seventeenth century by the same networks that had supplied them for centuries before the advent of Vasco da Gama. But the ship offered a dream of radically reduced costs per ton of goods and, perhaps more importantly, of the ability to monopolize the entire European spice trade by being able to supply sufficient goods to satisfy

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[42] Steensgaard, N: "The Growth and Composition of the Long-distance Trade of England and the Dutch Republic before 1750" in Tracy, J. D. (ed): *The Rise of Merchant Empires: long-distance trade in the early modern world, 1350-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255-286: 277.

demand in the whole market. The implications of this were far-reaching. First, through its large warehouse capacity, Amsterdam could become an important centre of price regulation for any commodities brought to Europe from Asia. This goal was of immediate importance to the Republic in its war of independence from Spain: it had a direct bearing on the supply of money, and therefore military resources, the Republic could command. It also appealed to the zero-sum logic of mercantile capitalism: at the time of the Company's formation the Dutch were locked out of a trading cartel for many goods which was centered on Spain. Every clove or nutmeg that Amsterdam could supply to a finite European demand was taken straight out of the profits of the cartel that bankrolled Spain's war efforts.

Woodruff Smith has pointed out a second reason for desiring such a monopoly, which was tied to the networks that built the ship in the first place and suggests that a deeper restructuring of European trade was at stake.[43] Smith has emphasized that the core goal of the VOC was not profit-maximizing but market command. The VOC was to avoid price-cutting wars of economic competition through careful market control, maintaining a stable, reasonable price for its products that discouraged adventurers. Smith states that this goal of regulation was tied to a financial policy based around spices rather than bullion as the currency of inter-state trade. The Dutch Republic relied on bulk imports from central Europe, delivered via the Baltic, for its

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[43] Smith, W. D: *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

daily bread, meats and other necessities, including ship timbers. Spices were seen by Dutch merchants as the ideal trading currency for supplying these wants, since the Republic could control their supply, rather than relying on silver, over which the Spain had exerted a powerful influence since the sixteenth century. Dutch merchant houses—which were tied to the network of city corporations and therefore the government—could control spice prices, keeping them stable across multiple years through monopolistic control, achieved through large-scale warehousing and regular shipments from the Indies.

The features of the ship were ideally suited to this sort of monopolistic activity. The ship's isolation, the relative ease with which it could be tracked, and the mutual surveillance among its crew combined to create an environment that could be policed, made accountable and visible. In contrast with transport across land or with networks in which goods were passed through multiple hands between source and destination, the ship promised quantifiable, discrete deliveries of goods via approved agents, substantially reducing the risk of leaking spices, personnel or information along the way.

First spaces of colonialism

Most of all, VOC ships were instrumental in forming and propagating the structures of European expansion, which would develop into colonialism. I have termed the Company's ships "first spaces of colonialism," both because they introduced roughly a million ordinary workers drawn from around

Europe to the Company's proto-colonial project and because in their social structure, rendered modular and portable, repeated across the Company's network, they provided a prototype for colonial productive societies.

Although it has been argued that the VOC had an aversion to colonies, resisting rather than planting Dutch settlements in the Indies, it was certainly at least a proto-colonial organization, its period of operation a "prelude" to the extensive system of plantation colonies that expanded across the Netherlands East Indies during the nineteenth century.[44] Gaastra has described the Company as a "reluctant imperialist," one which, despite regular protests against permanent settlement, maintained an establishment of between twenty and twenty-five thousand servants in the Indies during the eighteenth century.[45] Ships played a variety of important roles in supporting this imperialism. In place of an "age of partnership" between Indian Ocean polities and European companies, Markus Vink has characterized their relations as negotiating a "balance of blackmail."[46] This balance was determined by the relative wealth, military strength and freedom of agency the VOC and its

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[44] Goor, J. van: *Prelude to Colonialism: the Dutch in Asia* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2004), 9. Van Goor notes Batavia and the Cape colony as exceptions to the "strictly business" factory-based, minimal colonialism the VOC practiced across most of its network.

[45] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 65.

[46] Vink, M: "A match made in Heaven? World-system Analysis and 'Dutch Indian Ocean' Studies." In van Veen, E, and Leonard Blussé (eds.) *Rivalry and Conflict. European Traders and Asian Trading Networks in the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2005), 267-314.

negotiating partners could bring to bear. In the Company's first decades it principally sought spices from a set of small island polities: its armed trading ships were capable of forcing negotiations with these partners, and in the case of the Banda islands exterminating them, to replace them with the Company's first plantation colony.[47] More frequently ships were used to meddle in wars between Indies powers, alongside the Company's money and soldiers, supporting the Company's allies against their rivals and overseeing a judicious balance of power "so that no warrior… can rise, and oppress neighboring rulers,/ and stand in the light of Batavia's happiness."[48] The steady growth of settlements at the Cape, at Batavia and at other centers such as Colombo; growing commitments to infrastructural elements such as schools and tax offices; growing populations of "Eurasian" children of settlers, who acted as clerks and supercargoes in the VOC's intra-Asian shipping network; and the symbiosis of Chinese and other Indies planters with Company governors in the *umland* of Batavia through the eighteenth century all suggest that a form of colonial settlement was part of the Company's *modus operandi*, no matter how unofficial that part might have been.[49] And shipping networks,

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[47] The full story is given in a highly entertaining but far from neutral form in Milton, G: *Nathaniel's Nutmeg, or, The True and Incredible Adventures of the Spice Trader who Changed the Course of History* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1999). Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.*

[48] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company,* 60, 87. The quotation is from Joannes Antonides van der Goes' poem, *de Ystroom*, translated in E. du Perron: *De muze van Jan Compagnie: Overzichtelijke verzameling van Nederlands-Oostindiese belletrie uit de Compagniestijd (1600-1780)* (Bandoeng 1948), 20, quoted in Goor, J. van: *Prelude.* 10

[49] For a discussion of the development of Colombo see Remco Raben's dissertation: *Batavia and Colombo.* Lodowijk Wagenaar's work on Galle shows the steady growth that occurred even at what was avowedly a secondary port for the VOC's networks.

methods and infrastructure established by the VOC also formed an important

part of the foundation on which nineteenth century colonial expansion would

build, in organizing, gathering and delivering the Company's goods, and later

the products of the "cultivation system," to markets in Europe.

For the purposes of this discussion I define the VOC's colonialism as a form of

exploitation or expropriation in which one group, composed of directors and

shareholders, exploited several others, including the Company's mariners and

other shipboard servants, as well as native people of the East Indies, for the

purpose of extracting profits.[50] The methods of expropriation were

fundamentally those of mercantile capitalism, combining state-like

sovereignty and powers of coercion with ruthless, monopolistic profit-seeking

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Raben, R: *Batavia and Colombo: the ethnic and spatial order of two colonial cities 1600-1800* (unpublished diss. University of Leiden, 1996). Wagenaar, L: *Galle, VOC-Vestiging in Ceylon. Beschrijving van een koloniale samenleving aan de voravond van de Singalese opstand tegen het Nederlandse gezag, 1760* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994). On schools and taxes see Goor, J van: *Prelude,* 23. Jean Gelman Taylor's *Social World of Batavia* provides a portrait of the lives of VOC governors and high officials at Batavia, documenting their migration from the fort and factory to large "estates" in the hinterland, which developed in the nineteenth century into plantations. Leonard Blusse has lead a considerable research program into the non-European contributions to the life and economy of Batavia, which might be termed "conjoint communities." Taylor, J. G: *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in colonial Indonesia.* (Madison Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009). Blusse, J L: *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Leiden: KITLV Verhandelingen Ser No, 122, 1988).

[50]Kohn describes the relationship of exploitation as one occurring between states. Kohn, Margaret, "Colonialism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2010 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/colonialism/. Accessed 10 June, 2011. In this case the VOC stands as a kind of pseudo-state actor, with many of the powers of a fully-fledged sovereign state, expropriating labor and goods from many non-state actors.

and continuous attempts to reduce the costs of labor by reducing the rights of laborers. Colonialism is here distinguished from mercantile capitalism by a preoccupation with the maintenance of boundaries between different communities of different status within the enterprise, and by the Company's concern to keep its mariners captive in a "third space," defined and maintained by the VOC, where the Company could command their labor and prevent their seeking alternatives to its order, either from the legal and cultural systems of the Dutch Republic or from those found in the Indies.[51]

The establishment of colonial spaces ashore in the Indies was dependent on first "colonizing" the ships, that is, establishing a self-reproducing system for organizing expropriated labor. That the Company expropriated labor, both in the Indies and from Europe, is not in doubt: an extensive secondary industry of crimps, who tricked or forced men onto VOC ships, often through fraudulent debts, operated in the Republic's port cities and extended far beyond its borders.[52] Far more of the Company's men were simply

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[51] "Third space" here refers to Anthony King's "third cultures:" novel cultural formations that form within colonial situations, that are distinct from the native culture of the colonizers, the colonized, and any simple hybrid of the two. King, A. D: *Colonial Urban Development: culture, social power and environment* (London, New York: Routledge, 1976). On the topic of "colonial space" I am also guided by Bernard Cohn's writings on the epistemology particular to colonialism and by John Noyes' thesis on the creation of frontiers and emptiness in colonial territory-making, as necessary steps both for claiming such territory and maintaining discipline among colonists. Cohn, B: *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton 1996). Noyes, J: *Colonial Space: spatiality in the discourse of German South West Africa 1884-1915*. (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[52] Royen, P. C. van: "The 'national' maritime labour market. Looking for common characteristics" and Davids, K: "Maritime labour in the Netherlands, 1570-1870," in Royen, P. C. van, Bruijn, J. R. & Lucassen, J. (eds.), *"Those Emblems of Hell"? European*

economically dispossessed, being victims of a wider expropriation, whether

they were driven off their land through cartelization in the Republic (a process

that had similar results to those of enclosure in England during the same

period), or displaced by wars or changes to the labor market.[53] Such newly

migrant workers came from as far afield as Scandinavia, France, various

German and central European states, and the Mediterranean; they were

attracted by the promise of higher wages and growing employment in the

Republic, which indeed owed much of its success to just such migrations and

networks.[54]

Once aboard ship this labor was organized according to structures

characteristic of colonialism, such that the ships might be considered

laboratories for colonial methods and orders, providing the model for an

institutional culture and social structure that was replicated across the

Company's factories, from Japan to Persia and the Cape. The isolation of the

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sailors and the maritime labour market, 1570-1870, Research in Maritime History 13 (St. John's, Newfoundland 1997) 1-9; 41-71.

[53] Such economic refugees were by no means the Company's only recruits: Lucassen has shown both how the extension of the polder system displaced a large workforce and prompted unskilled labor migration in the 1600s and how the Company drew from extensive networks of skilled maritime workers through the Baltic and Scandinavia for skilled mariners. Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 66: 12-39 (Cambridge University Press 25 Feb 2005). Davids, C. A & Lucassen, J: *A Miracle Mirrored: the Dutch Republic in European perspective*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). On expropriation and migrant labor in the period more generally, see Linebaugh & Rediker: *The Many-headed Hydra*.

[54] Israel, J: *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740*. (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1990).

ship and the length of the voyage to the Indies required a certain organization of food and water, medicines and labor, as well as a high degree of sovereignty and a system of laws special to its operation and command, which were exported in many cases directly from the ship into the Company's possessions on land, through the transfer of the ships' councils to the first factory-forts and trading enclaves.[55]

Rigid social boundaries separated the groups to be exploited from those that benefited from the exploitation. These boundaries did not merely separate metropole (those who remained in the Republic) from colony (those who served the Company in the Indies). They were also ramified through the Company's hierarchies, aboard ships and in the Company's factories ashore, so as to maintain separate classes within the colonial capitalist endeavor, such that in each location a class of relative privilege and freedom confronted one of relative immiseration and subjection. In each case the privileged social layer was identified by visible markers of its higher status—initially expressed principally through conspicuous consumption, later through uniforms, and always in the hierarchy of spaces occupied aboard ship.[56] The privileged layer was generally composed of named individuals, who were consulted in the policies and operations of the Company and ship, while the layer charged with the execution of those operations was composed of interchangeable

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[55] Raben: *Batavia and Colombo*. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 66-68.

[56] Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795," *The Mariner's Mirror* 49. 2 (May 1963), 81-104.

workers, treated as a standing resource of labor, whether this distinction pertained to the organization of the Company as a whole, of the ship, or of the ropes on the foredeck. These boundaries were expressed in ranks and pay grades invented and controlled by the Company's directors. They were not based on nationality (although they tended to privilege Hollanders and Zeelanders relative to others), nor precisely on race (although race played a role in the Indies, regarding the highest rank a Company servant could attain), nor on social classes operating in the Republic, nor strictly on professional expertise.[57] Instead they were formed from complexes of all these elements, which were naturalized through the shipboard spatial and social structure, such that a worker's physical place aboard defined his rights, status and peer group, and further associated him with a stereotypical character and set of social norms proper to his station.

The social structure described thus far is very much like that common to military organizations, of which the VOC was certainly an example.[58] Despite

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[57] Mutiny trial records show frequent mismatches between pay grades and the experience claimed by mariners. *Crimineele Procedures by, mitsgaders voor en ten overstaan van de Hogen Scheeps Krygsraad in Texel gehouden, tegens sommige der Muitelingen van het O. I. Schip Neyenburg, in den voorleeden jaare 1763, uit Texel naar Batavia uitgevaren.* (Amsterdam: Petrus Schouten, 1764).

[58] The basic "company" unit of the standard military encampment, described by Simon Stevin, bears a striking resemblance to that of the *retourschip*, being composed of two long, parallel lines of quarters for the men, crossed at one end by a larger tent for the officers, recalling the spatial organization of starboard and larboard watches on a ship's gun deck, with the officers occupying a saloon to the rear. The interior arrangements of VOC and Admiralty ships of the eighteenth century were quite different from one another, however, partly because the former was arranged around maintaining a clear and functional cargo hold, while the latter, carrying far less cargo, was arranged around maintaining a clear and functional gun deck. Stevin, S. &

its foundation on private capital the VOC was very much an arm of state power, furthering the Republic's interests through both warfare and enforcement: as a patrimonial entity in service to the States General the Company occupied a role very much like the Republic's independent Admiralties.[59] The Company's ships were unique, however, in enforcing boundaries that were special to Indies trade, similar to those discussed by Ann Stoler: they both connected and divided Europe and the Indies, separating directors' decisions from their consequences, respectable burghers from acts of wanton violence and piracy in foreign seas, and shareholders' capital and dividends from the full costs of the Companies' enterprises.[60] On a practical level the VOC's ships acted as a filter between the Republic and its colonial enclaves, allowing desired products through but preventing the inappropriate passage of persons or reporting in either direction.

Schukking, W. H (ed.): *The principal works of Simon Stevin. Vol. 4, The Art of War* (Amsterdam: C.V. Swets & Zeitlinger, 1964), 280. Ab Hoving: personal communication. Lavery, B: *The Ship of the Line*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983).

[59] Israel, J: *Dutch Primacy*, 411. Enforcement pertained to the Company's monopoly on trade between the Indies and Republic and to the pass system, which in theory supported monopolies on certain trade routes and commodities within the Indies networks. In practice, efforts to dictate trade routes were mostly effective only on European pass-issuers' own populations: Gaastra notes that, depending on the treaty relations in effect between European powers at any particular moment, passes from different countries' companies might serve more or less interchangeably to protect ships en route, and Asian shippers could choose the ones that offered the most attractive terms. Ironically, then, this emblem of European mercantilist protectionism sometimes obeyed the laws of free market competition. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 120.

[60] Stoler, A. L: "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule" in Dirks, N. B. (ed.): Colonialism and Culture (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

Rediker has noted how the slave ship generated "whites" and "blacks" out of motley crews drawn from across Europe and captives from across west Africa, respectively.[61] VOC shipboard order, with its common work practices, experiences and strictly controlled social relations, likewise transformed the Company's men into a coherent and distinct category of European Company servants. The ships then brought these servants into limited contact with Indies civilizations while acting as a space apart from the Indies, keeping them separate from the people with which they traded, thereby laying the groundwork for relations of colonialism between these European servants and Indies populations, and also producing the European servants themselves as wholly dependent colonial subjects. Such a literal separation might dissolve in the Indies, where the VOC's ships became multi-ethnic, plural societies in motion, anticipating similar social formations on land. The VOC resisted using Indies-born personnel on its Europe-bound ships until chronic shortages of manpower forced its hand in the later eighteenth century, however, thereby retaining a resolutely European face within Europe until well into the eighteenth century, as well as a distinctively European shipboard culture that was replicated with every "outward" (from Europe) voyage.[62]

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[61] Rediker, M. B: *The slave ship: a human history*. (New York: Viking, 2007).

[62] Lucassen, J: "A multinational." Royen: "The 'national' maritime labour market."

Likewise, the VOC controlled the access of Europeans to the Indies, since it (theoretically, at least) held a monopoly on Dutch seafaring east of the Cape. Only VOC servants and occasionally their wives were permitted to take the voyage to Batavia, wives being more strictly controlled after the Company's first decades.[63] The contrast with migration of the Chinese population to Batavia is marked: the latter was encouraged on a large scale, forming a settler population of both male and female émigrés.[64]

Finally, VOC ships played a part in forming the conception of colonial society spread in the Republic during what Parry has termed the "age of reconnaissance," with consequences for the whole colonial period.[65] In the seventeenth century the Company's ships were deployed as symbols by Calvinist preachers in pamphlets, treatises and prayer books, some of which were published and distributed by the VOC for audiences in both Europe and the Indies.[66] These works presented well-governed merchant ships as exemplary models for ordered, productive and pious societies, within a

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[63] Early memoirs and the records of the *Batavia* mutiny show a considerable presence for women aboard VOC vessels. By the eighteenth century, however, the only women found aboard were attached to high-ranking Company officers, as family members or servants. Jean Gelman Taylor has shown how the restriction on transporting women from the Republic lead to a distinctive colonial culture at Batavia of intermarriage among governors' families and other high-ranking Company servants, the women in these strategic unions being supplied from the Indies, frequently as freed slaves. Ketting, H: *Leven, werk*. Taylor: *The Social World of Batavia.*

[64] Blusse: Strange Company. Ota Atsushi: *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java: Society, State and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830* (Brill, Leiden, 2006).

[65] Parry, J. *The Age of Reconnaissance* (Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1963).

[66] For a full discussion see chapter 4.

discourse that used the ship as a metaphor for the (Reformed) Christian's journey through life.[67] Less obviously but no less importantly, shipboard experience informed every soldier, sailor, clerk, merchant and governor who served in the Indies, as well as every Dutch author who described the Indies during the Company's tenure, since they all necessarily passed through a period of several months or years immersed in what Paul Gilroy has described as the ships' "microcultural, micro-political systems."[68] Following Van Leur's famous complaint that the history of Southeast Asia has been written "from the deck of a ship," VOC ships provided the idiom through which writers such as Valentijn and Stavorinus viewed both European and non-European ship-borne societies, and that their influence must persist today, however obliquely, in historians' works on seafaring societies of South, Southeast and East Asia that draw on those writings.[69] This dissertation aims to contribute to an understanding of the cultural background that informed such classic texts.

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[67] Goedde, L. O: "Convention, Realism, and the Interpretation of Dutch and Flemish Tempest Painting" *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 16. 2/3 (1986), 139-149.

[68] Gilroy, P: *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[69] Leur, J. C. van: *Indonesian Trade and Society: essays in Asian social and economic history by J.C. van Leur* (The Hague: W. Van Hoeve, 1967). Tony Day has observed that it is never exactly clear just what kind of ship Van Leur intends in this formula: the steamship, the indigenous peddling trader of which he wrote, or earlier ship of colonization, but that in all cases the perspective of each author remains bound to their home culture. It is my contention that an understanding of the ship itself as a world apart with its own distinctive social and cultural order is a necessary part of the project of growing critically aware of such cultural inflections. Day, T: "Second Thoughts about a History of Batavia" *Indonesia,* 38 (Oct., 1984), 147-161. Valentijn, F: *Oud en Nieuw Oost-indiën* (Amsterdam: J.C. Van Kesteren & Zoon, 1862). Stavorinus, J. S: *Voyages to the East Indies* (London: Dawsons, 1969).

Concerns informing the shape of the argument

Histories of the period of European expansion, and of the VOC in particular, tend to get caught up in arguments regarding teleological accounts of the "triumph of the west" and the spread of free market capitalism or "modernity." Although I claim an important place and a generative role for ships in the development of European capitalism and colonialism I do not wish to bind this study to any such arguments. It is emphatically not my intention to suggest that the development of colonialism or capitalism were unique in world history, nor to compare European against Asian shipping or organization, nor Dutch methods of colonialism against those of other European powers.[70] Following Barendse and Gunder Frank, I would argue rather that the Company's ships enabled northern Europeans to increase their stake in the large and vital Asian trading system.[71] The ships drew on and moved through extensive networks of supply, finance, shipping and labor borrowed from the Indies and from across Europe: their transformative potential could not have been realized without these networks.[72] Neither do I

[70] Subrahmanyam has detailed how historiography of European expansion has tended to pit "modern" Dutch and British actors against less "modern" Portuguese and Indians. Subrahmanyam, S: *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700* (London: Longman, 1993).

[71] Gunder Frank, A: *ReOrient: global economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Barendse, R. J: "Trade and State in the Arabian Seas: A Survey from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of World History* 11.2 (2000) 173-225.

[72] Subrahmanyam, S: "Of Imarat and Tijarat: Asian Merchants and State Power in the Western Indian Ocean, 1400 to 1750" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No.4. (Oct., 1995), 750-780. Bayly, C. A. & Subrahmanyam, S: "Portfolio-capitalists and the Political Economy of Early Modern India," in *Merchants, Markets and the State in Early Modern India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 242-65. On the

think it appropriate to tie the ship to "great confinement" arguments, nor to consider it a Panopticon-like agent in the formation of modern, disciplined society.[73] The VOC ship certainly contributed to disciplinary aspects of the Company's society. It is notable, also, that at the time of the VOC's establishment there was a great expansion of the system of workhouses in Amsterdam, with both institutions offering solutions to the "problem" of the urban poor, through disciplined living and working environments.[74] There is little evidence, however, that VOC mariners retained their shipboard identities outside the terms of their service, or that shipboard order contributed greatly to the orderliness of societies at its ports of call. If anything the opposite appears to be true, the port and its brothels providing mirror heterotopias for the ship and its discipline.[75] Finally, although I attempt to deal with the everyday lives of ordinary VOC seamen, I have deliberately not presented this study as a "history from below" or "history 2," centered on mutineers and others rendered mute by dominant discourses.[76] I have avoided

importance of warehousing and hinterland networks, see Antunes, C: "Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640-1710: Urban links and trade networks in the Early Modern period," in van Veen, E, and Leonard Blussé (eds.) *Rivalry and Conflict. European Traders and Asian Trading Networks in the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2005), and Wijnand, W. M: "The Dutch Republic as a Town" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.3 (1998) 345-348.

[73] Foucault: *Discipline and Punish.*

[74] Spierenburg, P: "Close To The Edge: Criminals and Marginals in Dutch Cities" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31.3 (1998) pp 355-359.

[75] Foucault, M: "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986), 22–27.

[76] Thompson, E. P: "History from Below," *Times Literary Supplement*, (7 April 1966), 279-80. Chakrabarty, D: *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

this approach partly because, despite the spatial organization aboard ships, categories of "above" and "below" shift when the ship reaches land: when the master is reintegrated in a society in which he is required merely to execute the decisions of merchants and directors, or when a lowly soldier publishes his own narrative on returning home, which casts him as an observing, assessing protagonist.[77] Instead I have attempted to pay equal attention to the whole society aboard the ship, and to include the social, representational and physical contexts of shipboard environments and something of their meanings for all of the ship's inhabitants.

My reasons for concentrating on the VOC and particularly on the case of the *Nijenburg* mutiny are rather methodological and practical. The VOC's place in the great economic and cultural efflorescence that took place in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century is well known.[78] For the purposes of this study, however, the most interesting period falls between 1750 and 1780, a period economic historians associate firmly with the ascendancy of London and the decisive decline of Amsterdam. Records for this unfashionable period of VOC history show a remarkable unity, completeness and discipline when compared with those of other periods and companies. The system of

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[77] Gelder, R van: *Naporra's omweg*. Bruijn, J. R: *Commanders of Dutch East India Ships in the eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011).

[78] Schama, S: *The Embarrassment of Riches: an interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age.* (New York: Knopf, 1987). Israel, J: *Dutch primacy*. Zandvliet, K, and Rijksmuseum: *The Dutch encounter with Asia, 1600-1950* (Amsterdam, Zwolle: Rijksmuseum, Waanders, 2002).

shipbuilding and operation organized during this period was remarkably

coherent, allowing one to speak of VOC practices and resolutions with more

confidence than is possible regarding, for instance, the English East India

Company, with its myriad independent shipyards, ship husbands and

individually recruited crews.[79] Further, the unprecedented centralization and

standardization of the VOC's shipbuilding, sailing, business and record-

keeping practices between 1750 and 1780 allow more to be understood and

generalized, with greater confidence, regarding the forms of the Company's

retourschepen during this period than those of any other ship type or any other

period. Such records are useful both for themselves and for providing a

coherent frame for the individual and extraordinary documents that form the

basis of this study.

Taking advantage of this unusual resource I have deliberately limited my

research data and conclusions to a few coherent sets of records, addressing

specific shipboard situations in order to present differences and contradictions

clearly, in order to subject the generalized accounts of VOC shipboard life that

already exist to a scrutiny that only an approach from case studies can

provide. There are advantages to such an approach: rather than submerging

points of distinction between ships and situations in a generalized narrative of

vague, eternal "traditions," they can be highlighted and examined, in order to

interrogate common views on the subject. There is also a cost to this approach,

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[79] Sutton, J: *Lords of the East: the East India Company and its ships* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1981).

however: I have not been able to render as evocative or encompassing a story as I might have with a more omnivorous method, which would have allowed me to include anecdotes and details from many voyages, showing cartographic research conducted on the quarterdeck or scientific or political discussions between shipmasters, merchants and passengers in the saloon.[80]

The structure of chapters follows the case study approach by first defining the class of ships under discussion, examining their typical or canonical characteristics, interrogating the description thus obtained in the light of atypical cases, and exploring the ways in which even accounts of the atypical might be bent to normative ends. Chapter one deals with the "typical" ship as an idea or imagined entity (or entities, since the typical ship evolved over time). Charting its evolution as a discourse and an ideology, and as an architectural, social and sociospatial *type*, or mode of building and of understanding and inhabiting built space. This chapter draws on Anthony King's and Eve Blau's works on the evolution, global spread and adaptation of types, especially on King's analyses of the bungalow and the villa, which shows how each type developed to house a specific institution or mode of existence and in turn carried certain relations and modes of being with it into

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[80] The rare diaries of female passengers show a consciousness regarding the whole society of the ship that is illuminating, regarding how a *retourschip* looked to an outsider, but also difficult to read "around." Barend-van Haeften, M: *Op Reis Met De VOC: De Openhartige Dagboeken Van De Zusters Lammens En Swellengrebel*. Linschoten-Vereeniging 95. (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1996).

different contexts.[81] Like the bungalow, the type of the VOC ship encoded

particular rules for behavior among those that inhabited it and for discourse

among those who have discussed it down to the present, affecting discussions

of shipboard spaces, of the Company and of the proto-colonial project it

represented. During the Company's operation the type informed the building

and disciplining of individual ships, the expectations and experiences of

Company servants and the social identities and reputations of those servants

aboard and ashore. In some sense, then, this chapter might be considered

analogous to a view of the ship "from without," as it is always shown in

contemporary paintings: as an object in the Company's cultural landscape and

a metonym for the Company as an institution and its institutionalized

behaviors.

Chapter two, on the spaces aboard the typical ship, might be considered a

view "from within," concerned with the physical environments and social

subdivisions that the ship provided to its inhabitants.[82] The design of

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[81] Eve Blau's *Red Vienna* provides a partial model for the approach taken here: her discussion of the *Gemeindebau* in interwar Vienna addresses the effects of this distinctive type of apartment building and the political agendas that surrounded it, on political discourse, on the social identities of its inhabitants and other Viennese, and on the images and narratives presented regarding the inhabitants in the popular press. King: the Bungalow. Eve Blau, *The Architecture of Red Vienna, 1919-1934* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999).

[82] Viewed "from without" the ship is considered as a kind of "mid-space object:" this is the way it appears in paintings, as an object on which meanings can be hung. Viewed "from within" the ship itself takes on the character of a context for the activities that occur aboard. A similar shift in perspective from the involved user to the distant observer has been remarked in the re-presentation of Islamic urban features as monuments. Carruthers, K. D. B: "Architecture is Space: the space-positive tradition" *Journal of Architectural Education* 39:3 (spring 1986), 17-33.

shipboard space is analyzed alongside the architecture of systems of authority used aboard, the latter being derived both from the Company's Articles of Employment and from a largely unacknowledged body of seafaring spatial traditions. Certain sets of social relations were considered characteristic of the VOC ship, between members of the ship's council, between the officers and men, and between soldiers and sailors. The chapter explores how space use contributed to the VOC's social order and especially to control, resistance and communication aboard the Company's vessels.[83]

Against this typical image, in chapter three I pose a number of case studies of ships under the atypical condition of mutiny. Reports from mutinies simultaneously offer some of the very few sources available on the use and arrangement of space aboard VOC ships and a kind of counter-discourse to the Company's standard or typical account of shipboard order. Space leaves few explicit traces in the archives of commercial institutions. In particular everyday spatial practices tend to go undiscussed: it is this quality that Pierre Bourdieu and others have claimed lends space its power to influence social relations and behaviors.[84] It is only on rare occasions, and especially in moments of crisis, that the "hidden" factor of space is brought into discussion and the "black box" of the ship's everyday operation is opened.[85] The fact that

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[83] Gilroy: *Black Atlantic*.

[84] Bourdieu: *Outline*.

[85] The term "hidden society," referring to specific institutional relations, stems from Aubert: *The Hidden Society*, that of the "black box" from Callon, M. & Latour, B:

much of what we know regarding shipboard space is drawn from such crises offers an analytical challenge. First, mutiny records concentrate on the extraordinary or deviant as that which is worthy of note or which might be used to apportion guilt. Second, the questions asked at trials and the reception of their answers cling to the comprehensible: a set of ideas or opinions informed by the Company's official categories of good and bad order. One mutiny in particular generated a large volume of complex and contradictory records: that on the ship *Nijenburg*, which was seized by a small group of soldiers in 1763 and diverted from its course toward Asia, landing instead at Brazil and French Guiana. Testimonies were gathered from over a hundred witnesses to and participants in the events of the mutiny and its aftermath. The *Nijenburg* therefore provides unique opportunities for the critical analysis of a particular shipboard situation, from multiple perspectives.

Published narratives of mutinies and other VOC disasters tend to follow a particular trajectory, containing details that identify them as adventure yarns and a certain construction of events, which they share with official accounts. One effect of the construction characteristic of the genre is to incorporate the crises described into official discourses: one may speak of the institution of the Company striving to make sense of aberrant events and to employ them in its programs, such that mutiny, too, became incorporated in the type.

"Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: how actors macrostructure reality and how sociologists help them to do so," in K. D. Knorr-Cetina and A. V. Cicourel (Eds.) *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro- and Macro-Sociologies*. (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 277-303.

The work is necessarily incomplete. Were it to be pursued to its logical conclusion, I should have to research all accounts of VOC voyages and vessels, in order to produce a monograph that kept them all distinct and finally drew a new synthesis from them, hedged about with endless exceptions and caveats. I have also fallen some distance short of the program for architectural history set out by Spiro Kostof.[86] Although the ship appears to offer a nicely self-contained world, I have not been able to address every corner of it. In particular, technical aspects of construction, the masts and rigging, and the decorative carving that formed each ship's most distinctive designed statements have all been given short shrift. This is partly because others have covered technical aspects better than I could: I have tried to make use of their work where it has had a clear bearing on shipboard society. Regarding the rigging, which was certainly a complex working environment, apart from technical descriptions I have not found sufficient evidence to form conclusions: we know that men hid in the rigging during mutinies and that, because grenades were stored at the mast tops, these played an important part in the defense of the ship. As the most visible part of the ship from a distance (and especially from the "middle distance" that characterized ship paintings in the seventeenth century), rigging clearly had representational value: the flagpole of the Company's enclave at Deshima, for instance, took the form of a ship's mast rigged with stays and a top. Trial testimonies, however, rarely refer to the complex web-work above the decks, and since these form my

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[86] Kostof: "the study of what we built" in Kostof, S: *A History of Architecture*, 3-19.

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primary body of evidence I have left this space for another study. Decorative

woodwork likewise formed an important part of the presentation of the ship:

its continued presence on VOC ships, despite the Company directors'

continued protestations regarding its cost, suggests that it served some

important function, but I have found no fresh evidence to supplement the

studies already extant.[87] It has further not always been possible to speak of

ships as they were, rather than as they should have been; no complete VOC

ships survive to this day, and the written accounts we have of life aboard are

all the products of memory, assembled long after the facts recounted, for the

benefit of courts or paying readers.[88] All the available evidence, including

models, plans, charters, logs, memoirs and paintings falls into the category of

discourse regarding the ship, much of it also having been produced by the

Company. I have not been able to see around this discourse to any posited

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[87] Schokkenbroek, J: *Kunst op het water: Nederlandse scheepssier, 1650-1850* (Amsterdam, Zutphen: Stichting Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum, Walburg Pers, 1995). Ships' names fall in the same category of deliberate statements intended to affect how the individual ship was read. Bruijn, Gaastra & Schoffer note a shift from principally patriotic names, such as *'t Wapen van Amsterdam* (the Arms of Amsterdam), or *Eendracht* (unity) to names of personal significance to Company directors, commemorating their family members (e.g. *Vrouwe Petronella* or *Jonge Lieve*) and their properties (e.g. *Huis ter Velsen*). Such work is clearly of importance to a study of the public image of the Company and the position of its ships in that image. I have not been able to draw a clear link, however, between these concerns and the social structure operating aboard the ships. DAS I.

[88] The historical record for these artifacts is instead composed first of descriptions—text, drawings and models—and therefore of discourses about the ships, and second of fragments of wrecks, which must generally be reconstructed according to the descriptions. Some more-or-less complete hulls have been found, including notably that of the Amsterdam, which remains buried in sand off the south coast of England. If excavated this wreck would considerably advance our knowledge of the fabric of VOC ships. Nonetheless, even the Amsterdam could not provide a complete record of the class of VOC ships.

"true" or "authentic" ship, but I have attempted to address the available material directly and critically, as evidence for how the VOC ship was conceived and perceived during its time of operation.

CHAPTER 1: THE TYPICAL SHIP

On types and stereotypes: the class and the instance.

Between 1913 and 1914, Johannes de Hullu published five articles on

shipboard life in the Dutch United East Indies Company (VOC), which have

largely set the agenda and terms of debate for all subsequent studies.[89] These

articles were remarkable, pioneering efforts of scholarship, which drew

together a variety of sources to produce a synthetic portrait of the Company

seaman and his world: like Melville's *White Jacket* they deployed details and

anecdotes judiciously to evoke a sailor's world.[90]

The danger of such portraits is that they tend to obscure the ways in which

they are constructed; they appear to be complete and self-sufficient

explanations of their subjects. In the case of de Hullu's articles this danger was

compounded by the fact that the mariner merchant-warriors he described

were already subject to a good deal of essentializing, as components of the

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[89] In many cases de Hullu's work is simply adopted as a template for the social aspect of later studies; Bonke's *Jonge Lieve* follows de Hullu's schema faithfully. Hermann Ketting's recent *Leven, Werk,* despite a more self-consciously ethnographic approach remains heavily indebted to de Hullu in its depiction of sailors' lives, its selection of topics and its organization. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: vijf artikelen studie over de werkgelegenheid bij de VOC* (Groningen, 1980). Bonke, H: *De Zeven Reizen van de Jonge Lieve: biografie van een VOC-schip, 1760-1781* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1999). Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk en rebellie aan boord van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-1650)* (Aksant, Amsterdam, 2002).

[90] Melville, H: *White-jacket or, The World in a Man-of-war* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

Dutch national narrative.[91] Nationalist influences aside, de Hullu's portrait relies on, and replicates, the construction of a category or class of ships and of seafaring: that is, of a "typical" VOC ship, which is identified both as homogenous and as recognizably different from other kinds of ships, including warships, independent merchantmen and the ships of other East India companies. This "typical" ship shares some of the characteristics of Max Weber's *ideal type*: it is constructed from a number of interested viewpoints in order to emphasize its distinctiveness. Where Weber's *ideal type* was intended to stand as a declaration of the author's stance, however, the "typical" VOC ship fails to declare the viewpoints from which it is constructed, standing instead as the proper object of analysis and understanding, both substituting itself for detailed case studies and declared individual perspectives, and acting as a filter through which such studies are read into maritime historiography.[92]

The creation of such a class is an inevitable and necessary part of the historian's work: the ability to answer general questions about the Company's

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[91] Both the VOC and its sister West-Indische Compagnie (hereafter WIC) have had a significant influence on the national image of the Netherlands: several VOC servants and directors were regarded as national heroes during de Hullu's time, including Jan Pieterzsoon Coen and Admirals Michiel de Ruyter.

[92] Weber posited the ideal type as an answer to the ethical problem of the impossibility of objectivity in historical analysis; in place of an objective stance he advocated a declared position of interest in social science work, that would make the writer's own value positions clearly evident: "An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those onesidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct". Weber, M: "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy" in Weber, M. *The methodology of the social science*s, trans. Shils, E. A. & Finch, A. H. (Glencoe: Free Press, 1949).

operations relies on the building of models of typical behaviors and conditions. Moreover, individual primary sources never provide complete descriptions of ships, shipboard societies or social structures; at best they offer "thick" descriptions, couched in specialized, idiosyncratic language and heavily filtered through the reporters' own expectations, of whatever was notable in a particular circumstance.[93] "Typical" or normal models of shipboard society, such as those offered by de Hullu, are therefore regularly used to "fill in the blanks" and aid interpretation of allusive accounts and isolated incidents. Such a class or model brings a number of problems with it, however: being "typical," it is inevitably normative and stereotyping; it is supposed to offer a comparative lens for the researcher's interpretations but it also acts as an explanation and as a yardstick for assessing the information in specific accounts, naturalizing some features of shipboard society and marginalizing others.

The worst excesses of this normative/stereotyping tendency are well known in the field of maritime history, which has been described as showing a peculiar susceptibility to mythologizing and romanticizing tendencies. Flatman has described a "Hornblower complex" affecting much British maritime historiography, composed of an emphasis on heroic individual sea

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[93] Geertz, C: "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30.

officers and a generally dystopian view of the hardships of shipboard life.[94]

The equivalent impulse in Dutch historiography on the VOC might be termed

a "Bontekoe complex," after the most widely-known of all VOC ship-

masters.[95] On the one hand, this model emphasizes consultation and collective

decision-making among the officers as signs of a "gentler," more enlightened,

liberal system than the proverbial tyranny of the British navy.[96] On the other

[94] "Hornblower complex" refers to the heroic British naval officer of Forester's Napoleonic novels, a character who displays gentlemanly instincts in a crass and brutish environment. N. A. M. Rodger notes that these novels were written within a genre, exemplified most famously by the novels of Tobias Smollett. Flatman uses the term for the tendency among Anglophone authors to assume that all shipboard life was essentially like certain famous cases of abuse of authority recorded in the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic wars. Rodger describes his book, *The Wooden World,* as an attempt partly to counteract the dominant, overly harsh view of the British Navy, noting that its many victories "are frankly difficult to account for if the Navy was run as a sort of concentration camp." Greg Dening traces some part of the "complex" to a certain auto-mythologizing, "theatrical" consciousness apparently at work in the late eighteenth century among Naval officers and the class of society ashore that constituted "the public," shown in participants' accounts and testimony regarding the mutiny on the Bounty. Flatman, J: "Cultural Biographies, Cognitive Landscapes and Dirty Old Bits of Boat: 'Theory' in Maritime Archaeology," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 32. 2, (November 2003), 143-157. Rodger, N. A. M. *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986); 13. Dening, G: *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: passion, power, and theater on the Bounty* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[95] Bontekoe's account was published for the first time in 1646 and became an immediate fixture in Dutch literature and children's literature, giving rise to a genre of derivative works. Bontekoe. W. Y: *Journal or Memorable description of the East Indian Voyage, 1618-25,* trans. C. B. Bodde-Hodgkinson & P. Geyl (Routledge: London, 1929).

[96] A generally benign, liberal and egalitarian view of Dutch "Golden Age" culture informs e.g. Simon Schama's *The Embarrassment of Riches* and, although it has been questioned in colonial contexts, appears to retain a strong influence on Dutch maritime historiography. Pieter Geyl, in his introduction to an English edition of Bontekoe's *Voyage,* emphasizes both Bontekoe's own use of "gentle words" with his crews and the moderating influence of Dutch political traditions: "the system of Councils, which pervaded the whole service of the Company as it did the government of the Dutch Republic, encouraged methods of deliberation and consultation rather than command. In a general way it ma be said that the Dutch as a nation were, and are, more easily led than driven" Geyl, P: "Introduction" in Bontekoe: *Journal,* 5. Schama, S: *The Embarrassment of Riches: an interpretation of Dutch culture in the Golden Age*. (New York: Knopf, 1987).

hand, the model presents an extremely negative view of the raw recruits that filled the Company's lowest ranks—a view inherited directly from the writings of the Company's first generation of governors and admiral-generals.[97] Other consequences of the adoption of a "typical" model are less immediately apparent, but no less important: since such a model is a composite entity derived from many sources, representing a conglomeration of attitudes and interests from many authors, it does not necessarily resemble either any specific individual ship or the view of any of the ship's occupants. All recorded ships and voyages might therefore be said to deviate from the typical model in one way or another—a point that will recur throughout this analysis.

Unfortunately, de Hullu does not offer an account of how his understanding of the VOC ship is constructed, and none has been provided by subsequent authors who have built their own studies on his foundations. Mixing archival research with a raft of common cultural assumptions, proverbs and popular literature, the resulting model of shipboard society presents a number of

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[97] The negative assessment of Company sailors and especially soldiers can be seen in Pieter Both's missives but appears most clearly in J. P. Coen's 1620 description of the lower orders of Company servants (particularly those who had completed their service and had elected to settle in Batavia) as lowlife scum. This image has been repeated, largely without commentary, in later historiography. A. C. J. Vermuelen summed up "contemporary opinion" regarding Company servants by describing the VOC as "a great refuge for spoilt brats, bankrupts, failed students, cashiers, brokers, tenants, bailiffs, informers and suchlike rakes" Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795,"*The Mariners mirror* 49. 2 (May 1963), 81-104. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company: expansion and decline* (Leiden: 2003). Vermeulen, A. C. J: "The people on board" in Emmer, P. & Gaastra, F. S. (eds.): *The organisation of interoceanic trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996).

uncertainties, both regarding its sources and its applicability.[98] Regarding the

social historiography of the British navy, N. A. M. Rodger has lamented the

continued grip of "the assumption, still widespread in the teeth of all

probability, that nothing ever changed, so that something that can be shown to

have happened once in, say, 1690, may be assumed to have been common at

any period from the Restoration to the Regency."[99] The same criticism can be

leveled at de Hullu's articles and much of the historiography based on them,

with several consequences. First, de Hullu's model presents the two centuries

of the VOC's operation as a single, largely unchanging moment, which is,

moreover, dominated by an image of the Company from the glorious first

decades of its expansion, during the Dutch "golden age," before about 1680.

Changes in shipboard arrangement and society are therefore obscured,

especially if those changes occurred during the less ennobling, and less

thoroughly explored, eighteenth century.[100] Second, the model has multiple

narratives submerged in it, including the views of individual Company

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[98] Bruijn and Lucassen note the poverty of footnotes in de Hullu's articles, and have done a great deal retrospectively to mitigate the problem in their 1980 edition of his works on the VOC. The articles resist complete annotation, however, and are largely uncritical regarding the sources from which they draw: in an introduction the editors note that he approached the material largely without any historical questions in mind. Bruijn, J. R. & Lucassen, J: "Introduction" in Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen*. 9

[99] Rodger, N. A. M: *The Wooden World*, 12

[100] In their introductory comments Bruijn and Lucassen note de Hullu's heavy reliance on the Company's early history (which spans the Dutch "golden age") and his tendency to take interested official accounts at face value, especially regarding revolts and tensions among sailors. Bruijn, J. R. & Lucassen, J: "Introduction" in Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen*. Hermann Ketting, who explicitly limits his study to the VOC's first 50 years, draws a more nuanced but broadly similar portrait of VOC shipboard society. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk.*

directors and of judges in VOC courts, mixed with popular ideas regarding

the character of mariners (drawn from accounts of the Dutch Admiralties,

independent merchants and other chartered companies) and debates, current

in the first part of the twentieth century, regarding maritime—especially

naval—security and discipline.[101] Finally, the model tends to subsume all the

individual cases that inform it: by frequently extrapolating general conditions

from single events, de Hullu provides no means for assessing whether any

particular practice was common or unusual, or for understanding the

potential for variability in practices between ships. If a case is not presented as

aberrant, involving courts and punishment, it is absorbed into the normative

order; there is no room for a more complex examination of what might be

termed "approved methods" and "acceptable improvisations."

The typical ship is not, however, purely a historian's construct. An awareness

of VOC ships as a class is clearly present in the Company's own records, while

both implicit and explicit codes of behavior for the proper conduct of VOC

voyages can be seen informing social norms and legal decisions aboard and in

the courts. Standardized routes, working practices and, in the eighteenth

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[101] The continued importance of the VOC mariner, popularly "Jan Compagnie," in forming the image of the Dutch seaman during the period can be seen in J C Mollema's 1933 account of the 1763 mutiny on the VOC ship *Nijenburg*. Mollema was prompted to write his account by another mutiny: that aboard the warship *Zeven Provincieen* in February 1933; his introduction on shipboard life and the powder keg of tensions found aboard every ship that sometimes leads to mutiny assumes that the characters of the mariners, the shipboard conditions and the experiences of the two mutinies, separated by a century and a half, are essentially the same. Mollema: *Een Muiterij in de achtiende Eeuw: het afloopen van het Oost-Indische Compagnieschip Nijenborg in 1763* (Haarlem, 1933).

century, deck plans enabled the directors to reduce the "most complex machine of the epoch" to a book-keeping shorthand, in which ships and their crews could be understood as exchangeable logistical elements in the Company's business.[102] A model of the typical ship was vital to the creation of regularized labor relations and a uniform understanding of shipboard society that could function on all the Company's vessels to produce a stable, adaptable network, staffed by a standing pool of labor. As part of its corporate identity the Company adopted an archetypal armed trading ship under sail as its defining image, which it placed at the centre of its arms and on most of its publications in the form of a print mark. Tracing the history of the Company's own printed production in Patria and at Batavia, Landwehr has found a fixed, essentialized image of the ship, which remained unchanged on documents produced from 1672 to 1791, despite some considerable changes in the appearance of actual ships over the period (Figure 1.1: VOC printmark, Amsterdam Chamber,1672. Figure 1.2: VOC printmark, Middelburg Chamber,1789).[103]

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[102] Pérez-Mallaína, P. *Spain's Men of the Sea: daily life on the Indies fleets in the sixteenth century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 63. The description of the ship as a machine is a common trope in literature on the Companies from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

[103] The 1672 printmark is from a copy of the Company's Articles, printed at Amsterdam. VOC 364. The 1789 print mark is from an extensive volume of documents relating to ships of the Middelburg Chamber, compiled in the Company's last days. VOC 4952. The 1672 mark more closely resembles the VOC's arms, established in 1626, featuring Neptune and Europa as supporting figures. The supporters on the later arms are unidentified, but appear to represent the arts of navigation and seamanship, a variation on the original mark, versions of which continued in use until the Company's collapse. Landwehr, J: *VOC: a bibliography of publications relating to the Dutch East India Company, 1602-1800* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1991), XV-XXX.

Figure 1.1: VOC printmark, Amsterdam Chamber, 1672.

Figure 1.2: VOC printmark, Middelburg Chamber, 1789.

This chapter is intended to build an understanding of the typical ship forwarded by the Company's directors and set down in Company records, to disentangle it from the description found in de Hullu's account, and to trace its historical development, its representation in various genres of the Company's writing, and the changing regard in which it was held during the Company's history. Several purposes are served by this disentangling, which involves the separation of a normative model from the practical impact that model might have had on actual ships. The first purpose is to examine the motivations that produced the model as a "form of knowledge," in order to understand the model's structure and its ideological payload. The second is to separate the properties assigned to the general class of VOC ships from the conditions that obtained aboard any specific vessel, helping to define and clarify individual ships as objects of study on their own terms. The typical ship can be seen as a sign of a unified enterprise; a mobile office and instrument that represented the Company across its far-flung network, signifying the imagined community of the Company.[104] In presenting a uniform sociospatial order, the typical ship served as a disciplinary technology for producing an ideology of the uniform Company servant—the

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[104] The ideological function of the ship may be compared to that of the English East India Company (EIC) factory office and ledger book, which served to discipline EIC merchants' activities, to open a space for the Company's business distinct from the private business of the merchant-ambassador, and to present an image of a unified endeavor, linking together the individuals working in its distributed factories around Asia. Ogborn, M: *Indian Ink: script and print in the making of the English East India Company*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

figure of *Jan Compagnie*. The third purpose is to provide a clear idea of the

normative order, which is needed if one is to understand the nature of

transgressions, modes of resistance or strategies for accommodation regarding

that order. Yvonne Brink has found, through her reading of VOC maps of the

Cape settlement, that the Company worked to produce and disseminate an

image of rational and unitary order, reflected in its presentation, to Company

servants and elite audiences, of a highly formalized street-plan of the

settlement, showing offices and residences but excluding the less regular, less

gridded and "rational" farmsteads built by discharged Company servants,

who settled "independently." In her study of surviving farmsteads she

describes some ways in which the settlers' own place-making orders acted as

forms of resistance to the Company—as ways of living respectably beyond the

Company's hegemonic rules.[105] No equivalent body of physical evidence exists

for seamen's spaces aboard the Company's ships. The written records that

offer the richest sources in their place are court proceedings, memoirs and

journals, all of which present heavily filtered accounts of shipboard space and

its reception by mariners. Such records presuppose a reader with a detailed

understanding, both of the expectations of officialdom and the normal

practices of everyday seamanship. A grasp of the model of the typical ship is

needed to understand the language in which seamen's communicative acts—

including disobedience and outright rebellion—were couched.

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[105] Yvonne Brink: "Figuring the Cultural Landscape: Land, Identity and Material Culture at the Cape in the Eighteenth Century," *The South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 52.166 (Dec. 1997), 105-112.

The typical ship, then, might properly be termed a "discursive formation" applied to the Company's ships, in which case it would be useful to establish who, within the Company, acted as the authors of this formation.[106] On the one hand, clerks, record-keepers, factory governors and ship captains distributed around the VOC's networks were all involved in constructing and reproducing the typical ship, and the interests of these various groups can hardly be condensed into a single voice. Julia Adams has characterized the VOC as a multi-headed entity, with often contentious relations between the the Seventeen Lords, or Gentlemen, of the ruling council (hereafter referred to as the *Heren Zeventien* or *Heren XVII*), and the Governors (particularly those at Batavia) who ruled the Company's eastern possessions as semi-independent fiefdoms.[107] The reporting of business from the Eastern offices to Patria was a highly politicized affair, and there is reason to suppose a "hidden transcript" underlying the reports (delivered annually in indigestible bricks of data), which would serve to mask ways in which operations in Asia might have

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[106] The terms "discursive formation" and "discourse" have come to mean many different things: here I intend the rather old-fashioned sense of a group of statements, representing an interested viewpoint that "refer to the same object, are made in the same enunciative modality, share a system of conceptual organization and share similar themes and theories", rather than any of the broader senses in which the term has been used, which mostly refer to what Foucault described as "non-discursive domains." R. Keith Sawyer "A Discourse on Discourse: an archeological history of an intellectual concept" *Cultural Studies* 16.3 (2002), 433-456, quoting Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

[107] Adams, Julia. 1996. "Principals and Agents, Colonials and Company Men: the decay of colonial control in the Dutch East Indies." *American Sociological Review* 61.1 (February): 12-28.

deviated from the *Heren XVII's* instructions.[108] On the other hand, my concern

here is with the dominant discourse that informed record-keeping, which,

even if it amounted only to an ideology of uniformity, nonetheless formed

"the book," or doctrine by which VOC ships were supposed to be constructed

and operated. The authors of this dominant discourse, who lent it their

authority, were all located at the Company's head offices in the Republic.[109]

These were *Heren XVII*, the *Haags Besogne* (a council tasked with overseeing

supplies and logistical support), and the offices of the *equipagemeesters*, who

were responsible for supplying and maintaining the fleet. The typical ship

primarily reflected the concerns of these bodies.

Constructing the typical ship

How, then, did the Company develop its model of the typical ship, and how

did that model differ from extant methods of ship operation? The first point to

note is that the model developed over a long period and was adapted to some

extent in dialogue with changes in the forms and technologies of the ships

[108] The annual reports from Batavia are listed in the archive as *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren,* and form an unindexed, highly heterogeneous mass of fragmentary records. I have borrowed the category of the "hidden transcript" from James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*: while the Council of the Indies at Batavia can hardly be described as a "weak" agent, its foot-dragging, under- and over-reporting and the opacity of many of its records are reminiscent of the methods of resistance Scott describes and were a source of continual frustration to the *Heren XVII*. Friction and mutual suspicion were rife between the head offices in Batavia and The Hague. Gaastra notes that fiscaals (auditors) sent from Patria to investigate the Indies factories tended not to survive long enough to report on their findings. Scott, J: *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 101.

[109] Foucault, M: "What is an Author?", in Bouchard, D. F. & Simon, S. (eds.): *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 124-127.

themselves, such that the ships that were considered "typical" changed substantially through the Company's history. Although some aspects of ship operation and manning were established in the Company's first decades, efforts to standardize the physical forms of the ships continued well into the eighteenth century, leading to changes in the vessels themselves and, to a lesser extent, in their representation in the Company's records. The result of this is that some representations of typical ships from the Company's first decades do not match closely with the much more tightly defined type of the *retourschip* that appears in the more detailed eighteenth century records. The second, related point to be borne in mind is that the typical ship was written into the Company's records at least partly retrospectively; as a model or discourse applied to ships it reflected a certain conception of the ships' physical forms, their norms of operation and their functions in the Company's business that served the interests of the discourse's authors over time.

In charting the development of the model of the typical ship it is worth dwelling on the period of transition between the *voorcompagnieen* ("pre-companies") and the VOC because it was during this period that certain stable institutions of the Company's operation (in particular the Articles of employment) were established, and also during this period that the ships and their social environment went through their phase of most rapid transition. At the same time, we find the view or discourse of the typical ship, as a uniform entity produced under VOC control, substantially constructed in later documents with special reference to this period. In particular, in van Dam's

Description of the Company, written between 1693 and 1701, the ships of the pre-companies and of the first VOC fleets are cited as the prototypes for all subsequent Company shipping such that, whatever the nature of the typical ship came to be in later years, it was understood to be identical with that of the first Company ships.[110] The idea of simple continuity put forward by van Dam seems to have survived in subsequent scholarship, even though the status, interior layout, and operational paradigms of the Company's ships changed greatly within the first few decades. I believe this discourse of continuity has gone unremarked partly because shipboard culture has been assumed to be unchanging and partly because continuity itself tends to be treated as unremarkable in historical accounts. An ideology of continuity becomes remarkable, however, when the circumstances surrounding that supposed continuity change as they did in the first half of the seventeenth century.

The remainder of this chapter outlines a chronology of the development of the model and discussions of several methods by which the Company made fundamental changes to the organization of its shipping and the status of its mariners, which served to define and distinguish VOC ships, and which affected the autonomy and acceptable variability of ships, their masters and their crewmen, and the methods by which they were recorded and

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[110] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie. Uitgegeven door Dr F. W. Stapel.* ('s-Gravenhage, 1927-43). I.1

represented. Finally, the ideological uses of the typical ship, imagined as a continuation of the pioneering *voorcompagnie* ship, are considered.

Chronology

Several narratives and chronologies are bound up in the development of the typical ship, but for the purpose of periodization here four distinct moments can be identified. The first is that of the *voorcompagnieen* and the Company's first years, from 1595 to roughly 1620, when what might be termed a "pre-company paradigm" was in effect. This moment ended with the establishment of multiple factories in the Indies, which largely overthrew the paradigm, led to changes in the nature of VOC labor and ushered in a second period defined by the coexistence of two separate networks, one serving the *retour* (return or homeward) route between the Netherlands and the Indies, the other serving the Company's intra-Asian trade web. The third period might be termed that of standardization, beginning between the construction of the Company's huge shipyards at Amsterdam in 1660 and the declaration of standard rates for *retourschepen* in 1697, and ending in the 1780s with the disastrous Fourth Anglo-Dutch War. During this period ever-more-standardized East Indiamen came to dominate the return voyage between the Netherlands and the Indies, with the larger two rates all but eliminating other ships on the return route between 1740 and 1780: it was in this period that the typical ship reached its most standard form and its greatest influence.[111] The final period, during

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[111] Before 1742 in addition to the three rates then in use we find some other vessels being built and sailed on the return route, including *fluits* and smaller *hoekers* and

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which standardization gave way to improvisation and desperation, lasted from ca. 1781 to the cessation of VOC shipping operations in 1795.

The periodization given here does not accord with those set forward for the Company's operational history in general, nor even with that suggested by Ketting, which specifically addresses the organization and rationalization of VOC shipboard space.[112] The reason for this discrepancy is the difference in the intention of this study from its predecessors. Ketting offers an ethnography of the early VOC ship that charts the replacement of "traditional" shipboard social modes and norms with a distinctive Company-created social order, a process that was significantly completed by the 1640s. The terms of Ketting's enquiry are sociological, being concerned with the character of the average or representative VOC mariner.[113] In contrast the

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hekboots. Between 1742 and 1784 very few of these other craft entered service: the numbers of non-rated vessels declined as older craft were retired from service. Out of the total of 1169 voyages to the Indies undertaken between 1750 and 1780, less than 5% deviated in tonnage from the two dominant rates. DAS II.

[112] Gaastra's account of the Company's operations remains the most nuanced and thoughtful available: it tracks the VOC's financial fortunes in order both to trace and to critique a teleological account of the Company's "expansion and decline." Gaastra has stated, however, that he considers the VOC's shipping operations to have been adequate, and not a significant factor in the Company's decline and bankruptcy at the end of the eighteenth century. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk.*

[113] Where Rediker uses the stereotyping term "Jack Tar" to describe the gamut of Anglo-American merchant seamen in the first half of the eighteenth century, Ketting does not use the problematic "Jan Compagnie" to encompass his average VOC mariners. Nonetheless, like de Hullu he deals with both the ships and the mariners as general classes or stereotypical figures, making it difficult to tease apart elements of specific biography and of general discourse regarding both in his work. Rediker, M; *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987). Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk.*

typical ship periodized here is largely a bureaucratic model, created for the

consumption and use of the Company's directors and shareholders, and for

the publics of the Company's servants, its competitors, and the Republic.[114]

1. The pre-company paradigm

Between 1595 and 1602 a total of 65 ships departed the Dutch Republic with

the purpose of trespassing on the Portuguese monopoly then in effect and

bringing pepper and other spices from their sources in South and Southeast

Asia to the markets in Amsterdam.[115] These ships sailed in flotillas of up to

four ships for a variety of companies, which retrospectively have been labeled

"pre-companies:" fore-runners to the VOC. We know relatively little about the

physical forms of these ships. They operated according to a common

paradigm, however, which influenced the kinds of ships used and their

manner of operation, and which informed the VOC's fleets during the

Company's first expansion and explorations until the establishment of the

depot at Batavia in 1619.

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[114] Ketting ends his study of VOC shipboard space around 1650 because he identifies
this moment as one where the personnel serving aboard change in character, from
predominantly Dutch-speakers with some maritime experience to a mixed
complement heavily biased toward German-speakers from inland provinces with no
prior seafaring knowledge. This shift, coupled with the increasing institutionalization
of the space on models dictated from the *Heren XVII* makes the VOC less interesting
to Ketting's approach to the ship as a site for ethnography and the exploration of
cultural tradition, in the vein of Wiebust's *Deep Sea Sailors*. Ketting, H. (Jr.): private
communication. Weibust, K: *Deep Sea Sailors.*

This "pre-company paradigm" was partly borrowed from Spanish and Portuguese models of East Indies trading and partly created in reaction against those models. It profoundly affected the methods of Indies trading adopted by the Dutch and other European East India companies and therefore also the ships and societies that carried out the Indies trade, setting a course for interaction between the Netherlands and the Indies the effects of which can still be felt today.

The pre-company paradigm consisted of opportunistic privateering combined with largely unrestricted movement and trade, all at the discretion of the Admiral-generals who commanded the pre-company flotillas. Each of the pre-companies was formed to execute a discrete venture of exploration capped by a return to Patria with goods: the paradigm therefore involved temporally limited engagements with the Indies and swift realization of the profits of engagement on return, in both financial and social capital.[116] After 1619 and the establishment of Batavia, the VOC changed its methods of business markedly. Nonetheless the paradigm had a continuing influence on how the VOC's business was presented by figures such as van Dam, and subsequently

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[115] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 17.

[116] By conducting voyages into a realm of risk and bearing the promise of an exchange of that risk for tangible reward, the pre-companies participated in an idiom or tradition of adventurous sailing that stretches back in literary history at least to Homer's and Apollonius' epic sea tales. Apollonius Rhodius: *The Argonautica* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

on the historiography of the VOC, particularly regarding how its ships have been imagined.[117]

The paradigm was shaped by a number of factors, including the ongoing war of independence that followed the declaration of the Dutch Republic and its separation from Habsburg Spain, developments in naval technology and the state of knowledge in the Republic regarding the Indies.

The war

The war, which began in 1568 and (despite some extended periods of truce) continued until the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, strongly affected the status and social meaning of seafaring in the Republic. In its first years the emerging Republic relied on coalitions of private citizens and corporations to provide both its revenue and its armed forces.[118] Privateering accordingly became an important cornerstone of the defense of the Republic, and a respectable, patriotic activity for burgher families.[119] At the same time, trade as a source of

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[117] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1, 456-496.

[118] Israel, J: *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic world, 1606-1661* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1982). Sicking, L. *Neptune and the Netherlands: state, economy, and war at sea in the Renaissance* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004).

[119] The so-called "sea beggars," named after the "beggarly" Netherlands nobles who instigated the revolt, became symbols of pride both for the Republic and for the protestant cause. Villiers, P: "Privateering and North Sea Conflict, c.1500-1715," and Sicking, L: "State and Non-State Violence at Sea: Privateering in the Habsburg Netherlands" in Starkey, D, & Hahn-Pedersen, M: *Bridging Troubled Waters: Conflict and Co-operation in the North Sea Region since 1550. The 7th North Sea History Conference.* (Esbjerg: Fiskeri-og Søfartsmuseets, 2005), 17-30 and 31-44 respectively.

revenue took on national importance: the Republic needed to increase its trade and income, specifically at the expense of Spain, in order to secure its independence.

The unification of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns in 1580 had significant consequences for the Portuguese aristocracy and for the trading world of the Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century.[120] One such consequence was that the Portuguese *Carreira da India* and its monopoly on Indies trade became strategic factors in the Dutch war of independence, especially after Dutch merchants were closed out of the trade in the *Carreira'*s spices by a cartel of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian merchants backed by German financiers. In 1585 the Spanish crown increased its pressure on Dutch merchant interests by confiscating all the Dutch ships at Lisbon, which were engaged in buying the *Carreira's* goods.[121]

The pre-companies were formed to bypass the cartel by acquiring their own sources of spices in the Indies and, if necessary, fighting in order to trade. They were therefore able to combine their own profit seeking with the

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[120] Dobbin, C: *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities: conjoint communities in the making of the world-economy, 1570-1940* (Richmond: Curzon, 1996), 200-202.

[121] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company,* 17. Lisbon and Antwerp, and later Amsterdam, were seen as being involved in direct competition for hosting European sea-trade. Antunes, C: "Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640-1710: Urban links and trade networks in the Early Modern period," in van Veen, E, and Leonard Blussé (eds.) *Rivalry and Conflict. European Traders and Asian Trading Networks in the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2005).

interests of the emergent Republic to form the paradigmatic example of what Adam Smith termed "the mercantile system," combining the roles of privateers and revenue-generating merchants.[122] The rhetoric of the first voyages cast the "opening of the Indies" in patriotic terms, the right to engage in the spice trade being described as an element of national destiny, the spices themselves as treasures to be wrested from the enemy.[123]

Van Linschoten's critique

The pre-companies were also shaped by the state of knowledge and perceptions in the Netherlands regarding the East India trade at the turn of the seventeenth century.

The publication of Jan van Linschoten's famous *Itinerario* in 1585 provided a prescriptive idea of the typical East Indies voyage and a primer on the methods and trading world of the Portuguese *Carreira da India* for an audience of Dutch would-be Indies entrepreneurs.[124] Many institutional features of both

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[122] Smith, A: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by Sálvio M. Soares. (MetaLibri, 2007), v.1.0p. http://metalibri.wikidot.com/title:an-inquiry-into-the-nature-and-causes-of-the-wealth-of Accessed 5 July 2011.

[123] Udemans, G: *'t geestelyck roer van 't coopmans schip*... (Amsterdam, 1638. Reprinted Leiden: IDC, 1980). This narrative, of the noble and national "mercantile spirit" of the Dutch, which required only the "freedom to trade" in order to prevail, has continued in Dutch historiography into the twentieth century: Hoogenberk cites Spanish efforts to stifle this spirit as a major cause for the formation of the VOC. Hoogenberk, H: *De Rechtsvoorschriften Voor De Vaart Op Oost-Indië, 1595-1620*. (Utrecht: Kemink, 1940), 3.

[124] The *Itinerario* was published in 1585 as a work of what might be called industrial espionage, offering descriptions of a number of aspects of the Indies trade the Portuguese attempted to keep secret, including information regarding those parts of the Indies with which the Portuguese traded, the principal products to be found

the pre-companies and the VOC showed Van Linschoten's influence, which

can be seen in the wordings of the commissions of pre-company "Admiral-

generals," in the Articles that governed their voyages, in the goods and

destinations that were prioritized and in the sizes of the largest ships used.[125]

The *Itinerario* did not, however, provide a blueprint for the pre-companies:

mixing detailed description of the operation and characteristics of Portuguese

East Indiamen with a critique of Portuguese methods, pointing out where the

Iberians wasted resources, incurred unnecessary risks and impeded the

delivery of trade goods, it rather provided a theory of good and bad methods

of East Indies voyaging, illustrated with cautionary tales of ships, filled with

spices, capsized by poor management and undisciplined trading practices.[126]

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there, and the methods of navigation the Portuguese used. Burnell, A. C. & P. A. Tiele (eds): *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies, from the Old English Translation of 1598*. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988).

[125] The *voorcompagnies'* inheritance of methods from the Portuguese described in the *Intinerario* is most striking in the setting of terms for profit sailing, or "private trade," with the seamen's chests acting as the limiting factor for all but the senior officers, the size of this chest being set at four spans width and height and seven spans length. The largest ships operated by the *Carreira da India* appear comparable in size with the largest Dutch ships throughout VOC history, capable of carrying 400 to 500 men, and as heavily laden with money, victuals, wine and oil on the outbound journey as they were with Asian trade goods on the return. Burnell & Tiele, *Linschoten* II, 230; I, 10.

[126] Van Linschoten was particularly critical of the way in which overloading endangered the rich cargoes of the homeward-bound fleets, a problem he attributed to the practice of profit-sailing through the appointing of cargo space to crewmen and officers as a major part of their remuneration, a point that the VOC would take up eagerly. Burnell & Tiele, *Linschoten* II.

The ships as physical and social entities

Regarding the ships themselves, under the pre-company paradigm they bore a heavy legal and ideological load, combining the functions of a warship, an embassy and a law court along with those of exploration, trade, and transportation.

Aubert and Arnor have described the ship at sea as an instance of what Erving Goffman termed the "total institution:" a closed society, comparable to a prison or mental hospital, that contains both inmates and their custodians, and that supplies all the needs of its inhabitants, who therefore never have to venture outside it and instead form their social worlds within it, producing a society apart from the outside world, which generally contains categories and hierarchies that do not translate easily beyond the institution's walls.[127] Although the idea that all ships necessarily partake of this "total" nature has been challenged, certain aspects of the East India ship seem peculiarly well suited to a "total institution" approach.[128]

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[127] Aubert, V. & Arner, O, *The Ship as a Social System*. (Oslo 1962). Goffman, E: "the characteristics of total institutions," in *Asylums* (1961), 14-28; 148-9.

[128] Heidi Gerstenberger, in her study of German coastal traders and fishermen, has found that the men involved in these trades generally had well-developed social lives ashore and spent much of their time in social situations ashore. The total institution therefore did not fit the shipboard populations she studied. VOC ships, however, showed many of the features Goffman cited as typically "total," including long periods spent within the institution, isolation and strongly institutionalized hierarchies. Gerstenberger, H: "Men Apart: The Concept of "Total Institution" and the Analysis of Seafaring" *International Journal of Maritime History*, VIII. 1 (June 1996), 173-182.

The ship as a social unit

The pre-company ship moved beyond the legal sphere in which Dutch merchants had previously operated, in order to project the Republic's commercial and military interests into areas of world trade that had previously been the exclusive province of the Spanish and Portuguese. Accordingly, the pre-company ships became sites of broad autonomy and limited sovereignty, their admiral-generals endowed, through charters granted by the Prince or the States General, with the rights to try and execute their mariners, to make war and peace with foreign powers and to conduct business as they wished in the Indies, as representatives of the Republic's interests, if not quite as ambassadors for the States General.[129]

The extraordinary powers of the admiral-generals were couched within familiar idioms of authority; in common with other classes of Dutch merchant shipping, the command structures of pre-company ships mimicked those of the other "patrimonial" entities that made up the Republic (including towns, guilds and other *corporations*). While at sea ships were ruled by councils of officers, which reached resolutions, at least nominally, via majority

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[129] Hoogenberk, H: *Rechtsvoorschriften*. A similar situation is described for the first English EIC generals by Miles Ogborn. In the latter case, however, the role of the general as an ambassador for the Queen was clearer: ships carried letters from the Queen, addressed to various Indies rulers, which formally identified the named generals as her emissaries, wielding her authority and to be respected as parts of her sovereign character. In comparison, Prins Maurits' letters were modest: he stated only that the merchants were not to be hindered, or gave formal permission for them to attack Iberian ships wherever they were encountered. Ogborn, M: *Indian Ink.*

consensus.[130] As floating corporations the pre-company ships therefore acted as autonomous social units, using the same political language as other limited-sovereignty, patrimonial entities ashore.[131] The ship therefore presented a microcosm of both the Company and the corporate or patrimonial State, its Admiral-general, and by extension the Seventeen Gentlemen of the VOC's ruling council, appearing as a sovereign authority.

The spaceship metaphor

In addition to providing an image as discrete social units and national metonyms, the pre-company ships acted as symbols of expansion and discovery. As the most advanced machines of their day, combining sophisticated construction, navigation and labor organization, they represented the prowess and capability of the Republic pitted against the challenge of world exploration. In his study of the technological challenges faced by the Portuguese in reaching the East Indies in the sixteenth century, John Law describes the Portuguese achievement as, "a combination of social and technical engineering in an environment filled with indifferent or overtly

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[130] Adams, J: "Trading States, Trading Places: The Role of Patrimonialism in Early Modern Dutch Development" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36.2 (Apr., 1994), 319-355. Adams, J: *The Familial State: ruling families and merchant capitalism in early modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[131] Manguin, P-Y: "Shipshape Societies: boat symbolism and political systems in insular southeast asia" in David G marr & A C Milner, eds: *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th centuries* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1986) 187-213. The idea of the "ship of state," common since Plato, speaks to a similar impulse in European thought.

hostile physical and social actors."[132] In describing the waters beyond Europe as "a hostile and dissociating world" he joins a long list of authors who have compared the ships sent to the East Indies with spaceships: state of the art technological wonders that allowed a precarious sort of access to a world beyond the familiar.[133]

The spaceship metaphor, although it is anachronistic, may be valuable in understanding the ways in which the pre-company and early VOC ships have been used as exemplary prototypes, both by Company writers and by historians. At the Company's inception the ships were understood to be entering a hostile environment, where they would face dangers from foreign ships, natural hazards such as storms and reefs, and Indies pirates and smugglers. The demands of exploration shaped the outfitting and design of the ships that were chosen: they were made to be as self-sufficient as possible.

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[132] Law, J: "On the Social Explanation of Technical Change: The Case of the Portuguese Maritime Expansion" *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Apr., 1987), pp. 227-252.

[133] Pérez-Mallaína uses the spaceship metaphor to describe sixteenth century Iberian vessels. It also appears in Ketting's and Gawronski's accounts of seventeenth and eighteenth century VOC ships and in Stinchcombe's analysis of Captain Cook's late eighteenth century voyages. Pérez-Mallaína, P. *Spain's Men of the Sea: daily life on the Indies fleets in the sixteenth century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk.* Gawronski, J: *De "Equipagie" van de Hollandia en de Amsterdam: VOC-bedrijvigheid in 18de-eeuws Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1996). Arthur L. Stinchcombe: "The Sociology of Exploration: Captain Cook and the Exploring Ship as a Social System," *Working Paper Series* (Symbolic Boundaries Research Network, ASA, 2001). http://educ.jmu.edu/~brysonbp/symbound/papers2001/StinchCook.html Accessed 7 July 2011. More generally, the metaphor is frequently employed on tours of restored or reconstructed sailing ships as diverse as the *retourschip Batavia* at Lelystad in the Netherlands and the whaler *Charles W. Morgan* at Mystic Seaport, Connecticut.

This self-sufficiency included minimizing contact with the Indies themselves: the ships were expected to travel to the spiceries without the need for landfall along the way, to act as homes for the crews while their cargoes were collected from various scattered sources, and to bring those cargoes home, all without depending on the Indies themselves for anything other than the specific goods desired and the one resource that could not be carried in sufficient quantities: drinking water.[134] Part of the ship's function was to separate its crew from the lands and peoples they traded with. Before the founding of a permanent depot at Batavia outbound ships were supposed to carry enough food for their crews for three years, working on the assumption that no resupply (apart from water) would be possible outside Europe. This requirement was reduced to 15 months in 1649 and to nine months in 1669, since the Cape colony and other establishments allowed resupply to be guaranteed, progressively shortening and making more predictable the maximum voyage lengths undertaken by VOC mariners.[135]

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[134] Water was the one resource of which the ship simply could not carry enough: expeditions to unfamiliar shores in search of water and the native encounters and attendant dangers they entailed form a major strand in the voyage accounts of Bontekoe, Middleton and Lancaster, among others. Bontekoe. W. Y: *Journal*. Purchas, S: *Hakluytus posthumus, or, Purchas his Pilgrimes: contayning a history of the world in sea voyages and lande travells by Englishmen and others.* Extra series (Hakluyt Society), no. 14-30 (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1905-07).

[135]Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1, 512-515.

The combination of social self-sufficiency and isolation afforded by the pre-company ship held clear advantages for the Company's high officials in their dealings with ordinary crewmen: locked on the ship, and into long contracts, the crew would better tolerate poor conditions, focused on the reward that awaited them on mustering out. Desertion was a well-known bargaining tool among merchant-seamen in the Atlantic, and appeared (at least to Linschoten) also to be a problem for the *Carreira da India*.[136] To the extent, then, that the ship could be kept as a closed system and society and the Indies could be presented as a frightening, alien environment, the type of the retourschip could aid the Company in maintaining control over its staff in the East.

Military technology

Finally, the new mercantile bellicosity of the Dutch revolt and the "opening of the Indies" coincided with a significant moment in the development of military and shipbuilding technologies. At the end of the sixteenth century the armed merchantman represented the state of the art in warship design. The storied English defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 had demonstrated to contemporary satisfaction that English and similar Dutch merchant galleons of moderate sizes were capable of overcoming the much larger Spanish war- and treasure-ships. This demonstration was confirmed during the early years of the Dutch revolt by the privateers known as the Sea Beggars and, most

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[136] Rediker, M. B: *Between the Devil*. Burnell & Tiele: *Linschoten.*

famously, by Piet Heyn's capture of the Spanish silver fleet in 1628.[137] The faster Dutch and English galleons, although significantly smaller than the Iberian Indiamen, combined heavy armaments with capacious holds, allowing room both for the enormous quantities of supplies required to support long exploration voyages and the large cargoes required to make globe-spanning endeavors profitable. The galleon therefore emerged as the ideal vehicle for the pre-company paradigm: a combined merchant-warship, capable of exporting the Republic's commercial and military might together around the world's oceans.

The ideological form of the East Indiaman

The demands of the pre-company paradigm required a particular kind, or range, of ships: large, independently-operating, self-sufficient and warlike. This image of the merchant-warship was a very attractive one for the directors of the fledging VOC, just as the image of the pre-companies was highly attractive as an idiom for understanding their business. By encroaching on Spanish and Portuguese empires and making a fortune through trade, the pre-company enacted successes that could be read, ideologically and to some

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[137] News of the defeat of the Spanish armada spread to the Indian Ocean quickly. Subrahmanyam reports how English captains received congratulations on their victory in southeast Asia in 1591. Subrahmanyam, S: *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700* (London: Longman, 1993), 59. Piet Heyn's seizure of the Spanish silver fleet in 1628 made him a national hero in the Netherlands: he was lauded at the time by Calvinist pamphleteers. The event was celebrated again in the nineteenth century in a nationalist song, "De Zilvervloot," by J. P. Heije, which remains popular today. Spranckhuysen, D: *Triumphe van weghen de Gheluckighe ende Over-rijcke Victorie welcke de Heere onse God [...] Verleent Heeft aen de Vlote vande West-Indische Compagnie, onder het Beleydt vanden Heer Generael Pieter Pietersz. Heyn* (Delft: pr. J.A. Kloeting, 1629).

extent materially, as the successes of the Republic. By taking profits away from the Republic's enemies, the pre-companies built a reputation for patriotic heroism as they made money.

The large and heavily armed merchant-warship therefore became a potent device for the VOC, representing simultaneously both the mercantile and military strength of the Dutch. The use of the image of the merchant-warship was not limited to its appearance on the Company's arms and printmarks: it was to be found on the Company's ships themselves, which borrowed from the dress of contemporary warships, adopting the Republic's red lion as their uniform figurehead and gilt-work on their stern galleries. VOC ships were therefore easily confused with the ships of the Republic's admiralties (Figure 1.3: Detail from Jacob van Strij: The yacht of the Rotterdam VOC-Chamber greets a Rotterdam VOC ship and a Netherlands warship in the roadstead of Hellevoetsluis, 1790. The VOC ship is on the right).

The ideological importance of the merchant-warship seems to have made it desirable even after its mission and functions had changed, and after the window of coincidence between merchant vessel and warship had closed. During the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-4), the development of line-of-battle tactics effected a separation between the demands of trading and fighting.[138]

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[138] Gardiner, R. & Lavery, B: *The Line of Battle: The Sailing Warship, 1650-1840*. (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1992).
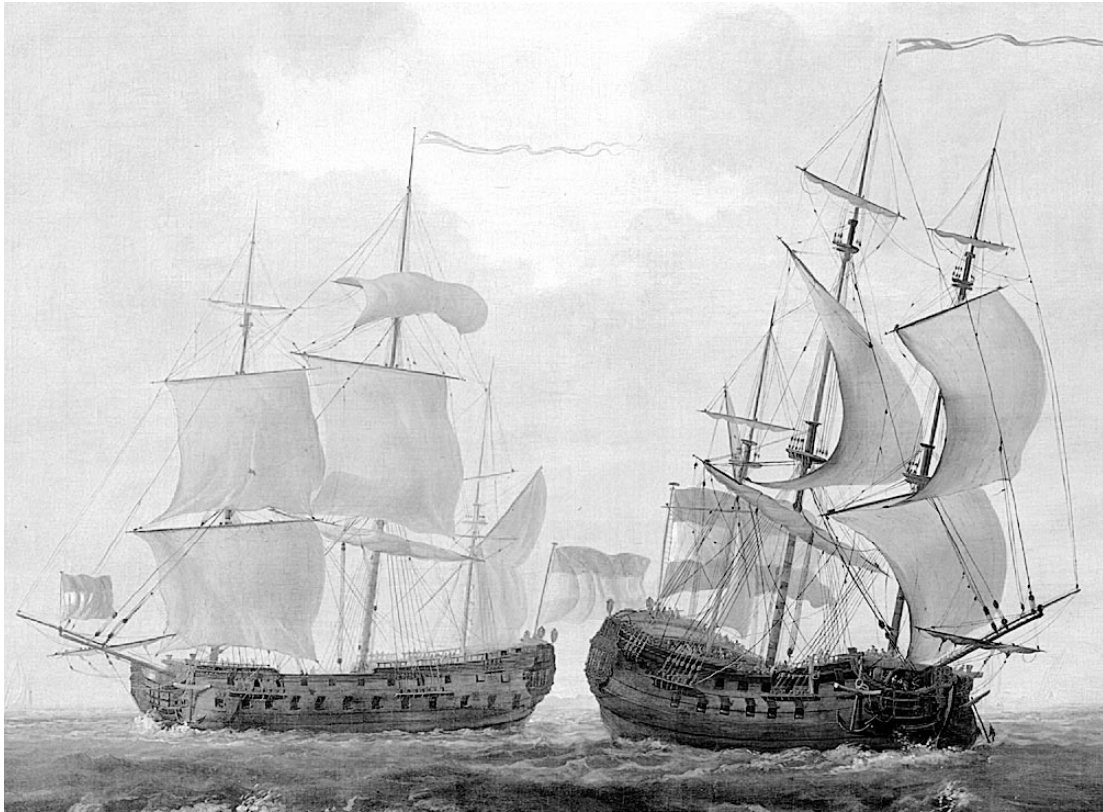
Figure 1.3: Detail from Jacob van Strij: *Het jacht van de Kamer Rotterdam van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) begroet een Rotterdamse Oostindiëvaarder en een Nederlands oorlogsschip op de rede van Hellevoetsluis.* (The yacht of the Rotterdam VOC-Chamber greets a Rotterdam VOC ship and a Netherlands warship in the roadstead of Hellevoetsluis), 1790. collection of the Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrick, Rotterdam. The VOC ship is on the right.

Purpose-built warships, which had heavy interior bracing that severely limited their cargo capacity, abruptly rendered the *retourschip* obsolete as a primary weapon of war in Europe.[139] In subsequent conflicts the VOC's merchant-warships proved vulnerable to capture by men of war, such that by the fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-4) British warships were able effectively to

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[139] Gardiner, R: *The Line of Battle, 11-15*. Deane, A. & Lavery, B. (ed.): *Deane's Doctrine of Naval Architecture, 1670* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1981).

stop VOC ships shuttling between the Indies and Patria. Nonetheless, the ships depicted on the VOC's print marks remained curiously uniform throughout two centuries of use, failing to keep up with significant changes both in the physical appearance and practical functions of the ships they represented, while the VOC's officers came to wear uniforms in imitation of the Netherlands' admiralties in the second half of the eighteenth century, long after their practical contribution to the Republic's *navale macht* was past.[140]

The best ship is whatever ship you can get

It should not be imagined, however, that all pre-company or early VOC ships really conformed to the profile of the merchant-warship. Even during the VOC's first years there was a clear difference between the ideological form of the East India ship and the vessels that actually made up the fleet. The merchant-warship that appears in later sources (especially Van Dam) as the archetypal East Indiaman was generally the flagship of a motley flotilla of vessels that varied widely in size and type, including *fluits*, *kats* and the galleon's lighter, faster relative the *jacht.* This last classification, essentially a

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[140] Lewis Mumford observed that institutions in decline tend to produce the most extravagant, and perhaps expressive and significant, monuments, the solidity of the architecture attempting to make up for the shakiness of the institution, rather than reflecting its true state. In this case an image of reliable invariability took the place of novel monumentality, and was bolstered by external signs of power. In the 1780s William Hickey observed "the officers in the Company's service all receiving their commissions from the States-General and wearing the uniform of their Navy, a blue coat with scarlet facings, richly laced, waistcoat and breeches also of scarlet." Mumford, L: *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1938). Hickey, W. & Spencer, A. (ed): *Memoirs of William Hickey, 1749-1809* (4 vols, London 1919), vol. II, 224. Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795," *Mariner's Mirror* 49. 2 (May 1963), 81-104; 87.

smaller galleon with narrower lines and a correspondingly reduced cargo capacity, has received much attention because of its use on voyages of exploration. *Jachts* including the *Halve Maen* in which Henry Hudson explored the river that bears his name; the *Duyfken,* which was the first Dutch ship to sail along the coast of Australia; and Abel Tasman's *Heemskerck* have all been the subjects of extensive discussions and more or less speculative reconstructions.[141] The case of Tasman's ships shows how the ideal exploration ship was whatever ship could be procured: his flotilla consisted of a fast, defensible *jacht* and a slow, capacious *fluit* in convoy.

2. The establishment of factories and the *retour* route

The establishment of the VOC as a persistent chartered corporation in 1602 changed both the business environment of Dutch trading in the East Indies and the organization of the ships that conducted the trade, requiring standard methods of operation for the first time and an understanding of the VOC ship as a class of merchant shipping, rather than a specific vessel.

During the company's first years, however, it generally formalized and intensified the modes of operation of the pre-companies. The VOC was

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[141] The reconstruction of the *Halve Maen* is a floating museum on the Hudson, operated by the New Netherland Museum.
http://www.halfmoonreplica.org/livinghistory.htm
http://www.newnetherland.org/ Accessed 7 July 2011. The *Duyfken* replica was built as a work of experimental archaeology to test the possible performance characteristics of early seventeenth century ships. Burningham, N: "Experimental Archaeology: Reconstructing Duyfken," *Nautical Research Journal*, 46.4 (2001): 220-231. Hoving, A. J. & Emke, C: *The Ships of Abel Tasman* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000).

formed in order to follow the pre-companies' program, but on a unified footing, to avoid competition between Dutch interests. The Company was to coordinate and discipline the many overlapping strategies and interests of the pre-companies, to transform their unpredictable commercial winnings into a steady supply of spices for the markets in Amsterdam: in short, it was to provide a univocal, responsible actor on behalf of the Republic in the Indies.[142]

The VOC differed from the pre-companies markedly in its systematization and standardization of practices. Where the pre-companies engaged in opportunistic privateering, the East and West India Companies were formed with military functions explicitly stated in their charters.[143] Where the pre-companies followed Linschoten's geography of trade, interloping in existing Portuguese networks, the VOC set out to exclude the Portuguese from those networks and systematically to explore the spiceries, forming trade relations around and between the Iberian establishments. Most importantly, where the pre-companies were organized around single voyages and might not own their ships, the VOC was intended to ensure a regular supply of ships, crews and resources for continuous trading. in order to build a regular Dutch presence in the Indies that could displace other European presences.[144]

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[142] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.*

[143] Hoogenberk, H: *Rechtsvoorschriften.* Heijer, H. J. den: *De Geschiedenis van de WIC* (Zutphen: Walburg. 1994).

[144] Regularity and repeatability of uniform methods and practices were highly valued by the *Heren XVII.* The actual spread of such 'rational' methods in the Company's

The practical needs of the VOC were fundamentally different from those of the pre-companies: to the extent that the pre-companies acted as proofs of the concept of Dutch trading in the Indies, their direct profits were of secondary importance to their simply succeeding in returning to Patria with cargoes. The VOC would need to replicate those successes while maximizing profits, minimizing costs and establishing repeatable methods. From the moment of the VOC's establishment, therefore, a gap can be observed between the image and ideology of the "typical" ship inherited from the pre-company paradigm and the practical reality of labor relations aboard VOC ships, which became less autonomous, less egalitarian and more centrally organized and accountable.

Shareholder trust and standard reporting

Two novel factors, unknown to the pre-companies, further contributed to an urge to standardize methods for business and operation under the VOC.

The first was the structure of the Company's relations with its investors. Seamen and investors in the voyages of the pre-companies understood their enterprises as *sui generis*, original undertakings of discovery and adventure that would require their own structures of power, contracts and rules (even though the Spanish and Portuguese, and not a few Dutch mariners on those

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practice is less clear: Meilink-Roelofsz, M: *Hoe Rationeel was de Organisatie van de Nederlandse Oost-Indische Compagnie?* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1982).

Iberian ships, had been taking the route to the Indies for nearly a century by the time of those first Dutch-originated voyages).[145] The unit of control and analysis for the pre-companies was the individual voyage/expedition: the success of each venture could be measured directly in the value of the cargo brought back and the single payment disbursed to the stockholders at the dissolution of the company.

Further, the pre-companies were generally associated with individuals—the entrepreneurs and investors who established them, or the Admiral-generals who commanded their flotillas, where these were separate persons.[146] As a result, in the event that a pre-company invested in developing methods for repeating its successes, that investment tended to be incorporated into the reputation of the successful Admiral-general, rather than abstracted into an institutional practice.[147] Conversely, if investors were unhappy with the

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[145] Following Vasco da Gama's pioneering voyage in 1498, the Carreira da India quickly instituted regular links between Lisbon and Goa that were capable of meeting the European spice market's demands. Over 2242 metric tons of goods were shipped from Indian Ocean ports to Lisbon in 1518. Subrahmanyam has compared Lisbon to Genoa in the sixteenth century, as a multi-cultural, cosmopolitan port that drew expertise from the shipping centers around Europe, employing large numbers of mariners from the Southern Netherlands and, prior to 1580, from Holland and Zeeland. Subrahmanyam, S: *The Portuguese Empire,* 63, 40.

[146] Hoogenberk provides the text of some patents from Prins Maurits for pre-company generals, as well as patents issued in the early years of the Company. They show the personal nature of authority clearly, being issued to named individuals, and also the evolving basis of authority on which the Company conducted business, with both the Prince and the States General issuing patents for Company voyages in the first decade. Hoogenberk, H: *Rechtsvoorschriften,* 232-250.

[147] Admiral Jacob Cornelisz. Van Neck provides an example: his reputation was made via a highly successful first voyage, begun in 1598 and returned in 1600, which yielded 400% profit over investment. He went on to a high position in the fledgling

performance of a pre-company, they simply declined to invest in future ventures undertaken by the same entrepreneurs.

VOC shares, on the other hand, were to pay annual dividends in perpetuity, those dividends being calculated against the anticipated costs of continuing business.[148] In the VOC's first years the costs of growing the Company, fighting off the rival Portuguese and English companies and establishing supply lines were so high that no dividends were paid until the 1630s and were frequently delinquent for more than a decade thereafter.[149] VOC shares therefore demanded greater trust from their holders over longer periods than pre-company shares had.

The second factor was the suspicion with which investors in the fledgling Republic's various cities viewed one another. The cities of the Netherlands had a long history of economic and political competition among themselves, and networks of trust remained much stronger within cities than between them within the Republic. Shifts in relative status between cities that occurred as consequences of the war frequently increased resentments and tensions

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VOC and eventually became mayor of Amsterdam, 1622-6. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*.

[148] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*.

[149] The Company initially paid dividends in cloves, the value of which it suppressed through its own auctions. Sustained pressure from investors eventually yielded cash dividends in 1645, after the Company had been trading for 43 years. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 28.

among the cities, their corporations and their burgher investors.[150] The unity

forced on the seven independent provinces was fragile and contested. The pre-

companies were therefore generally strongly identified with their home cities,

bringing together investors who were already associated through long-

standing alliances, as representatives of burgher families, which frequently

also held positions on their city councils. The word "United" in United East

India Company referred to its novel bringing together of investors from six of

the Republic's foremost seafaring cities: Amsterdam, Middelburg, Rotterdam,

Hoorn, Enkhuizen and Delft, each city's interests being represented by a

voting Chamber. These Chambers organized their own accounts and

expenses, and inspected the overall accounts of the Company closely,

primarily in order to be assured that they each received a proportional share

of overall profits based on each city's investment in the Company's capital.

Both the strength of city-Chamber-based identity among the Company's

directors and the mutual suspicion between Chambers can be seen in the

organization of the Company's ruling council, the *Heren XVII*. Each Chamber

was to be represented on this council according to the capital its city had

contributed during the Company's establishment, with the proviso that no

single chamber should hold a majority. The four "lesser" chambers therefore

each received one seat, these being "balanced" by an equal number of seats

held by the much richer Middelburg Chamber, and the total being "balanced"

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[150] Geyl, P: *History of the Dutch-speaking Peoples: 1555-1648.* (London: Phoenix, 2001).

by the Amsterdam Chamber, which had provided more than half the initial capital. This yielded 16 seats: a seventeenth seat, rotating among the "lesser" chambers, was added to keep Amsterdam's power in check. Through this scheme a certain proportional relationship between the Chambers became enshrined in the Company's structure: further investments by the Chambers in any form was supposed to maintain this proportion.

The result was an environment of increased oversight and reporting of all aspects of the VOC's business, particularly regarding the costs of operation and purchase of assets.[151] Standard methods of bookkeeping, shipbuilding and management were enforced among the Chambers as part of their collective efforts to prevent any individual chamber gaining an advantage over the others, since a failure of equal accounting would have both economic and political consequences. The various but commensurable accounts of the six Chambers were kept proportional by a strict "equalization" performed annually, based on the profits realized by the auctions of goods brought back from the Indies.

Ships stood at the centre of these "equalizing" calculations: they formed the Company's largest fixed assets in its first decades, such that the reporting and

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[151] Jongh, M. de: "Shareholder Activists Avant La Lettre: The Complaining Shareholders in the Dutch East India Company" in Duker, M., Pieterse, R. & Schild, A.J.P. (eds.): *Welberaden* (Fetsschrift of the research department of the Supreme Court of The Netherlands 2009) Accessed August 2009 at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1275305.

justification of expenditure on ships became one of the major concerns of the VOC's ruling council.[152] Shipbuilding was also organized and funded through the individual Chambers and conducted on the wharves of the six cities: each ship was therefore associated first with its home city and was expected to carry cargo principally for its own Chamber.[153] Ships were also notoriously difficult to standardize. The fundamental measure of a ship for accounting purposes was its cargo capacity, measured in tuns (standard size barrels, from which the term "ton" derives) or corn lasts.[154] This capacity was both difficult to measure and not tightly controlled during shipbuilding until the eighteenth century, when standard plans were introduced and rates based on tonnage enforced.[155]

Contradictions

Regarding shipboard society, the Company revealed a number of tensions between contradictory impulses that were concealed under the pre-companies. Where the pre-company ship operated autonomously under a single authority, which was carried aboard, the VOC ship was required to

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[152] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.*

[153] The association between city and chamber was sometimes increased by the naming of the ship. In the early decades many ships bore the names or arms of their home city. Often the schipper or senior merchant also hailed from the sponsoring Chamber's city.

[154] One cornlast was equivalent to two Amsterdam tuns/tons, which are similar to the modern Register Ton, a volume of 100 cubic feet. DAS I.

[155] Hoving, A. J, Lemmers, A, Gerritsma, J, Harpen N. T. van, Lantau T, Zwijndregt P. P. van: *In Tekening Gebracht: de achtiende-eeuwse scheepsbouwers en hun ontwerpmethoden* (Amsterdam: de Bataafsche Leeuw, 2001).

operate under a scheme of limited autonomy and on behalf of a large organization the head of which remained in the Netherlands. Where the pre-company mariner was a junior partner who shared equally and entrepreneurially in the risk and rewards of trade, the VOC mariner was an employee charged with maintaining the corporate monopoly and forbidden from trading in those goods reserved for the VOC's monopoly. These contradictions would make the paradigm into a two-edged sword for the Company, both attractive as an image of the Company's activities and dangerous as a model that did not always accord with the Company's changing needs.

Wage labor

First, the pre-companies generally offered greater shared risks and rewards, and more egalitarian distributions of the latter between the investors, officers and crews than would be found later under the VOC. Wage labor, in which the amount of profit from a voyage was decoupled from the compensation of the crew, was well established as the norm among merchant seamen in the North Atlantic by the seventeenth century, but for ventures that involved extraordinary risks or unpredictable profits the older practice of share- or profit-sailing remained in use.[156] Privateering and piracy, in particular, tended to operate on the basis of proportional shares rather than regular wages, with

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[156] Jackson, R. P: "From Profit-Sailing to Wage-Sailing: Mediterranean Owner-Captains and their Crews during the Medieval Commercial Revolution," *Journal of European Economic History*, 18. 3 (Winter, 1989), 605-628.

investors, ship masters and ordinary crewmen all receiving comparable remuneration.[157] The pre-companies generally followed some kind of profit-sailing schema, paying their mariners via a share either in the total company profit or in the cargo space of the ship, a portion of which each mariner could use for his own trade goods. Such profit sharing was incrementally abolished under the VOC, since it interfered with the Company's monopoly charter.

Entrepreneurship vs. monopoly

Regarding private trade as an aspect of profit-sailing, the contradictory impulses to individual entrepreneurship and the voyage as a collective endeavor appear to have been effectively bound together within the context of the pre-company voyage, the fortunes of the ship being tied tangibly to those of individual mariners and associated metonymically with the emergent national fortune. Long contracts in the Indies, during which a mariner would potentially serve aboard more than one ship, made the divergence of interests between the entrepreneurial mariner and the monopolistic Company more apparent.

Linschoten was critical of the individual interests that structured Portuguese trade, which he observed both among supercargoes and captains and among

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[157] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*. Peter T. Leeson: "An-arrgh-chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization," *Journal of Political Economy*. 115.6, (Oct. 2007): 1049.

lowly sailors and loaders.[158] Seeing that each participant on a voyage was granted limited personal trading rights, and that the consequence of this was chronic, dangerous overloading of the ships on their return voyages, Linschoten wrote against uncontrolled autonomous trading and models that emphasized the individual business interests of mariners. Instead he recommended rationalized regimes of central control for Dutch trade, understanding the end beneficiaries of such trade to be burgher investors and town corporations, and through them, the Republic as a whole, rather than the personnel on the ships.[159] Linschoten's critique presented the tradition of private entrepreneurship by those aboard the ships as a problem for collective Dutch efforts in the Indies. The pre-companies accordingly sought various compromises between the interests of individual mariners and those of their investors, placing strict limits on individual trade by allowing only a clearly delimited space aboard for each man's private hoard of cargo, sometimes combining this with the expedient of making each participant in the voyage a share-holder in the collective contents of the hold.

The individual entrepreneurship that held an ambivalent position in Linschoten's analysis would become a necessary evil for the VOC; while the

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[158] Burnell & Tiele: *Linschoten*. Pérez-Mallaína has offered a portrait of the Spanish mariner that emphasizes patron-client relations as a feature of Spanish culture, in which each man was considered responsible for his own welfare and upkeep as a matter of course and of pride, such that even cooking aboard was decentralized, since no man would suffer the indignity of serving others in the kitchen. Pérez-Mallaína, P. *Spain's Men of the Sea.*

[159] Burnell & Tiele: *Linschoten*.

Company struggled to maintain its monopolies on Indies goods, the prospect of making a fortune out of such trade was one of the main attractions of recruitment for merchants and other officers. Ultimately it was the ordinary mariners whom the VOC steadily excluded: whereas, under the Portuguese system and the pre-companies, mariners were junior partners in the enterprise, under the VOC their share in the hold was replaced by regular wages, while the space allotted for their own trade shrank steadily, became ever more restricted, with only goods in which the Company itself did not deal being permitted, and was periodically threatened with removal altogether.[160]

The effect of permanent factories

The practical impact of these changes in the Company's methods and priorities was limited during the VOC's first years by the fact that the ships continued to operate on a basis of individual voyages, and the crews that were sent to the Indies, regardless of their contract terms, returned with their ships to the Republic at the end of each voyage, generally lasting about three years. This changed with the establishment of permanent factories at Batavia and Galle, on Japan and in Bengal during the 1620s.

From the central factory/depot at Batavia the VOC was able to build up an

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[160] Blusse records an incident in which such a threat was resisted by the Chinese population in Batavia, who feared loss of income from their private trading with VOC servants. Blusse, J L: *Strange Company*, 127.

extensive intra-Asian trade network, which fundamentally changed the Company's operations and the work experience of its mariners. It became possible for the first time to establish a standing pool of labor at the factories, in order to operate this network. For the first time the Company's demand for manpower was decoupled from the requirements of sending three fleets annually on roundtrip expeditions, and for the first time returning ships could be optimally loaded with Indies goods, rather than being required to bring back to Patria all of the men who had survived the rigors of the voyages. It also became possible to optimize the Company's shipping operations, since the many different routes of the intra-Asian network could be served by a variety of specialized ships adapted to meet their particular demands.[161]

The creation of a standing pool of labor

The establishment of a standing pool of labor in the Indies wrought far-reaching changes on the Company and presumably made a significant difference in shipboard life. After 1620 as a matter of course the entire crew of a ship arriving at Batavia would be reassigned off the ship that had carried them from the Netherlands, in order to spend their full contract periods serving in the intra-Asian network and its associated military operations. The

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[161] Robert Parthesius gives some sense of the complexity and variety involved: he draws 11 broad categories of ships from the partial and ambiguous entries found in the harbormasters' records of a number of Asian factories, including several categories of "indigenous" and "Dutch" vessel types, generally operated by non-Dutch or mixed crews. Parthesius, R: *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: The development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) shipping network in Asia, 1595-1660* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010).

Articles cited in van Dam state that, as in the *Carreira da India*, Company servants would be allowed back home only at the end of their contracts, which were eventually standardized at five years, and on the condition that more than half of their wages remained in escrow with the Company, to be paid off only when the men reached the head offices of the Chamber with which they had enlisted.[162] The expedition-based *gesellschaft* of the pre-company paradigm was therefore shattered: whatever characteristics of the total institution might have pertained to the outward-bound voyage, they were canceled as the mariners, soldiers and officers were separated and decanted into an Indies labor network where they would have to adapt to new ships and shipmates repeatedly for the duration of their service in the Indies.[163] Or, perhaps, they were transferred on arrival at Batavia from one institution (the outward bound ship) into another (the Indies network), very frequently spending a long transitional period in a third institution: the Batavia hospital.[164]

The *retourschip* and the ships it obscured

The establishment of factories led rapidly to the creation of two largely separate shipping networks, one connecting Batavia with the Republic, the other connecting the Company's factories in the Indies with each other.

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[162] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.2, 555-604.

[163] Goffman, E: "the characteristics of total institutions," in *Asylums* (1961), 14-28; 148-9.

[164] Brug, P. H. van der: *Malaria en Malaise: de VOC in Batavia in de achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994).

The largest and most heavily armed ships were reserved for the most dangerous route – that between Patria and Batavia. For this route the pre-companies' charismatic armed trader flagships provided the best mixture of cargo capacity, seaworthiness and defensive capability; they accordingly provided the model for the *retourschepen* that came to be seen as the Company's "typical" ships, eventually representing shipping in the Company's records to the exclusion of all other ship types.

Recent work by Robert Parthesius, Gerrit Knaap, Els Jacobs, Herman Ketting and others has thrown some light on the bewildering variety and complexity of the fleet left out of this typical/*retourschip* model, which served the intra-Asian shipping network, as well as the great variety of business methods used by the Company in Asia for shipping its goods.[165]

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[165] Knaap's surveys of harbormaster records at Makassar and along the *pasisir* coast of Java in particular show the great mixture of ship types and sizes used in Java Sea shipping, involving both products intended for the Company and wholly independent trade: they throw light on the logistical needs of the Company in addition to the business of shipping commodities ultimately bound for Europe, as well as the various ethnicities of the shippers who supplied those needs. Jacobs' survey of the intra-Asian network likewise draws attention to the variety of goods carried for the Company beyond the list of items the Company sold at auctions in Amsterdam, including saltpeter, tin and whelk shells, all of which were vital components in intra-Asian commerce. Knaap, G. J. & Sutherland, H: *Monsoon traders: ships, skippers and commodities in eighteenth-century Makassar*. (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004). Knaap, G. J: *Shallow waters, rising tide: shipping and trade in Java around 1775* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996). Jacobs, E: *Merchant in Asia: the trade of the Dutch East India Company during the eighteenth century*. (Leiden: Research School CNWS, Universiteit Leiden, 2006). Parthesius: *Dutch Ships*. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Fluitschepen voor de VOC: balanceren tussen oncostelijckheijt en duursaemheijt*. (Zaltbommel: Aprilis, 2007).

Parthesius has shown that during the company's first 60 years it operated a fleet of 529 ships exclusively within this intra-Asian network, equaling the number of vessels used in the same period on the *retour* route (the overall tonnage of the intra-Asian fleet being very much lower, however).[166] Parthesius has also outlined in some detail the history of the Company's policies regarding its intra-Asian fleet between the establishment of Batavia (1619) and 1660.[167] In doing so, he sheds light on the moment of emergence of the *retourschip* as the canonical type of the VOC ship.

Governor General Jan Pieterszoon Coen established Batavia with the intention of using it as the central depot for an extensive intra-Asian network.[168] Observing a complex web of demands and dependencies in the Indies, Coen envisioned a Company-operated trade web that would find and supply the optimal chain of products to the optimal series of commodity suppliers, with the intention of minimizing the final cost of spices to the Company in the form of bullion. In 1619 he proposed the creation of the network in a letter to the directors in Patria, in which he stated its aim and scope baldly:

> Guserat [Gujarati] textiles must be traded for pepper and gold on the shores of Sumatra; pepper from Banten for reals and textiles from the coast (of Coromandel); Chinese goods and gold for sandalwood, pepper and reals; silver can be got from Japan for Chinese goods; the textiles of the Coromandel coast for spices, other merchandise and pieces of eight; pieces of eight from Arabia for spices and other small goods, making sure that one

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[166] Parthesius: *Dutch Ships* 529

[167] Parthesius: *Dutch Ships.*

[168] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 39-43.

compensates the other, and that all is done in ships without money from the Netherlands.[169]

Shipping goods within this web required a wide variety of vessel types and sizes: many of the desired goods were only available in small quantities, poorly suited to the ships of 500 tons or more that the Company regularly used on its voyages between Batavia and Patria, or accessing them required shallow-draft vessels that could enter silted harbours and venture far up rivers.

For the safest, most regular routes, *fluits*, with their boxy hulls and narrow, easily-managed decks, were adopted as the most efficient bulk carriers, as they had been a century earlier on the Baltic.[170] These were joined by *katschepen, chialoupen, fregatten, boyers, junks, schuyten, orembaeyen, waterprauwen, schouwen, pantchiallangs* and other types, such that by the early 1680s *retourschips* formed a decided minority of the vessels found at Batavia.[171]

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[169] Coen, J. P, letter to the Directors, Aug 1619, in Colenbrander, H. T: *Jan Pietersz. Coen; Levensbeschrijving* I ('s-Gravenhage: KITLV, 1934), 485-6, quoted and trans. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 121.

[170] Barbour, V: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping in the Seventeenth Century" in Emmer, P. & Gaastra, F. S. (eds.): *The organisation of interoceanic trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (aldershot: variorum, 1996). In 1655 the *Haags Besogne*, the council in charge of shipping logistics, decided to use only "costelijke retourschepen" for the valuable return cargoes. Ketting notes, however, that large, stout *fluits* were used for carrying sugar, pepper and cinnamon to Patria through the 1660s. Ketting: *fluitschepen*, 40-1.

[171] Nieuwstad's report on ships at Bataviais found in VOC 1431, 1442, 1457c. Jonge, J. C. de: *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewezen*, vol 2, (Haarlem: A C Kruseman 1858-1862), 803-805.

In the same period, however, this variety of intra-Asian ships was systematically ignored in the records used in Patria. The intra-Asian fleet wa dismissed as consisting chiefly of small or old ships of little value, while directors' resolutions made a point of controlling the production and use of large ships—those of 120 Amsterdam feet in length or more—which were to be built only in the Company's shipyards in the Republic, from European materials and, after the creation of uniform rates in 1697, according to specific designs.[172] The description of the ships built and operated in the Indies, as small and relatively insignificant in the Company's finances, appears to be undermined in van Dam's *Description of the Company*, which includes vessels of up to 114 feet in length and considerable capacity being built and repaired on the island of Onrust in Batavia's bay, a practice criticized because of the greater expense of materials and labour in the Indies compared with Patria.[173]

A number of factors contributed to the relative invisibility of intra-Asian ships in the Company's records compared with the *retourschepen*. First, the intra-Asian fleet was restricted to operating in the waters over which the Company

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[172] Among the "ships of little value" were counted those *retourschepen* that were deemed to old and insufficiently seaworthy to be used on the *retour* route: these generally remained in service in the Indies, transporting goods around the spice islands or maintaining the Dutch blockade of Goa, sometimes for many years. Parthesius, R., Millar, K, & Jeffery, W: "Preliminary Report on the Excavation of the Seventeenth-Century Anglo-Dutch East-Indiaman Avondster in Bay of Galle, Sri Lanka" *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 34. 2 (1990), 216-237. Parthesius: *Dutch Ships*, 169. DAS I, Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, III, 172-180.

[173] Van Dam recommended ceasing the building of all ships greater than 60 feet length in the Indies, because of the high costs and the loss of labor in Patria to Indies competition. Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1, 453

had been granted a monopoly charter: that is, to waters beyond the confines of the Atlantic, which was defined as ending at the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan.[174] This restriction was due largely to the aforementioned "equalization" between Chambers, which served to separate *retourschepen* functionally from all other Company ship types. The cargo capacities of *retourschepen* were a matter of great interest to the Company's directors, since the equalization was calculated on profits realized from goods carried to Europe aboard those ships. The Chamber that built and maintained any individual *retourschip* had a strong interest in controlling both the ship's costs and its own share of the cargo space it represented. In contrast, ships supplied to the intra-Asian network represented costs sunk into the Company's shared infrastructure—cogs in a machine dedicated to filling up the *retourschip*. Their capacities were not tightly controlled, as those of the *retourschip* were, because their cargoes were effectively valueless in the eyes of the Chambers and ruling council until such time as they were decanted into a *retourschip* and conveyed to Patria. These ships were therefore not subjected to the scrutiny applied by the Company's ruling council to ships that sailed to and from Europe: they were the responsibility only of the Council of the Indies at Batavia.

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[174] The limits of the monopoly charter appear to have been taken as boundaries for the Company's sovereign authority, since VOC ships were the only Dutch ships permitted within the monopoly zone. Philip Stern has described a similar boundary of presumed sovereignty for the English East India Company, beginning sometimes at the Cape and sometimes at the latitude of St. Helena, beyond which the EIC's authority was absolute. Accodrding to Stern crossing this boundary sometimes changed the missions of EIC ships, since secret instructions, carried from Patria, would be unsealed as the ship crossed the boundary. Hoogenberk, H: *De Rechtsvoorschriften.* Stern, P. J: "Politics and Ideology in the Early East India

Second, relations between the High Command at Batavia and the ruling councils in Patria were often difficult: "smuggling" – that is, running private trading operations on the side – was known to be common practice among factory governors in the Indies, and various kinds of resistance were common between the company's "two heads," including selective over- and under-reporting of Intra-Asian business. It was simply not in the interests of the Indies governors to divulge much detail regarding the capacities and movements of their fleets. Pieter van Dam, the Advocate or secretary to the *Heren XVII* in the second half of the seventeenth century, dispatched several *fiscaals* to the Indies factories to learn about what they were not reporting. Among these, one named Nieuwstad made measurements of some of the larger vessels that called at Batavia in the early 1680s. In Nieuwstad's report we find several substantial ships, of over 120 feet length, which are not accounted for in the records of vessels sent from the Republic: their origins remain unknown.[175] These were in addition to the very many "Small craft" (that is under about 110 feet long) that were built at various company centers in the East Indies, generally from European materials, including Russian and central European oak and Scandinavian pine, imported for the purpose.

Company-State: The Case of St Helena, 1673-1709" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 35.1 (March 2007), 1-23. Stern, P. J: personal communication.

[175] These include the *Boers van Amsterdam* (126'), *Coeverden* (150'), and the *jacht Capelle* (137'). VOC 1457c.

The lack of uniformity, or even of recognizable classes, of ship types and sizes in the Intra-Asian fleet also serves to obscure their characteristics. Although some familiar type names, such as *fluits, jachts* and *chialoups*, recur frequently in the records, Parthesius has noted that such types were not standardized during the period and a single type name could be applied to a broad array of different functions of ships, while a single ship might be listed under various type classifications in the records of various ports.

Further, ships could enter service in the intra-Asian network through being built in company shipyards, through capture from foreign powers (particularly but not limited to other European East India concerns) or through purchase in the Indies. It seems likely that ships from such diverse sources were given types "of convenience" in Company records, while the terms "*prahu*," "*pantjalang*" and, vaguest of all, "*schip*," all of which we find being built and repaired at the Company's yards at Batavia, might stretch to cover any kind of otherwise-unclassifiable craft.

Coen's influence

Jan Pieterszoon Coen appears to have played an important role in defining the *retourschip* both as a distinct type and as the Company's archetypal type of vessel. As the architect and chief proponent of the intra-Asian network in the Company's first years Coen initially contributed to the diversity of Dutch ships in the Indies, demanding that a wide variety of vessels be permanently stationed there to support Batavia and the other factories that he anticipated

stretching from the Cape to Japan. In the years immediately following the establishment of Batavia Coen envisioned a migration of Dutch colonists from reputable families to people the new town and supply reliable crews for the intra-Asian vessels and routes. He shifted his policy in the mid 1620s, however, to favoring the divesting of intra-Asian shipping to the Chinese population of Batavia, concentrating the Company's resources instead on the Europe-Indies "return." It was during this period that the term *retourschip* entered the Company's records.[176] A brief hiatus in the flow of ships leaving the Republic for permanent deployment in the Indies resulted, which resumed, however, on Coen's death in 1629, after which the Company again picked up and expanded its intra-Asian shipping concerns: as a result demand for a variety of ships from the Netherlands to serve the intra-Asian network continued throughout the rest of the Company's history.[177] This hiatus appears significant as marking the moment when the *retourschip* entered the Company's language and was established as the archetypal and, briefly, only important type of VOC ship. It would take many decades for distinctive *retourschepen* to fill the Company's networks, however, or for them to exclude other ship types from the *retour* route.

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[176] Parthesius: *Dutch Ships.*

[177] The steady expansion in the number and size of Indies factories is recorded by Gaastra, with 25 major factories operating at the peak of the network in the 1680s: the hiatus noted by Parthesius cannot be detected in Gaastra's figures, which only deal in the flow of persons per decade. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 85-95.

Thus it was exactly during a period of diversification in the Company's operations, shipping missions, and ship types that the "typical" ship came to mean only one form, the *retourschip*, which served to mask that diversification in the Company's records, particularly from observers in Europe.

The *retourschip* and the pre-company paradigm

The concentration on the return to Patria, and the eventual evolution of the *retourschip* as the "typical" ship, can be seen as parts of an attempt to domesticate the pre-company paradigm and the expectations it generated into forms congenial to the VOC's needs. The use of the *retourschip* in images, popular narratives and Company records to represent the type of the VOC ship supported an idea of continuity between the operational paradigm of the pre-companies and that of the VOC; it tended to obscure both the formation and operation of the intra-Asian network and changes in the Company's labor relations, such that these are only now being explored by historians.[178]

Continued reference to the pre-company paradigm's fundamental components—the self-sufficiency of the ship in the Indies and the settling of

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[178] Jacobs: *Merchant in Asia*. Parthesius: *Dutch Ships*. Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 66 (25 Feb 2005), 12-39. Despite increased attention currently being paid to the business of the intra-Asian network, the ships that operated it have so far remained obscure. *The Colourful World of the VOC*, a general introduction to the Company published for the 400 year anniversary, even though it included a large section on intra-Asian trade, limited its discussion of VOC ships to the *retourschepen*, which it described as the Company's "workhorses." Akveld, L, & Jacobs, E (eds.): *The Colourful World of the VOC: national anniversary book VOC 1602 2002* (Bussum: Thoth, 2002).

accounts promised by return—supported a mode of deferred freedom and reward for mariners during their contract periods: the moment of return to Europe retained its carnival gloss through the withholding of over half of each mariner's wages, which were paid out in a lump sum that formed a kind of surrogate treasure, associated with, but not practically tied to, the auctioning of the returning ship's cargo. The isolation of the crew on the ship helped limit the mariner's engagement with and investment in the Indies. Through isolation and the withholding of wages a mariner's five year contract, which involved multiple journeys within the Indies and multiple purchases and sales of cargoes, was recast as a single voyage event, while the VOC's mariners were converted from junior partners in a cooperative trading enterprise into employee-servants who held no direct stake in the Company's profitability and no direct interest in the routes they plied.

The casting of the contract period as a single adventure may also have contributed to the "lords of six weeks" phenomenon that formed an important part of the VOC seaman's reputation in the Netherlands.[179] This phenomenon consisted of an extended binge of feasting, drinking and whoring indulged by some VOC seafarers on receipt of their wages in Patria. The stereotypical VOC seaman ended his binge back in debt on the streets of Amsterdam, seeking to sign on for a second East Indies voyage to pay off his creditors. Just how prevalent this pattern really was among seafarers is a matter of debate. The

[179] Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795," *The Mariners mirror* 49. 2 (May 1963), 81-104.

trope clearly served Company interests, however: to the extent that the

Company's seamen could be persuaded to perform the part of irresponsible,

debt-incurring wastrels ashore, they could be kept desperate and short of

options beyond the VOC, bonded to the Company at perpetually preferential

rates. Moreover, the more of their wages they spent in port cities in the

Republic, the less VOC seamen might extract from its patrimonial economy. A

bad reputation for its seamen in Patria may also have helped the Company

indirectly: reportedly ship masters in the fishing fleets and shorter cargo

carrying trades were reluctant to take VOC men because of their rough

manners and unreliability: a reputation as an adventurer did not necessarily

serve a mariner back in the bosom of civilized, domestic sea-work.

3. Standardization

Sources for the physical forms of *retourschepen* during the Company's early

years are scarce: although the type and function of the *retourschip* had been

established in the Company's records in the 1620s there is little evidence that

ships identified by the type conformed to a distinct, consistent plan or size.[180]

This changed between 1660 and 1750, however, during what I am calling the

period of standardization, when the *retourschip* seems to have changed

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[180] DAS shows a considerable variation among ships returning to the Netherlands between 1620 and 1680, many of which were unclassified or marked interchangeably as *retourschepen* or *spiegelschepen* (ships with flat, decorated transoms): they range in capacity from 120 to 1210 tons. The lower tonnages have generally been identified (in DAS and Parthesius) as smaller ship types such as the *jacht* and *fluit,* which are sometimes marked among the in return fleets, along with a few vessels of less than 100 tons, marked as *hoekers* and *bootjes.* DAS III.

incrementally from a functional classification to a set of standard vessels. The

result was the production, by 1750, of plans and specifications describing three

classes or rates of vessels, all *retourschepen*, which were intended to stand as

the models on which all further VOC production of ships would be based.

Following 1750 the records of ships sent to the Indies show great uniformity,

almost all of them conforming to the larger two of these rates, until 1782 when

the disastrous Fourth Anglo-Dutch War forced a radical revision of VOC

shipping strategy.[181]

The story of this standardization reflects the attempts by the *Heren XVII*

simultaneously to understand and control the characteristics of the ships they

commissioned and deployed. These simultaneous attempts were played out in

documents – reports, resolutions, manuals and plans, created to describe and

define the forms of the ships for the *Heren XVII*, for shipbuilders and for the

Company's records.

Increasing documentation

The reason for the steady increase in the documentation of the ships and the

centralizing of control over them in the hands of the Company's ruling

council, over considerably more than a century of operations, is not

completely clear. A number of scholars have commented on such attempts

toward a controlling understanding from the center of power as characteristic

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[181] DAS II. Dillo, I. G: *De Nadagen Van De Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, 1783-1795: Schepen En Zeevarenden*. (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1992).

of the enlightenment moment in European history. The efforts of the *Heren XVII* could be understood as early manifestations of an urge toward what Foucault termed "power-knowledge," and therefore fitted into a teleological account of enlightenment as early examples of the spread of ideas among ruling elites regarding rational power, hegemony and the engineered consent of the governed.[182] The efforts certainly aimed at disciplining and rationalizing the ways in which Company ships were built and used. The production of standard units of trade and control can also be understood as part of an urge toward what James Scott has called "legibility," and Latour and Callon have called "black boxing," consisting of attempts to conform the objects of control to a simplified scheme, easy to notate in centralized records, which allows for the strategic planning of mass actions on those objects so as to yield predictable results.[183] Scott in particular has pointed out that centrally-controlled, 'rationalist' projects (of which the VOC certainly stands as an example) tend to produce views of the world over which they exercise power composed of standardized units and subjects, as part of the replacing of local

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[182] Power here is defined following Foucault, as interpreted by Stuart Elden: "Power is not domination, it is the ability to get things done: it's creative, constructive. It only manifests in action, rather than being held passively" Elden, S: *Mapping the Present; Heidegger, Foucault and the project of spatial history* (London, New York: Continuum, 2001), 105-6.

[183] Scott, J. C: *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Callon, M. & Latour, B: "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: how actors macrostructure reality and how sociologists help them to do so." in Knorr-Cetina, K. D. & Cicourel, A. V. (Eds.) *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro- and Macro-Sociologies*. (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 277-303.

knowledge with "documentary facts."[184] Such a tendency might be seen in the *Heren XVII*'s attempts to contain Company ship design in plans subject to its own review, rather than trusting in the time-tested skills of its master shipbuilders, who worked without plans or detailed oversight.

Such explanations tend to abstract ruling elites to single entities, however—to "black box" them for the purpose of understanding vertical relations of power. They do not effectively account for multiple centers of power within an organization, for power struggles within the center(s), or for the ways in which power-knowledge could be passed from one ruler to another, such as between the Chambers, the ruling council and the Indies factories, or from sitting directors to their successors.

The *Heren XVII* were accountable to their shareholders, the broad group of *bewindhebbers* or directors among the six Chambers, and to the Staten Generaal, which held the keys to their trade monopoly in the Indies. They were, moreover, closely tied to these extra-Company interests, since many of them also sat on governing councils including the Staten Generaal or had close

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[184] Scott: *Seeing Like a State*. The stolid attachment of the VOC to a centralized model, while other companies (notably the English EIC) adopted adaptive, internally-competitive models, has been noted (Steensgaard, N: "The Growth and Composition of the Long-distance Trade of England and the Dutch Republic before 1750" in Tracy, J. D. (ed): *The Rise of Merchant Empires: long-distance trade in the early modern world, 1350-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255-286: 277. Furber, H: *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976).

relatives there.[185] Through the eighteenth century the Company's rising costs

and sinking profits prompted growing unease among these groups, which

manifested particularly at those moments when the Company's monopoly

charter was due for review and renegotiation.[186] The most extensive reform

and complete description of the Company's ships was tied to such a

renegotiation, as part of Governor-General van Imhoff's extensive *redress* of

the Company in 1742.[187] Increased reporting might simply have reflected

dwindling confidence in the ability of the Company to resolve its own

problems.

Finally, it seems that over time more explicit knowledge regarding the

Company's operations was required because implicit or local knowledge

among the directors could no longer be assumed. The single most important

document for charting the *Heren XVII's* knowledge and understanding of

Company affairs is Pieter van Dam's five-volume *Description of the Company*,

written nearly a century after the Company's establishment.[188] Van Dam was

the Company's Advocate, the senior secretary to the *Heren XVII*, "the only

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[185] Adams, J: *The Familial State: ruling families and merchant capitalism in early modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[186] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*? Steur, J. J: *Herstel of Ondergang. De voorstellen tot redress van de VOC 1740-1795* (Utrecht: HES Uitg, 1984).

[187] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*. See Kist for renegotiation.

[188] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*,

permanent functionary at the highest level" of Company policy-making.[189] The *Description*, commissioned in 1693 and delivered in 1701, drew on van Dam's 50 years' service with the VOC and outlined the Company's holdings and factories, its trade goods and assets, the terms of its charter and by-laws, and its shipping and shipbuilding; it offered a complete manual for VOC operations, for the use of the *Heren XVII* and, presumably, for the instruction of directors newly appointed to the council. Its value as a working document and as an encapsulation of the power-knowledge of the directors can be seen in the fact that it was kept under lock and key in the ruling council's chambers until the dissolution of the Company.[190] Adams has identified a sociological shift among the Company's directors during the "periwig period" of the eighteenth century away from men actively engaged in the business of shipping and selling commodities to *rentiers* who inherited their directorships along with their country houses.[191] Later generations, being more distant from the business and culture of seafaring, may have needed more training. This in turn required a formalization of knowledge and increased reliance on documents, such as the *Description*, prepared by expert functionaries in the Company.[192]

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[189] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 151

[190] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1 ix.

[191] Adams: *The Familial State.*

[192] This formalization is analogous to the process described by James Scott in *Seeing Like a State*, in which many forms and systems of implicit, local knowledge, which he groups together as *metis*, are reorganized into a uniform code of teachable,

Toward a complete description

Van Dam's *Description* played an important role in the history of VOC ships. As a collection of documents drawn from the Company's archives it offers an apparently authoritative account of VOC shipbuilding to 1700, encompassing the *besteks* (charters or specifications) by which the first purpose-made VOC ships were built and subsequent modifications to those specifications up to the time of writing. As an index of the knowledge of the *Heren XVII* regarding VOC ships in 1700 it is unrivalled.

The account offered in the *Description* is far from disinterested, however: it was prepared at the same time as what appears to be the pivot of the "period of standardization:" the declaration of the first set of VOC rates, in 1697.[193] The system of rating ships according to their size and firepower originated with the navies of England and France. When first introduced these rates described general categories of ships that could be expected to fulfill similar roles, as floating fortresses, cruisers or scouts.[194] In the 1670s, however, both the English

theoretical, but decidedly partial knowledge, which he terms *techne*. Scott: *Seeing Like a State.*

[193] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1, 456.

[194] The highly diverse fleet of the English navy was divided into six rates in 1633. The first establishment laid down detailed specifications to standardize the building of new ships in these rates in 1677. In France, Colbert set out similar specifications for Navy rates in 1674. The Dutch case is more complex, with little standardization between the five Admiralties. In 1737 the shipwright and sometime spy Blaise Ollivier observed that eight different, somewhat variable, categories of warships were known in the Netherlands, but that these were organized for administrative and strategic purposes into five rates. Gardiner: *Line of Battle* 14-16. Ollivier, B & Roberts, D. H: *Eighteenth Century Shipbuilding: remarks on the navies of the dockyards in 1737* (Rotherfield: Jean Boudriot Publications, 1992), 203.

and French navies began to standardize their rates, such that by the middle of the eighteenth century the term "a Royal Navy ship of the third rate" described a specific type of vessel, following a standard hull, rigging, armament, crew complement and victualing.[195] The VOC rates took the form of detailed specifications for three particular vessels, all *retourschepen*, which were essentially identical in their proportions, lines and function, differing only in their overall sizes, and which could, given their uniformity, be given in shorthand simply by referring to their lengths: of 160, 145 and 130 Amsterdam feet. These rates were intended to provide the standard by which all future VOC ships were to be built in Patria, with the exception of some few smaller

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[195] The shift from general classification to close specification in naval rates in the 1670s appears to have been catalyzed by a sharp increase in naval shipbuilding, required to replace losses suffered during the second and third Anglo-Dutch wars, which prompted an arms race in shipbuilding around the Atlantic seaboard of Europe. The commissioning of large numbers of ships at a time, and the need to negotiate their costs through governmental institutions, lead to greater standardization in order both to simplify such negotiations and to increase the accountability of shipbuilders and navy boards. The diary of Samuel Pepys shows how such negotiations, in which the king and Parliament participated, could pose personal risks: Pepys, as comptroller of the navy, maintained careful records of all such negotiations against the day he might be called to account for the performance of his ships in battle. Dening states that by the late eighteenth century British navy rates were so specific and well understood that they implied distinct modes of leadership, discipline and communication, and were considered in the judgments of Admiralty courts, specifically in the trials following the famous mutiny on the *Bounty*. Gardiner: *Line of Battle*, 14-26. Pepys, S. & Wheatley, H. B. (ed:): *Diary of Samuel Pepys — Complete 1660 N.S.* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1893), accessed via *Project Gutenberg*, http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/4125 on 7/5/2010; June seventeenth, 1667 (in which Pepys prepares the letters of his office "against a black day to defend the office with and myself"), June nineteenth, 1667 (in which Pepys presents his papers in court, while ordering his personal property removed from the office, anticipating that he might be turned from witness to defendant while offering deposition). Dening, G: *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: passion, power, and theater on the Bounty* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The precision with which manning and victualing requirements were specified in 1789 for the *Bounty*, a naval "armed transport" below the sixth rate, can be seen in John McKay, *Anatomy of the Ship, The Armed Transport Bounty.* (1989. London: Conway Maritime Press).

fluits and other special-function vessels, to be negotiated individually by the Chambers and the *Heren XVII*.[196]

The rates mark a shift in emphasis in the *Heren XVII*'s efforts from gathering information regarding the VOC's ships to dictating and improving their forms, frequently over the objections of shipbuilders, shipmasters and merchants serving in the Indies.[197] Van Dam's *Description* presents the rates as the natural outgrowths of a tradition established in the first years of the Company, of building ships according to *besteks* or charters: sets of uniform specifications to be followed by the master shipwright in order to yield ships with the desired proportions. Their physical characteristics are presented as the outcome of incremental improvements in ship design and directorial oversight through the seventeenth century.[198] Outside van Dam's own writings, however, the story appears more complex, contested and contingent. In the early 1680s a report by one Hendrik Decquer, commissioned by the *Heren XVII*, on the forms and sizes of actual VOC ships showed that even on the *retour* route the fleet was highly diverse, including many types of vessels other than *retourschepen*, and quite unlike the limited picture offered in van

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[196] DAS I, 42. Hoving A. J, Witsen, N, Weerdt G. A. de: *Nicolaes Witsens Scheeps-bouw-konst Open Gestelt* (Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, cop. 1994). Hoving: *In Tekening Gebracht*.

[197] Kist, B: "VOC shipbuilding Policy 1740-1750" in Gawronski, J.K: *Hollandia Compendium: a contribution to the history, archeology, classification and lexicography of a 150 ft. Dutch East Indiaman (1740-1750)* (Amsterdam: Rijks Museum, 1992), 34-75.

[198] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1.

Dam.[199] In 1671, however, the *retourschip* was presented as the Dutch trading vessel par excellence, used not only by the VOC but more generally by extra-European Dutch traders, in a manual on Dutch methods of shipbuilding and maritime command written by the mayor of Amsterdam, Nicolaes Witsen.[200]

The report and the manual offer very different perspectives on the form and construction of VOC ships, despite both issuing from authoritative sources related to the Company directors. They might be said to represent different epistemologies, based respectively on data and on models, that informed the *Heren XVII*.

First steps to standardization

It is doubtful whether it would have been possible, or even thinkable, to produce either Decquer's or Witsen's standardizing accounts, however, without the previous construction of the Oostenburg shipyards in Amsterdam, the largest industrial production facility in the world on its completion in 1660.[201] At Oostenburg, raw materials from all over Europe were processed into as many as eight ships a year, together with all of their

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[199] AN Collectie Hudde, 22-23: Decquer, H: *Middelen om Uit te Vinden de Ware Ladinge der Scheepen na hare Groote* {Means for Determining the Possible Capacities of Ships From Their Dimensions), (1685) VOC 1431, 1442, 1457c.

[200] Nicolaas Witsen. *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum. Ofte Aaloude en Hedendaagsche Scheeps-bouw en Bestier,* (Amsterdam, 1671, reprinted Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1994).

[201] Kist, J. B et al: *Van VOC tot Werkspoor. Het Amsterdamse industrieterrein Oostenburg* (Utrecht Matrijs, 1986).

necessary equipment, including ropes, sails, clothing, tableware and decorative carving.[202]

Massive investment in Oostenburg and the smaller yards of the minor chambers during the 1650s and 1660s allowed the VOC to realize a long-standing policy goal of building all its ships in-house, within facilities wholly controlled by the *Heren XVII*.[203] Centralization of the Amsterdam chamber's ship production at Oostenburg allowed for a greater standardization of parts and a move toward early assembly-line methods. While multiple ships with the same broad characteristics stood on the stocks together, it was easy to see that standardization of parts – especially of metalwork, would aid production and maintenance. Moreover, the centralization of the Oostenburg yards facilitated oversight by the Company's directors and made shipwrights

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[202] Ship production numbers are compiled from a survey of outward bound Amsterdam chamber vessels built between 1670 and 1680. DAS II. Much of the minor equipment was contracted out to independent suppliers, who were not infrequently related to Company directors or well-placed servants. All of these materials were, however, assembled and administrated through the Oostenburg offices, such that the facility can be considered a complete shipbuilding and –supplying one-stop shop. Jerzy Gawronski has explored the rich web of business relations and contracts that linked Amsterdam tailors, tanners, farmers, glaziers and more in the supplying of the Amsterdam and Hollandia in the mid eighteenth century. Gawronski, J: *De "Equipagie" van de Hollandia en de Amsterdam: VOC-bedrijvigheid in 18de-eeuws Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1996).

[203] Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge*, I.1, 456-496. Amsterdam was only required to provide half of the Company's ships, the remaining chambers were required to supply the other half, in proportion to their share in the Company's initial investment and profits. Differences between VOC shipyards have received relatively little attention, however. Oostenburg appears to have played a large role in setting standards for shipbuilding and rendering ships visible to the Company's directors. Kist: *van VOC to Werkspoor*.

available to them for consultation on demand.[204]

Nicolaes Witsen

This last feature of the yards was used extensively by Nicolaes Witsen in the preparation of his shipbuilding manual. Witsen's manual is important to the development of the "typical" VOC ship because it spelled out for the first time, for a lay audience, the method of building, the characteristics and the operation of such a ship, which he termed a *pinas*.[205]

Writing for the economic and ruling elite of Amsterdam as a prominent city

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[204] Kist: *van VOC to Werkspoor*.

[205] Some explanation of this simple statement is in order, since Witsen does not explicitly call his *pinas* a *retourschip*, and in general usage in the Dutch Republic at the time the term *pinas* was applied, like most ship classifications, unsystematically to a wide range of vessels. Hoving has built a considerable case for interpreting Witsen's *pinas* as narrowly describing the VOC *retourschip* as a distinctive class of vessels, comparing it with contemporary models of known VOC ships. The term *pinas* was further used interchangeably within the VOC at the close of the seventeenth century with *retourschip.* Witsen does identify his *pinas* as a vessel suitable for Indies voyages, citing "Curacao, Aleppo, Guinea or elsewhere" as typical ports of call. This causes some confusion, however, since of these ports, the Indies destinations are all in the Atlantic realm, i.e. WIC territory, and in general the WIC operated ships of lower tonnage than the VOC. It would therefore be extremely useful as a means for verifying the association of Witsen's *pinas* specifically with an East India ship to be able to gauge its cargo capacity (tonnage). It is not possible from Witsen's instructions, however, to derive the tonnage of the *pinas* described with any accuracy. Going on length alone, Witsen's *pinas*, at 134 Amsterdam feet, would have been comparable to a VOC second rate *retourschip* of the eighteenth century, which varied over time between 130 and 140 feet. Hoving points out, however, that van Dam and other contemporary sources mention wide variation in tonnages for the same lengths of ship, such that an absolutely positive identification remains elusive. For the purposes of the current discussion the question of specificity to the VOC is made moot, however, by Witsen's more general claim for his *pinas*, that it represents all Dutch-built ships of its size, a set that includes the subset of *retourschepen*. Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst,* 22, 36, 39-42. Hoving, A. J: "A seventeenth-Century Dutch 134-foot Pinas: A Reconstruction after Aeloude en Hedendaegse Scheepsbouw en Bestier by Nicolaes Witsen 1671." *IJNA* 17.4 (1988), 331-338. Heijer, H. J. den: *De geschiedenis van de WIC*. DAS I.

father and statesman, Witsen aimed his work at his fellow gentlemen burghers who wished to know about the industry they funded and which supported their families.[206] The book was compiled, however, through long association with the shipwrights working at Oostenburg.[207] Witsen was the ideal figure for presenting the knowledge of these shipwrights to the polite society of Amsterdam: his credentials as a man of creditworthy opinions were impeccable.[208] Prior to serving as *burgermeester* (mayor) of Amsterdam Witsen had been a governor in the VOC; later, when Peter the Great visited Amsterdam in order to learn shipbuilding at Oostenburg yards, Witsen was

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[206] Hoving notes that while Witsen's text appears generally accurate it lacks much technical information that would have been essential for completing actual ships. In contrast, the Rotterdam shipbuilder Van Yk's *scheeps-bouw-konst open gesteld* is evidently addressed to his fellow shipwrights, being couched in their familiar technical language and offering concise but complete instructions as to the preparation, treatment and joining of wooden baulks. Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst.* Yk, C. van, Voorstad, A, Claesz ten Hoorn, J, Luiken, J, *De Nederlandsche Scheeps-bouw-konst Open Gestelt. Vertoonende naar wat Regel, of Evenredenheyd, in Nederland Meest Alle Scheepen Werden Gebouwd…* (Rotterdam, 1697, reprinted Delft: SPD, 1981).

[207] Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst.*

[208] In his discussion of the sociology of scientific knowledge in eighteenth century England, Steven Shapin has noted that "what underwrote assent to knowledge claims was the word of a gentleman." Drawing on Shapin's model of the generation of assent through the collection of the opinions of creditworthy sponsors, I contend that Witsen's involvement in writing about shipbuilding was vital to the reception of the topic as a worthy one for discussion in Amsterdam polite society. Few other individuals commanded such social capital: Witsen served as the *burgermeester* of Amsterdam 13 times and was appointed to the council for Amsterdam's defense during the second Anglo-Dutch War in 1672. He was also known as a prominent member of Amsterdam's intelligentsia, with a lively interest in engineering and practical arts, and as a skilled negotiator, being appointed later in his career ambassador to Russia and to England. Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst,* 23. Shapin, S: "The House of Experiment in Seventeenth-Century England" *Isis.* 79. 3, *A Special Issue on Artifact and Experiment.* (Sep., 1988), pp. 373-404. Whether the Oostenburg yards could be considered an institutional "house of experiment," a proving ground for ideas seeking acceptance in broader Amsterdam society, is beyond the scope of the current work.

chosen to act as his mentor.[209]

Witsen's discussion of shipbuilding is accordingly framed for an intellectual audience, with a structure similar to contemporary architectural treatises. Beginning with a universal history of shipbuilding, in which Noah's Ark takes the place of the Temple of Solomon as the primordial model of the shipwright's art, it contains discussions of Roman, contemporary European, Turkish and Indies traditions, all presented as introductory material for his detailed treatment of the technical principles of contemporary Dutch shipbuilding.[210]

With sections on the organization of shipyards and on the acquisition of suitable timbers and other materials, Witsen's book was the first to address the business and practicalities of both shipbuilding and the commanding of ships as suitable concerns for the genteel society to which the Company's directors belonged. The book is also notable for setting out for the first time something approaching a theory of Dutch shipbuilding and command, with considerable detail on the history and laws of the latter; the complete work forming an instruction manual for the Dutch elite regarding what to expect from ships

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[209] Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst*, 23

[210] Nicolaas Witsen: *Architectura Navalis*. A discussion of Villalpando's 1572 description of the Temple of Solomon as the supposedly perfect structure, comparable with the human body as a basis for correct proportion and measurement, can be found in Evers, Bernd, Christof Thoenes, Kunstbibliothek (Berlin, and Germany). *Architectural theory: from the Renaissance to the present: 89 essays on 117 treatises* (Taschen, 2003), 366-377.

and what they ought to know about them.

Witsen's book provides a unique look into the form, image and public understanding of the *retourschip* in the seventeenth century. Not only does it provide the most complete description of Dutch shipbuilding practices available to historians for the period, it also offered a unique glimpse of VOC ships to the seventeenth century Dutch public, one rich in detail from otherwise unpublished shipwrights' manuals and shipyard accounts. Of particular interest for this study, it was the first publication to provide sections and plans that show the division of interior spaces alongside the more usual concentration on the structure, strength and hydrodynamics of the hull.

Most importantly, however, Witsen unambiguously presented his *pinas* not only as an exemplary model of and for VOC ships but as "the true model for all ships of the time;" an appropriate basis for a general theory of shipbuilding from which a wide range of other vessels could be derived.[211] Witsen's *pinas* stands as the epitome of the *retourschip* as armed trader or merchant galleon, related both to the *oorlogsjachten* (fast warships) used by the VOC's explorers in the early seventeenth century and the larger, heavier ships termed *pinassen* that plied the *retour* route at the end of the century.[212] Although it was

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[211] Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst*, 22.

[212] The terms *oorlogsjacht* and *pinas* were used interchangeably to describe, for instance, the flagships of explorers Olivier van Noort in 1598, and Abel Tasman in the 1630s and 1640s. Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst*, 304-5.

constructed for trade rather than war, with internal bracing sacrificed to the interests of tonnage, its lines and armament were most comparable to those of a *fregat* (frigate), the class of relatively light, fast warships that served as the main workhorses of the Dutch Admiralties in the second half of the seventeenth century.[213]

Decquer and Nieuwstad

For all its unique detail and meticulous research, however, Witsen's book did not deal with any actually extant vessels: it described the kinds of ships understood to be constructed for the VOC, but not the state of the VOC fleet itself. The knowledge that the *Heren XVII* actually possessed regarding the Company's ships can be read in the reports they commissioned in the early 1680s from Decquer and Nieuwstad, two *fiscaals* who were dispatched to the docks of Amsterdam and Batavia respectively in order to observe, measure and assess the Company's vessels.[214]

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[213] Hoving derived these lines, that suggest a comparatively fast-sailing ship, rather than a vessel built principally for hold space, from reconstructing Witsen's *pinas* as a model. At the time of Witsen's writing the term *fregat* denoted any light and fast warship, with up to 50 guns, carried on one or two decks. The term supplanted *pinas* in the Dutch Admiralties during the first two Anglo-Dutch wars in the 1650s to 1670s, to describe ships of broadly similar characteristics and functions. These ships were capable of fighting alongside heavier "ships of the line," the heaviest carrying as many as 112 guns on up to three decks. The VOC adopted the term *fregat* from the Dutch admiralties to describe its *retourschepen* in the early eighteenth century, replacing *pinas* as the dominant classification. Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst,* 37. Gardiner: *The Line of Battle*.

[214] The office of *fiscaal* might best be translated "auditor." The VOC employed fiscaals throughout its operation, sending them to assist in court cases and audit Indies factories, as well as shipping production in Patria. Decquer: *Middelen.* Nieuwstad's reports were not published. They are found in the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*, 1680-82, AN VOC 1431, 1442 and 1457.

In particular, the reports show that the directors as a group knew very little about the forms of their ships; Decquer's introduction states that he was tasked with describing the Company's ships for the directors, to increase their understanding of the fleet. His description includes accepted methods for loading ships with barrels and loose goods (possibly anticipating efficiency-maximizing debates about wasted interstitial space in the holds).

The reports also make plain that the cargo hold was the primary shipboard space the *Heren XVII* were eager to standardize and render legible, to oversee and control. Decquer's and Nieuwstad's reports were commissioned primarily in order to find out the cargo capacities (tonnages) of Company ships in service. The stated reasons for the investigation were, on the one hand, to ensure safe and efficient loading of vessels, such that the *Heren XVII* might better understand how many vessels were required to maintain the Company's shipping capacity, and on the other, to assess the possible extent of smuggling within the Company and deter it through closer control of hold space.[215] We can thus see that the urge to standardize the Company's fleet began in defense of the Company's monopoly against the illicit trade of its servants.

Even given this limited brief, however, Decquer found it impossible to render

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[215] The introduction of Decquer's report clearly states the intention to prevent "*het onoordentelyk en zoo nageeligh misbruik van's Compagnies scheepen*" (the disorderly misuse of the Company's ships). Decquer: *Middelen*, 2.

a full and reliable account of the fleet, because of the variety in size and form

of the ships he encountered. The situation Nieuwstad encountered at Batavia

was even harder to generalize, since it included ships of the intra-Asian fleet.

Decquer eventually reported on a sampling of 14 more or less representative

vessels, which included a wide variety of mariner's classifications (including

fluits, jachts, pinassen, kats and *Spiegel-schepen*), from which he derived an

apparently reliable method of calculating hold capacity, given accurate

measurements of a ships' length and breadth, and the depth of its hold.[216]

Decquer's report contains one further remarkable feature that suggests an

attempt to build a theory of the Company's ships, to impose an orderly,

typical view on highly heterogeneous data, and that anticipates the imposition

of rates. In describing the Company's ships Decquer attempted to resolve

them into four basic, typical models based on their tonnages, thereby creating

the first ordering of VOC ships into homogenous classes based on size.[217]

These classes were represented with deck plans, which provide one of the first

accounts of the placement and size of non-cargo spaces, such as galleys and

supply-rooms, aboard VOC vessels. The reliability of these plans when

applied to any specific, individual ship cannot be assessed, although it is clear

from the report that they exclude vessel types such as the *fluit* and the *kat*,

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[216] Decquer's calculation remained in use through the remainder of the Company's history. Tested against a number of models and wreck sites it has been assessed reasonably reliable. Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst*. DAS I.

[217] Decquer: *Middelen*.

which required separate illustration.[218] Nonetheless, the urge to find a typical

solution to the problem of representing a diverse fleet is apparent.

The rates

Given this context, it can be seen that the idea of rates describing standardized

vessels was far from revolutionary in 1697. There had even been requests from

the Council of the Indies for "no more than some few rates" because serving a

limited variety of *retourschepen* made both repairs and loading easier in the

Indies.[219] The degree to which the rates of 1697 really determined Company

shipbuilding in the early eighteenth century remains somewhat unclear,

however: the introduction of rates began a period of conflict over ship design

and frequent revisions to the rates that lasted from 1697 to 1749.

As for the degree to which actual vessels conformed to the rates, the

archaeological record to date does not provide sufficient information to

resolve the distance between description and reality. Ab Hoving has noted,

however, that half-models of the last ships built by the Company in 1795 did

not correspond with the plans of the most recent revision of the rates, drawn

in 1750. The plans were the result of a protracted battle within the Company

to introduce lines influenced by British shipbuilding philosophy. The models,

however, showed very traditionally Dutch curves, suggesting that some

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[218] Decquer: *Middelen.*

[219] DAS I, 41.

resistance, or undocumented revision, was being practiced in the Company's shipbuilding, outside the framework of the *Heren XVII*'s pronouncements.[220]

The rates and resistance to them has commonly been discussed as a contest between the Company's master shipwrights and the *Heren XVII*.[221] Determining the rates, and with them, the conceptual form of the East Indiaman, involved several other parties, however, including the directors of the Company's six chambers, who were charged with financing and supplying the VOC's ships, the *Staten Generaal*, which granted the Company's monopoly charter, and the shipmasters who commanded the vessels. Moreover, the 1697 rates did not specify how ships were to be built; they only stated how large they had to be and the relative proportions of their parts. Although they necessarily entailed an increase in the power of formal knowledge in the hands of the *Heren XVII* relative to that of the shipbuilder's traditional know-how, in practical terms they acted more to restrict the choices of those who commissioned ships than the practices of those who built them.[222]

The primary source of resistance to the 1697 rates appears to have been the governors of the Company's individual chambers. A review of ships built in

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[220] Hoving, A. J: personal communication.

[221] DAS I.

[222] Hoving: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst*; Ollivier: *eighteenth century shipbuilding*. Scott: techne and metis, *Seeing Like a State*.

the years after 1697 shows that although the rates dominated the reporting of

which ships were produced, some smaller vessels continued to be produced,

and among the rated ships, small variations between the Chambers emerged.

Alterations to the rates in 1714, making the ships broader and a little

shallower, reflected the practice already in effect in some of the Chambers'

yards.[223] One reason for this variation between ships may have been shipyard

directors and Chambers attempting to "game the system," making ships

subtly larger than their specifications in order to carry more cargo for their

own Chamber.[224] Another reason was local differences between shipyards,

such as narrow lock gates and shallows in the Zuiderzee or on upriver

reaches where the yards of Delft and Rotterdam were located, which also

imposed their own restrictions, preventing the largest of the rates from being

built by any Chamber except Zeeland in the 1720s.[225]

The existence of formal rates also provided a target for fault-finding when

disasters overcame Company fleets. Following the loss at Table Bay of 10

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[223] DAS I, 43-47.

[224] The practice lead famously to the breaking up of two ships on the stocks, on discovery that they were too large to be launched into the scheldt, prompting Tieleman's 1747 poem: *Treurdicht wegens het Wonderlyk Omstorten, van een Nieuw OIC schip* (elegy on the toppling of a new-built ship). MMPH Ladenkast 20S.

[225] The rates of 1697 all had the same relative proportions between length, breadth and the height of the hold, the length to width ratio being 4:1 and the height of the hold being roughly 42% of the width. The first rate was 160 feet long, the second 145 feet and the third 130 feet long. Following Witsen's design scheme, proportions would be maintained strictly throughout ships of different sizes, such that the heights between decks, of doors and mast steps and anchor bitts would all be different between rates according to the difference in length. DAS I, 43-47.

outward-bound ships in 1722 and of eight returning ships in 1737, reforms of

the Company's rates were demanded. The latter loss was financially far worse

for the Company, since the ships were laden with nearly two million guilders

worth of Indies goods.[226] The reason for the sinkings at Table Bay was well

known: seasonal severe winds made Table Bay an unsafe anchorage from

April to mid July, when storm surge could break the hold of anchors on the

bottom of the bay, dashing the ships against the coast.[227] Nonetheless, some

hitherto unidentified fault was suspected in the design of the rates, or, rather,

in the modifications of 1714.[228]

Van Imhoff and the standard *retourschip*

The combined crises of the loss of ships and cargo in 1737 and the massacre of

the Chinese population of Batavia and outbreak of a Chinese revolt across

northern Java in 1740 joined more general anxieties regarding sinking profits,

growing competition and corrupt mismanagement in the Indies. These events

made political elites in the Netherlands seriously question the East India

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[226] The story of the disaster is quoted from an unidentified 1784 book detailing the life of one Herr Allemann in *The Cape monthly magazine*. J. C. Juta, 1872. Boeseken, A. J: *Jan van Riebeeck en Sy Gesin* (Cape Town, Tafelberg Publishers. 1974).

[227] The fact that the one surviving ship was saved by the quick thinking of the first mate, who ordered a number of cannons to be dropped down the anchor cable to hold the anchor down, did nothing to dissuade the *Heren XVII* of the idea that the ships themselves were faulty. *Cape monthly.*

[228] DAS I, 45.

Company's ability to deal with its own problems.[229]

These crises coincided with the periodic expiration of the Company's monopoly charter and the need for its renewal by the *Staten Generaal* in 1742. The *Staten Generaal* made renewal of the charter contingent on a general reform of the Company's operations, ushering in the period of Gustaf Van Imhoff's *redress*, the full scope and consequences of which are beyond the bounds of this discussion.

Van Imhoff proposed a complete overhaul both of the rates themselves and their method of construction, leading to a sharp increase in the formal specification both of the ship and its manner of operation in 1742. There followed a protracted struggle between, on one side, Van Imhoff and Charles Bentam, the English shipwright he retained and, on the other side, the Dutch shipwrights who were supposed to implement the new rates.

At the turn of the eighteenth century shipwrights in the Netherlands maintained a high degree of autonomy relative to their counterparts in Britain, France and Iberia, where standard plans and drawings, expanding bureaucratic control and the practice of "whole moulding" had weakened the individual shipwright's power relative to the institutions in which he worked,

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[229] Ota Atsushi: *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java: Society, State and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830* (Brill, Leiden, 2006). Blusse: *Strange Company*. Steur, J. J: *Herstel of Ondergang*.

in a process of formalizing and rationalizing shipwrightry that began in the sixteenth century and continued well into the nineteenth.[230] The organization and standardizing influence of the Oostenburg yards did not reduce the authority of the master shipwrights in Amsterdam, who continued to build by eye and by tradition, without drawn plans or pre-set moulds.[231] They were able to guard their local knowledge because they built ships that matched the Company's specifications faster and cheaper than they could be built anywhere else in Europe.[232] Van Imhoff's proposal would introduce English methods to the Company's yards, however, severely curtailing the autonomy of the master shipwrights and potentially threatening the basis of their expertise. As early as 1727 English shipwrights had been employed in the Amsterdam Admiralty yards, where they had introduced scale plans and standard moulds, in order to ensure that warships made at the yards would conform in practice to the lines set down by their rates.[233] Van Imhoff's new rates, commissioned from Bentam, included plans, moulds and scale models, to be distributed to each of the six VOC yards in order to ensure compliance

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[230] McGee, D: "From Craftsmanship to Draftsmanship: Naval Architecture and the Three Traditions of Early Modern Design" *Technology and Culture* 40.2 (1999) 209-236. For more on the ship builders' disputes in England in the eighteenth century, see Roberts, L, Schaffer, S & Dear, P: *The mindful hand: inquiry and invention from the late Renaissance to early industrialisation.* (Amsterdam, Bristol: KNAW, 2007).

[231] In Rotterdam some moves toward formal plans were made as early as 1727, by master shipwright P. van Zwijndregt. There is no indication, however, that van Zwijndregt was required to tender such plans to the Chamber or that they acted as restrictions on his shipbuilding practice. Hoving et. Al: *In Tekening Gebracht*.

[232] Barbour, V: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping."

[233] Hoving et. Al: *In Tekening Gebracht*.

both with the Englishman's specifications and with his methods (Figure 1.4: Bentam's drawing for a first rate ship of 150 feet length, 1742).[234]
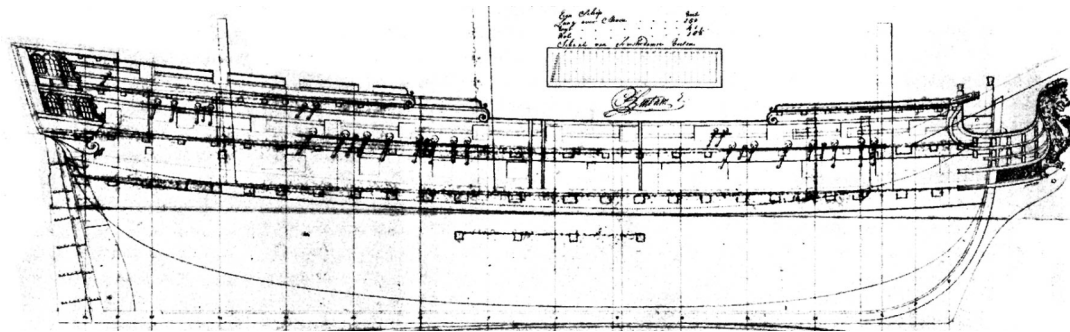

Figure 1.4: Charles Bentam's drawing for a first rate ship of 150 feet length, 1742. Collection of the Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam.

The new rates were significantly different from everything that had come before them, being narrower for their length and somewhat deeper but lighter built than ships of the Dutch tradition. They were criticized both by VOC shipwrights and shipmasters over the five years after their introduction, for exhibiting several bad sailing flaws. By 1749 they had been extensively revised, through input from the Company's shipwrights, governors and merchants in the Indies, and from designs taken from two French ships captured in 1746.[235] In 1749 new rates were issued, ostensibly still based on Van Imhoff's rates of 1742, and on the basis of these rates the Company's *retourschepen* reached their most standardized and stable forms, which lasted

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[234] Kist, B: "A short discussion."

[235] Kist, B: "A short discussion."

until the outbreak of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War in the 1780s.[236]

As stated above, it remains unclear to what extent ships built after 1749 conformed to Van Imhoff's plans. The period of Van Imhoff's *redress* is remarkable, however, for the degree to which the design of *retourschepen* became a matter of open debate, between the *Heren XVII*, the directors and shipwrights and shipmasters, such that the most detailed records, providing the clearest image of shipboard space and organization, emerge during the period 1742-1750. Where resistance to the rates of 1697 took the form of quietly-implemented design changes that eventually became the norm, resistance to the rates of 1742 was expressed openly and documented, and the image of the VOC ship was challenged and reworked. Conceptually, then, in terms of its received image, the standardized ship of 1749 had no competitors until the 1780s, and although it lost its hegemony, it remained unrevised until the end of Company operations in 1795. We can thus state that the plans of 1749 provided an accurate representation of the standard East India ship, as understood, at least, by the *Heren XVII*, in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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[236] Dillo, I. G: *De Nadagen.*

4. The end of standardization and the age of improvisation

The fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-4) broke the continuity of the Company's trading operations and shipbuilding, and greatly reduced its fleet. The VOC lost a number of important Indies factories: those that remained became places of defensive retreat rather than expansion. The war also introduced Dutch naval vessels to the Indian Ocean for the first time, breaking the VOC's claim to exclusive presence. Despite the involvement of the naval forces, however, the incursion of British vessels into Dutch harbors and over Dutch trade routes simply could not be resisted: the Dutch navy, long outstripped by those of Britain and France, was reduced to escort and convoy duty for a limited subset of the VOC's ships.[237]

For the purposes of this study the period after 1780 is one in which the type of the *retourschip* declined, together with the business idiom of the VOC. *Retourschepen* continued to operate, but during the war were shown to be vulnerable and almost completely ineffective in returning rich Indies cargoes to Patria. Several strategies were attempted to deal with the military threat from Britain. VOC trade was masked under the flags of foreign nations, using ship types not associated with the Company, and involved lengthy diversions into neutral harbors or along novel routes. The use of warships as escorts was limited: in addition many small ships were employed to spread out the risk to

[237] Dillo, I. G: *De Nadagen*.

returning cargoes.[238] In general, it can be said that the previous age of standardization entirely gave way to one of improvisation and adaptation to external factors the Company could neither control nor meet directly.

After the war some efforts were made to rebuild the Company's fleet of *retourschepen*. These ships were expensive to build and maintain, however: given the Company's large debts consequent on the war, they had to be supplemented by cheaper vessels. The craft that best fitted the new, impoverished and improvisational character of the VOC's enterprise were *fluits, hoekers, kats* and *pinks*, vessels adapted for fishing and cargo carrying over shorter distances, notably on the safe Baltic routes (Figure 1.5: section of a katschip, from Decquer, 1682). These were pressed into service during the war to serve on the *retour* route.[239] The adoption of these simpler, smaller ships was a rational design response to the changed circumstances of the East India trade. Virtually unarmed and capable of operating with a minimal crew, they represented a much smaller and more focused investment than the *retourschip* had done: they were the simplest craft the Company could deploy with a reasonable hope of retrieving cargo from the Indies.

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[238] Dillo, I. G: *De Nadagen.*

[239] DAS I. *Pinks* are not closely described in the VOC's records: the model assumed here is drawn from the plans provided by shipwright Fredrik af Chapman in his widely-distributed 1768 work on European merchant shipping. Chapman, F. *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria* (Bielefeld; Berlin: Delius/Klasing, 1968).
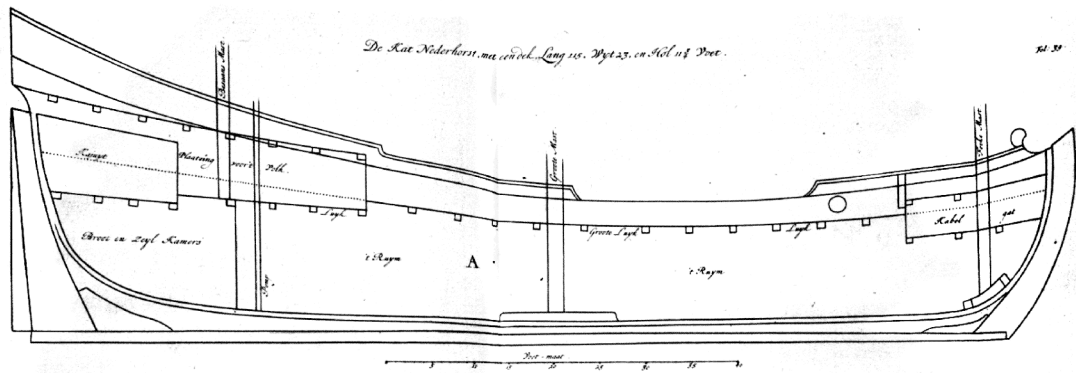
Figure 1.5: Section of a katschip, an inexpensive trading vessel of 115 feet length, from Decquer: *Middelen*, 1682. AN Collectie Hudde 22.3.

Given the ineffectiveness of Dutch sea power during the war and the relative stability provided by British naval presence in the Indian Ocean afterward, these ships can be seen as a response to a trading environment brought more into line with that of the more lawful and peaceful Baltic or north Atlantic: environments in which the key to Dutch success had been vessels that were cheap to build, crew and maintain, most notably *fluits* and *katschepen*.[240] Before the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War the Company's attachment to the *retourschip* had been criticized as a sign of decadent conservatism, of a failure to keep up with changes in the business environment brought about by other companies.[241] The smaller ships offered efficiency in place of tradition.

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[240] The *pink*'s predecessor, the *fluit*, has been used by historians as an index of the safety of trading environments, its relative cheapness being bought at the expense of defenses. Before 1780 the *fluit* was considered adequate for many intra-Asian routes but not for carrying the return cargoes, which attracted pirates, privateers and, during wartime, the naval vessels of foreign powers. Barbour, V: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping." Ketting: *fluytschepen*.

[241] DAS I.

I would suggest, however, that the *retourschip* represented an entirely different model of Indies trade: it supported the infrastructural requirements and ideational models of the Chartered Company mode: one of limited, armed interaction with the Indies for the purpose of extracting commodities, under which the French *Compagnie des Indes* operated until it was ousted by the English East India Company, and which the latter was to pursue until the 1840s, when it was finally supplanted by outright colonialism.[242] The use of *hoekers* and *pinks* on the *retour* route betokened a desperate measure by a company that was essentially bankrupt; it was incapable of supporting the "mercantilist" Chartered Company mode; to the extent that it was heralded as a new method of business in the VOC, it represented an abandonment of that mode. In practical terms, the smaller ships could not replace the r*etourschip* in three important ways: they could not act as warships in conflicts between the Company's suppliers in the Indies, they could not adequately transport troops between factories in the Indies to support those same conflicts, and they could not carry the very large numbers of men that the Company continued to require in order to support its Asian networks in the face of devastating wastage from malaria and other tropical diseases.

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[242] French East India ships showed a substantially similar form and spatial division to those of the VOC between 1720 and 1770, being easily mistaken for warships under sail, while the English East India Company supported a variety of trading ships with purpose-built warships. Boudriot, J: *Compagnie des Indes 1720-1770*. (Editions A.N.C.R.E., 1993). Boudriot, J: *The Seventy-four Gun Ship: a practical treatise on the art of naval architecture*, trans. Roberts, D. H. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986-1988), vols. 2, 4. -), vols. 2, 4. Sutton, J: *The East India Company's Maritime Service, 1746-1834: Masters of the Eastern Seas* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2010).

Enormous manpower was required to support the idiom of expansionist, armed trade that characterized the Chartered Companies: to build up infrastructure, to maintain trade webs, to defend forts and administer ports, to negotiate diversifying trades and changing priorities for products in Asia and in Europe. As long as the VOC intended to expand or maintain its extensive holdings in Asia it would require such continual feeding with men: a requirement that was exacerbated by the famously high mortality at Batavia in the later eighteenth century, when more than half of all new recruits died within six months of arrival.[243] *Hoekers* and *pinks* could not support this demand in the 1780s and 1790s: to the extent that they took over from *retourschepen*, they eroded the ability of the VOC to sustain its investment in the East. When the colonial project was picked up again and intensified in the nineteenth century, it was in the context of a new Dutch state and a model of intensive commodity production on Dutch administered lands. This new formation, which required direct state involvement and deliberate settlement, also required quite different modes of shipping.[244]

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[243] Blusse, L: "An Insane Administration and Insanitary Town: The Dutch East India Company and Batavia 1619-1799, in Betts, R. F., Ross, R., Telkamp, G. J (eds.): *Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context*, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985). Brug, P. H. van: *Malaria en Malaise.*

[244] Eyck van Heslinga, E. S. van: *Van Compagnie Naar Koopvaardij: De Scheepvaartverbinding Van De Bataafse Republiek Met De Koloniën in Azië 1795-1806. Hollandse historische reeks 9.* (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1988).

Conclusion

I have dwelt at great length on the type of the *retourschip* and on the issue of which ships were considered typical because I believe it is necessary to understand in order to understand both how individual ships the whole VOC fleet were perceived. It is necessary not only for the trivial reason that the direct evidence contained in the archives and in wreck sites regarding individual vessels is always too fragmentary and incomplete to support a coherent account without the armature of the typical ship to hold it together for the historian and the archaeologist. It is also indispensable because a common understanding and consciousness of the type and its normative function informed the understandings of Company directors, shipmasters, shipwrights, officers, and all those making and hearing depositions in the court records that inform later parts of this dissertation.

As a type, the *retourschip* entailed a certain division and use of space, a certain set of social relations and code of behaviors between the ranks and functions of its many crewmen, a certain standard method of operation and certain expectations regarding the nature of service aboard, of contract terms, of relations with the Indies and of individual involvement in the VOC's collective enterprise. Critically, the type informed how specific ships and voyages were read, even when those specific cases deviated from it. Throughout its history the Company employed a great variety of ships, many of which did not conform closely to the *retourschip*, especially within the intra-Asian fleet, while even the most standardized of *retourschepen* underwent

significant changes in spatial layout and manning from voyage to voyage. Nonetheless, all these variable ships and situations were apprehended, at least in official documents and court records, as conforming to a certain typical model. This model should not be seen as unitary through time: it was the object of constant negotiation. Moreover, the *retourschip* was not the only normative model the Company employed: the *fluit*, the *pink* and the directors' *jacht* also appear in the Company's records as distinctive types with their own social organizations.[245] But where ship types and differences were unmarked, where general rules for the Company were concerned, where "the Company's ships" were invoked, the *retourschip* provided the implicit, assumed standard against which difference had to be asserted. In court, deponents referred to the *retourschip*'s spaces and social relations in order to express their testimony in terms of a common language. These same deponents were questioned and judged according to an assumed sociospatial idiom which entered the realm of discourse only when it was violated.

The model replaces the data

The "silent" (or "hegemonic") character of the type poses challenges for the historian; as the typical ship has been naturalized in directors' and historians' discourses, so it has tended to evade discussion, while structuring understandings of shipboard orders and events. The typical ship allowed for a streamlining of records, permitting Company bookkeepers to be ignorant of

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[245] Ketting: *fluytschepen*.

shipboard operations and ships to be reduced to strings of numbers: quantities of crew and cargo. By providing readymade explanations and a fabric to fill in the gaps between sources, the model of the typical ship can lead to an exaggerated impression of a common culture between ships and shipping traditions. Ketting points out a number of cases of "exceptional" behaviors from his scouring of early company records, where a seaman was recorded as sharing his bunk with his wife against the assumption that no women were allowed among the crew; where passengers and junior officers carried on liaisons below decks and subverted the Company's structures of command.[246] In light of such exceptions, Ketting has questioned to what extent such unexpected behaviors point to a great variation in norms between ships; whether they invalidate the typical models, and what kind of latitude was given VOC seamen to improvise their own rules and schemas.[247] Although we can identify these cases as falling outside the normative model, that model does not help us to assess just how uncommon or "aberrant" they are.

The model replaces the Company and the Indies

As an entity, constructed at a particular time by particular authors but made to appear the eternal product of an authorless tradition, the typical ship recalls Benedict Anderson's discussion of the supposedly eternal nation.[248] The VOC

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[246] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk.*

[247] Ketting: personal communication.

[248] Anderson, B. R. o'G: *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1983).

ship shares some other characteristics with the nation: in its first decades the Company possessed no lands in the East, its ships formed its only "sovereign territory."[249] As factory settlements were established, these inherited their command structures from the model of the ship, implicitly confirming the ship as the basic model of the VOC polity (just as Pierre-Yves Manguin has identified the ship as a model for the basic social unit in maritime Southeast Asia), even as it was subordinated to land-based authorities.[250] Perhaps most importantly, however, the ship rather than the factory remained the visible face and dominant image of the Company in the Republic. As the Company's correspondence and products bore the image of the ship, so the ship could stand for the imagined geo-body of the Company—a mobile body, ferrying spices and treasures from the East and also a distributed, serialized body, at once acting uniformly across the unimaginable spaces of the Indies, holding them within its commercial web, and reducible to the physical constraints of the individual hull, captain and crew, presenting an orderly and above all European image of profit-making enterprise for the Company's directors, shareholders and sponsors in the Netherlands government.[251]

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[249] Pieter Geyl makes this point explicitly in his introduction to Bontekoe's *Journal*, calling the Governor General and Council of the Indies "an itinerant government… [which] could be said to be on their own territory only when they were on board ship" Geyl, P: "Introduction" in Bontekoe, W. Y: *Journal*, 10.

[250] Manguin, P-Y: "Shipshape Societies: boat symbolism and political systems in insular southeast Asia" in Marr, D. G. & Milner, A. C. (eds.): *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th centuries* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1986), 187-213.

[251] In *Siam Mapped* Thongchai Winichakel charts how cartographic representation and instruction gave a physical presence to the emerging boundaries of Siam, constructing a "geo-body" for the nation, a feature assumed in European nationalisms, which, however, formed a novel conception in Siamese understandings

By standing in for the whole apparatus of government, extractions and territorial control, and by recalling the pre-company paradigm of venture and return, the *retourschip* served to mask the degree to which the Company became an organization of the Indies. Over the two centuries of its operation large populations of Company servants and their dependents accumulated at the main factories in the East, the number of active European servants in the Indies growing to nearly 25,000 by 1783.[252] In the eighteenth century this total included men recruited in Europe, the Asian-born children of previous generations of Company servants and large numbers of Chinese and other Asian sailors, principally drawn from levies.[253] Until the later eighteenth century, both Asian-born Europeans and Chinese sailors were restricted to serving in the intra-Asian network and prevented from traveling west of the Cape. The public face of Jan Compagnie in the Netherlands therefore remained that of a European man who had journeyed to the East and returned with goods he had won there, rather than that of an Asian or mixed-heritage man who came to Europe to sell his own production.[254] By using the

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of the polity, based on the model of the Mandala State, a set of concentric relations centered on the king. Thongchai Winichakel: *Siam Mapped: a history of the geo-body of a nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

[252] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*, 87.

[253] Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company*. Taylor, J. G: *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in colonial Indonesia*. (Madison Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); Lucassen states that in 1791 roughly two thirds of the Company's seamen were of Asian origin. Lucassen: "A multinational and its labor force."

[254] Lucassen: "A multinational and its labor force."

retourschip as its mark of identity, the Company could obscure not only its intra-Asian fleet but its entire establishment in the Indies from its European consumers and shareholders.

Historical agency of the ship and the type

The pre-company paradigm and its effects on the *retourschip* also played important roles in shaping the physical form of the Company's establishment in the East. To a large extent the VOC inherited the paradigm from the Portuguese, not only via Linschoten's *Itinerario* but also through the relations and expectations the Portuguese had established among their trading partners around the Indian Ocean.[255] Thomas Roe, English ambassador to the Mughal Court in the early seventeenth century, stated baldly that the idiom of trade in the Indies necessarily involved the show and use of arms, because: "onely for a little feare wee were entertained, but for our trade or any thing we being not at all respected."[256] The pursuit of armed trade via its principal vector, the trader-warship, demanded the transportation of hundreds of men non-stop for up to 15 months and the return of a quantity of cargo sufficient to justify the enterprise. These demands gave rise to a certain set of parameters for both ships and ports, which in turn dictated the contours of the Company's networks. Such parameters included deep-water harbors or standing

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[255] Subrahmanyam, S: "Taking Stock of the Franks: South Asian views of Europeans and Europe, 1500-1800," *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 42.1 (2005), 69-100.

[256] Roe, T. Sir, & Fryer, J: *Travels in India in the Seventeenth Century* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1993), 33.

infrastructures such as cargo lighters that could overcome the silty shallows that surrounded many Indies riverine ports; warehouses sufficient for gathering the large supplies of spices required to make their voyages profitable; and facilities for supporting and maintaining both the ships themselves (since they were frequently damaged en route) and the large crews that operated them.

The production of trader-warships further took on its own momentum: the commercial strength of Dutch shipbuilding lay in the volume of ships the Netherlands produced and the speed with which they were finished.[257] The Republic's unmatched shipbuilding capacity provided one of the chief advantages the VOC enjoyed over its competitors in its first decades.[258] The efficiency of high-volume production was achieved not only through the construction of massive shipyards such as Oostenburg but also through the creation of networks and secondary industries for supplying the materials suitable to such ships. The Company's supply chains brought together timber from the Baltic ports, Scandinavia and the upper Rhine, a domestic metalworking industry, and seamen both from around the Atlantic seaboard

[257] Smith, A: *Wealth of Nations*, Barbour, V: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping."

[258] Milton's *Nathaniel's Nutmeg* paints a clear and vivid picture of the relationship between shipbuilding capacity and influence in the Indies: where the English Company through the first quarter of the seventeenth century had difficulty sending a single ship to the Banda islands, sole source of mace and nutmeg, every two years, the VOC maintained a fleet at Bantam, and later Batavia, that could act as a base for military operations around the spiceries. Milton, G: *Nathaniel's Nutmeg, or, The True and Incredible Adventures of the Spice Trader who Changed the Course of History* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1999).

of Europe and from landlocked provinces of Germany and central Europe.[259]

Each of these supply chains worked toward a known product, in the case of Baltic timber involving specialist scouts, who sought out trees with specific shapes in order to provide particular timbers for well-understood classes of vessels. Each also fed the economy of the Republic: teleological accounts of the fall of the VOC tend to emphasize its ever-growing expenditure, while ignoring the contribution that expenditure made to the Republic as a whole.[260]

The price of efficiency, however, was inflexibility. The chief economic virtue of the standard *retourschip* was that it made shipping a known cost. Its chief vice was that it made shipping a fixed cost, and kept questions from being asked about the source of that cost and how to remedy it. In the second half of the eighteenth century the English East India Company was able partially to separate its protection and shipping costs, using British navy support in the Indian Ocean and a variety of both heavily- and lightly-armed merchant ships. The VOC could not follow suit, partly because the monopoly status on which it depended had been granted on the basis of the pre-company paradigm, which assumed that the Company's ships would be able to provide their own

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[259] Davids, C. A & Lucassen, J: *A Miracle Mirrored: the Dutch Republic in European perspective*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[260] Woodruff Smith suggests that the ultimate purpose of the Dutch spice trade may have been the stabilization of trade relations with Eastern Europe, which supplied both timbers and grain to the Republic. Smith states that the VOC was concerned to stabilize the prices for spices such that those commodities might be used as currency in persistent contracts for grain and other basic food products grown in Poland. Smith, W. D: *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

protection and extend the power of the State alongside its economic interests. While the paradigm held, the *retourschip* was the ideal vehicle for carrying both its physical and its ideological freight. The paradigm relied on a certain conception of the Indies, however, as a space beyond the control of any European power: a *mare librum* of open competition that offered risk and reward in equal measure. As British control spread across the Indian Ocean this space-beyond-control was steadily excluded, and the *retourschip* lost its niche.

CHAPTER 2: SPACE ABOARD THE TYPICAL SHIP

This chapter undertakes an analysis of the spatial orders operating aboard the type of the VOC *retourschip* in order to examine how they contributed to producing the social structures that the Company relied upon to conduct its business in the Indies. Since the chapter deals with the type it necessarily deals principally with representations and discourses of the *retourschip* rather than with individual ships. These representations have been drawn from a variety of sources, including shipbuilders' plans, accounts by Company directors and financial officers, and the memoirs of soldiers and sailors. They are necessarily dominated, however, by the agendas of the Company's elites, who had the power to render their descriptions into prescriptions for how ships should be made and operated, and who were able to assimilate non-elite voices into their own ordering narratives.[261] The chapter also leans heavily on the work of historians, archaeologists and sociologists who have contributed, since the Company's founding, to an ever more complex but still largely homogeneous and canonizing view of the ship, its society and the meanings assigned to its various spaces.

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[261] Vilhelm Aubert makes the point that when policy-makers play the parts of sociologists it is impossible to pry their understanding of society apart from their domination of it; a point later elaborated into Foucault's theory of power/knowledge. Aubert, V: *The Hidden Society*. (Totowa, N. J.: Bedminster Press, 1965), 22. Foucault, M: *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the human sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

In the twentieth century, the deep sea sailing ship has come to be discussed alongside a number of other institutions, including boarding schools, asylums, prisons and factories.[262] Goffman described such "total" institutions as forming worlds unto themselves that deliberately isolate their inmates from the wider world outside their walls.[263] The purpose of this isolation is to enable the institutions to act as crucibles for working changes on their inhabitants, fitting them for social and professional roles tied to the specific purpose of the institution, and most of all for institutional life. Accordingly, such institutions provide the minimum necessary means of living for their inmates, while eradicating all markers of extra-institutional affiliation, allowing for a "purification of identity" built around the needs and identity of the institution.[264] Foucault has termed such institutions "heterotopias:" places where the ordinary rules of society are "represented, challenged and overturned," the ship itself providing "the heterotopia par excellence," its inmates exchanging the various disciplinary regimes found ashore for an equally but differently restrictive shipboard regimen.[265] Aubert and Arnor have listed a number of characteristics of sailing ships that are common to "total" institutions, including strict discipline, a rigid social hierarchy and a clear separation between two broad classes of inmates, termed "inhabitants"

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[262] Goffman, E: "the characteristics of total institutions," in *Asylums* (New York: Anchor books,1961), 14-28; 148-9.

[263] Goffman, E: "the characteristics of total institutions"

[264] Aubert: *The Hidden Society* 245.

[265] Foucault, M: "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16 (Spring 1986), 22–27.

and "visitors," who exert some measure of control over the shared environment and are controlled by it, respectively.[266]

The focus of this chapter is on this final point: it compares the spatial organization of the *retourschip* with those of other institutions in order to characterize the ship as an institution and to explore the role played by the space of the ship in forming the institution of the Company. A variety of theoretical lenses are applied in order to examine the work done by shipboard spatial organization in constituting the proper relations between Company servants, the means of operating the ship and recognized modes of resistance and back-channel communication.

Methods

As discussed in the previous chapter, the analysis of a type is different in important ways from that of an individual vessel. How then might we examine typical space and what should we expect such an analysis to tell us?

In his study of the bungalow, Anthony King describes how architectural types develop in order to house, encode, spread and reproduce social institutions.[267]

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[266] Aubert, V. & Arner, O, *The Ship as a Social System.* (Oslo 1962). Aubert: *The Hidden Society*. This division of inmates into visitors and inhabitants forms a cornerstone of Markus' sociospatial analysis of a range of total institutions. Markus, T: *Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993).

[267] King, A. D: *The Bungalow. The Production of a Global Culture* (London ; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

By shaping practices they reproduce modes of behavior, territoriality and existence. The bungalow, although it changed its pattern and meaning many times, always entailed a separation from its surroundings in the form of a distinct spatial compound: it stood generally for a life apart, whether that aloofness suited the social structures of the British colonies in Africa or the suburbs of London.[268] Considered in this way the type is related to Barthes' "myth:" it naturalizes and enwraps a narrative that makes coherent a set of social relations or ideas.[269] We may therefore ask what sort of institution the *retourschip* embodied and what social relations it naturalized.

Related to its production of social categories, the type further encodes a cognitive scheme that organizes the world, selects what is important from what can usefully be ignored, and allows agents to take action. Giddens has described such cognitive schemes as providing an *umwelt*, or perception of the world, which forms both "a defensive carapace," filtering and sorting experience to exclude dissonant elements, and "the means whereby [the subject is] able to get on with the affairs of day-to-day life:" that is, a basis for determining appropriate actions.[270] The following analysis is intended therefore partly to tease out the Company's systems of classification from its

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[268] King, A. D: *The Bungalow,* 1

[269] Dovey, K: *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form* (London: Routledge, 1999).

33. Barthes, R: *Mythologies,* trans. Lavers, A. (London, Paladin, 1972).

[270] Giddens, A: *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 40, 187.

shipboard space, and partly to see how such systems were expressed in spatial features and relations, to ask what and how the spaces taught Company seafarers regarding the cognitive schemes proper to their enterprise.

Finally the type essentializes the complex of social relations and ideas it houses into a prototype or model of and for individual buildings, by which they might be understood and against which the individual example is measured.[271] Where the model encompasses the entire ship as a unit it provides an exemplary standard of "shipshape" order. Models also exist for subdivisions of the ship, however, forming spatial domains with separate meanings, the officers and their spaces being subject to different standards and rules from the men. The meanings of such domains could change, depending on the actors involved and their circumstances, and on the relations and rituals in play. The officers' saloon carried one set of meanings for the sailor brought before the ship's council for disciplinary hearings and another for the merchant's wife or maid who might lodge there as a guest. This is the level at which most accounts of shipboard life begin; with a mapping out of social distinctions between groups aboard expressed in the circumstances and performances of their habitation, like that described by Melville in *White Jacket*, between the open, airy souls that tended the topsails, the dour, ungenerous denizens of the lower decks and the officers who

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[271] Here I use the term "prototype" loosely, to mean the image held in mind whenever the term "ship" was discussed in Company records.

slipped their "quarterdeck faces" on and off as occasion demanded.[272] The

VOC ship may not present as complex and ritualized an entity as Melville's

frigate. It was further never blessed with as vivid a recorder as Dana proved

for the American merchant service.[273] Nonetheless, a spatial analysis based on

the anecdotes of shipboard life provided by de Hullu and Ketting can

illuminate the roles of particular places in the micropolitics that operated

aboard.

The three fields of inquiry identified above bear some relation to Lefebvre's

categories of perceived, conceived and "lived" space.[274] Lefebvre's categories

address the ordering of space (a) through working and living practices, (b)

through representations and descriptions that support cognitive schemes of

classification and hierarchies, and (c) through the ascription of ritual

meanings, respectively. Although each of these aspects of spatial analysis is

supported by some theoretical work, no single author or body of theory

provides a method for dealing with all of them. I will therefore be combining a

rather eclectic collection of methods to address the ship's spaces. Further, the

uses and meanings of the ship's spaces are constituted not only by the

behaviors and performances associated with them but also by the physical

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[272] Melville, H: *White-jacket or, The World in a Man-of-war* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

[273] Dana, R. H: *Two Years Before the Mast: a personal narrative of life at sea,* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1964).

[274] Lefebvre, H. *The production of space*. (Oxford, Cambridge Mass.: Blackwell, 1991).

forms and equipment or furniture that articulate them. A total architectural

analysis of the ship, encompassing materials, decoration, sight lines, access to

light and air flow, and other environmental factors, is therefore required in

order to form an adequate account of the meanings of shipboard spaces. My

primary means for dealing with these features will be to identify those that

appear necessary to the coherence of the type and examine how they

contribute to "an assemblage of interrelated dialectics" in order to define and

characterize the spaces aboard.[275]

Sources on shipboard space

In order to understand the spatial and architectural order of the *retourschip* it is

necessary to reconstruct its interior spatial division and partitioning.

Unfortunately this is one of the most speculative and difficult aspects of VOC

ship reconstruction.

On the negative side, as noted in the previous chapter, the *retourschip* presents

something of a moving target, undergoing various changes through the

Company's history. Moreover, no thorough or complete records for interior

divisions exist in the archives, even after Van Imhoff's *redress* of VOC

shipbuilding between 1742 and 1750, when deck plans became part of the

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[275] Kim Dovey identifies several such dialectics that appear relevant to the ship, delimiting inside/outside (referring to social groups and access), local/global, home/journey, private/public and, following Deleuze and Guattari, striated/smooth. Dovey, K: *Framing Places,* 56. Deleuze, G, Guattari, F & Massumi, B: *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988).

shipbuilding process.[276] No complete VOC wreck has been excavated sufficiently to permit a full reconstruction of its interior partitions.[277] Even if such an excavation were conducted its utility for defining the type of the ship over the Company's history might be limited. Before the first formal rates of 1697 there appears to have been considerable variation in shipbuilding methods and norms, shown in the surveys of Company ships conducted by Decquer and Nieuwstad in the 1680s.[278] After van Imhoff's reforms the outline of ship hulls were standardized, as were the arrangement of cabins on the quarterdeck and the number and dimensions of capstans. Beyond these points, however, we know that throughout the Company's history its ships underwent significant spatial re-ordering between voyages, with interior partitions being added, removed or shifted, the better to accommodate each voyage's particular balance of cargo, crew and passengers, such that any reconstruction would necessarily be limited in its applicability across the fleet.[279]

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[276] Ab Hoving has identified some plans drawn by Van Zwijndreght in 1727. Plans were not generally adopted, however, until Van Imhoff employed Chales Bentam during the redress of 1742-50. Hoving, A. J, Lemmers, A, Gerritsma, J, Harpen N. T. van, Lantau T, Zwijndregt P. P. van: *In Tekening Gebracht: de achtiende-eeuwse scheepsbouwers en hun ontwerpmethoden* (Amsterdam: de Bataafsche Leeuw, 2001).

[277] The largely complete wreck of the Amsterdam remains buried in mud off the south coast of England: to date the foundation devoted to the preservation of the wreck has not managed to raise sufficient funds to attempt a full excavation. Rooij, H. H. van, Gawronski, J: *VOC-schip Amsterdam: gebleeven, op de kust van Sussex tusschen Hastings en Beachyhead gestrand* (Haarlem: H. J. W. Becht, 1989), 72.

[278] AN Collectie Hudde, 22-23: Decquer, H: *Middelen om Uit te Vinden de Ware Ladinge der Scheepen na hare Groote,* (1685).

[279] In particular, partitions were often added to the cargo hold to separate those goods destined for different Chambers from one another. To date only one drawing has

On the positive side, we know that some characteristic features of the type were in place from the Company's first decades, since charter documents (*besteks*) dating back at least to 1593 mention the lower deck, koebrug, gun room and other elements.[280] Witsen indicated in 1670 that the general layout of ships was consistent across different scales, while paintings and models produced during the seventeenth century show largely consistent numbers and placement of external features that hint at similar interior spatial arrangements.[281]

Periodization

In order to focus the discussion of spatial order and address the ways in which the evolution of the type changed I have therefore identified two distinct "moments" for analysis, which show important differences. The first moment belongs to the most commonly studied period of VOC history; the "golden

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been found that shows the layout of partitions so added to a ship for its return voyage. Jerzy Gawronski: personal communication.

[280] Ab Hoving provides the *bestek,* or charter, for a *pinas* of 85 Amsterdam feet. This vessel was smaller and lighter than the later *retourschepen*; following Witsen it would have resembled its larger brethren closely in all ways but scale, however. Hoving, A. J, Emke, C, Sigmond, P, Weerd, G. de, *Het schip van Willem Barents: een hypothetische reconstructie van een laat-zestiende-eeuws jacht* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 128. Hoving A. J, Witsen, N, Weerdt G. A. de: *Nicolaes Witsens Scheeps-bouw-konst Open Gestelt* (Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, cop. 1994).

[281] These include the fore- and stern-castles, gun ports and details of rigging, which are broadly similar to those of English ships at the same period. Daalder, R: *Schepen van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam, Zutphen: Stichting Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum, Walburg Pers, 2005). Sigmond, J. P & Kloek, W. Th: *Sea Battles and Naval Heroes in the seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, Nieuw Amsterdam, 2007).

age" of the middle seventeenth century, and is most closely described in Witsen's *Aeloude*.[282] The second moment is that of governor van Imhoff's *redress,* from 1742 to 1750, during which unprecedented documentation of the Company's new, standardized methods of shipbuilding was generated. This moment is supported both by ship plans and models, and by evidence from two largely intact wrecks, those of the *Hollandia* (built and wrecked in 1742) and the *Amsterdam* (built and wrecked in 1749).[283]

Model vessels

There is a secondary, but non-trivial, reason for choosing these two specific moments for a comparative study: each has been the subject of a large, multidisciplinary research project resulting in the creation of a full-size replica ship, the first moment being represented by the *Batavia*, built under the direction of Willem Voss and completed in 1985, the second by the *Amsterdam*, built by the Stichting Amsterdam Bouwt Oostindiëvaarder between 1985 and 1990.[284] Each project prompted and collected a large body of research, aimed

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[282] Witsen, N: *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum. Ofte Aaloude en Hedendaagsche Scheeps-bouw en Bestier,* (Amsterdam, 1671, reprinted Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1994).

[283] Gawronski, J: De "Equipagie" van de Hollandia en de Amsterdam: VOC-bedrijvigheid in 18de-eeuws Amsterdam (Amsterdam, 1996). Gawronski, J.K: *Hollandia Compendium: a contribution to the history, archeology, classification and lexicography of a 150 ft. Dutch East Indiaman (1740-1750)* (Amsterdam: Rijks Museum, 1992). Rooij, H. H. van & Gawronski, J: *VOC-schip Amsterdam.*

[284] Each project involved a large team of researchers and shipbuilders. Each is also the subject of some controversy, regarding both the construction methods used and the final product. Both replicas are open to the public, the *Batavia* at the Bataviawerf in Lelystad, Netherlands, the *Amsterdam* beside the Scheepvaartmuseum in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Parthesius, R, Roeper, V. & Wagenaar, L (eds.): *De Batavia te Water* (Amsterdam- De Bataafsche Leeuw 1995). Vos, W., Parthesius, R et al: *Batavia*

specifically at aiding a complete reconstruction of a vessel. Such

reconstruction projects are of incalculable value as means for raising

questions, especially regarding technical details of construction and practical

matters of spatial arrangement, which tend otherwise to go unasked.[285] The

replicas themselves cannot necessarily be taken as authoritative statements

regarding the forms of particular historic ships: both acknowledged errors in

the building of each replica and some significant filling-in of detail from

varied sources require the researcher to approach them critically and

cautiously.[286] Nonetheless the replicas help considerably with the challenging

task of visualizing the structures and grasping the relations between their

component spaces, whether in pursuit of practical conclusions regarding their

use or of some more nebulous sense of their aura or psychological impact on

the viewer. Regarding the purpose of this chapter, each replica may also be

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cahier 1-5 (Lelystad: Stichting Nederland bouwt VOC-Retourschip, 1990-1994).
Research and experimental archaeology devoted to seventeenth century shipbuilding
continues at Bataviawerf, in the current project, to build a replica of the warship
Zeven Provincieen, which served as Michiel de Ruyter's flagship during the Second
Anglo-Dutch War. Zee, A. van der & Klein, A: "De Zeven Provincieen: building a
replica of a famous Dutch warship," *Nautical Research Journal* 50.4 (Winter 2005), 1-8.

[285] Swogger, J-G: "Image and Interpretation: The Tyranny of Representation?" in
Hodder, I. (ed.): *Towards Reflexive Method in Archaeology: the Example at Catalhoyuk*
(Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of
Cambridge, 2000), 143-152.

[286] Ad van der Zee: personal communication. Among the acknowledged errors in the
Batavia replica, the addition of round gun ports under the quarterdeck and the
significant overbuilding of the koebrug are obvious examples. The Amsterdam
replica presents a much more challenging case, being built from tropical Iroko wood
rather than historically-appropriate oak, and suffering from considerable distortions
especially in the heights between decks, with the officers' cabins being significantly
shortened in order to compensate for an oversized hold and lower deck, while
presenting a consistent external appearance. Jerzy Gawronski: personal
communication.

approached as an attempt to recreate a type rather than a particular vessel, through the assembly of typical features. The two replicas mentioned above therefore contribute significantly to the following spatial analysis, supplemented by further sources where the replicas appear to offer atypical or incomplete evidence. Where the terms "*Batavia* subtype" and "*Hollandia* subtype" are used, they refer to the evidence provided by the reconstructions and to *retourschepen* of their respective moments.

Of the two replicas, that of the *Batavia* is necessarily based on a broader synthesis of wider-ranging sources. No primary documents exist that describe the physical form of the ship that the current *Batavia* purports to replicate, while the fragments of the wreck that have been found show nothing of the ship's interior.[287] The replica has therefore been assembled out of models, such as that of the Prins Willem, contemporary paintings and prints, such as those by the Van de Veldes, and descriptions such as those by Bontekoe, Both and Coen, along with largely achronic statements regarding shipboard order, from Van Dam's *Beschryvinge* and de Hullu's articles.[288] As a result the replica is

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[287] Green, J. N: *The Loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie Retourschip Batavia, Western Australia 1629: an excavation report and catalogue of artefacts* (Oxford, England: B.A.R., 1989).

[288] Ketting, H (Sr.): *Prins Willem: Een Zeventiende-Eeuwse Oostindiëvaarder.* (De Boer maritiem. Bussum: Unieboek, 1979). Kamer, H. N: *Het VOC-Retourschip: een panorama van de 17de- en 18de-eeuwse Nederlandse scheepsbouw* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1995). Parthesius et al: *De Batavia te water*. Daalder, R: *Maritieme Meesters: scheepvaart op tekeningen 1600-1800 (*Haarlem, Amsterdam: Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum, 1997). Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie. Uitgegeven door Dr F. W. Stapel*. ('s-Gravenhage, 1927-43). Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: vijf artikelen studie over de werkgelegenheid bij de VOC* (Groningen, 1980).

ambiguous in two ways. First the boundaries of the moment it represents are difficult to trace, stretching over most of the seventeenth century. Second, the replica comprises a series of selections from palettes of options, which show variance on important points, including whether the decks should be continuous or staggered fore-and-aft, or flat or curved up at the ends, and the number and arrangement of cabins on the quarterdeck.[289] The following sections and plans drawn from the replica may therefore be taken only as a partial description of a possible ship. That ship closely resembles Ab Hoving's reconstruction of Witsen's "typical" *pinas,* differing only in some details incidental to the argument.[290]

The finished *Amsterdam* replica deviated significantly from the research on which it was based. That research is best represented instead by the longitudinal section and deck plans prepared for the *Hollandia Compendium* (Figures 2.1, 2.5 & 2.6. Section and deck plans of the *Hollandia*

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[289] These synthesizing works include the models demonstrating Amsterdam and Rotterdam construction methods by Ab Hoving, the full size replica ship *Batavia*, illustrated books derived from models built during the seventeenth century, and a series of speculative reconstructions of the ships of famous seventeenth century explorers, also by Hoving. Hoving A. J, Witsen, N, Weerdt G. A. de: *Nicolaes Witsens Scheeps-bouw-konst Open Gestelt* (Franeker: Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, cop. 1994). Hoving, A. J. & Emke, C: *The Ships of Abel Tasman* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000). Hoving et al: *Het schip van Willem Barents.*

[290] The most obvious differences are among the cabins on the quarterdeck (including the addition of a small cabin on the poop deck of the replica) and the placement of gun ports: Hoving devotes a more generous section of the front of the ship to storage for supplies than does Voss' team, excluding guns from the space under the forecastle. Other differences are of degree rather than kind: Hoving's gun room is more generous than on the *Batavia*, and he provides hints of some cabins subdividing the forward part of the saloon. Hoving et al: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst.*

reconstruction).[291] These plans were drawn from a model built to support

Bentam's revised first rate *retourschip* in 1742.[292] The *Batavia* and *Hollandia*

sections used in the present work (Figure 2.1) have been adapted for clarity by

the author from drawings in the *Batavia Cahiers* and *Hollandia Compendium*,

respectively.[293] Deck plans for the Batavia replica (Figures 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) are

the author's drawings, interpreted from the section and from direct

observation of the replica.

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[291] Drawn by A. Hoekstra, from research data compiled by Ab Hoving and Jerzy Gawronski. Gawronski, J.K: *Hollandia Compendium.*

[292] Ab Hoving: personal communication. The model contains several partitions of unknown purpose. These have been greyed on the plans reproduced in the present work.

[293] The present author has removed extraneous detail from Hoekstra's section of the *Hollandia* to clarify the spaces aboard and recolored the masts, anchor bitts and other features grey to indicate that these only partially obstruct movement. The *Batavia* section has been extensively adapted from a drawing in the *Batavia Cahiers* to the same ends as those for the *Hollandia*, to clarify the separate spaces and draw a distinction between partial and total obstructions. Gawronski: *Hollandia Compendium*. Vos et al: *Batavia Cahiers.*
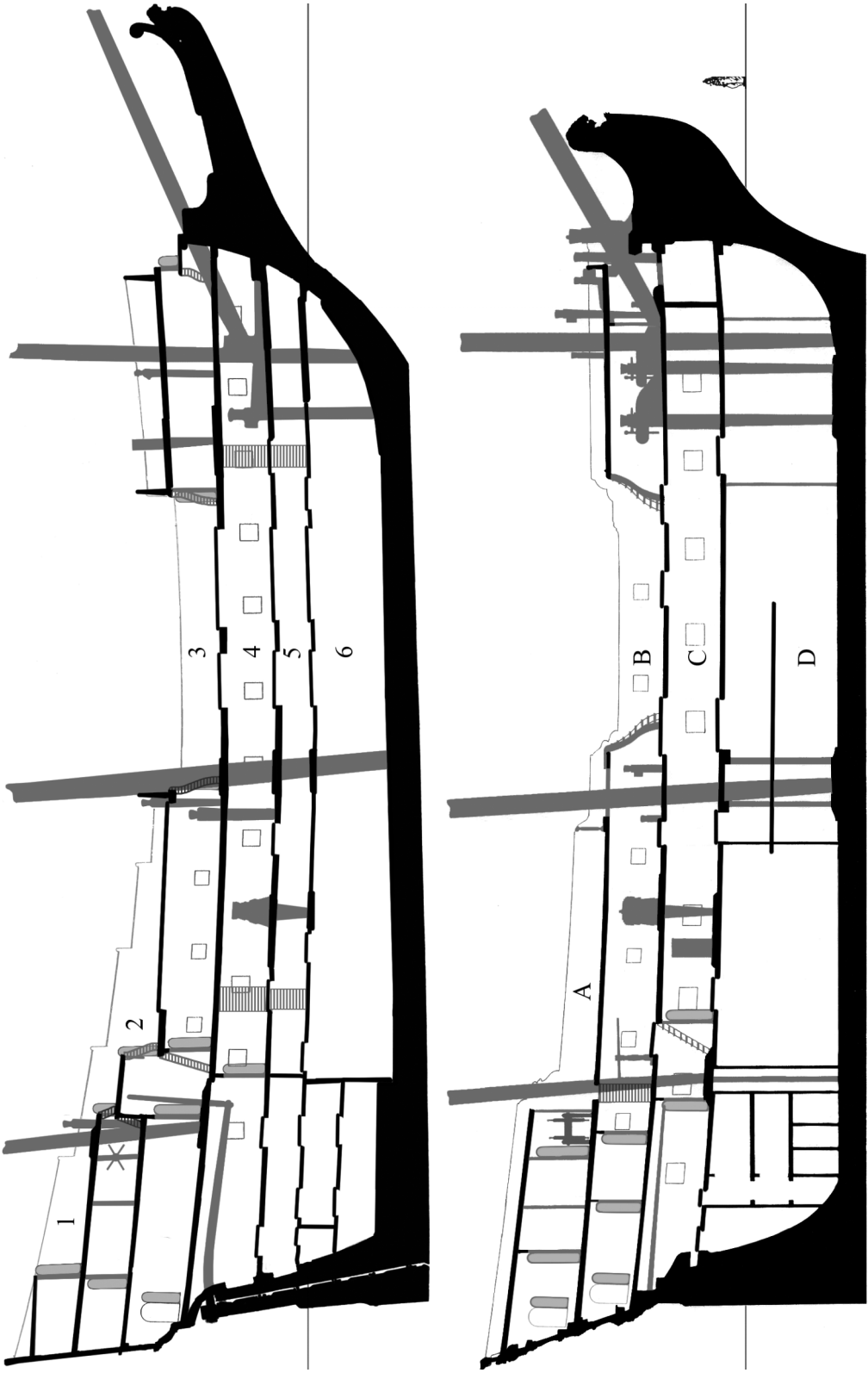
Figure 2.1: longitudinal sections of the *Batavia* replica (top) and *Hollandia* reconstruction (bottom).

Lookout's cabin

Poop
deck

1. Poop deck

Foredeck

Pit

Quarterdeck

Raised deck over schans
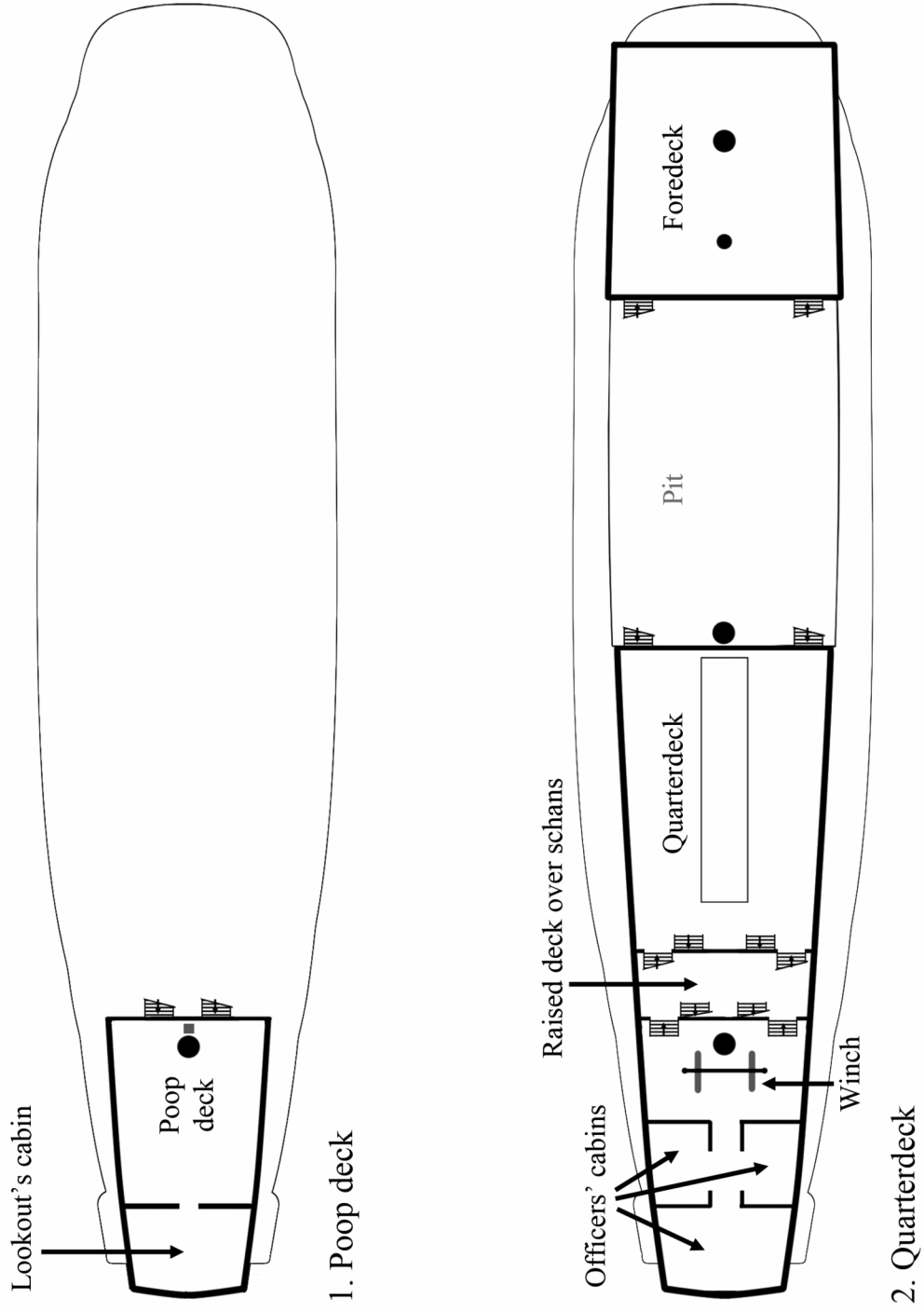
Officers' cabins

Winch

2. Quarterdeck

Figure 2.2: Deck plans of the *Batavia* replica, showing (1) Poop deck and (2) Quarterdeck and foredeck.

3. Upper deck

Labels on upper deck: Head, Forecastle, Capstan, Pit, Space under quarterdeck, Schans, Gallery, Saloon, Gallery

4. Lower deck

Labels on lower deck: Anchor bitts, Cable locker, Galley, Capstan, Lower deck: crew quarters, Steward's pantry, Gun room
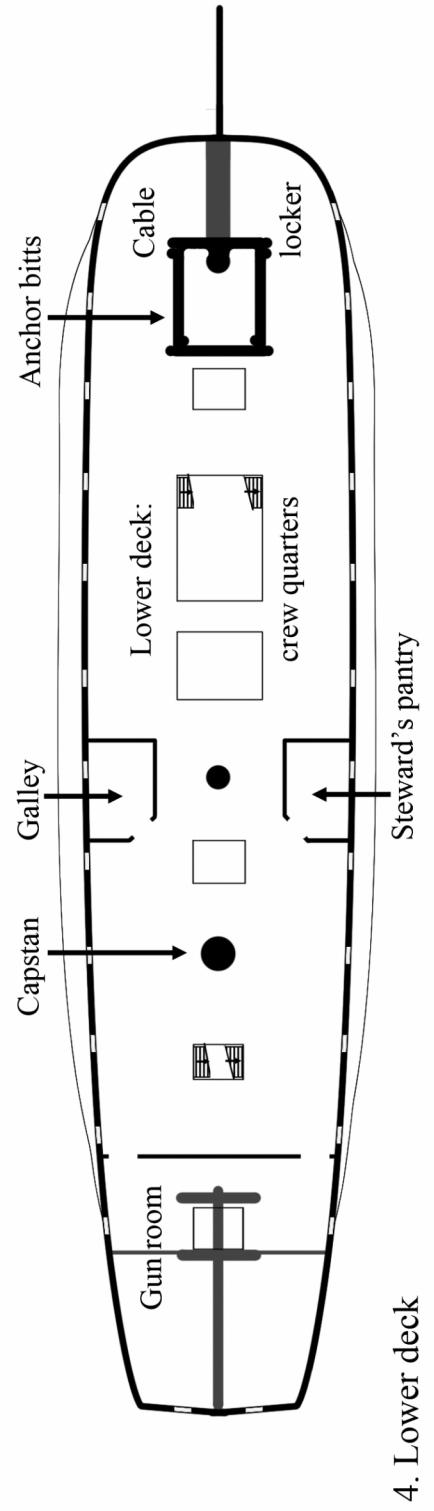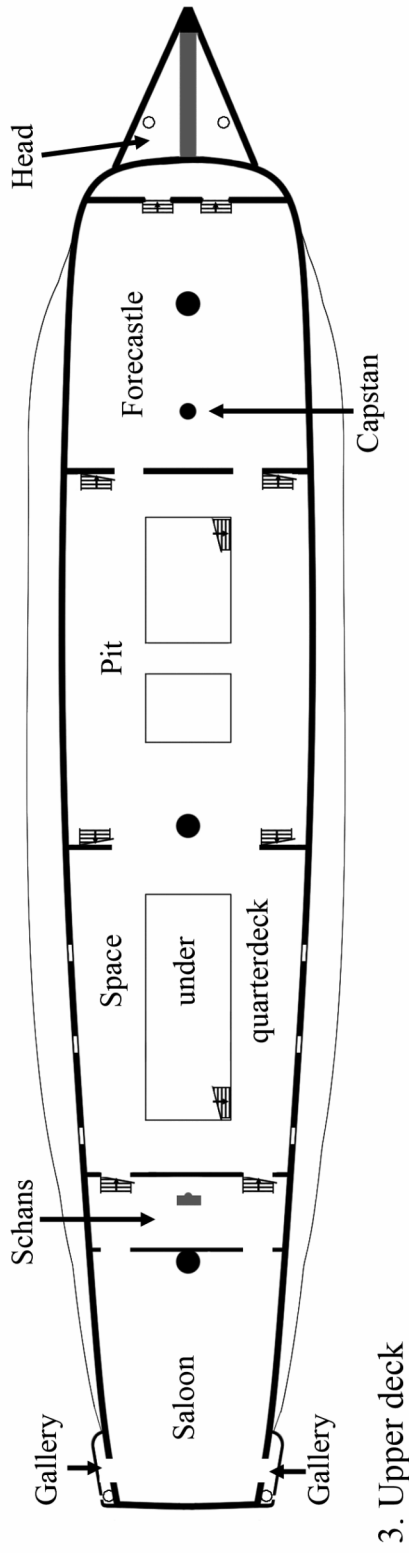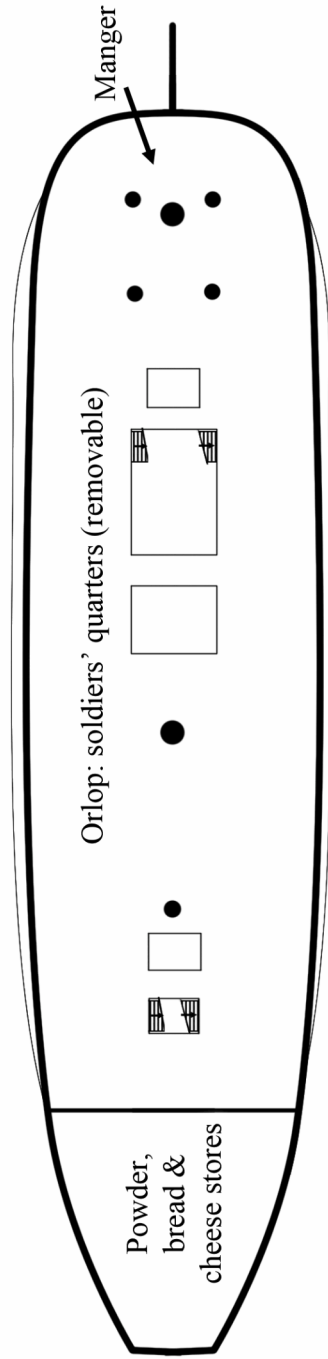
Figure 2.3: Deck plans of the *Batavia* replica showing (3) Upper and (4) Lower decks.
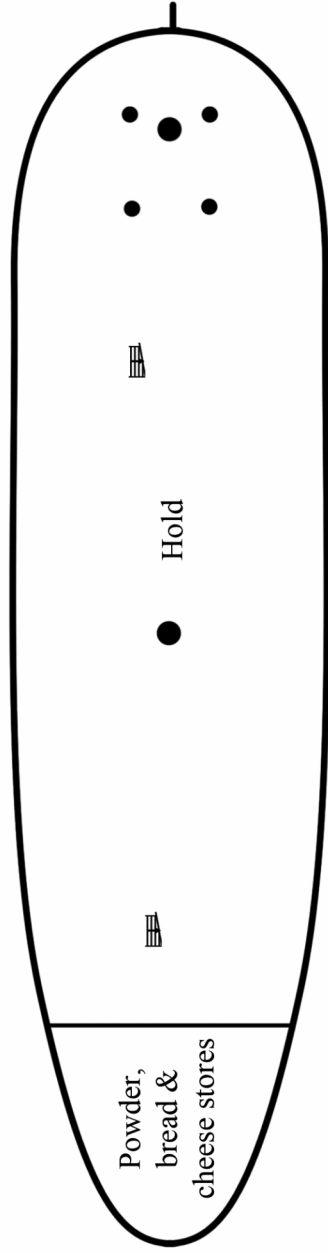
Figure 2.4: Deck plans of the *Batavia* replica showing (5) Orlop and (6) Hold.

Manger

Orlop: soldiers' quarters (removable)

Powder,
bread &
cheese stores

5. Orlop

Hold

Powder,
bread &
cheese stores

6. Hold

Officers' cabins. **a**: captain's bedroom, **b**: first mate, **c**: chief surgeon, **d**: second mate, **e**: third mates

A. Quarterdeck
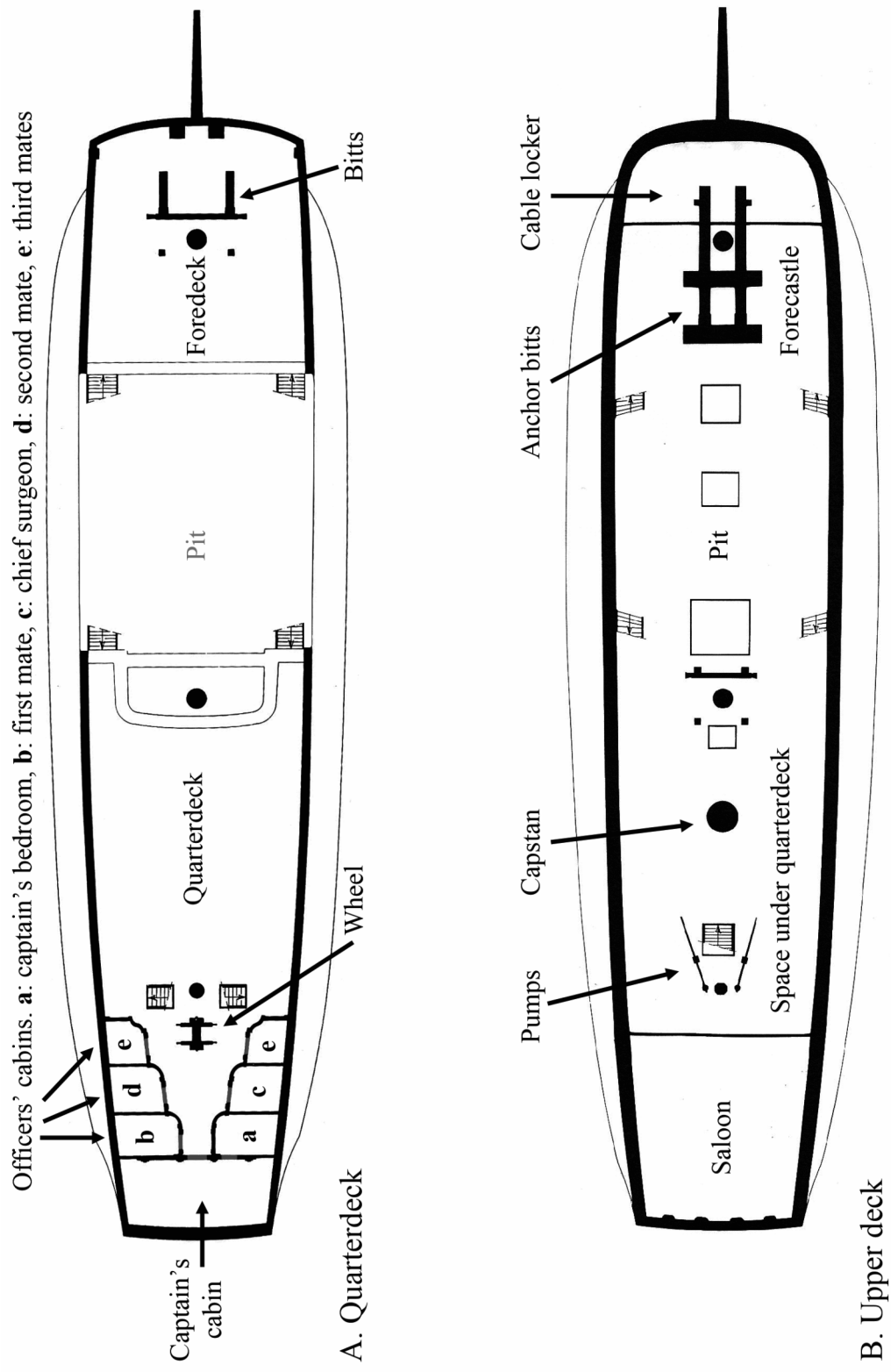
B. Upper deck

Figure 2.5: Deck plans of the *Hollandia* reconstruction showing (A) quarterdeck and foredeck, and (B) upper deck.

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C. Lower deck

Cable locker
Rope store
Lower deck crew quarters
Galley
Steward's pantry
Hold ventilation pump
Sail room
Gun room

D. Hold

Manger
Water hold
Cargo hold
Shot locker
Powder, bread and cheese stores
Water & victuals hold
Cable locker
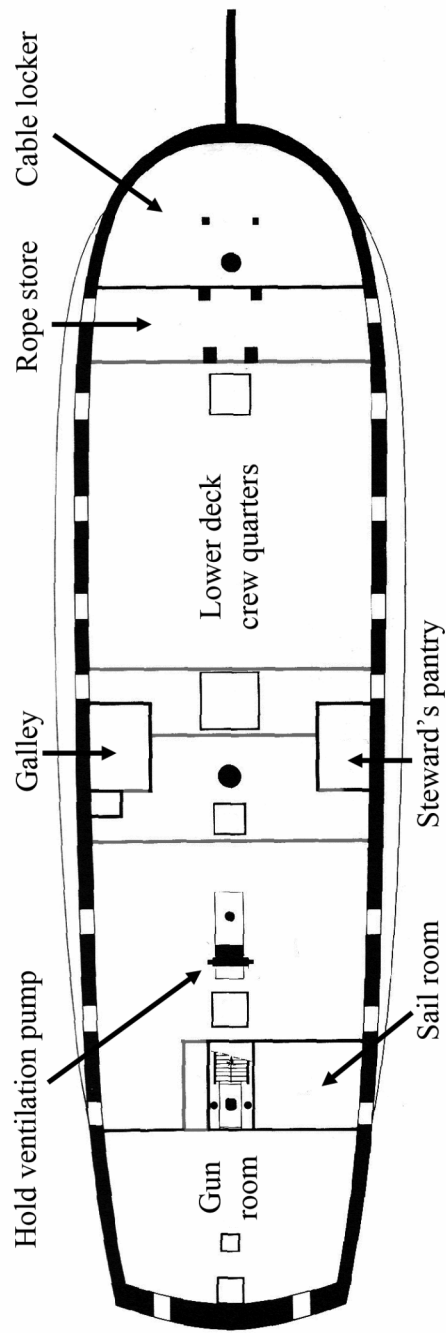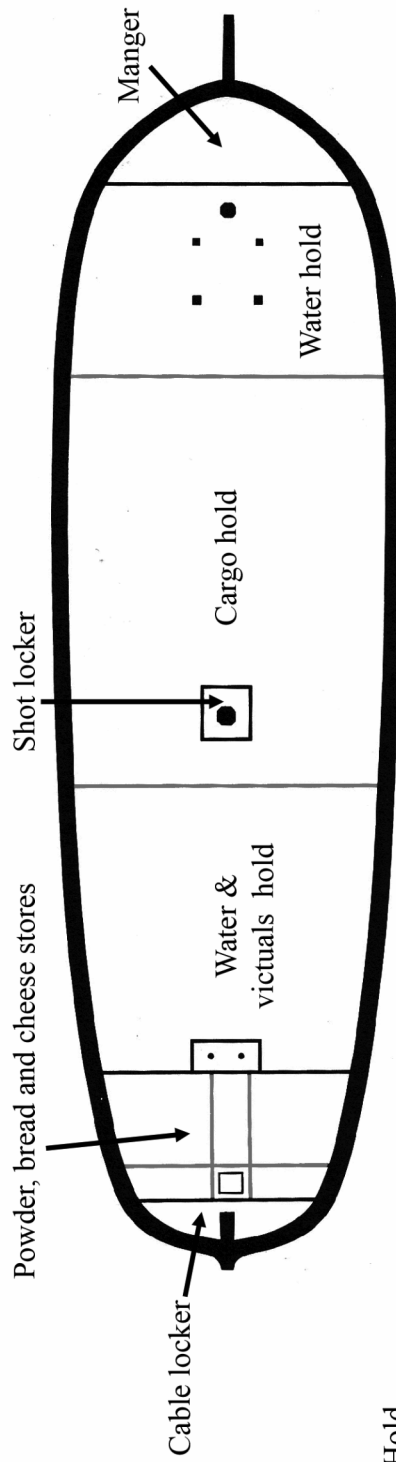
Figure 2.6: Deck plans of the *Hollandia* reconstruction showing (C) Lower deck and (D) Hold.
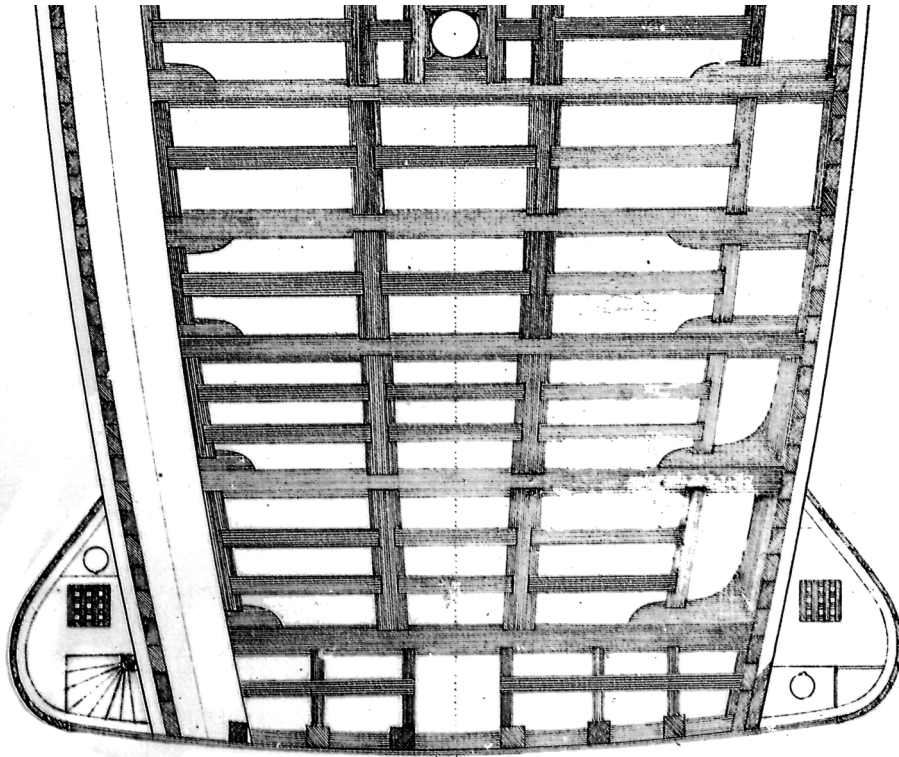
Figure 2.7: Extract from Van Zwijndregt's plan of the "second" (upper) deck of the *Noord Nieuw Landt* (1750), showing the galleries, which contained the officers' toilets, and a staircase connecting the saloon with the captain's cabin. Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrick, Rotterdam, Netherlands. T1127-16.

The *Hollandia* plans reveal much detail concerning interior division but are not complete: details including the stern galleries are missing. Galleries are shown, however, on deck plans drawn by VOC shipwright Pieter van Zwijndrecht in 1750 for the *Noord Nieuw Landt*, a second rate that conforms to the 1749 revision of Bentam's 1742 design (Figure 2.7: P. van Zwijndrecht: Second (upper) deck of the VOC ship *Noord Nieuw Landt*, 1750: detail).[294]

[294] Bentam's first and second rates were very similar in design and lines. The second rate, however, was criticized for instability and lack of seaworthiness. Having seen the new ships performing in Asia, van Imhoff suggested the lengthening of this rate

The first and second rates were essentially the same except for their overall scale: the two rates differed in length by 6.7% (10 Amsterdam feet) and in most other proportions by 9% to 9.5%. The arrangement of features such as quarterdeck cabins are known to have been the same between the rates. In common with other contemporary ships' plans, the plan of the *Noord Nieuw Landt* shows the lack of attention paid to interior spatial divisions by shipwrights. Partitions must be inferred from the positions of the capstan, pumps and other fixed equipment. Further, no plans exist for the upper decks: the forecastle, quarterdeck and poop deck.

The lower and upper decks were vital to the ship's overall structural integrity: the "knees" that fastened the decks to the outer hull were among the strongest and most difficult to obtain elements in the whole ship.[295] These elements are therefore well recorded in shipbuilding manuals and in plans such as those by van Zwijndregt. Superstructures above the upper deck were less important to the survival of the ship and therefore to the business of master shipbuilders: they were correspondingly more prone to variation and adaptation between

from 136' to 140'. Kist, B: "VOC shipbuilding Policy 1740-1750" in Gawronski, J.K: *Hollandia Compendium*, 34-75.

69. Pieter van Zwijndrecht's plan for the Noord Nieuw Landt, a 140' East Indiaman reflects this lengthening, but is otherwise comparable with an undated 136' plan he also penned, held at Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrick, Rotterdam (MMPH 1180-19). The plans for the lower and upper decks of the Noord Nieuw Landt are MMPH T1127-15 and T1127-16, respectively.

[295] Ab Hoving, personal communication.

voyages. Even more ephemeral was the koebrug (orlop), where outward-bound soldiers were quartered: the framework on which this deck rested provided important bracing for the hull. The planking of the deck was regularly removed on return voyages, however, to maximize the space for valuable cargo.

In the sections shown in Figure 2.1, grey indicates features that only partially obstructed access: the most significant of these were doors that could be locked to control access physically. The masts, bitts (reinforced posts to which the anchors were attached), and capstans (the winches manned by up to 40 men at a time, used for raising and lowering the cargo, anchors, spars and sections of masts) were vital to the ship's operation but served as landmarks rather than as structuring obstructions. In the plans shown in Figures 2.5 and 2.6 grey is used to indicate doors and features that are present in Bentam's model and therefore reproduced in the *Hollandia Compendium* plans, but which do not accord with written descriptions of contemporary ships, in particular the divisions shown on the lower deck immediately fore and aft of the galley/steward's pantry and mainmast, which if present on actual ships would significantly change the space of the lower deck. The status of these partitions is unclear—whether they represent some feature of Bentam's design or artifacts of the model builder's methods or serve some other function is unknown.

Technical differences

As can be seen from Figure 2.1 the partitioning of space aboard the *Batavia* and *Hollandia* subtypes is similar. A number of small differences between the two indicate changes in the institution of the *retourschip* that will be explored below. Three significant technical differences between the subtypes strongly affected the spatial order aboard in various ways and require special explanation: those concerning the steering gear, the capstans and the orlop.

Dutch ships in the seventeenth century were generally steered using a whipstaff: a vertical lever attached to the tiller and operated by one or more sailors in a space variously known as the *schans* (fortress), *stuurplecht* (steering platform) or *pothuis* (steerage), according to instructions shouted by an officer observing from the quarterdeck.[296] In order for these instructions to be passed to the helmsmen an opening was added to the quarterdeck with a roof raised over it, through which the steersmen might hear and possibly see the officers (shown immediately to the left of the number 2 on Figure 2.1).

English translations for the distinctive room devoted to the whipstaff are all rather vague and unsatisfactory, referring merely to "the place of steering." I

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[296] Beylen, J. van: "stuurplecht," "pothuis," "schans" in *Zeilvaart Lexicon: Viertalig Maritiem Woordenboek*. (Weesp: De Boer Maritiem, 1985). According to van Beylen the term *schans* (fortress) refers more generally to the sterncastle of ships, and therefore the defensible officers' quarters, being a term carried over from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when such castles formed a physically distinct part of the ship's structure. The term is used by Witsen interchangeably with *stuurplecht* to refer to the steering platform, however. Witsen, N: *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum.*

have therefore retained the Dutch *schans* to identify this space because of its dual function in the *Batavia* subtype, both as the place from which the rudder was controlled and as one of the first lines of defense for the officers' spaces against those of the men. One important way in which the *Batavia* replica differs from the *Hollandia* subtype is that the former shows several features intended to aid the defense of the officers' quarters against those of the men. The main access from the upper deck to the quarterdeck is hampered by a banister rail that an attacking or mutinying man would have to climb over in order to gain an equal footing on the officers' domain. The *schans* shows a boundary zone in these defensive works: access from the men's part of the ship is hampered by lockable doors and the placement of stairways directly behind those doors so as to break the impetus of a charge.[297] Access from the *schans* to the saloon is likewise controlled via lockable doors, such that the space falls within the defensible realm of the rear of the ship but outside the officers' private quarters. Control of the steering gear was related to control of the ship both practically and metaphorically: to have the helm was equated with the practice of command. Although they rarely took the whipstaff or wheel themselves the captain's closest lieutenants, the mates, were addressed as *stuursman* or steersman. Further, on all European ships of the period which showed separation of spaces and functions into rooms with a hierarchy of access, the spaces occupied by the steering gear were among the first to be restricted and made defensible. The tiller, which both whipstaff and wheel

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[297] Ad van der Zee: personal communication.

controlled, was confined in the gunroom together with other sensitive items such as the gunpowder and fuses, and placed under the protection of the master gunner. Members of the general crew were admitted to the gunroom to lay hands directly on the tiller only in extremis, during severe storms and high winds, when the whipstaff and wheel proved too weak to control the rudder.[298]

In 1725 the whipstaff was replaced on VOC ships by a wheel mounted on the quarterdeck before the cabins, which controlled the tiller through a geared system of ropes and pulleys, allowing the helmsmen (usually three in number) to steer according to their own observations and rendering the *schans* obsolete.[299] Traces of the *schans* can still be seen in the *Hollandia* subtype, however, in the staircases leading between the wheel and that part of the upper deck immediately in front of the door to the *kajuit* (saloon), which became known as the *voorkajuit* (before-the-saloon) or *kerk* (chapel). No defensive works for the officers' spaces are found in the *Hollandia* subtype beside doors: the *voorkajuit* therefore did not carry on the defensive function of the *schans*, and it does not seem always to have been separated from the space

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[298]On these occasions steering instructions were passed down from the quarterdeck by relays of men. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk En Rebellie Aan Boord Van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-±1650).* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2002).

[299] Akveld, L, & Jacobs, E (eds.): *The Colourful World of the VOC: national anniversary book VOC 1602-2002* (Bussum: Thoth, 2002).

under the quarterdeck by partitions or a door of its own.[300] Nonetheless, the *voorkajuit* continued to have special importance as a place of gathering for religious services and for announcements by the officers before the crew.

Both the capstans and the orlop were redesigned during Governor van Imhoff's *redress* of the Company's ships in the 1740s. Van Imhoff chose the English shipwright Charles Bentam as the architect of his *redress* in 1742 because of a general sense that the VOC was falling behind the highly successful English Honourable East India Company.[301] Bentam's program involved reforming both the methods of Dutch shipbuilding and the ships produced to conform to current English practices: his designs produced ships that were clearly modeled on English traditions, as exemplified by the merchant ship *Falmouth* (Figure 2.8: inboard profile of the merchant ship *Falmouth*, built at Blackwall, 1752).

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[300] Beylen, J. van: "kerk. " in *Zeilvaart Lexikon*. The presence of a "*kerk* or *voorkajuit*" persisted to the end of the Company. In the late 1780s the Company built ten fast-sailing, light "packet boats" for the express reason of carrying news and orders quickly between Patria and the East. These modest ships were very different from the *retourschepen*, bearing two masts and carrying a total complement of only 24 men. Nonetheless, they numbered a kerk among their spaces, as a separate room between the saloon, cabins and space for the general crew with its own door. Tempel, K van der: "'Wij hebben amok in ons schip': Aziaten in opstand tijdens drie terugreizen op het einde van de achttiende eeuw" in *Muiterij: oproer en berichting op schepen van de VOC*, Bruijn, J. R & Eyck van Heslinga, E. S. van (eds.), (Haarlem: de Boer Maritime, 1980), 123-147.
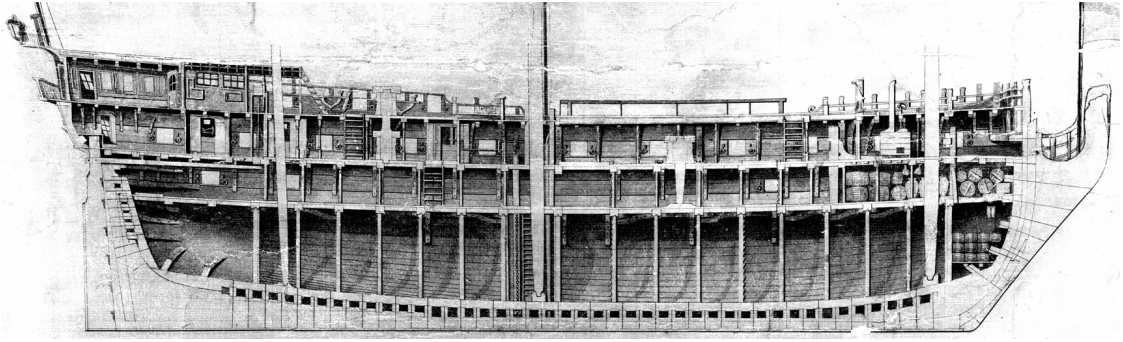
[301] DAS I

Figure 2.8: extract from the inboard profile of the merchant ship *Falmouth*, built at Blackwall, 1752, NMM ship plan MSA0069. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

These ships had very different lines from those traditionally used by Dutch shipwrights, which had been developed to work within the shallow waters of the Netherlands.[302] Their interiors also differed from traditional Dutch designs in several ways.

One of the most significant but rarely discussed of Bentam's changes was the reduction of the orlop. This half-height deck, which was only jury-rigged over the cargo hold on outward-bound journeys, was the primary lodging-place aboard ship for soldiers who were being transported to the garrisons of the Company's various Indies factories. During the seventeenth century the orlop had reportedly stretched the full length of the ship. It was cut down in Bentam's designs, however, to a set of cross braces reinforcing only 30 feet of the ship's length, stretching forward from the mainmast. Fore and aft of this platform the cargo hold rose unobstructed to the level of the lower deck. The

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[302] Hoving et al: *In Tekening Gebracht.*

implications of this change for shipboard society are not obvious from the records. It is notable, however, that during the 30 years after the radical reduction in the orlop's area, complements of up to 150 soldiers were frequently carried aboard first rates.[303] If all were indeed carried on the orlop, then crowding must have been comparable with that shown on the infamous plan of the slave ship Dutton, or on a contemporary British Man of War, with each soldier receiving at maximum between seven and eight square feet of deck space.[304] Bentam's drawing for the proposed first rate of 1742 (Figure 1.4) clearly marks the extent of this reduced orlop: the model on which Figures 2.1, 2.5 and 2.6 are based does not show an orlop at all, however.[305] I have therefore added the indication from Bentam's plans to the section of the *Hollandia* subtype shown in figure 2.1.

By 1746 the English-influenced redesigns were themselves subjected to redesign, principally with reference to French, Danish and Swedish models.[306]

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[303] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: *Op de Schepen*. Soldier complements are from DAS II.

[304] This figure is derived from the maximum width of the first rate (41 Amsterdam feet) and the length of the orlop shown in Bentam's 1742 drawing. It does not allow for interruptions to the space from accessways, equipment or the mainmast. The signal difference between the British warship and this calculated figure is that at any one time the entire complement of the warship was on duty: Jack Tar's famous eighteen inches of private space therefore expanded to three feet as the hammocks either side of him were vacated. Gawronski, J: *Hollandia Compendium*, 64, Rediker, M. B: *The slave ship: a human history*. (New York: Viking, 2007). Lavery, B: "Accommodation" in Gardiner, R. & Lavery, B: *The Line of Battle: The Sailing Warship, 1650-1840*. (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1992), 145.

[305] Gawronski, J: *Hollandia Compendium.*

[306] Kist, B: "VOC shipbuilding Policy 1740-1750," 68.

The first casualty of this reassessment of Bentam's plans was the English habit of placing the galley in the forecastle: the galley returned to the lower deck "as of old."[307] Other reforms included the addition of a hand-operated ventilation pump on the lower deck, for improving air flow around the cargo in the hold, in order to reduce spoilage in the tropical heat. In addition, the multiple capstans commonly used on VOC ships were reduced to a single, large capstan in imitation of captured French ships.

The capstan was one of the most important machines aboard: a winch used for heavy lifting, including raising and lowering the anchor, sails, masts and cargo. Operating this winch required the single greatest collective, simultaneous effort involved in working the ship: one group of men turned the capstan while others maintained tension on the ropes, frequently from the deck below, since the capstan generally ran through two decks.[308] The redesign appears to have doubled the number of handspikes (wooden levers) applied to this winch, as well as lengthening each lever, such that more than 30 men might simultaneously push the winch around, their efforts coordinated by rhythmic capstan chanteys.[309] The redesign of the capstan had several consequences for the space in which it was kept. First, with its levers in place the capstan of a first rate occupied a circle 30 feet in diameter,

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[307] AN VOC 7375.

[308] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 113. Ketting, H (Sr.): *Prins Willem*, 61-3

[309] Beylen, J. van: "kaapstander," "gangspil" in *Zeilvaart Lexikon*.

encompassing most of the width of the deck on which it was mounted, leaving

only a narrow passage to either side. The space accordingly had to be kept free

of obstructions in case anchors or spars had to be moved at short notice.

Second, with a large complement of operators, the winch had to be easy to

access. The capstan was therefore removed from the lower deck and placed

under the quarterdeck, where it could control ropes on both upper and lower

decks without the need for ropes to be passed on long, complicated run from

one deck to another, or for ropes to enter the cargo hold or orlop.[310] The result

was a significant centralizing and rationalizing of work space aboard, which

will be analyzed below.

Analysis 1. A practice-based approach

On the topic of practice, or the everyday use of space, I am guided both by

Foucault's ideas on *canalisation* and by Bourdieu's and Mauss' ideas regarding

habitus, with, however, some caveats as to the hegemonic claims made for

each.[311]

According to Bourdieu's practice theory, everyday habits and actions provide

the framework by which individuals understand and learn about the world

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[310] Gawronski, J: *Hollandia Compendium*. AN VOC 7375.

[311] Bourdieu, P: "The Kabyle House or The World Reversed," in Bourdieu, P: *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 271-283. Bourdieu, P: *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Mauss, M: "Techniques of the Body," *Economy and Society*, 2.1 (1973), 70-88. Foucault, M: *Discipline and Punish* (New York, Pantheon, 1978).

and their place in it.[312] Bourdieu borrowed the idea of *habitus* from Mauss, who had described it as a system of attitudes and regular movements of the body that are associated with particular cultural groups, and which serve to reproduce the group's identity and cohesion.[313] Bourdieu expanded these "Techniques of the Body" to include the social and built environment and all aspects of performance within it, which he described as forming the rules of the social "game" that constituted a culture. In particular, Bourdieu contended that the arrangement of space teaches individuals the dance or game of social integration and relations suitable to their gender and status by deliberately placing them in their appropriate milieu and surrounding them with signs that showed their station. Foucault emphasized the role of institutional programs in producing similar disciplinary results: institutions shape the field of possible actions available to their inhabitants such that they are directed to conform to those actions, habits and identities that support institutional governance.[314]

Ketting's account of seafaring life in the Company's first decades is heavily informed by practice approaches: he shows how the seamen's shared risks and responsibilities were clarified both in the ritual of the sea baptism and in daily work and habits. On the one hand the sea baptism served to initiate

[312] Bourdieu, P: *Outline of a theory of practice.*

[313] Mauss, M: "Techniques of the Body."

[314] Foucault, M: *Discipline and Punish*.

landsmen into the seafarers' world with a dramatic assertion of seamen's interdependence. On the other, combined, synchronized work at the capstan reinforced the need for collective effort without regard to differences of pay or experience among the hands.[315] Ketting shows likewise how sailors' jargon and distinctive clothing served dual functions; on the one hand they marked the men as seamen and separated them from landsmen, fitting them for institutional life: on the other they reinforced distinctions between groups aboard and supported the competencies appropriate to particular positions: the sailor's blue smock left his limbs free for climbing, while the surgeon's extravagantly rich costume showed his status, bound to the quarterdeck. Likewise the rich lexicon of names for ropes and parts of the ship, once mastered, helped sailors operate the ship together promptly and correctly, while providing a basis for coterie speech that excluded non-sailors from their conversation.[316] Most of all, Ketting points to the strict programming of the sailor's daily and weekly routine according to a round of watches, meal times and rest times regulated by the tolling of the ship's bell. Such regimentation is of clear relevance to the study of space, since it helped to define the seaman's world, his relations with his shipmates and his interaction with various parts of the ship.

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[315] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 174.

[316] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 76-80, 135. Bercaw Edwards, M. K: "Sailor talk," paper presented at *NASOH 2010 "Maritime Environments,"* session: *Sea Stories: Narrative Experiences Within the Oceanic Realm*, Mystic Seaport Museum,13-15 May, 2010.

Applying practice theory to the space of the *retourschip* presents a number of

challenges, however. First, the lack of a current, living practice of working

East Indiamen leaves the researcher only with representations of remembered

practices as sources: if one follows Bourdieu's observations regarding habitus

strictly, then written sources, recorded in memoirs or derived from interviews,

should provide access to practices only inadvertently or partially: the

competence of each seafarer in his social and functional roles should rather

inhibit his ability to report on what he is doing.[317] Second, the interpretation of

practice and the interpretation of cultural categories form a hermeneutic circle;

in order to understand how bodily movement through the built environment

reinforced cultural norms, it is necessary to understand how the VOC's

seafarers would have interpreted it: where there are gaps in our knowledge of

the seamen's system of signs, we may expect to find similar gaps in our

knowledge of their practices. Third, the ship presents a complex social milieu

with a large number of status distinctions to be considered. Studying the

Kabyle house, Bourdieu identified a set of oppositions, between damp and

dry, dark and light, concealed and open, cool and warm, which together

produced a female/male binary within the home and which assigned certain

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[317] The pitfalls of using memoirs for these purposes have been explored by Van Gelder: such memoirs were written for readers keen for adventure stories and for potential land-bound employers; they rarely criticized the VOC openly or failed to show their authors in a favorable light and the authors' rivals in unfavorable ones. Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997) . Trial testimonies present different, but not lesser, pitfalls. In either case the intercession of memory calls written evidence for practice theory into some question, even in Bourdieu's own work. Goodman, J. E: "The Proverbial Bourdieu: Habitus and the Politics of Representation in the Ethnography of Kabylia" *American Anthropologist* 105.4 (2003), 782-793.

parts of the house to each gender.[318] The ship was certainly a gendered space, but the system of up to 40 different professional categories and ranks that had to be distinguished and clarified appears to have had a much larger influence on the spatial order, performances and privileges of shipboard life.[319]

Bourdieu's and Foucault's ideas have also sparked extensive debates regarding the power of social structure to shape individual action and the extent of the individual's agency to resist such shaping. Both have been interpreted as crediting social institutions with an irresistible hegemonic power: since repeated practices operate unconsciously, below the level of discourse, they are held not to be susceptible to criticism or resistance.[320] The *retourschip* offers a complex case for sustaining claims of non-discursive

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[318] Bourdieu, P: "The Kabyle House or The World Reversed."

[319] Arguably, the performance of gender is heightened in homosocial environments such as the ship: aboard traditionally all-male work environments such as oil drilling platforms gender has been identified as an important factor in relations between ranks, attitudes to risk taking and accountability for mishaps. Ely, R. J & Meyerson, D. E: "An Organizational Approach to Undoing Gender: The unlikely case of offshore oil platforms," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 30 (2010), 3-34. The limitations on sources that make space difficult to analyze also pertain to gender on the VOC ship. They are compounded for gender, however, by uncertainty as to the presence or absence of women aboard, both as passengers and among the crew. Ketting cites some cases of men bunking with their wives on the lower deck in the first decades, as well as assignations below decks between sailors and the female servants of high company officers. It is impossible to determine how widespread such activities were, however. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

[320] Bourdieu, P: *Outline of a theory of practice*. Here I use the term "discourse," like Bourdieu's "field," to mean that which is available for discussion, and which has a clear and coherent program. Bourdieu argues that the submersion of ideas and programs into *habitus* renders them undiscussable or "non-discursive." R. Keith Sawyer "A Discourse on Discourse: an archaeological history of an intellectual concept," *Cultural Studies* 16.3 (2002) 433-456.

hegemony, however, since its spaces and social rituals had to be learned anew, rapidly, by every new recruit. Regarding the coercive aspects of *canalisation*, ships of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been described as paradigmatic cases of controlled, disciplinary space, where daily life was extensively programmed and regimented, and where domination was given free rein, through arbitrary corporal punishment attendant on trifling infractions and much worse consequences for insubordination.[321] Aubert and Arnor have characterized seafaring life as suffering under a tyranny of work, in which leisure time is collapsed into work time and the quality and promptness of a seaman's work provides the only index of his value.[322] In consequence, they argue, the seaman tends toward great personal responsibility and agency in his work, but an infantilized dependency in non-work areas, such as the organization of meals.[323] Against this regimentation, however, the shipboard order allowed for certain modes of resistance and anti-hegemonic communication and action that became so well-established that they too became "typical." Idioms or "tactics" of resistance included all the categories identified by James Scott in *Weapons of the Weak*, such as foot-

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[321] Schaeffer, R. K: *The Chains of Bondage Broke: the proletarianization of seafaring labor, 1600-1800* (unpublished diss., SUNY Binghamton, 1984). Rediker, M. B: *Between the devil and the deep blue sea: merchant seamen, pirates, and the Anglo-American maritime world, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[322] Aubert, V. & Arner, O, *The Ship as a Social System*.

[323] Aubert, V. & Arner, O, *The Ship as a Social System*.

dragging, the spoiling of work and petty acts of insubordination.[324] Resistance may also have played a part in some of the ritual of below-decks life described by Ketting, including mocking and *double entendre*-laden performances involving barely-masked figures of authority.[325] Even the act of mutiny showed a common set of tactics, which were evidently reproduced alongside the institutional programs as typical of the VOC ship, as shown in the next chapter of this dissertation.[326]

Space syntax

Ketting's and Weibust's studies show how shipboard environments have fostered a rich variety of distinctive individual practices and social relations and distinctions. My focus is on the overall system of spaces aboard and its role in forming shipboard social order, however. To help investigate this I have enlisted some aspects of Hillier and Hanson's space syntax analysis, which posits a system of status distinctions between spaces within a building.[327] Thomas Markus, in his study of institutions and typologies that emerged during the Enlightenment, has made extensive use of Hillier and Hanson's "spatial maps" to characterize and differentiate those institutions

[324] Scott, J: *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

[325] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 266.

[326] Certeau, M de: *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[327] Hillier, W and Julienne Hanson: *The Social Logic of Space (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

with which the ship is most commonly compared.[328] Such "spatial maps"

reduce the distinct spaces or rooms within a building to a network of

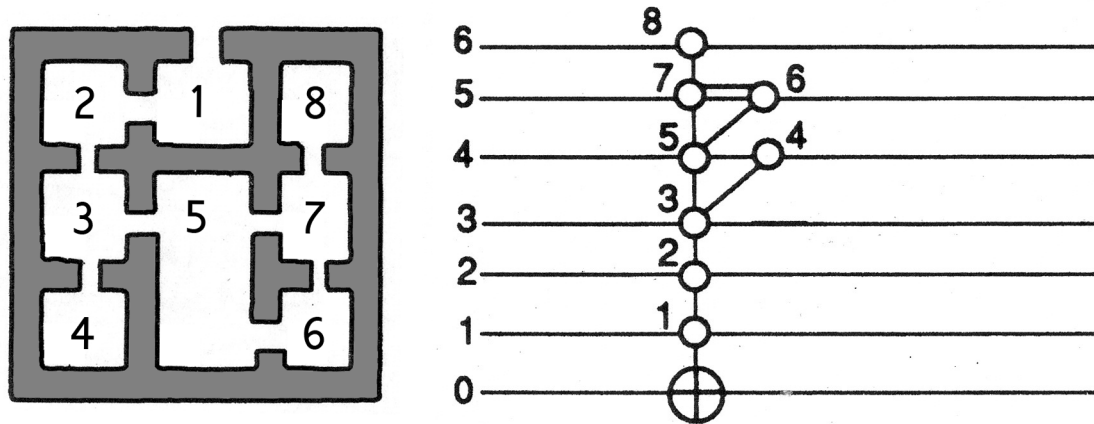connections (Figure 2.9: Floor plan and spatial map, from Hillier & Hanson

1984).

Figure 2.9: Floor plan of a simple building and its corresponding spatial depth map, from Hillier and Hanson, 1984.[329]

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[328] Markus, T: *Buildings and Power.* The comparison of ships with these particular institutions is generally traced to Goffman, although parallels have been drawn between ships and prisons at least since Samuel Johnson famously quipped "no man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned." Boswell, J: *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (New York: Modern Library, 1931). Aubert and Arnor adopted Goffman's category of the "total institution" to describe European ships, adding a general description of their institutional and spatial characteristics from prehistory to the twentieth century. Aubert, V. & Arner, O, *The Ship as a Social System.* (Oslo 1962).

[329] The depth map shows the numbered spaces arranged according to how many discrete spaces must be passed through to reach them from the building's entrance. E.g: to reach room no. 5 one must pass through 3 intermediate spaces: it is the fourth space reached on the shortest path from the entrance, so its depth is 4. Room number 8 can be reached by multiple paths, but all involve at least 5 intermediate spaces. Room 8 therefore has a depth of 6. Hillier, W. & Hanson, J: *The Social Logic of Space*.

In general, spaces closer to the building's main entrance are taken to be more public and more appropriate to casual users of the building. Recalling Aubert's classification of the inmates of institutions, these casual users are termed "visitors" and are opposed to the building's "inhabitants," who occupy spaces farther away from the entrance, or "deeper" in the building's network.[330]

Spatial maps are therefore taken principally to show both relative accessibility and the implicit hierarchies between rooms or spaces. Depth is generally taken to indicate both greater privacy and greater power.[331] The signal exception to this rule lies exactly in those total institutions with which the ship is compared, which are considered "inverted:" in these cases the "visitors" are powerless inmates, kept at great depth, while the "inhabitants" (administrators, wardens and guards) occupy positions closer to the public "front" (Figure 2.10: workhouse, schematic plan and spatial map).[332]

I have employed some aspects of spatial mapping in order to add the ship to this comparative project and characterize its place vis-a-vis the other institutions so described, paying particular attention to the "spatial narrative,"

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[330] A distinction here is drawn between the visitor's entrance or "front" and the staff entrance or "back" of an organization. Markus, T: *Buildings and Power.*

[331] Hillier, W. & Hanson, J: *The Social Logic of Space*. Markus, T: *Buildings and Power.*

[332] Hillier, W. & Hanson, J: *The Social Logic of Space.* Markus, T: *Buildings and Power* 95-119.

or series of rooms that must be experienced on the way from one part of the

ship to another.[333]
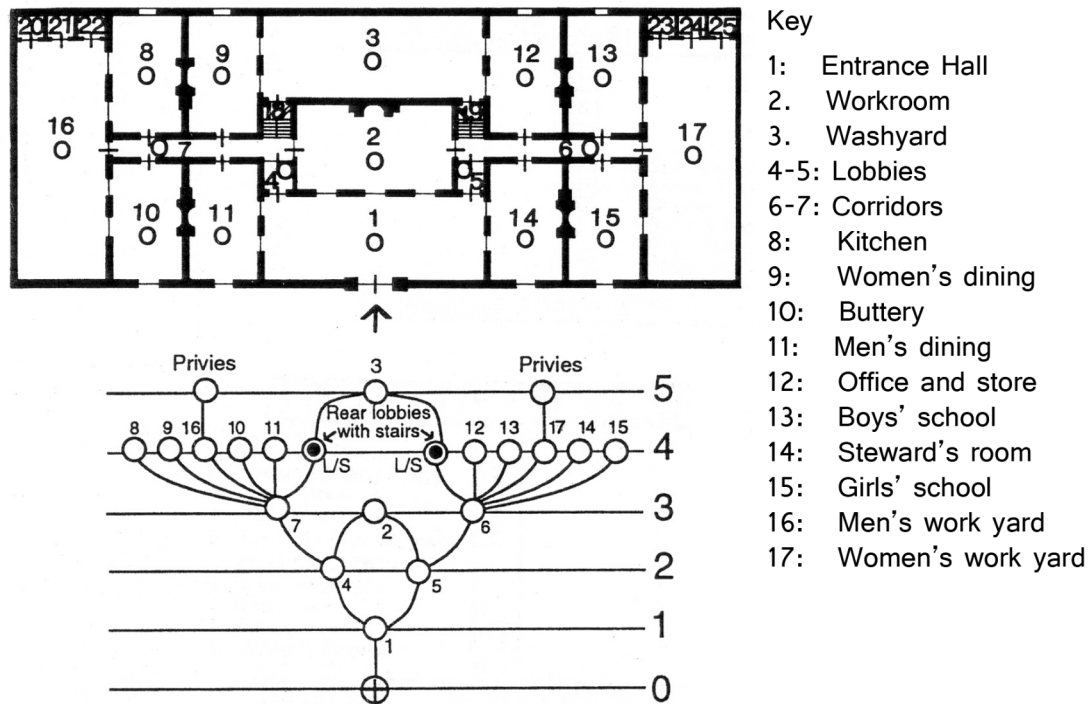
Figure 2.10: Parish workhouse, St. George's, Hanover Square, London (1725),
schematic plan and spatial depth map, from Markus, T: *Buildings and Power,*
101.

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[333] The example of such a narrative used by Hillier and Hanson is that of the enfilade
of rooms at Versailles, which separates the king's apartments from the "public"
audience chambers. As Dovey has observed, the passage through rooms that lead
ever "deeper" into the palace's spatial organization and the consequent power
differential between the public and private chambers tells only part of the story of
how the superior status of the king was impressed upon his visitors. The other part,
invisible to the methods of space syntax, is the complex narrative of mythological and
planetary figures the visitor walks through on his way to petition the Sun King.
Dovey, K: *Framing Places.* Markus, T: *Buildings and Power.* Hillier, W. & Hanson, J: *The
Social Logic of Space.*

It is important to bear in mind the limitations of such maps. The meanings of buildings, and the reasons for the patterns of connection and access that space syntax traces, are based on complex cultural and historical matrices: they refer to social structures, discourses and practices that are not themselves revealed by space syntax.[334] Further, the nature of individual connections between spaces is at least as important as the networks they form, and often not susceptible to mapping. Hierarchies between spaces and their users are informed by many factors, including the bodily attitudes used to enter and leave them, changes in the visibility and legibility of particular spaces from various points in the network, and the opportunities for surveillance they afford.[335]

Moreover, space syntax maps are not ideally adapted for modeling ships. First, they reflect a preoccupation with physical connections and enclosures to the exclusion of many other methods for organizing space: they offer no means for modeling purely social or legal prohibitions, or for distinguishing between lockable doors and open passages that afford sight lines and relatively free movement while still conveying social distinctions. Second,

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[334] Osman, K. A & Suliman, M: "The Space Syntax Methodology: fits and misfits" *Architecture and Comportment/Architecture and Behaviour* 10.2, 189-204.

[335] In space syntax terminology the visible horizon of any point in a space is its "isovist." M. Benedikt (1979). "To Take Hold of Space: isovists and isovist fields". *Environment and Planning B* **6**: 47–65. Hillier & Hanson 1984. Regarding surveillance Markus cites Bentham's Panopticon prison as a clear case where an asymmetry between guards and prisoners regarding their ability to see and be seen supports an asymmetry in power. Surveillance proves to be a much more complex and more limited issue on the ship. Markus, T: *Buildings and Power*, 95-119.

they build their measurements of "depth" on the foundation of an access point

between the building and an "outside." This latter category of space

constitutes an abstract "ground plane" in space syntax analysis—a neutral

background, excluded from the topic of the building's peculiar power

relations. The assumption that any building rests on such a "neutral"

foundation is deeply problematic. For the ship in motion, however, "a floating

piece of space… that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same

time is given over to the infinity of the sea," it is simply inapplicable.[336] The

retourschip's external referents are its boats, other ships, the hazards of the sea

and its destination: none of these serves to organize the space aboard in a way

analogous to a street door. There are various ways in which this problem

might be resolved, each, however, altering the nature of the analysis.

Figures 2.11 and 2.12 are simple maps showing the connections between

spaces in the *Batavia* and *Hollandia* subtypes without any built-in assessments

of depth or a "ground."

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[336] Foucault, M: "Of Other Spaces."

Figure 2.11: Network diagram of distinct spaces aboard the *Batavia* subtype. Spaces to which access was restricted are shown in grey: clockwise from left, these were the domains of the officers, the boatswain and junior officers, and the steward.
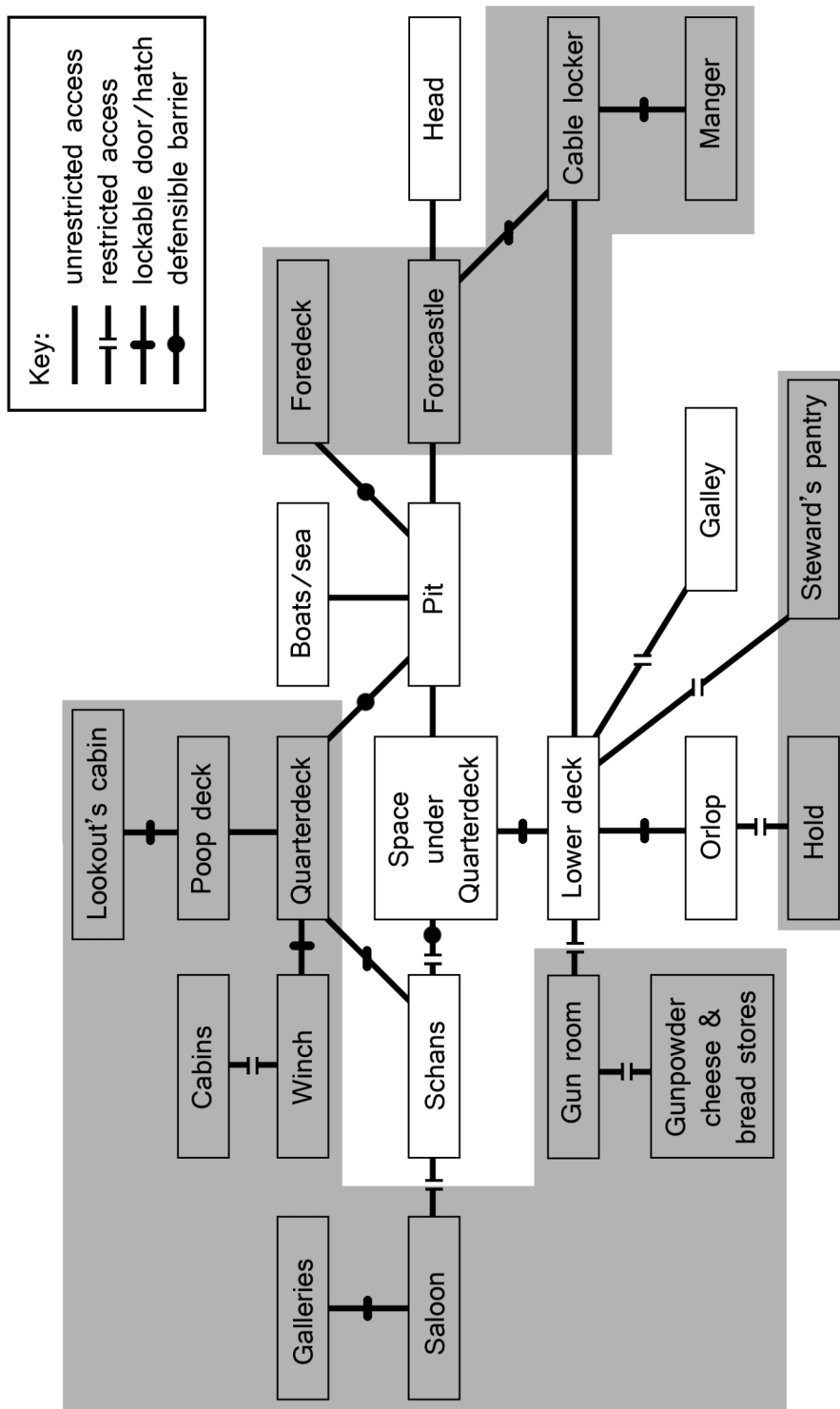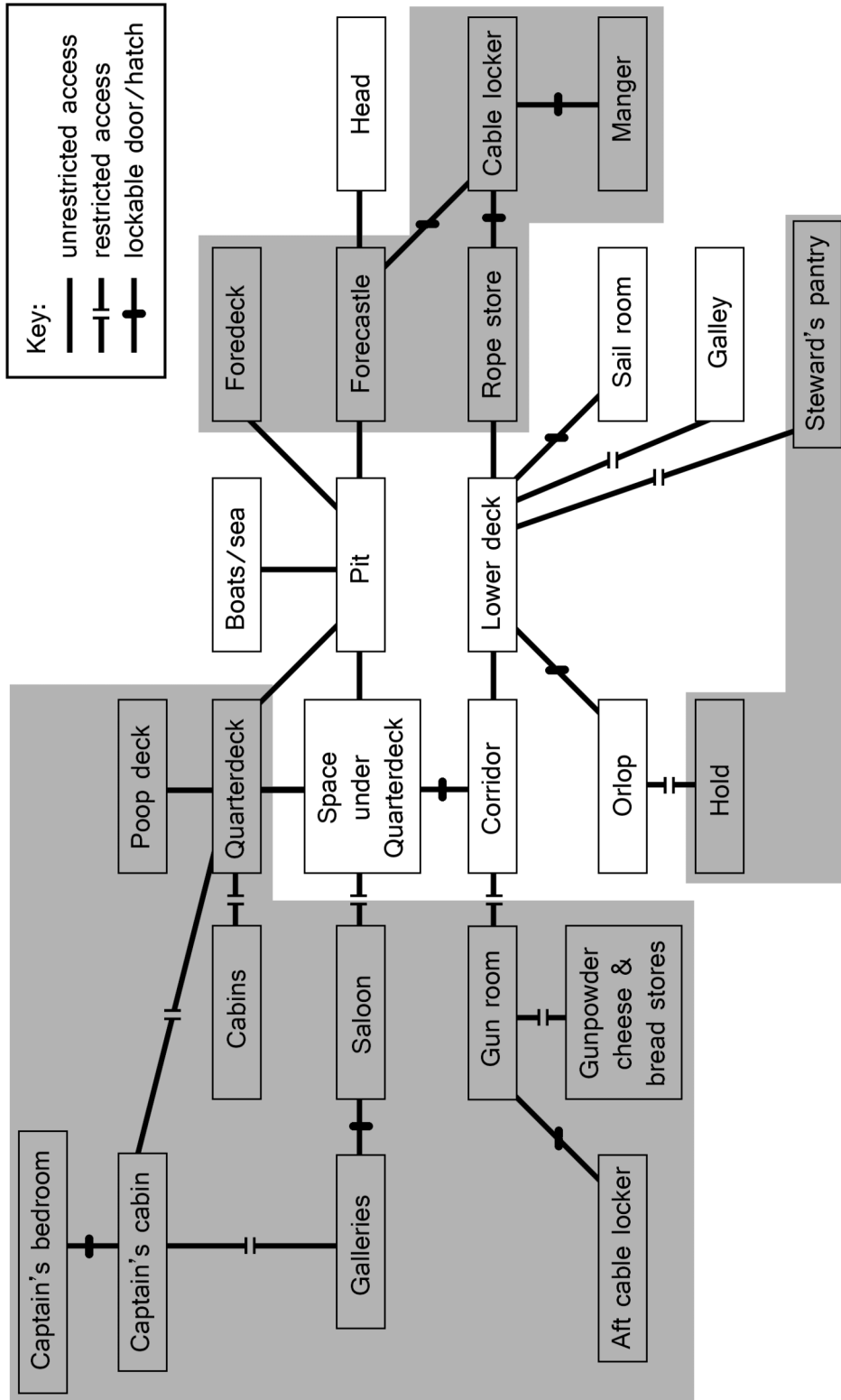
Figure 2.12: Network diagram of distinct spaces aboard the *Hollandia* subtype. Spaces to which access is restricted are shown in grey: clockwise from left, these were the domains of the officers, the boatswain and junior officers, and the steward.

Three categories of connections were observed in the two subtypes. The first category lacks any physical restrictions: access between the spaces is entirely open, the spaces themselves being distinguished from one another by name and function but not separated by walls or other obstructions. One example of such a connection is that between the pit, which was open to the sky, and the space under the quarterdeck, which is generally shown on models as a continuous run of unpartitioned deck. Such connections might still involve social restrictions: for instance, animals that had free reign of the pit were penned and prevented from roaming under the quarterdeck or in the forecastle. The second category involves hatches or doors that were habitually kept open so as to allow free access but that could be closed if circumstances demanded, such as when the ship had to be defended against enemies, mutineers or a storm. All deck hatches, providing access from one deck to another, fall in this category except those that provided access to the hold, which were kept locked. The third category divides classes of crewmen from one another, and is marked by doors that were habitually kept closed, so as to create separate domains aboard. The most well-known and -documented such separation was that between officers "up at the back" and men "before the (main) mast," found on all large European sailing ships of the period. This division was expressed physically on both subtypes by a partition wall, which separated the officers' domain, roughly the rearmost quarter of the ship, from that of the rest of the crew in a continuous line that stretched from the keel to the quarterdeck. The partition marked a boundary of asymmetric rights of access: while all inhabitants of the ship were permitted forward of the line, the

spaces to its rear were restricted to the use of select groups of officers. Lockable doors on the lower and upper decks marked the limits of access: for a seaman to cross these boundaries without an explicit summons from an officer was itself a punishable offence.

There were two other distinct "domains" with similarly exclusive rights of access. The first belonged to the boatswain and his assistants, the junior officers charged with coordinating the crew before the mast. The boatswain's traditional place aboard was in the forecastle: this was considered a good lodging place for seamen, but they were permitted there only under the boatswain's sufferance. The cable locker and the manger were likewise under the control of the boatswain and hold man: like the gun room these spaces were devoted to particular functions about the ship—the storage and ordering of vital equipment—but also had a certain status as lodging places, reserved apart from the general crew for a small expert coterie responsible for the equipment.

The second separate domain was that of the steward, the hold crew and the cook, who alone had rights of access to the supplies in the hold and the steward's pantry (*bottelarij*) and galley (*kombuis*). Only the steward's domain spread over several locations separated by general crew space: on the lower deck he was responsible both for general supplies kept in the pantry and for the officers' own food and drink kept beneath the gun room. On the upper deck he was responsible for a further small cupboard of supplies and the

water vats. None of these spaces afforded lodging: the steward slept together with the general crew on the lower deck. Of all the domains aboard the steward's was also the most closely recorded: regulations dedicated to controlling access to and use of cargo and supplies accounted for a significant portion of the Company's Articles. Access to the hold was permitted only to the steward under supervision by a council of junior officers. Strict accounts were kept of every item brought out, its condition and its manner of use, in order to prevent both smuggling and the abuse of stores of which stewards and masters were so regularly accused.[337]

From figures 2.11 and 2.12 it can be seen that the spaces of the officers' domain on the *Batavia* replica form three cul-de-sacs linked by the spaces of the general crew. The cul-de-sac on the quarterdeck housed the mates, that on the upper deck contained the saloon, which housed the master, merchant and any other passengers, and that on the lower deck housed the chief gunner and his protégés.[338] On the *Hollandia* subtype the arrangement was similar, except that the captain (formerly master) had joined the mates on the quarterdeck. The apparent loop offered by the connection through the galleries (which

[337] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen*. Dening recounts how Mr. Fryer, shipmaster of the *Bounty* during the famous mutiny, accused Mr. Bligh in front of Dutch authorities of making profits off his purser's duties. Dening notes that "these were telling accusations to the mercantile Dutch, the sort of reprehensible behaviour in a commander they understood" abuse of stores being a commonplace grievance on all mercantile and military shipping during the period. Dening, G: *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: passion, power, and theater on the Bounty* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 107.

[338] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

contained the officers' toilets) is somewhat misleading: the captain might use it as such, to travel between his own cabin and the saloon, but access to the captain's cabin was not free for the rest of the officers.

Excluding the officers' quarters, the space of the general crew formed a loop, one end of which fell within the boatswain's domain. The remainder of this loop occupied the middle portions of the lower and upper decks, its center falling on the stairs connecting the two decks, which on the *Batavia* replica are placed just outside the *schans* and on the *Hollandia* subtype are found in the *voorkajuit*.

This space, comprising all of the area under the quarterdeck but centered on the *voorkajuit*, offers a good candidate for the center of the ship for space syntax purposes, or the "ground" from which relative depths might be calculated, for several reasons. First, it can be assumed to have seen a great deal of traffic and to have been used as a pass-through space for a wide variety of seafarers and purposes. As the site of the main access hatch between the upper and lower decks the *voorkajuit* would have been used by men beginning or ending watches and by those going from work to their meals. The space under the quarterdeck was also the most multi-functional space aboard: on the *Hollandia* subtype it contained the capstan, the water vats, some of the ship's guns, the medicine chest, access to three decks, and a number of mariners' berths. Regarding the social center of the general crew's portion of the ship, it was one of several spaces used for regular assembly. The

galley acted as a focus at mealtimes. Sick mariners were seen by surgeons daily in the pit, beside the mainmast: this was also where auctions of dead seamen's belongings were held and corporal punishments were meted out.[339] The *voorkajuit*, however, stood as the formal center of assembly and the speaking-place both for the captain and for the preacher/sick visitor. As such it represented the place on the ship where the worlds of the officers and the general crew met, the saloon door at its rear separating the space of the officers' work (when they met in council to debate the course or judge crewmen) from that of the men.

If the *voorkajuit* is taken as the "ground," then depth maps may be derived from the two subtypes, as shown in figures 2.13 and 2.14.

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[339] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen*.

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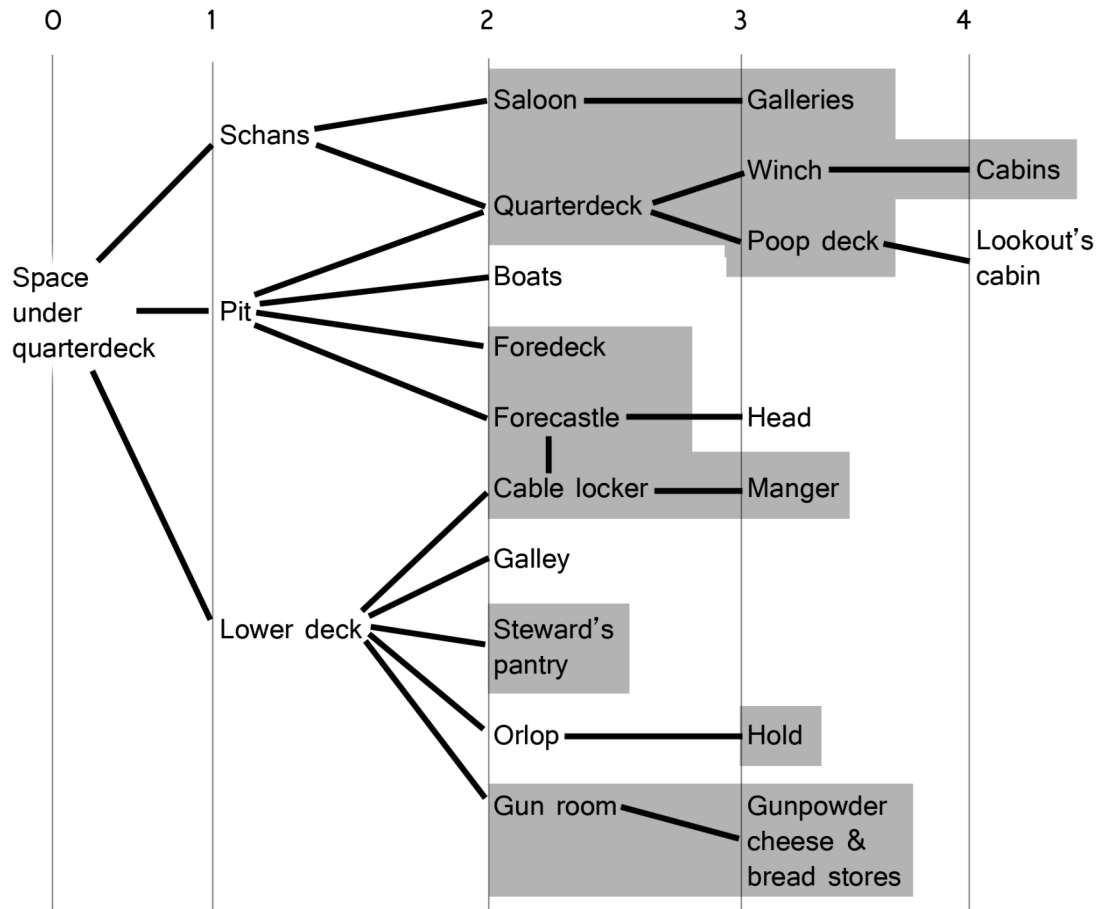
Figure 2.13: Depth map for the *Batavia* subtype, with exclusive domains shaded grey, as in Figure 2.11.
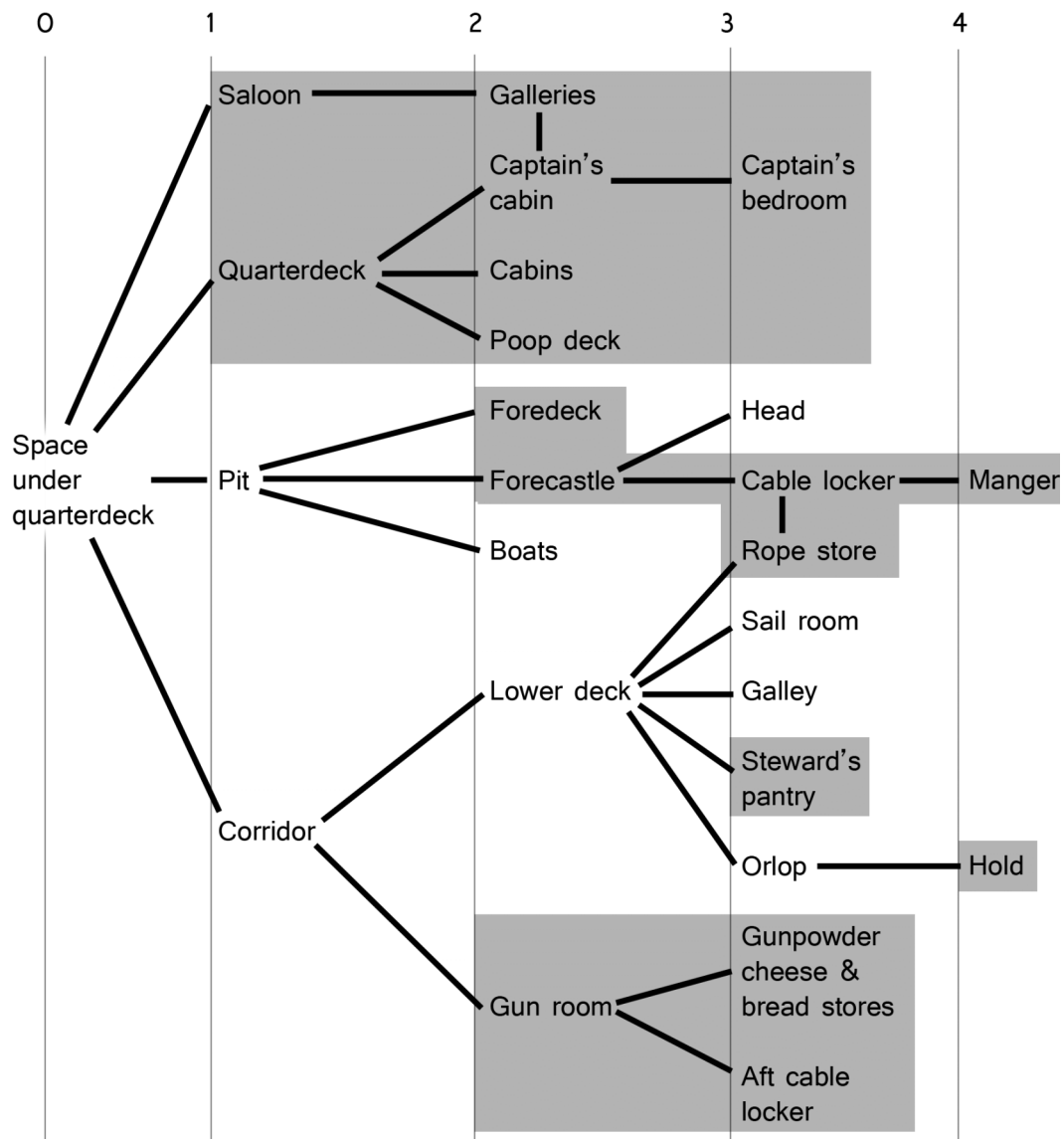
Figure 2.14: Depth map for the *Hollandia* subtype, with eclusive domains shaded grey, as in Figure 2.12.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the depth maps. First, the separation of the officers' domain from that of the general crew is clearer and more consistent on the *Hollandia* subtype than on the *Batavia*. The ambiguity of the *schans*, which fell within the defensible region of the officers but was occupied by ordinary sailors, was removed, as was the lookout's (or trumpeter's) cabin

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on the poop deck, such that ordinary sailors no longer had any regular accommodation aft of the officers' partition.[340] Second, the captain's quarters on the *Hollandia* subtype show a very different ordering of spatial priority from those on the *Batavia.*

In his history of the evolution of the English Country House, Mark Girouard has described a shift in the spatial presentation of power between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, and roughly a century later elsewhere in Europe.[341] Girouard states that prior to this shift the lords of estates and fiefdoms in England maintained Great Halls, where they would regularly eat together with all their retainers, affirming and reproducing the fief as a social unit. During the sixteenth century the lords and a select group of courtiers came to withdraw from the Great Hall to private dining rooms and lodgings above it, demonstrating a hierarchy of favor through opportunities of access to the lord. This process of withdrawing was repeated a number of times, resulting eventually in a scheme of progressively smaller, more private chambers for ever more select groups of courtiers, as shown in Robert Hooke's 1678 design for Ragley House, where in order to reach the lord from the Hall a visitor would have to traverse a saloon, a "withdrawing

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[340] The poop-deck cabin that forms a prominent feature on the *Batavia* replica is absent from Hoving's reconstruction of Nicolaes Witsen's *pinas*. Such cabins can be found, however, in several seventeenth-century paintings. Hoving et al: *Nicolaes Witsens scheeps-bouw-konst.* Witsen, N: *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum.*

[341] Girouard, M: *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 10-12.

room," a bedchamber and finally a closet.[342] Something similar can be seen in the evolution of the Captain's quarters. In the VOC's first decades the most senior officer aboard its ships was generally the merchant, after whom came the master, being the most senior sailing officer. Both of these men lodged in the saloon, together with any high-status passengers and sometimes with the dominee, or preacher.[343] The saloon was also the social center of the officers' part of the ship: the officers gathered there to take meals, to meet in council and to plan the ship's course.[344] This arrangement is reflected on the *Batavia* replica. As the meeting point for meals and the sole access point for the officers' toilets, the saloon clearly formed the officers' "hearth:" it is also shown as the largest of the officers' spaces with the most decoration, including glazed windows and built-in benches. In comparison the mates' cabins on the deck above are recreated as modest affairs, for the most part lacking doors, furnished with small, unglazed portholes for windows, and subject to periodic invasions by sailors using the winch placed within their enclosure on the quarterdeck. By the construction of the *Hollandia*, however, the *Heren XVII* had mandated that the captain should maintain his cabin, which functioned as an office and as the centre for navigation and planning, on the quarterdeck separate from his bedroom, which might be used for private counsel.[345] This

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[342] Girouard, M: *Life in the English Country House,* 135

[343] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

[344] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

[345] VOC 7375.

arrangement closely follows that of Ragley House, even to the point of replicating a "back stairs" access to the Captain's cabin via the gallery/toilet (Figure 2.7), through which messages might be passed without the messenger emerging into the public space of the quarterdeck.

The process of withdrawal clearly accords with space syntax models, organizing chambers to reflect social hierarchies. The mates' cabins offer less clear examples than the captain's, since on the *Hollandia* subtype they occupy a level closer to the "ground" of the *voorkajuit*. The officers' accommodations were, however, also reconfigured to reflect changing standards of privacy and potentially to show a growing power distance between levels of hierarchy on the ship. The saloon remained the common dining room. Its use as a bedroom was restricted, however, to passengers: "visitors" in Hillier and Hanson's terms. Both the preacher and the merchant, if present, were afforded private cabins beside this communal space. In addition to withdrawal, Girouard states that physical height above the ground reflected high status. The *Hollandia* subtype clarifies this relationship greatly: the captain, occupying the farthest cabins to the stern, was placed marginally above the mates by the curvature of the decks, while cabins were graded in size to place the largest at the rear, forming a tapering corridor behind the wheel that led to the captain's door, centrally placed where he might benefit from the clearest view of the quarterdeck available to any of the cabins. The mates, then, were arranged by rank with the highest closest to the captain and stern of the ship and the lowest farther forward. Merchants continued to outrank captains in the

Company hierarchy and to lead councils aboard ships when they were present. Their separation from the sailing officers subtly colored their positions aboard, however: the "promotion" of ship's masters to the pseudo-military rank of captain during Van Imhoff's *redress*, and the adoption of similarly military-inflected uniforms, was intended to present the Company's ship officers as members of an autonomous, expert cadre.[346] The merchant was effectively presented as a guest, authoritative, but extraneous to the everyday running of the ship.

Third, the dividing line between senior and junior officers was drawn explicitly and spatially on the *Hollandia* subtype. Indigenous ships in the Indian Ocean routinely had cabins constructed on them for each voyage, according to the numbers of important passengers and high-status seamen carried. Portuguese ships followed a similar tradition, without a standardized corps of officers or merchant's agents to fix the numbers of cabins required.[347] The VOC instituted a standard corps of officers from its first Articles, but still showed variation during its first decades in the numbers of officers of various ranks carried on each ship, their status and the methods for carrying them, as

[346] Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795,"*The Mariners Mirror* 49.2 (May 1963), 81-104.

[347] Khalilieh, H. S: *Islamic Maritime Law: an introduction.* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 1998). Pérez-Mallaína, P. *Spain's Men of the Sea: daily life on the Indies fleets in the sixteenth century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). Castro, F: "The Pepper Wreck, an Early Seventeenth-century Portuguese Indiaman at the Mouth of the Tagus River, Portugal," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 32.1 (2003), 6–23.

well as those for accommodating merchant-captains and passengers.[348] With the formalizing of quarterdeck cabins during Van Imhoff's *redress*, the cadre of officers was made independent of the specific requirements of individual voyages. The gunroom appears in accounts of early voyages to have had a status somewhere between that of the officers' spaces and those of the general crew: like the gunroom on a warship it was the domain of the chief gunner and served as a training ground for future officers. The spatial maps show it to have been entirely separate from the rest of the officers' spaces, however. The chief gunner might eat together with the officers in the saloon, but he lodged below. The main points of contact between gunroom and saloon seem to have been the weapons that were stored in each, turning each into a space that had to be defended against mutiny, and the placement of the officers' private supplies beneath the gunroom's floor, which may have afforded the trainees housed there some opportunities to mix with the society of the saloon above their heads.

The most important thing revealed by the depth maps, however, is the parallel structures of spaces and hierarchical levels that obtained both for the officers and the general crew. Increasing depth correlated with increasing power and privacy both behind and in front of the saloon door, with the boatswain and his assistants' superiority over the general seamen expressed in their lodging

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[348] Ship's councils, the main governing authority aboard VOC ships, were somewhat variable in their makeup before about 1650: they might include or exclude figures such as the boatswain and the sergeant, who commanded any soldiers carried aboard. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

in the distinct spaces of the forecastle and cable locker, controlling their own access between the lower and upper decks independent of that of "the people." Height in the ship also denoted status before the mast, as behind, with soldiers at the lowest level and junior officers at the highest. This result is surprising only if we consider the ship a sister institution to the prison, hospital or asylum, in which case we should expect the officers to occupy spaces between the inmates/crew and the ship's "exterior" access points, or alternatively for those junior officers charged with maintaining order (the boatswain, sergeant, quartermasters and provost) to occupy a position between the men and the senior officers. Instead most of those charged with keeping order lodged among the rest of the general crew or maintained an aloof position close to the tools of their particular expert trades. The *retourschip* therefore offers a clear dual order, containing two communities that faced each other across a clearly defined partition, each containing a sociospatial hierarchy arranged in opposition to the other.

Markus identifies one other building type in which administrative and labor functions form two bookends around the workers' living space: the factory, for which Markus draws from French examples including the Royal Foundry at Le Creusot, Ledoux's celebrated salt works at Chaux.[349] As a space of organized labor the *retourschip* has much in common with the factory; the regular rhythms of work and leisure times, the organization of the crew into

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[349] Markus, T: *Buildings and Power,* 250, 259.

work gangs and the need to perform tasks with steady repetition in order to "produce" progress toward the destination all recall industrial production methods. The ship has moreover been cited as a kind of proto-factory and one of the first environments in which proletarian labor occurred.[350] There is one important way in which the spatial organization of the ship differed from those of factories identified by Markus, however: in Markus' examples the site of production is always placed deep within the structure, while accommodation for workers is comparatively shallow. The work surfaces of the ship, however, being the upper decks and rigging, were the first any visitor would encounter and were commonly used by the crew for circulation and for accessing other spaces. Indeed, the ship's living spaces were built largely around the demands of its sailing, steering, fighting and cargo-handling machineries: in order to afford access to the ship's three masks, all of the decks needed to be accessible to the workers, even the quarterdeck, which was understood to "belong" to the officers.

Markus' argument regarding factory structures relies on the correlation observed elsewhere between network depth and power, Markus reasons that, since the factory's power lies in its productive capacity, it is natural that those parts devoted to production should be the deepest. He does not, however, offer a practical argument as to why this should be so. It would be perfectly possible to place the work surfaces of ships at greater depth than the living

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[350] Schaeffer, R. K: *The Chains of Bondage Broke*. Rediker, M. B; *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.

quarters: the points of greatest traffic flow and common access need only be moved to lower decks. Such an arrangement was found on passenger and cargo ships in the Mediterranean as early as the twelfth century and on modern cruise ships and ferries.[351] No East Indiamen or European warships during the Company's period used this arrangement, however; in all cases the locations of greatest traffic, general accessibility and contact with the outside world were also the work surfaces, while accommodation was principally buried below.[352] Finally, despite its relationship with both the total institution and the factory, the *retourschip's* arrangement does not compare readily with the *bagne*, a hybrid dockside factory-workhouse-prison built in France in the middle of the eighteenth century and in French colonies from 1790.[353] The *bagne* and the ship both placed inmates' living quarters at greater depth than the production spaces. The *bagne* otherwise followed the total institution model, however, placing the inmates deeper than the administration and

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[351] In his *Travels*, ibn Jubayr describes a Genoese ship of four decks, tied up at a quayside, being loaded via a large opening in the side of the hull. Goods and passengers therefore entered the ship without needing to access the decks. The opening was sealed shut in stages as the weight of cargo lowered the ship in the water, and ultimately completely sealed prior to departure. Similar lateral cargo loading methods were used on *retourschepen* for difficult items such as spare masts and spars, which were taken into the lower deck or hold through ports similar to gun ports placed at the stern. Ibn Jubayr: *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R.C.J. Broadhurst (London: J. Cape, 1952). Dam, P. van: *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie. Uitgegeven door Dr F. W. Stapel.* ('s-Gravenhage, 1927-43).

[352] The main difference between East Indiamen and warships was that the lower or gun deck on the warship was also a work surface, such that accommodation on warships was typically concentrated one deck below that on East Indiamen, making use of the orlop and hold space, which in the East Indiaman was reserved for cargo. Gardiner, R. & Lavery, B: *The Line of Battle*.

[353] Markus, T: *Buildings and Power,* 258

guards, unlike the ship, on which the living spaces were strongly divided
between officers and men, but there was some limited sharing of work spaces.
Indeed, the focus on shared work appears stronger on the ship than in any of
the other building types discussed, such that the ship must be considered
according to a work/habitation axis as much as an axis based on status.

Analysis 2. Cognitive schemes

The ordering and clarifying of work space and functions aboard the *retourschip*
played an extremely important part in its organization. Thomas Markus has
noted that "the study of buildings is one way to understand society… the
physical structures are translations on the ground of models in the actors'
heads."[354] Following King, Markus considers how buildings help to form a
collective *unwelt*, by acting as "material classifying devices; they organize
people, things and ideas in space so as to make conceptual systems
concrete."[355]

The sociospatial order of the ship also served to 'orient' and 'identify' each of
its inhabitants—to tell him his place.[356] The non-discursive, unconscious effects
of such concretizing belong to practice theory, above. The embedding of
conceptual systems in the fabric of the ship also guaranteed those systems a

[354] Markus, T: *Buildings and Power,* 26.

[355] Markus, T: *Buildings and Power,* 19

[356] Dovey, K: *Framing Places,* 46

place in discourses about the ship, however, among both the ship's inhabitants and the Company elite. Susie West has emphasized the need to consider simultaneously the effects of practice and reason on the use of space, to address how spaces have been imagined as well as how they were used physically.[357] A cognitive scheme of space might be described as a purposeful imagining of its function: a distinctive meaning to be communicated to novice users of the space regarding, for instance, those spaces that formed the domain of one or another expert user or proprietor.

Addressing the cognitive schemes behind spatial order and place-making has generally entailed a turn toward phenomenology, positing a set of effects a space might have upon a thinking, perceiving, dwelling subject.[358] Such exercises applied to an eighteenth century architectural type are necessarily highly speculative and prone to essentialism, since any findings must be ascribed to a putative collective subject who is not available in the present for comment. Such a subject is frequently personalized as "Jack Tar" or "Jan Compagnie" or "the common sailor;" he appears in de Hullu's and Boxer's accounts of the VOC as a character with a recognizable set of attitudes and motivations, and in Rediker's work as the (deliberately stereotyping)

[357] West, S: "Social Space and the English Country House" in Tarlow, S. & West, S: *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of later historical Britain* (London, Routledge 1999), 103-122.

[358] Dovey, K: *Framing Places*. Lawrence, D. L. & Low, S. M: "The Built Environment and Spatial Form" *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1990) 19, 453-505.

personification of a class.[359] This figure is the invention of a variety of authors

originating with the Company's first governors: like the *retourschip* itself, it is

the product of a variety of political agendas.[360] There is another collective

subject, however, which communicated impressions and associations

regarding the ship, and which most of all intended to impart behaviors to

seafarers based on shipboard order: it is most evident in the Resolutions of the

Heren XVII and in Pieter van Dam's *Beschryvinge,* as the Company's decision-

making function, which the Company's directors, supply-masters,

shipbuilders and masters/captains were required to interpret and implement.

To the extent one may speak of the Company taking action or displaying a

will, it is this subject that so acted and willed, receiving reports and demands

from its shareholders, captains and directors, and smoothing its internal

debates and controversies into unitary resolutions for publication. This subject

displayed an active concern for shipboard space as a means to facilitate certain

kinds of interactions, of discipline, subordination and collective work, and to

hinder other interactions through control of access. It also clearly set store by

the communicative aspects of spatial design: in 1763 a debate over the safety

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[359] Hullu, J de, Bruijn, J. R. & Lucassen, J: *Op de Schepen.* Boxer, C. R: *Jan Compagnie in war and peace, 1602-1799: a short history of the Dutch East-India Company* (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1979). Rediker, M. B: *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.*

[360] The figure and character of the Company's sailors has been invoked generally by authors hoping to improve them, most famously including the first Governors General, Pieter Both and J. P. Coen and, toward the end of the Company's existence, van Kinsbergen and Titsingh. Vermeulen, A. C. J: "The people on board" in Emmer, P. & Gaastra, F. S. (eds.): *The organisation of interoceanic trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996). Kinsbergen, J. H. van: *Myne Droomen* (Amsterdam: s.n. 1800). Titsingh, I: "Bedenking over de Schaarsheid van Zeevarende Volk" in Hoefnagel, N: *Plan of Welmeenende Voorstelling ter Verbetering van Neerlands Zee-weezen...* (Amsterdam: Dirk Schuurman, 1779).

and capacity of *retourschepen* focused on whether the VOC should adopt *gladdeck* or "stretched deck" designs, favored by the English and Swedish East India Companies, which eliminated the pit around the mainmast and joined the foredeck to the quarterdeck in a continuous span (as in Figure 2.8: The *Falmouth,* which was an early example of a stretched deck design).[361] Debates over *gladdeck* ships continued for the next 30 years, the advantages of superior safety, capacity and waterproofing being pitted against the concern that the loss of the quarterdeck as a separate spatial marker would erode the special status of the officers: the men working before the mast would be able to confront the officers literally on the same level.[362]

Through the Company's history the spatial order aboard its ships underwent a series of changes alongside the process of standardization outlined in Chapter 1; in general the ships of the Company's later years revealed their system of classification more clearly and their spaces were rendered more "legible" than those of the first decades. The reasons for this clarification appear related to those for standardization: they reproduced an order meant to be legible not only to captains and merchants on the quarterdeck but also to the landlubber scions of directors' families and to fresh recruits who had no

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[361] The Zeeland chamber built nine *gladdeck retourschepen* between 1765 and 1772, after which the *Heren XVII* decided against allowing any more to be built, until 1780 when it was left up to each Chamber to decide for itself whether its ships should have pits. DAS I, 48-9.

[362] VOC 59, Minutes of the *Heren XVII*, 18 October 1764. The concern regarding loss of officer authority was voiced by Rotterdam shipwright P. van Zwijndregt. DAS I, 48-9.

previous maritime experience. In particular the *Hollandia* subtype appears less reliant on assumed seafaring traditions and less amenable to local interpretations of the Company's rules than the ships of the Company's first decades described by Ketting. In its separation of functions the *Hollandia* subtype also more closely resembles contemporary Admiralty vessels, contributing to a disciplined and rationalized "shipshape" order that emphasized seamen's professional obligations over the formation of any shipboard community, generating a set of spaces, each with their own specific instructions.

Division into "workrooms"

The elite "director's view" divided the ship and its crew into a series of "workrooms," each dedicated to performing a particular set of tasks for the Company and enabled to focus on those tasks because of a certain "functional distance" between each workroom and the rest of the ship's systems and occupants.

For the concepts of the "workroom" and "functional distance," I am indebted to Yoko Arisaka's interpretation of the discussion of space as a cognitive category in Heidegger's *Being and Time*.[363] Where Heidegger referred to a

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[363] This dissertation is not intended as a work of scholarship on Heidegger's thought. Arisaka's interpretation is assessed and employed only in terms of its applicability to shipboard space, without regard for its accuracy regarding Heidegger's original intent or Hubert Dreyfus' analysis. Arisaka, Y: "On Heidegger's Theory of Space: A Critique of Dreyfus" *Inquiry* 38: 4 (December 1995), 455-467.

dasein, or "participating subject" identified with an individual person, I am

taking the observing and participating subject to be formed from the elite

collective referred to above, which constituted a kind of "design council" for

the Company's ships.

Arisaka's interpretation revolves around the ideas of "equipment" and the

"workroom" as fundamental elements in the formation of a spatial

understanding. "Equipment" is a term applied not only to physical tools but

also to persons and concepts employed by the subject. Such "equipment" is

grouped together in a "workroom" (or "region" in Arisaka's terminology): a

classificatory schema produced by the subject for the purpose of organizing

and using the equipment, which might literally be a room full of tools that

belong together (such as a kitchen with the tools for preparing food), or more

figuratively might be a set of associated objects and persons that together

perform a particular set of tasks.[364] According to Arisaka's interpretation, the

subject develops a sense of space through the practical use of equipment.

Through being repeatedly used in combination, certain items of equipment

are associated together by the subject into workrooms, where they are kept

"ready-to-hand." Centered on an interested subject or user, this conception of

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[364] The "workroom" full of "equipment" in this account has a clear affinity with the actor-network described by Callon and Latour, being a collection of discrete entities deliberately bricolages together in order to perform tasks and overcome challenges. Callon, M. & Latour, B: "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: how actors macrostructure reality and how sociologists help them to do so," in Knorr-Cetina, K. D. & Cicourel, A. V. (Eds.) *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro-and Macro-Sociologies.* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 277-303.

space is built around the user's care rather than any other coordinates. "Functional distance" in Arisaka's interpretation is an instrumental measure of the availability or readiness of an item of equipment for use. Something or someone that occupies the subject's attention, for which a use is known and in mind, is in Heideggerian jargon "de-severed" or linked to the subject, and experienced as "nearer" than items of equipment that have less ready application for the subject's current needs or that are "in the background" or "severed" from the subject's awareness.[365] Both "nearness" and "farness" are vital functions of the workroom: in order to function and achieve its objectives the subject must be able to locate and select the proper equipment, placing what is needed "ready-to-hand" and what is unnecessary "far away." Therefore a certain blindness or limitation on the subject's attention is implied by the workroom: each task necessarily involves its own perspective, which is actively hampered by the failure to screen out perspectives or equipment proper to other tasks.

Within the use-world of a single subject this selection and distancing is a fairly simple operation; it corresponds to the concept of "attention." Where many subjects must function together, however, as in communal spaces, they must share a common "workroom," and organize their equipment in a consistent

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[365] This user-centered perspective appears similar to that identified by Hillier and Hanson as fundamental to Piaget's work on the development of spatial cognition in children, who were observed to organize the world according to relations of proximity, separation, succession, enclosure and contiguity. Hillier, W. & Hanson, J: *The Social Logic of Space*, 47.

way. Conversely, a particular ordering of equipment in a communal

workroom will prompt similar modes of use among all the workroom's users.

Arisaka relates this communal associative space specifically to work

environments:

> In an office, workers orient themselves and move according to the locations
> of desks, computers, pathway, copier, etc. Each worker has her own sphere
> of de-severance but this is not because she has her own self-centered,
> private space; rather, the region dictates personal de-severance through the
> perspectival givenness of equipment and presence. De-severance is a
> particular, actual perspective derived from the region (the frame of possible
> perspectives).[366]

Discrete workrooms can be seen clearly expressed on the *retourschip*,

compartmentalizing and organizing the objects, spaces and persons aboard by

status, by their places in the operation of the ship and by their functions for

the Company. The arrangement of such workrooms not only separated and

clarified the operations needed to work the ship, they also placed particular

personnel in positions of authority over them and encouraged the growth of

exclusive "fiefdoms" in the shipboard order. These workrooms were also

demarcated spatially: navigation, bookkeeping, sailing, carpentry, sail-making

and cooking each had its own special space on the ship where its own

hierarchy of seamen was revealed. Even the casual, menial task of picking

oakum occupied a particular position on the deck.[367] The clearest example of

such a workroom and its sociospatial effects is found on the foredeck, which

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[366] Arisaka, Y: "On Heidegger's Theory of Space." 464.

[367] Rediker, M. B; *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.*

was placed in the boatswain's care and under his organization. One of the first tasks for a new sailing recruit on a ship was to "learn the ropes:" this meant entering and adopting the boatswain's workroom, memorizing and internalizing the precise, mnemonic disposition of the ropes used to handle the sails and spars, which were ordered around the foredeck and pit in order to be ready to the boatswain's hand. Novice seamen posed a considerable danger to their workmates; if a rope was wrongly placed or the wrong belaying pin removed a sail might be loosed or a spar brought crashing to the deck.[368] The boatswain therefore had sole charge of the ropes and their space until the sailors had been taught to emulate his order.

Through the Company's history many of these workrooms remained the sole responsibility of their chiefs or fief-holders: a boatswain's quality consisted in large part of his memory and organizational skills; a poorly organized foredeck was therefore a disciplinary problem. The *Heren XVII* never saw fit to issue any resolutions ordering the ropes for him. In the formalizing of officers' cabins discussed above, however, a workroom or operational schema may be seen to have been imposed on captains and navigation officers by the Company's highest council, standardizing relations among officers in line with the pay hierarchy. Proximity to the stern meant both higher status and a shorter distance from the captain, who could summon any officer at will but

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[368] Dana, R. H: *Two years before the mast.*

who kept his first mate, the second in command overall, closest at hand.[369] The two third mates, the lowest ranked men granted a place on the quarterdeck, were comparatively distant both physically and in their functions: they might readily be sent into various quarters of the ship to command them locally while the captain or first mate remained on the quarterdeck, at the center of his own equipment, with his peers ready to hand for consultation.[370]

The grouping together of functions into "workrooms" aboard was related to the organization of the Company's records, the hierarchy of its officers and men, and the arrangement and separation of pay grades. Members of the same workroom would be interdependent and capable of replacing one another, their pay would form a hierarchy within a certain common scale, and they would be expected to form a social unit within the crew.

The separation between workrooms on the other hand contributed to a set of useful "functional distances" between various groups, reflected in their

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[369] The captain and first mate were functionally interchangeable under normal sailing conditions: when one rested the other took charge of the ship. They nonetheless worked in concert for many tasks including navigation and ships' councils. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

[370] The separation of the third mates from the rest of the navigation officers is made clear in the trial papers for the *Nijenburg* mutiny: both the third mates were sent forward of the mast in their duties, were expected to know something of the movements and moods of the men, and were held in some suspicion of fraternizing with the mutineers, because of their free and social mixing with the general crew. *Crimineele Procedures by, mitsgaders voor en ten overstaan van de Hogen Scheeps Krygsraad in Texel gehouden, tegens sommige der Muitelingen van het O. I. Schip Neyenburg, in den voorleeden jaare 1763, uit Texel naar Batavia uitgevaren.* (Amsterdam: Petrus Schouten, 1764).

placement on the ship. Members of different workrooms were permitted or even expected to be somewhat ignorant of one another; senior officers were not expected to be informed about or responsive to the mood below decks, such information being the province of the junior officers, who were elevated only contingently from the men with whom they bunked. The ship's council, the main governing body on each VOC ship, consisted of almost exactly the group that occupied the officers' domain and workroom, including any merchants aboard, the master and the mates.[371] There was one exception: the boatswain, who reported on and spoke for the rest of the crew. In this position the boatswain acted as the single point of contact between the interests of the Company's commerce, represented by the merchants, the ship's administration, represented by the captain, and its sailors.

The workrooms, once expressed physically as places where expertise was gathered and networked together, further provided armatures for secondary sets of relationships and associations. In this regard workrooms can be seen to be similar to King's description of architectural typologies such as the bungalow; they give social institutions physical forms, which then become capable of propagating their own kinds of social institutions. The inclusion of the chief surgeon in the workroom of the quarterdeck altered his availability to the officers and to the other crewmen: sharing something of the navigation officers' status, authority and distance from the men before the mast, the chief

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[371] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

surgeon became "severed" from the men, being reserved principally as the officers' doctor. Ketting notes how chief surgeons were remarked on in sailors' and soldiers' memoirs as presenting a pretentious appearance, dressed extravagantly, as though anxious to justify their place among the officers.[372]

The case of the foredeck and cable locker is more complicated, their exclusivity being less strongly enforced. These spaces were distinguished from the lower deck, the proper domain of the general crew, by the presence and expert organization of the sailing tackle: their inhabitants held a privileged association with the proper use of the sailor's tools. Nonetheless the sailing crew themselves formed part of the boatswain's equipment, the foredeck forming perhaps something akin to a "high table" in the "hall" before the mast, its occupants eating and sleeping apart from the general mess between decks.

Workrooms and discipline

The bulk of the crew were subdivided into sets of workrooms along two axes. First they were divided into watches: units that pertained to the operation of the ship and had no bearing on the skills of any but the sailors. Second, they were sorted and sometimes segregated by job function and expertise, broadly into sailors, soldiers and craftsmen. Both divisions defined fields of competition for Company servants, which served to discipline and socialize

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[372] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 89

individuals to work within the power structures aboard and to invest their own identities in their proper subdivisions.

Watches were expressed not spatially but temporally: the members of a watch shared the same sleeping, eating and working schedule. Each watch was responsible for running the ship for regular periods of four hours duration. VOC ships generally operated on a system of three watches, such that for every four hours on duty each man would have eight hours off, each watch being on deck for eight hours out of every 24. Sometimes, however, they practiced a more arduous two-watch system, in which case the men worked four hours on duty, four hours off, for a total of 12 hours a day.[373] The watch set the tempo of work and the unvarying rhythm of life at sea; as long as the ship was in motion there could be no "days off" from sailing.[374] Among the general crew each watch was further subdivided into a set of *baks*, groups of seven or eight men who ate at a common mess table and were expected to support one another in work and when sick, these *baks* being spread over the whole of the lower deck. Watches cross-cut other systems of workrooms on the ship: they associated a subdivision of the seamen with certain of the officers, surgeons and other support personnel. In Dening's description of

[373] There is some evidence for a spatial expression of the two-watch system, these being termed "starboard" and "larboard" watches on Royal Navy and American merchant ships: that is, associated with the starboard and port sides of the ship. VOC watches had no such spatial names, however. Lavery, B: *Shipboard Life and Organisation, 1731-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

[374] Rediker quotes a familiar seaman's saying, that "there are no Sundays at sea." Rediker, M. B; *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*.

Royal Navy vessels, the division of the men into watches was part of a disciplinary scheme to generate competition between them.[375] Both the starboard and larboard watches were charged with cleaning the decks and maintaining an orderly ship. The officers would compare the efforts of the two watches in fulfilling this duty and punish those they judged to be doing an inferior job or reward those who did an exemplary one. The purpose of such an exercise had less to do with an institutional obsession with cleanliness than with an obsession with the specter of mutiny: it made each watch the primary target of the other's frustrations, diverting anger away from the institution. VOC ships certainly did not approach those of the Navy either in cleanliness or in the fostering of divisional pride. Nonetheless it may be seen in mutiny records that watches formed firm practical divisions in crews, with the members of core groups of mutineers, almost without exception, belonging to single watches.

Regarding division by function, the most important one, involving the largest groups of men, was that between the sailors and soldiers. These shared a traditional enmity that was remarked on repeatedly throughout the Company's history.[376] Ketting states that the traditional animosity between the sailors and soldiers acted to reinforce solidarity within each group, as well as a

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[375] Dening, G: *Mr Bligh's Bad Language*.

[376] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen*. Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795,"*The Mariners Mirror* 49.2 (May 1963), 81-104.

Company-based identity between them.[377] Sailors, housed together on the

lower deck, would look down (literally) on soldiers, who had to make do with

the dark, stuffy and uncomfortably short orlop, crammed into the top few feet

of the hold. Trapped in this space for up to 23 hours a day, the soldiers were

nicknamed "hold riders" (*kattesporen*) by the sailors, after a proverbially

obdurate and inflexible part of the ship that was permanently fixed to the

keel.[378] The orlop was also tainted by association with unpleasant conditions

and uses: according to de Hullu its forward end, the manger (*hel*), apart from

serving as a store for various bits of ship's tackle, was also used as a sweat-box

for sufferers of fever, and was the place where mercury was administered to

those with venereal diseases.[379] Disdain for the soldiers enabled the sailors to

take some pride in their own superior collective, while the soldiers would

identify the sailors as their closest enemies and competitors for light, air and

the better sorts of food.[380] In each case resentment and violent impulses were

directed by each group toward the other, and away from the officers and the

Company as a whole.[381]

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[377] Ketting: *Leven, Werk*, 23-27.

[378] Hoving: personal communication.

[379] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 27, Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen,* 94.

[380] Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur*. Gelder, R van: *Naporra's omweg: het leven van een VOC-matroos (1731-1793)* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2003).

Rationalization

As noted above, during the eighteenth century the organization of VOC ships underwent an extensive process of rationalization, which aimed to establish clear and standardized codes of conduct for the workrooms, to separate their functions and to make the operations of the ship clear to recruits and visitors. This was achieved partly through an ever-growing set of regulations and partly through a redesign of the ship's spaces and their uses. Rationalization was generally phrased as the maintenance of good, workmanlike order and of clean and clear decks: that is, of an explicit schema for ordering equipment according to the needs of the responsible officer. It also tended to specialize both spaces and their occupants, replacing an order reliant on the traditional skills of well-rounded, experienced seafarers with one composed of discrete operations that could be conducted by industrial workers.

The clearest example of such a workroom-based rationalization is the difference in separation of the functions of upper and lower decks between the *Batavia* and *Hollandia* subtypes. The upper deck, being the primary work surface of the ship, was subjected to the greatest number of explicit regulations. This space eventually grew a long list of forbidden activities, a schedule for regular cleaning and a cadre of low-status "zwabber-kapiteins" (mop-captains) responsible for its upkeep at all times.[382] The lower deck,

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[381] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk*.

[382] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J., *Op de Schepen*. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk*.

which was devoted principally to habitation, likewise underwent some rationalization. In this case however it was achieved largely through a quiet process of elimination of elements rather than through regulations imposed on the ship's inmates. The result was first a loss of equipment from the space and later a reduction in the functions it had to serve: a possibly unintentional side-effect was that both spaces became more easily surveilled through the process.

Work-life axis

In Ketting's description of early VOC ships there is already a clear division between work space above and living space below decks. This functional division appears frequently overturned, however. Seamen often slept on the top decks, under the foredeck and in the ship's boats while the ship was in the tropics, in order to take advantage of the greater movement of air there. On the other hand heavy, communal work, pumping out the bilges or using the capstan to raise the anchor regularly invaded the lower deck space and even the orlop.

Ketting documents ways in which the lower deck of the first VOC ships was rendered "opaque" to the official gaze. First, it was filled with a claustrophobic rabbit warren of carpentry, composed of the bunks and living spaces of individual crewmen, each curtained, partitioned and otherwise distinguished from the next bunk and from common accessways. This mass of woodwork, which is not represented on the *Batavia* replica, helped to define the lower deck as a realm apart from the Company's formal order. Second,

Ketting describes a strong 'lower class' social organization and identity among ordinary seamen and soldiers, which operated alongside the Company's mandated order, and which had its own logic and cultural practices. He cites a number of collective expressions, or rituals, practiced among the general crew as indications of a distinct social world operating below decks. These included rites of initiation including the running of "gauntlets" through the warren of bunks and, when group censure of individuals was called for, of public shaming, such as a mocking form of theatrical performance known as *charivari*, which was conducted in semi-secret below decks and out of official view.[383] Ketting ascribes the origins of these practices to pre-existing seafaring traditions, drawn from the coastal communities around Holland.[384]

The exercise of sailors' freedom to hold *charivari* performances can be seen as an assertion of their rights over the below-decks space, helping to identify that space as belonging to the *gesellschaft* of the men themselves rather than to the Company, even if that *gesellschaft* was itself part of the Company's strategy for conducting its business. The most striking feature of the typical lower deck to visitors' eyes (and noses) was its extreme uncleanliness, despite the Company's Articles, which stated that the lower deck must be cleaned thoroughly each week, with vinegar and the burning of fragrant herbs, as a prophylactic against diseases thought to be spread by "foul airs." The

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[383] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk*, 252-255.

[384] Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 66 (25 Feb 2005): 12-39.

uncleanliness was attributed to the bad, bestial habits of sailors, their unwillingness to use the toilets in the beakhead, and the lack of facilities for drying waterlogged clothes and possessions. It also served to mark the space as belonging to the sailors, however, and as distinctive of their character.

Aboard the *Hollandia* subtype the lower deck presents a very different aspect. According to Ketting the proliferation of private spaces was swept aside in the 1640s with the widespread adoption of the hammock, after which lower decks came to resemble those of admiralty ships, with a floor area obstructed only by the sailors' sea chests and *bak* or mess tables, since it was possible to stow the hammocks away against the underside of the upper deck when not in use. There were clear practical objections to the construction of wooden bunks on the lower deck: if enemies were sighted then they had to be torn out and thrown overboard (an operation requiring several hours of work), since they obscured the gun ports and made it impossible to use the cannons.[385] They were further credited with spreading diseases, by obstructing the free flow of air and allowing noisome airs to collect.[386] Following the adoption of hammocks the deck was cleared of woodwork, except for partitions used for

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[385] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

[386][386] Ketting notes that unhealthy airs were thought by Europeans to be the main conduit for spreading diseases during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An objection more in line with current thinking on contagion is that they likely obstructed the flow of water, allowing it to collect and puddle on the lower deck. Water runoff was carefully considered during shipbuilding: all decks were cambered and fitted with scuppers for drainage, such that on an unobstructed deck water would flow easily into the bilges, from where it could be pumped out of the ship. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.* Witsen, N: *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum.*

the storage of supplies, to which the sailors had no access. The private space allotted to each sailor was accordingly reduced to the inside of his sea chest. The VOC ship never reached the condition of those navy ships described by Dening, however, where "privacy was not a matter of walls... [but] of behavior, closing the windows of one's soul. The essence of a sailor's existence was to be utterly without space he could call his own, to have all his possessions calculated narrowly, to be a totally public man to his peers and to be totally public to superiors."[387] Sea-chests continued to be used both for legitimate trade and for smuggling and the storage of possessions stolen from other seamen, while the men appear to have been subjected to few inspections beside those demanded by the Company's customs agents.[388]

Over the next century the lower deck also lost some of its non-residential functions. Apart from the removal of the capstan, described above, the water pumps and even the cannons, which had played a role in promoting hammocks, were also removed to the upper deck. In 1690 it had been observed that guns on the lower deck could almost never be used on ships

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[387] Dening, G: *Mr Bligh's Bad Language,* 28.

[388] Sailors returning to Patria counted the trade items in their sea-chests as an important part of their overall payment throughout the Company's history. Often these items infringed on the Company's monopolies. The trade was so widespread and important to the business both of Company sailors and of the Chinese community in Batavia that a blind eye was frequently turned. Attempts to stop the trade in porcelain in 1695 through heavy excise duties levied in Batavia prompted such an outcry among both groups that the Governor General, fearing that the Chinese community might migrate elsewhere, was forced to back down. Blusse, L: *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Leiden: KITLV Verhandelingen Ser No. 122, 1988), 127.

returning home because the heavy lading placed the gun ports dangerously close to the waterline.[389] Guns were therefore often stowed as ballast in the hold to make the best use of the available space. Moreover, by the second Anglo-Dutch War VOC ships had lost their military function within European naval engagements. The standard armament was accordingly formally reduced in 1744 to 32 guns for a first rate, these being carried on the upper deck and in the gunroom.[390] After 1744 the main kinds of work conducted on the lower deck became those associated with the care and feeding of the men and with the repair of a few of the ship's systems, notably the sails. In this clarified, simplified space markers of status differentiation that referred to the seamen's lives ashore were suppressed, as they were in other institutions.[391] Where in Ketting's description a bunk might conceal private stores, trade goods or even a wife, on ships like the *Hollandia* it was difficult to conceal the contents of one's sea-chest from one's neighbors.[392]

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[389] Decquer: *Middelen.*

[390] Prior to this date no standard had been established for the number of guns carried. At least 50 was common on large ships, however. The *Eendracht*, the first of the Bentam-designed first rates, was recorded carrying 50 guns in 1742. The resolution of 1744 stated that two guns of 12lbs shot weight were to be carried in the gunroom and six more under the quarterdeck; 14 guns of eight lbs "on the deck" (gun ports are provided for them on the upper deck in Bentam's plans and model) and two more on the foredeck, with a remaining eight guns of four lbs on the quarterdeck and 10 swivelguns to be mounted on the top decks when needed. VOC 7374.

[391] Goffman, E: "The moral career of the mental patient," in *Asylums* (New York, Anchor Books, 1961) 161-9.

[392] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

What remained was indicative of the directors' view of their workers. Where the officers were placed in individual cells that expressed an explicit hierarchy, the men were placed together in a pen shorn of distinguishing marks: their interchangeability was laid bare in the seriality of hammocks and *baks*. Arranged in even lines and gathered in work groups around their mess tables, nothing prevented the crew from seeing that they too were a standing resource, like the supplies in the hold or the orderly ropes on the foredeck: an element of the order and machinery of the ship. Those markers of status the Company provided were largely invisible and entirely concerned with performance: pay grades based on assessments of each man's usefulness and competence, combined in the final decades with seamen's uniforms that only indicated rank in the case of the senior officers. For visible, tangible markers of hierarchy among themselves, crewmen could use the space of the lower deck: positions close to the centerline of the ship were prized over those at the sides for being healthier and airier, on a pattern that mirrored the runoff of water, the brightest place being also the driest, while the walls were associated with weakness and sickness.[393] Membership of a *bak* that contained experienced mariners or junior officers could carry advantages, including better treatment from the officers, protection from victimization and greater potential for training and promotion. None of these status markers referred to any tradition or symbolic system outside the Company's authorship and authority, however: all were built from the spatial and social elements provided by the

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[393] Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur*.

shipboard order. To the extent they contributed to an environment of competition among seamen they also contributed to the Company's hierarchy and program, despite their being entirely unofficial.

Dialectical distinctions

The workrooms aboard and their status divisions were reinforced by visual markers in only a few cases. The relative cleaning schedule of upper and lower decks—daily and weekly, respectively—has already been remarked. More permanent were the marks that distinguished the officers' spaces visually from those of the men both inside and out. The saloon and officers' cabins were the only places aboard that were routinely painted, the captain's cabin generally being set apart in a characteristic shade of blue thought to repel flies.[394] In contrast the spaces of the men were coated with a tar that contributed to their characteristic smell. The officers' cabins were also provided with furniture: among the equipment carried aboard silver cruet sets and fine chairs and tables for the captain's cabin were frequently mentioned, while the men sat on the deck or on their sea-chests.

On the ship's exterior the one part of the ship that was routinely and extravagantly decorated with carved and painted woodwork was the stern, specifically the rearward faces of the saloon and officers' quarters and the

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[394] Horst, A. J. van deer: "Painting and Preserving the Ship in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries" *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* (2001) 30.2 (2001), 273–278.

galleries, which generally featured a great deal of golden-colored paint in imitation of the gold leaf used on Admiralty ships.

The resolutions of the *Heren XVII* routinely decried the money spent on such decoration and insisted that no more money was to be wasted in this way.[395] Paintings of *retourschepen* show a high level of decoration up to the Company's end, however, declining somewhat during the later eighteenth century apparently in line with a decline in decoration on warships. The reason for this continued practice of decorating the ships against the stated wishes of the ruling council is not known: it might be that the individual Chambers that paid for the ships considered it important to their dignity and relative positions to have their vessels smartly appointed. Alternatively the Company's shipbuilders or equipment-masters might have considered the decoration a necessary part of the ships' completion, or might have insisted that their vessels look no less fine than those of the English, French, Danish and Swedish Companies. The effect was clear, however: it presented the ships as belonging to a proud institution and underlined the similarity in organization, character and importance between the *retourschepen* and the warships that defended the Republic.

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[395] Schokkenbroek, J: *Kunst op het water: Nederlandse scheepssier, 1650-1850* (Amsterdam, Zutphen: Stichting Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum, Walburg Pers, 1995).

Conclusion

From the foregoing spatial analysis it can be seen that the *retourschip* was significantly different from most of the institutions with which it is commonly compared. Certainly there were aspects of the Company servant's life which resembled the lives of prisoners or hospital inmates. Officers acted as guards, to prevent desertion from the ship; physical and social reminders of the inmates' lives outside the Company were suppressed; and both Ketting and Van Gelder have compared the welcome that new recruits received on first boarding with that experienced by convicts on arriving at a new prison, involving physical and verbal abuse from officers and other inmates alike, intended to cow the new arrivals and show them their place in abjection.[396] As a working unit, however, the ship clearly functioned very differently from a prison. In its sociospatial arrangement the ship appears to have been closer to a factory, except that, unlike the factories described by Markus, on the ship all ranks were actively engaged together in the task of sailing, for which they used a common "production floor," this production floor acting as an important link between the officers' and general crews' respective living quarters.

With its dual social order, involving separate and unequal hierarchies of power before and aft of the mast, I propose that the *retourschip* showed a

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[396] Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur*. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.* Goffman has remarked on similar welcoming tactics among prison warders and inmates as efforts at social reproduction: Goffman, E: *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1959).

spatial arrangement analogous to the dual nature of some colonial cities, as famously described by Janet Abu-Lughod and Anthony King.[397] In Abu-Lughod's analysis of the two faces of Cairo that were developed during the nineteenth century she draws a clear line between the city's elite, "public" face, intended to represent the potential of Egypt to international visitors and its own government alike, and its undeveloped, domestic face, which reflected the actual economic base and conditions of the country. King has related these two faces to two cultures or impulses, oriented toward "global" and "local" orders respectively.[398] I propose that the *retourschip* presented a similar dichotomy in its dual spatial organization. On the one hand , the standardized and hierarchically ordered officers' spaces presented a uniform face to the officers, to the Company's directors and to any passengers or visitors to the ship, who would always be accommodated in the saloon and take their walks on the quarterdeck. On the other, the selective blindness of the officers and directors to a separate, "traditional," unofficial lower-deck order recalls similar "blind spots" or "dark twins" in Cairo, Delhi or, indeed, the Company's own Batavia.[399]

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[397] Abu-Lughod, J: "Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 7.4 (July 1965), 429-457. Anthony D. King: "Writing Colonial Space. A Review Article" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37.3 (July 1995), 541-554.

[398] King cites Redfield, R. & Singer, M. B: *The cultural role of cities* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, College Division, 1954) as the origin of a critical dichotomy between "technological" and "moral" or "traditional" urban orders. King: "Writing Colonial Space."

[399] Abu-Lughod, J: "Tale of Two Cities." Scott describes the "dark twin" as "everything forgotten or suppressed in the original plan, which however must exist for life to go on" Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the*

My concern here is with the structures of colonialism, rather than with its racial or ethnic aspects. The ship produced most of these structures from the company's first decades without the involvement of non-European crew members, generating categories of servants that functioned like colonists and colonized even as it produced all these seafaring servants as Europeans. When non-Europeans became involved in the Company's shipping, particularly on the *retour* route, they were subjected to certain restrictions characteristic of racialized colonialism: they were prevented from rising to the ranks of officers, they were limited in their duties, paid on different scales and contract terms from those of their European counterparts (not always to their disadvantage), and most of all they were actively prevented from remaining in Europe.[400] In most respects, however, they inherited their subordinate, dependent roles in the Company's operational organization from those developed for handling European crews.

Human Condition have Failed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 261. Atsushi and Raben have both investigated the kampongs and other extramuros spaces of Batavia that provided the city's productive umland. The same fundamental structure can be seen in the intramuros space, however, with the city's first development involving a Dutch colonial fortress supported by a Chinese town. Ota Atsushi: *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java: Society, State and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830* (Brill, Leiden, 2006). Raben, R: "Round About Batavia: Ethnicity and Authority in the Ommelanden, 1650-1800" in K. Grijns and P. J. M. Nas (eds): *Jakarta-Batavia: Socio-cultural essays (Leiden: KITLV, 2000)*, 93-113. Blusse, L: *Strange Company*.

[400] Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force."

Consultative and executive layers

The most direct parallel between the Company's shipboard social order and its development of colonial methods of production ashore can be seen in the relations between a consultative layer of officers, which participated in councils and decided the operations of the ship together, and the general crew, which was charged with the execution of those operations and which consisted of interchangeable workers, treated as a standing resource of labor. These last were typically represented to the consultative layer by a single individual who both spoke for and informed on his group of workers. Ashore, under the later "cultivation system," this position might be occupied by a local nobleman: in seventeenth and eighteenth century Batavia the head of the Chinese council (Kong Koan) filled a similar role.[401] Aboard ship there were three figures who might fill this role.

Among the officers there were almost as many subdivisions by rank as there were personnel. This etiolated hierarchy is characteristic of shipboard organizations: in practice it tended to concentrate power in the hands of the master or captain, since all the officers constituted a chain of command and accountability that ended at the captain's door. During the Company's first years the master represented "the people" of the ship to the merchant that commanded the expedition. After merchants had largely settled at factories ashore, the master formed the sole point of contact between the ship and the

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[401] Blusse, L: *Strange Company*. Blussé, L & Menghong Chen (eds.): *The Archives of the Kong Koan of Batavia* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003).

world outside it.[402] He might in this capacity act as a peer with other captains or a figure of authority to lesser officers. He always stood in a subordinate relation to the merchants and governors ashore and to the administrators to whom he had to report in Patria, however. Across the division between officers and men the Company used the boatswain as the sole representative for the subordinate group, except where soldiers were concerned, in which case the sergeant was the representative. The boatswain's own power hierarchy, of seconds, mates, quartermasters and enforcers, was effectively invisible to the upper tier of officers as long as operations continued normally.

Finally, fundamentally different sets of concerns affected the officers and the men, reflecting the different social worlds in which they moved. Officers competed for authority, promotion and influence. They might be involved in networks of power both in Patria and the Indies factories, being consulted for their expert opinions by directors' councils or even marrying into the upper echelons of Batavia society.[403] Before the mast, as shall be seen in the next

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[402] In accounts of several mutinies the captain or master is forced to interact with the masters of other ships, encountered at sea, to deflect their suspicions and allow the mutinous crew to escape. Where the master cannot be so forced, and the ship consequently lacks a proper spokesman, there is the perceived danger that the master of the encountered ship will take action against the crew. Bruijn, J. R & Eyck van Heslinga, E. S. van (eds.): *Muiterij: oproer en berichting op schepen van de VOC* (Haarlem: de Boer Maritime, 1980).

[403] Kist shows how ship captains were consulted on the performance of Bentam's revised rates in the 1740s, playing an active role in the VOC's ship design. Kist, B: "VOC shipbuilding Policy 1740-1750." Taylor describes how captains, like merchants, could marry into the Batavia elite. Taylor, J. G: *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in colonial Indonesia*. (Madison Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

chapter, the men's concerns were rooted much more in the society within the ship's wooden walls: they competed for the resources of food, drink and shelter that the Company theoretically made available to all, but which were frequently used and abused to establish hierarchy on the lower deck.

CHAPTER 3: ATYPICAL CIRCUMSTANCES: THE MUTINY ON THE *NIJENBURG*

In previous chapters I have discussed the space of VOC ships as interpreted through the constructed model of the typical ship. This chapter focuses instead on the trial records from a single mutiny, which took place on the *retourschip Nijenburg* in 1763, on the way from Patria to the Indies. Using these records I have attempted to reconstruct as closely as possible the socio-spatial order in operation aboard both before the mutiny, while the ship was under the Company's officers, and afterward, when the mutineers were in command.

I have several purposes in mind in comparing the type model with the conditions recorded on a particular, interrupted voyage. Case studies, in their individuality, reveal problems with such models, as well as something of the variation that might be expected among examples of a type. The *Nijenburg* mutiny records, moreover, allow for an examination of a specific moment of crisis and its effects on the spaces and dynamics of power, experienced in different ways by different individuals and groups involved. The records allow a glimpse of how crewmen made their living and working places aboard the ship both before and after the mutiny, showing how common shipboard socio-spatial structures could be made to support a variety of orders and power-holders.

Three separate trials followed the *Nijenburg* mutiny: the detail of their records, and the breadth of different viewpoints they contain, provide an unparalleled source for conducting a fine-grained analysis of the relationships between space, society and power aboard ship. Trial depositions are almost the only moments when ordinary crewmen are asked where they were and what they were doing at any particular moment during their labors: both the questions and answers reveal aspects of social ordering aboard that are missing, not only from the accounts of elite passengers or the official logs of merchants and captains, but also from the adventure-memoirs that retired Company seamen sometimes wrote for genteel European audiences.[404] The multiple perspectives of ordinary seamen and soldiers reveal the range of experience and the roles of information and ignorance aboard.

The *Nijenburg* mutiny is also one of only a very few VOC uprisings in which control of the ship was taken over for an extended period by the mutineers. The trial proceedings therefore offer a rare glimpse of the workings of a VOC ship both under the uniform work order of the VOC and under an alternative order established by the mutineers, which lasted for several weeks, until the ship was brought to port. A comparison of the two situations raises questions about the nature and purpose of the Company's shipboard order, and about the role of space in maintaining authority aboard. The differences between the spatial orders employed by different sets of masters allows for some

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[404] Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997). .

conclusions to be drawn about the role of space itself in supporting authority and control aboard.

More generally, mutiny trials offer rare moments when details of the day-to-day running of ships come under investigation. Latour has noted that it is only when a machine stops working that we look inside the "black box" of its operation.[405] At mutiny trials such "black boxes" were opened and aspects of shipboard life that generally lay far below the level of discourse became matters of explicit discussion, revealing not only the facts of shipboard life but also the expectations of authority figures in the courtroom. Mutinies on outward-bound vessels present a further unique opportunity to capture the typical ship in the process of being reproduced, since on outward voyages assorted laborers and nationals from across Europe were actively stuffed into the "black boxes" of the Company's ships, to be transformed into crews bearing the identity of Jan Compagnie. Throughout the Company's history only a very small proportion of all its servants enlisted more than once to sail to the East: by the eighteenth century very few experienced seamen were willing to accept its contract terms.[406] The space, society, and uniform work order of the VOC ship therefore had to be recreated anew on every outward

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[405] Callon, M. & Latour, B: "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: how actors macrostructure reality and how sociologists help them to do so," in Knorr-Cetina, K. D. & Cicourel, A. V. (Eds.) *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro-and Macro-Sociologies.* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 277-303.

[406] Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 66 (25 Feb 2005): 12-39.

bound voyage as novice crewmen—landlubbers "out of the woods for the first time, having never seen the sea or salt water"—had to be "shown the ropes," taught not only to operate and maintain the ship as a cohesive body of workers but also to comport themselves as Company servants, capable of being used anywhere in the VOC's extensive shipping networks.[407] The *Nijenburg* mutiny, which occurred in the final years of the Company's stable operation, between the crises of the Seven Years War and the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, shows the machinery of the VOC's recruiting and training tested to breaking point.[408]

The outward-bound VOC mutiny in the eighteenth century

In order to understand the *Nijenburg* mutiny and how it was organized it is useful to outline the parameters of the problem of outward-bound mutinies in

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[407] The quote is from Isaac Sunderman, VOC memoirist, who complained in 1711 of "de dommigheden der landluiden, die eerst uit het Bos komen, en nooit Zee of Zout-water gesien hebben" (the stupidities of the land-folk, coming for the first time out of the forest, having never seen the sea or salt water." Gelder, R. van: *Het Oost-Indisch Avontuur*, 48. Although this observation had been repeated since the Company's first decades, the severe deterioration in the quality of VOC recruits during the eighteenth century was a matter of public debate in the 1780s and has become a byword of VOC historiography. Hoefnagel, N: *Plan of Welmeenende Voorstelling ter Verbetering van Neerlands Zee-weezen...* (Amsterdam: Dirk Schuurman, 1779) Boxer, C.R: 'The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators, and Life on Board, 1602-1795', *The Mariner's Mirror* 49.2 (May 1963), 81-104. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen *der Oost-Indische Compagnie: vijf artikelen studie over de werkgelegenheid bij de VOC* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff/Bouma's Boekhuis, 1980).

[408] The impact of the Seven Years War on the VOC has received relatively little attention from historians. The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, however, suspended VOC return shipping for two years and severely damaged the Company's finances, being widely credited as one of the decisive factors leading to the final collapse of the VOC in 1795. Dillo, I. G: *De Nadagen Van De Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, 1783-1795: Schepen En Zeevarenden*. (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1992). Gaastra, F: S: *The Dutch East India Company, Expansion and Decline* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003).

general. This can be done by comparing the mutiny with subsequent revolts aboard the *Duinenburg* (1766), *Gerechtigheid* (1782), *Venus* (1782) and *Barbestein* (1786), which shed light on the common causes and methods of mutinies, since there are significant similarities between all the cases in the ways the mutinies progressed, in the vulnerabilities of the ships, the overall goals of the mutineers and their shipboard targets.[409] Indeed, the *Nijenburg* appears in this context to open a series of related mutinies that show repeated strains on the reproduction of the Company's shipboard order.

According to Cornelis Lammers' classification of mutinies, all these cases fit the "secession" type, in which mutineers act to sever their work relationship with the authorities.[410] Even though several involved the theft of the Company's money, ships and cargo, none aimed principally at piracy; the fact that these thefts were not primary motives for mutiny can be seen in the lack

[409] Bruin, G. de & Wal, A. J. J. van der, "'Allons Duytsche Broeders': de muiterijen op de 'Nijenburg' in 1763', in J. R. Bruijn, Eyck van Heslinga E. S. van (eds.): *Muiterij: oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC* (Haarlem: de Boer Maritime, 1980), 67-83. Meurs, I. van: "'Courage, Francois': een samenzwering op de 'Duinenburg' in 1766," in Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij,* 68-84. Gesner van der Voort, P: "'Oproer en geweld' op de rede van Texel in 1782" in Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij,* 85-97. "'Luxembourg en haut': muiterij aan boord van de 'Barbestein 'in 1786" in Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij,* 98-111. Additional details have been gathered from archival sources in each case.

[410] Lammers' other two classifications are the work stoppage or strike, a form of negotiation intended to lead to different working conditions within the same fundamental structures, and the mutiny of acquisition, the goal of which is to seize and hold the ship for the mutineers' own purposes, which frequently involve piracy. Lammers, C. J: "Strikes and Mutinies: A Comparative Study of Organizational Conflicts between Rulers and Ruled," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 14 (1969), 558-72. Lammers, C. J: "Review Essay: Mutiny in Comparative Perspective," *Internationaal Instituut voor sociale Geschiedenis*, 48 (2003), 473-82.

of any clear plans for their distribution among the mutineers.[411] Such thefts were instead always tied to aiding the primary goal of desertion: to return to a life on land in Europe, from which many mutineers felt they had been unlawfully snatched. Among the 51 deponents accused of mutiny in the *Nijenburg* trials, 28 (i.e. 54%) complained that they had been forced into Company service through violence or trickery, via networks of *zielverkopers* or via unlawful contracts enacted outside their control.[412] The means of recruitment and the VOC's monopoly charter may explain why desertion was preferred to negotiating with the Company through work stoppages or strikes: the latter proved effective in competitive labor markets, but the VOC stood as a monolithic opponent capable of forcing labor, more akin to a state's Navy than a commercial institution.[413]

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[411] On the *Barbestein* the first officer appears to have made use of this lack of planning to delay the mutineers and contribute to their eventual capture, by rendering confusing accounts of how much money there was and how it might be divided equally among the mutineers, and by encouraging the mutineers to open the chests and divide the money aboard, while dawn approached and their chances of escaping undetected by other craft dwindled, rather than escaping quickly with the chests and reaching land under cover of night. The five prospective mutineers on the *Duinenberg* aimed to dupe those they recruited by sneaking the Company's money ashore in sugar barrels, leaving the rest of the mutineers to negotiate the sale of the ship and cargo to Genoese authorities. Although the money chests play a large role in the *Nijenburg* mutiny, the mutineers appear to have taken them opportunistically as spoils once control had been secured: there is no indication that they had any plans for sharing the money out before they took possession of it. Bruijn & Van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij*.

[412] It is unfortunately impossible to state with any certainty what percentage of the *Nijenburg's* crew had been forced into service, since each trial court only asked a small subset of deponents whether they had been so forced. *Crimineele Procedures by, mitsgaders voor en ten overstaan van de Hogen Scheeps Krygsraad in Texel gehouden, tegens sommige der Muitelingen van het O. I. Schip Neyenburg…* (Amsterdam, 1764). AN Staten Generaal 9404-7, Societeit van Suriname 929.

[413] Rediker cites several successful strikes aboard British merchant ships, where officers abused crewmen and the crew responded with work stoppages and re-

Lammers' model further assumes that in any successful mutiny an initially small group of determined mutineers forms the core of a larger movement or uprising among the crew: the actions of mutiny prompt sympathetic action and a shift of loyalties among the larger group, leading to a tipping point where control of the ship is seized from the officers.[414] The cases studied complicate this picture in several ways, including the means by which the core group was formed, the division between that core and a larger group that was willing to take opportunistic advantage of the mutiny, and the troublesome fact that in each case the largest group aboard consisted of men aligned neither with the mutineers nor with the overthrown officers, who continued merely to operate the ship regardless of whether Company officers or mutineers were in command.

The mutinies listed above do, however, show that the core group required to wrest control of the ship from the officers was surprisingly small, provided the men in the group acted in concert: that is, provided their networks of trust and command were well prepared. The largest uprising, that on the *Barbestein*,

negotiation which might affect the officers' status aboard. The VOC, however, supported its hierarchy first, made no secret of statements from high officers such as Both and Coen that held the Company's mariners in the lowest contempt, and operated like a repressive state in the Indies. Rediker, M. B; *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: merchant seamen, pirates, and the Anglo-American maritime world, 1700-1750*. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 100-102. Rietbergen, P. J. A. N: *De Eerste Landvoogd Pieter Both, 1568-1615: Gouverneur-Generaal Van Nederlands-Indië, 1609-1614* (Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten-Vereeniging, 86-87; Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1987). Colenbrander, H. T. (ed): *Jan Pietersz. Coen: Bescheiden Omtrent Zijn Bedrijf in Indië* ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff & KITLV, 1919), 485-6

[414] Lammers, C. J: "Strikes and Mutinies."

involved 20 mutineers out of a total complement of 361. In other mutinies a

core of only 12 trusted men was considered sufficient to take over the ship.

Deserters on the *Venus* stated that they would not have gone ahead with their

plan if they had not been able to recruit 12 accomplices, while the one mutiny

that was nipped in the bud, that on the *Duinenburg*, failed during the

recruiting stage because one of the men invited to join informed the officers

before the 12 men required by the mutineers' plan could be gathered

together.[415] On the *Gerechtigheid* the core group that planned the desertion

consisted of only four men out of a complement of roughly 300.[416] This was an

exceptional case in several ways, however: seizing the opportunity presented

by a poorly guarded supply lighter that was bringing food and cargo to the

ship, the mutineers were able to short-cut their initial plan and rely on speed

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[415] Meurs, I. van: "Courage, Francois." It is unfortunately not recorded whether later mutineers based their actions on published accounts of the *Nijenburg* mutiny: although the courts that tried the *Duinenberg* and *Barbestein* mutinies both referred to the *Nijenburg's* precedent, the prisoners made no mention of it in either trial.

[416] The complement of the *Gerechtigheid* at the time of the mutiny is uncertain because the problem of desertion was so severe at the time that stable numbers were not maintained: Gesner van der Voort states that, of all those names entered on the paybooks of the *Gerechtigheid* during its long stay at Texel, 80% were listed as having left the ship without a proper closure of accounts. Gesner van der Voort: "Oproer en geweld." The ship eventually sailed in 1783 with 296 persons aboard. Figures are also not available for the complement of the Venus at the time of its mutiny: following the mutiny the ship was renamed Oostereem and wrecked on its next voyage without reaching its first port of call: no records of its paybooks have been retained. Bruijn, J. R, Gaastra, F. S, Schoeffer, I: *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (The Hague, 1979), II (hereafter DAS II), 4406.2. Since both ships were first rates it is reasonable to assume that the complement was also around 300. The *Barbestein* carried a large contingent of soldiers bound for garrisons in the Indies: its active crew totaled 262 men, the mutineers were counted among 99 others, being soldiers, passengers and any other persons not engaged in sailing the ship. DAS II online: Huygens Institute of Netherlands History website, "The Dutch East India Company's Shipping Between the Netherlands and Asia 1595-1795;" http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DAS Accessed 12/1/2011.

and stealth to reach the shore with 18 other deserters before their absence was noticed aboard.[417]

Actor-Network Theory, and more particularly John Law's idea of heterogeneous engineering, can help elucidate both the formation of the core group of mutineers and the issue of tipping points for command.[418] In Actor-Network terms a mutiny represents an attempt by two networks—the Company and the would-be rebels—to reinforce themselves while disabling one another, each preventing the other network from taking action by pulling apart, or disaggregating, the elements that compose it. The elements in question are the labor power of the men involved, the tools of coercion, including weapons, shackles and spaces of confinement, the spaces and equipment used for control of the ship and, ultimately the most difficult and mysterious factor to track, the assent of the crew to be governed and directed. In order to challenge the Company's aggregation of all these elements into its own network, the mutineers must construct their own network, composed of a plan proposing an alternative to the Company's agenda, a leadership structure for executing the plan and, most importantly, a common identity or network

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[417] The *Gerechtigheid's* deserters were detected and apprehended ashore by people who took them to be English spies. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: "Luxembourg en haut."

[418] Law, J: "On the Social Explanation of Technical Change: The Case of the Portuguese Maritime Expansion" *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Apr., 1987), 227-252. Law, J. "Notes on the theory of the Actor-Network" *Systems Practice* 5. 4 (1992), 379-392. Law, J: ""Technology, Closure and Heterogeneous Engineering: the case of the Portuguese expansion" in Bijker, W. E, Hughes, T. P. & Pinch, T. J. (eds.):

of trust binding the mutineers together. Mutiny is avoided through the disaggregation of any potentially rebellious alternative networks among the men and most of all, of communal identities, social categories and bases for loyalty except those founded on VOC functional categories.

The Company's primary tools for disaggregating rebellious networks aboard were terror, spread through severe physical punishments even for minor infractions, and the standard strategies identified by Goffman for isolating or "atomizing" new inmates used by "total institutions."[419] These included taking away personal possessions and other markers of individual character, sequestering the inmates without the possibility of contact beyond the ship, canceling status and wealth differences that related to the world outside and imposing standardized living, sleeping and eating arrangements.[420] The Company's main response to the threat of mutiny likewise showed an "atomized" conception of the crew: instead of using the officers and petty

The Social Construction of Technological Systems, New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology (MIT Press, Cambridge 1987).

[419] Erving Goffman has noted that "total institutions" such as prisons and mental hospitals commonly aim to disaggregate the identities of their inmates in order to mould them to their new roles within the institutional order. Such institutions therefore work first to take away the means by which inmates reinforce their personalities: isolating them, canceling their prior attachments to statuses and roles outside the institution and defining their primary meaningful relationships as being with the institutional hierarchy. The goal is to "atomize" the inmates: to take away their prior social identities and to provide them with no options for forming new identities but the institution itself. Goffman, E: "the characteristics of total institutions," in *Asylums* (1961), 14-28, 148-9.

[420] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk En Rebellie Aan Board Van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-±1650).* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2002).

officers to keep a close watch on the men as a group it relied on turning the men against one another, through a substantial reward offered to whistleblowers, of 20 ducats if the informant was himself a mutineer or 50 ducats if he had no prior involvement.[421] In 1782, when desertion was unusually rife, it was regularly read out to crews and posted on the mainmasts of all VOC ships.[422] Mutiny trials also contributed to the disaggregation of mutinous impulses or elements among the crews they examined: the primary purpose of such trials was to separate and punish a subset of "ringleaders," so as to be able to rehabilitate the majority of the crew. The men identified as instigators of mutinies were executed in spectacularly gruesome ways, while those who denounced the instigators and managed to minimize their own roles frequently faced lesser punishments or were merely fined the costs of the court. Prisoners were therefore required to state in public their antipathy for the mutineers' cause in order to preserve their own lives.[423]

The outward-bound mutinies show how such atomizing strategies could fail; in each case the core group of mutineers was able to find a source for common

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[421] This reward was written into the Company's first Articles in 1617: it remained in effect until the Company's dissolution. Hoogenberk, H: *De Rechtsvoorschriften Voor De Vaart Op Oost-Indië, 1595-1620.* (Utrecht: Kemink, 1940). VOC 4952.

[422] Hoogenberk: *Rechtsvoorschriften*. Gesner van der Voort: "Oproer en geweld".

[423] The *Nijenburg* mutineers were variously hanged, broken on the wheel, and beheaded. Arguably "lesser" punishments could be worse: these involved some combination of hundreds of lashes, with or without attendant strangulation, with keel-hauling (usually repeated three times) or partial drowning through being bound and dropped into the sea from the foreyard. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: "De scheepvaart van de Oost-Indische Compagnie en het verschijnsel muiterij" in Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij,* 9-26.

identity, which in turn allowed them to resist the Company's methods of terror and abjection and instead to derive common cause from their common grievances. Where they retained a basis for a shared, separate social identity from their former lives on land, they found a strong basis for collective action against the foreign and demanding environment aboard. On the *Barbestein* the mutineers' common identity was well established ashore: they were all members of the "Prince of Luxembourg" regiment, which had been hired by the VOC for garrison work in the East. While still ashore they objected to their new appointment in the Indies, which constituted a major change to their contracts.[424] Aboard they found their new employer treated them with less respect than they were accustomed to, providing poor accommodation and inadequate food, and concluded that they were being treated worse than the sailors who, as true Company servants, were given better quarters and rations.[425] On the *Nijenburg* the mutineers were also soldiers, recently dismissed from the various armies involved in the Seven Years War, which had ended a few months before the *Nijenburg* set sail. Their basis for collective identity, however, was that they had all been tricked or forced into joining the Company by the same organization of *zielverkopers*, and that most of them had

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[424] The *Barbestein* mutineers were kept together as a military unit in a depot building in Vlissingen, rented by the Company for the purpose. They were therefore provided before their transportation to the ship with both the opportunity to plot and a motive: their shifting contractual terms and poor treatment. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: "Luxembourg en haut."

[425] Bruijn and van Eyck van Heslinga remark that the soldiers were kept forward on the lower deck, in "the worst place aboard" and that they were routinely scolded by the sailors, who received cheese rations in addition to the "bad peas and meat" the

been made the same fraudulent promise before embarking, that they were

going to serve in regiments on land in the Republic.[426] It was while they were

being held together, prior to being transported to the ship, in an unofficial

zielverkopers' prison in Amsterdam that they formed themselves into the

zwavelband or "match gang" and first discussed deserting as a group.[427]

The architecture and organization of the ship played an active role at every

stage in the unfolding of mutinies. Prospective mutineers needed

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Luxemburgers had to eat. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: "Luxembourg en haut," 114-5.

[426] The ending of the Seven Years' War shortly before the *Nijenburg*'s departure lead to a massive increase in the numbers of loose, discharged and deserting soldiers passing through the Netherlands, and an unusual level of opportunity for *zielverkopers*: most of the Germans testified that they had entered the Company's service in this way. One sailor, Fredrik Mentel, was captured en route from Bremen to London, where he had been offered a job at the sugar mill where his brother worked; while sleeping at an inn in Amsterdam he was locked in his room, fraudulent debts were concocted in his name and he was forced aboard a VOC lighter. Mentel's case appears typical, and shows a system of capture and enlistment in the VOC that seems as cruel and haphazard as the impressment practiced in England. *Crimineele Procedures,* 38.

[427] There is some room for doubt in the court records as to who exactly among the mutineers eventually charged was a *zwavelbender* and who was not. The term zwavelband was used among the mutineers after their seizure of the ship to identify themselves, and is sometimes used in the court records as a synonym for members of the core group of mutineers, also called *muiterofficiers* (mutineer-officers) or simply *muiters* (mutineers). Some deponents stated that they had been *zwavelbenders* but had taken no part in the mutiny. The courts were never able to establish an exact division between the categories of *zwavelbender* and mutineer, however, and were in any case more concerned with identifying and punishing the mutineers than separating these categories. Of the 27 persons punished for mutiny, 18 we know to have been the victims of *zielverkopers*. Of the list of original mutineers given by Croos, one of the mutiny's two leaders, all but one were identified as *zwavelbenders*. The reason for the name is unclear, but may be linked to a land-based military identity, since musketeers, grenadiers and artillerymen all carried matches but seamen did not except during combat. *Crimineele Procedures*. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas en Dagverhaal Wegens den Opstand en… de Muiterij op het Oostindisch Compagnieschip Nijenburg, 1764* (Amsterdam: Terra Incognita, 1992).

opportunities to form social bonds and discuss plans outside the Company's gaze. They uniformly found these opportunities on the lower deck, relying on periods of low surveillance during night watches or in the sick bay in order to form and circulate detailed plans, involving multiple actions to be carried out simultaneously by different groups of men.[428] The arrangement of shipboard spaces also clarified the mutineers' targets. The number of mutineers required to carry out an uprising does not seem to have depended on the size of the ship or crew but on the tasks to be carried out and especially the spaces to be claimed.[429] In cases where the ships still lay at anchor in the roadstead (the *Gerechtigheid* and *Venus*) it was necessary only to steal a lighter: this could be achieved with a few men, and involved only the temporary holding of access ways between the lower deck, the deck and the escape boat, the most difficult part of the mutiny then being to reach land undetected.[430] After the ship had

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[428] None of the mutinies appear to have been spontaneous, requiring instead several weeks for recruitment, debate and planning. The *Duinenburg* mutiny even made use of written documents, calling the crew to rebellion and stating the mutineers' main objectives and proposed destination. Meurs, I. van: "Courage, Francois."

[429] The plans and numbers assigned were the same on first rates with over 300 persons aboard as on the *Nijenburg* with its crew of 198. The reason for this invariability may be related to the architecture of the ship, which was fundamentally the same between first and second rates, or to the number of senior officers, which was also the same.

[430] The surveillance of other ships was one of the gravest problems mutineers faced: it effectively removed the option of seizing and holding the mutineers' ship. Deserters from the *Venus* were seen boarding the lighter by an officer on the *Gerechtigheid*, a few months after that ship's own mutiny. They were apprehended by boats from several nearby ships before reaching shore. Ships would frequently spend weeks in the roads between den Helder and the island of Texel, taking on supplies, men and the Texel water, which was prized for its long usable life once placed in barrels. In 1782 these weeks stretched into many months, as the efforts of the Royal Navy during the fourth Anglo-Dutch War kept VOC ships from entering or leaving Dutch waters. The long wait by Texel was evidently a major contributing factor to the *Genrechtigheid* and

set sail however, the difficulty of desertion increased: the mutineers needed to

seize and maintain control of the vessel long enough either to steer it to a

friendly port or to make off in the ships' boats, an operation that required

preparing and lowering the boats, loading them and preventing retaliatory

action from the ship after departing.[431] Seizing the ship always led to the same

first objectives, expressed as seizing particular spaces aboard. These were the

quarterdeck, possession of which would mean overpowering the senior

officers and depriving them of their command, and the saloon, possession of

which would mean possession of the swords, pistols and muskets stored

there.[432] Six or seven men always proved sufficient for each task. Shipboard

time also played an important role: almost all the mutinies were launched at

the changing of the watch, as one set of seamen were relieved of their duties

by another. The reason for this might have been simply the ease of ensuring

synchronization: since men lacked individual timepieces, the ship's bell

regulated the communal day. Such moments were also relaxations of the usual

order, however, when *jenever* might be distributed and when groups of men

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Venus mutinies, which occurred amid a wave of desertions, from land-based depots, from ships and from the Company's hospital ship at Den Helder. Gesner van der Voort: "Oproer en geweld."

[431] In the case of the *Barbestein* the boats were chosen, since the ship was within a few miles of Britain, the mutineers' goal. The *Nijenburg*'s mutineers hoped to desert using the boats at the Cape Verde islands, expecting the ship to stop there to take on fresh water. Only after they became aware that the ship had passed the archipelago without stopping did their plans stretch to commanding the ship for an extended period. *Crimineele Procedures*.

[432] Firearms are generally referred to as "*snaphanen*" (snaphaunces, referring to a seventeenth century firing mechanism) in their trial records. Their numbers and attributes are not closely described.

might move from below onto the decks together without attracting suspicion.[433] The fact that any guards stationed about the ships were always surprised and disarmed by the mutineers, and that none of the mutinies faced very much opposition once launched, may be partly due to this camouflaging effect.

In all cases power appears to have transferred from the officers to the mutineers fairly easily and, most surprisingly, with minimal violence, one or two officers generally being killed or wounded, but no resistance being offered once possession of the weapons had been achieved and the quarterdeck had been claimed. This common moment, when control was conceded to the mutineers, is one of the most striking aspects of all the mutinies, and is difficult to explain in terms of tipping points in the wider crew's loyalty or interests, since in every trial many crewmen testified that they did not know who was in command of the ship during the moment of uprising. In all cases but that of the *Nijenburg* neither the petty officers on the foredeck nor the Constable in the gun room attempted to oppose the mutineers after the saloon and quarterdeck had fallen. Mutineers were therefore generally able to gain control of the ship within minutes and progress to their next goals. From an Actor-Network standpoint it appears

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[433] "*Jenever*" and "*brandewyn*" both describe the strong liquor provided to the men. The *Barbestein* mutineers specifically chose "*jenever* time," being the 4 am watch change, for their uprising. It is not recorded whether or not they received their *jenever* before the mutiny began. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: "Luxembourg en haut," 115.

that this moment demonstrated that the officers' network of control had been disaggregated: to restore their order it would be necessary to form a new network strong enough to oppose that of the mutineers, who were already joined to the spaces of command. Such networks might be found aboard other ships, and for this reason the mutineers feared encounters with other vessels, but they were never found among the lower officers and men aboard the mutineers' ship.

Among all the mutinies, only on the *Nijenburg* did the mutineers subsequently remain aboard to command the ship for an extended period. The *Nijenburg* therefore tests several further categories that remain impossible to examine in the other cases, in particular that of Lammers' wider "movement" of mutiny, called into existence by the actions of the "core" mutineers. Mutineers themselves do not seem to have had great confidence in such movements: it is notable that in all cases they called upon the rest of the crew to join them in deserting only after they had secured the means for doing so.[434] Unfortunately it is difficult to assess the degree of willingness or loyalty among these, the vast majority of the crewmen, who uniformly neither hindered nor aided the mutiny in progress. It is not safe to assume that those who joined the core mutineers in deserting the ship formed such a "wider" movement. The number of deserters in most cases appears to have been limited by the

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[434] Theft of the Company's money chests occurred in every case except the *Gerechtigheid* and *Venus* desertions, where money had not yet been loaded onto the ships.

available boats, which were filled with between 60 and 70 men.[435] Where these deserters were recaptured they proffered confusing stories, however, claiming to have been forced into the boats or not to have understood the situation, and courts were frequently lenient regarding such claims, being principally concerned, as noted above, to separate ringleaders and limit the loss of crewmen judged capable of rehabilitation.[436] Those who remained behind on the ships of course never offered testimony stating that they wished to desert: they were accordingly presumed loyal to the Company.

With the exception, again, of the *Nijenburg* the departure of the core mutineers allowed for the authority of the officers to be quickly restored. The officers then acted quickly to thwart the departing mutineers' plans for escape, succeeding in the case of the *Barbestein* by alerting nearby ships to give chase. There is no evidence from the trial records to suggest that the subsequent ability of the officers to command was compromised by the mutinies: once the mutineers' network had been removed from the picture, the social order aboard seems to have gone back to normal.

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[435] The exception to this rule is, again, the *Gerechtigheid*, where only 18 men joined the core mutineers in the lighter. It seems likely that the need for speed and surprise was the limiting factor in this case. Gesner van der Voort: "Oproer en geweld."

[436] In each trial the first concern of the court was to separate leader of the mutiny and those who carried out specific acts of violence from mere followers. The separation between death sentences and "lesser" sentences is generally predicated on this point. Most of the trials ended with between four and nine death sentences and rather fewer "lesser" punishments. In each case the majority of deserters were fined and then pardoned, or sometimes required only to pay their legal costs.

The final part of each mutiny plan involved landing in some foreign port, assumed to lie beyond the reach of the VOC, and using the Company's money to purchase impunity and further transport from there, relying on either the laxity or the cupidity of local authorities to provide a safe haven.[437] The mutineers appear in general to have underestimated the extent of the Company's influence, however, and overestimated the hospitality of foreign authorities. Both Britain and Brazil proved unwilling to accept renegades from the VOC, imprisoning them and alerting the Company as soon as their identities became known. In each case the former Company men seemed to have trouble integrating at their chosen destinations: although they had resisted the imposition of a Company identity aboard, they remained marked as Company men and deserters ashore.

The story of the *Nijenburg* mutiny

On May 8, 1763, the *Nijenburg* set sail from the Texel roadstead, bound for Batavia, closely following the routes of the *Eendracht* and *Oranjezaal*, which had departed two days earlier.[438] Like all outward-bound ships, it was heavily

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[437] In each case the destination was identified as a place where authorities might be fooled or bought off: the *Nijenburg* mutineers chose Portuguese Brazil because of its historical enmity for the Netherlands, while those on the *Duinenburg* chose Genoa as a place where buyers could be found for the VOC's stolen ship and goods. Two of the *Barbestein* mutineers had been wrecked on Cornwall aboard the ship *Ganges* earlier in the same year (1786). They had spent one month in prison, then been released, without having to hand over some bullion they had stolen from the wreck. Other destinations discussed by the mutineers included "a free republic" in the Channel Islands, and the Barbary Coast, where the ship would be sold to corsairs. Bruijn & Van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij.*

[438] *Crimineele Procedures.*

loaded with men and supplies to replenish the Company's factories in Asia, carrying a complement of roughly 200 crewmen, including a contingent of 29 soldiers, destined for the garrison at Batavia, and, beside a full cargo of supplies for the factories in the Indies, two chests of ducats and unminted bullion, with which the Company intended to pay the wages of its servants in the east and to buy a return cargo of Asian products.[439]

At midnight, between June 14 and 15, 1763, when the *Nijenburg* had been at sea for a little over five weeks and had just passed the Cape Verde islands, a band of 14 men seized control of the ship.[440] The uprising was remarkably bloodless: only eight persons were wounded in the whole action, and the sole killing (of the second mate) seems to have been the result of a personal vendetta.[441] The mutineers faced little opposition, apparently because there was very little solidarity between the officers and the bulk of the crew; a few of the junior officers rushed to defend their superiors, but for the most part the ship's ordinary seamen and soldiers either fled or hid from the mutineers, or meekly submitted to their orders when confronted. In particular the captain and first mate offered no resistance: at first sight of the mutineers on the

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[439] DAS I. Bruin, G. de & Wal, A. J. J. van der, "'Allons Duytsche Broeders.'"

[440] Bruin, G. de & Wal, A. J. J. van der, "'Allons Duytsche Broeders.'"

[441] Three men were associated with the killing of second mate Pieterson, who was deliberately killed in his cabin having been incapacitated by previous multiple stab wounds. According to Valk, a Catholic sailor, Pieterson had victimized the German Catholics aboard, throwing a "roozekrans or paternoster" overboard together with prayer books, and had mocked and beaten Catholics, treating them "like Turks, not Christian men." *Crimineele Procedures* II, 12. VOC 2407.

quarterdeck both fled. According to the popular account, the first mate cast down his pistol in his haste to escape into the captain's cabin: from there both he and the captain, who had been lying sick in bed, climbed out of the window of the gallery, over the officers' privy, and hid under the chain-wales mounted on the exterior of the hull, where they clung until coaxed back inboard some hours later by the mutineers' promises that no harm would come to them.[442]

Having gained control, and under the threat that they would kill the officers or blow up the ship if their wishes were not met, the mutineers demanded to be taken to Brazil, where they hoped to escape the VOC's authority with the Company's bullion in hand, to sell the ship, and to live off the combined proceeds. None of the mutineers had any seafaring experience prior to their enlistment, nor were they capable of sailing the ship or navigating to Brazil. They were therefore forced to rely on the ship's officers, the only persons aboard skilled in navigation, to direct the ship and crew on their behalf.

For the next seven weeks, under the mutineers' command, the ship made slow and anxious progress across the windless equatorial region known as the

[442] Here the "popular account" is the "*Echt Relaas*". A note of caution should be sounded regarding the comical scene of the captain's flight, which may have been embellished for its paying audience. The fact that the captain and first officer hid beneath the chain wale is confirmed, however, in reports received by the Suriname court. In other aspects the "*Echt Relaas*" appears remarkably faithful to the testimonies given during the West-Stellingwerf trial and that of the Opperchirurgijn. De Jonge, Kuijk & Oskamp: *Echt Relaas*. Societeit van Suriname 929.

doldrums. During this period the mutineers' threats against the officers were tested twice. The first was when the *Nijenburg* was hailed by the *Oranjezaal,* prompting the mutineers to prepare the ship's guns for combat and the powder barrels in the hold, in case the fight should go against them. A fight was avoided, however, by the captain, who successfully averted the suspicions of the *Oranjezaal's* commander, parting company with the other ship during the night. The second was when the mutineers, unnerved by the apparent lack of progress in the mid Atlantic, accused the captain of attempting to trick them, either preventing the ship from moving forward or steering for some other destination. On this occasion the mutineers threatened to execute the captain and officers unless land was sighted within two weeks. Again according to the popular account the captain's life was spared by a matter of hours, as the third mate in the mast-top sighted the coast of Brazil on August 2, just before the deadline. While the crew were still celebrating the sight of land the *Nijenburg* ran aground on a reef some miles off Cape Roque, Pernambuco, Brazil. At this point roughly 62 men rowed to shore in the ship's two boats, believing the ship itself to be hopelessly stranded and in imminent danger of sinking, and taking some share of the Company's money with them. These men included the bulk of the mutineers and two officers—the first mate and one of the two third mates—who were forced into the boats because the mutineers themselves did not know how to row. Shortly thereafter, however, the ship floated off the reef. Its signal guns, intended to recall the mutineers in the boats, were misinterpreted as attacks: the men who left in the boats made shore and never attempted again to contact the *Nijenburg.*

The few mutineers left aboard, under the leadership of one Johannes Brand, offered the captain his command back, which, however, he refused. After this blow, by a public vote conducted on the quarterdeck, the ship limped northward up the coast, in the direction of French Cayenne, on the report of one sailor who had previously served there that the French would accept willing laborers. At this point the ship had lost its boats and one anchor; it could no longer land the men safely nor stand off the coast indefinitely, while the rafts built by the ship's carpenters and sent to scout the shore failed to bring any news of civilization on land. Faced by a deserted coast, dwindling supplies and the loss of the boats, on arrival at French Cayenne the remaining mutineers were willing to hand over the ship in exchange for a guarantee of safe conduct from the French colonial governor. On August 30 the *Nijenburg* entered Cayenne harbor where the crew left the ship en masse, to be held in a secure building and interrogated by French authorities.[443]

Unfortunately for the mutineers, but fortunately for the present work, most of the core mutineers were subsequently returned to Dutch authorities.[444] The group that had left in the boats was imprisoned by the Portuguese governor at Pernambuco (now Olinda) and returned by way of Lisbon to the Dutch

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[443] De Jonge, Kuijk & Oskamp: *Echt Relaas*. Staten General 6836, 7029, 7040.

[444] A few of the core mutineers died before they could face trial: notably Johann Wolnar, a leader of the mutiny and perhaps the first to suggest it, was found hanged in his prison cell in Pernambuco. Bruin, G. de & Wal, A. J. J. van der, '"Allons Duytsche Broeders.'"

Republic. These arrived and were tried in two batches in 1764. Because the

VOC had no sovereign authority in Dutch territorial waters they were tried by

officers of the Amsterdam Admiralty with VOC *fiscaals* acting as advisers,

aboard two warships anchored in the Texel roadstead.[445] Of those who were

captured at Cayenne, 54 were tried by the nearest Dutch colonial court, at Fort

Zeelandia (now Paramaribo), Suriname, arriving there almost a year later on

July 31, 1764.[446] There is a serious discrepancy in the records of the *Nijenburg*'s

crew between Cayenne and Suriname, however; up to 70 men disappear from

the Company's records by the time of the Suriname trial, including Brand,

who had negotiated safe conduct for the crew at Cayenne. We know that

some, like the captain, died after landing at Cayenne, and we may assume that

diseases accounted for more.[447] According to the testimonies given at

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[445] This legal procedure was followed in all cases of trials of VOC personnel outside the Company's specified area of monopoly control, which excluded the Atlantic realm, being set in the VOC's charter "beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan." The warships were those that had transported the *Nijenburg*'s men from Portugal to the Netherlands; the *Zeepaard* and *West Stellingwerf*, both operated by the Amsterdam Admiralty. The Amsterdam and Rotterdam Admiralties conducted the trials following all subsequent VOC mutinies until the Company's dissolution in 1795. Hoogenberk: *Rechtsvoorschriften*, Bruijn & Van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij*.

[446] Ten others were exonerated by letters from Patria, including the merchant and his wife. Suriname was governed by the Society of Suriname, a chartered entity composed of Amsterdam merchants and the Dutch West India Company. Its courts were invested with sovereign authority to conduct trials and mete out punishments independently of Patria. The mutineers tried at Suriname therefore did not face either VOC or Admiralty justice, but rather that of a comparable, mercantilist institution. Nonetheless, the sentences handed down appear in general more lenient than those handed down in Patria. Staten Generaal 9407.

[447] New recruits to any of the East India Companies faced an alarming mortality rate on their first voyage outside Europe: VOC recruits in the eighteenth century had a less than one in three chance of returning to Europe. Batavia was a famously deadly destination, killing more than half of all new arrivals within their first six months, but figures were hardly better for English soldiers serving in India in the same period.

Suriname others were, as they had expected, offered work by the French

governor, as well as the chance to return one day to their homes, via France.[448]

It appears that many may have succeeded in deserting from the Company at

this point and made new lives in South America, without, however, the aid of

the Company's bullion, which was largely accounted for.[449]

The VOC supplied the Suriname court with testimony from the first trial at

Texel, from the captain's diary and from a report by the senior surgeon, along

with an advisor to suggest sentences.[450] Between the three trials a total of 121

men were questioned, and 79 testimonies collected. In all 25 men were

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Schnurmann, C: 'Wherever Profit Leads Us, to Every Sea and Shore . . .' the VOC, the WIC, and Dutch Methods of Globalization in the seventeenth Century. *Renaissance Studies* 17.3 (2003), 474-493. Heijer, H. den, & Enthoven, V: "Nederland en de Atlantische Wereld, 1600-1800. Een historiografisch overzicht," *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis* 24, no. 2 (2005), 147-166. Brug, P. H. Van der: *Malaria en Malaise: de VOC in Batavia in de achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994).

[448] Johann Otto Liep and Frederik Schneider testified at Suriname that they had been given paid work at the Cayenne magazine and offered a permanent appointment there. Staten Generaal 2407.

[449] The goals of the French colonial authorities in the events at Cayenne and Suriname remains somewhat mysterious. On the one hand , they offered work and freedom to the VOC's servants. On the other, they evidently sent the captain's diary to the Company's headquarters in Amsterdam, and much of the VOC's money seems to have been collected at Cayenne from the *Nijenburg*'s crewmen. Several deponents at Suriname stated that they were willing to stay at Cayenne, but nevertheless found themselves loaded back onto the ship and sent to the Dutch colony. It seems likely that some men managed to strike deals with the French authorities and others did not. The criteria for such deals are not known, however. Johannes Brand, or Brants, widely credited with leading the mutineers after the flight of the boats at Cape Roque, disappears from the record at Cayenne: he is recorded as having died in January 1764 in VOC paybooks, but no record of his death is to be found in the Cayenne papers. Societeit van Suriname 205, 323, 324, 929.

[450] Even though multiple copies of the captain's diary were evidently made and used at the courts in Suriname and on the *Zeepaard*, no copy survives.

sentenced to death: their remains were displayed, on pikes at Suriname, and on massive, specially-constructed gallows by the Texel roadstead, erected by the VOC to provide a warning in perpetuity to all sailors leaving from the Company's three northern Chambers.[451] A further 11 men faced lesser sentences ranging from keel-hauling and imprisonment (punishments considered less severe than death, but often fatal in fact) to fines and dismissal from Company service, while all 62 men who abandoned the ship at Cape Roque had their wages stopped at the moment they left.[452] Those crewmen who had not died or deserted were held at Surinam until the arrival of a relief captain and crew from Patria. The *Nijenburg* finally arrived at Batavia on August 30, 1765 with a crew of 163, of which only 40 had departed Texel on the same ship.[453]

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[451] "*…om aan de intente van den Hoog Mogende Heren door het opregten van een permanent teeken en spectacul tot een affschrick voor alle zeevarende persoonen to beantwoorden,*" or "with the intention of the *Heren XVII* to make of their punishment a permanent sign and terrifying spectacle with which to warn all seafarers." AN Collectie Van wassenaar Van Duivenvoorde 1475. The trial papers contain drawings and correspondence pertaining to the gallows, which were constructed over the objections of the Westfriesland authorities close to Den Helder. Staten Generaal 2404.

[452] "Appendix I," Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij* 155-6. The Company paybooks show that all those who left the ship on August 2 forfeited pay from that moment, including the first and third mates, and the loyal Indies hand Jan Meijer a.k.a. Jan Oostindien whom the mutineers had pressed into service as oarsmen. The names, ranks or job titles, and towns of origin for the *Nijenburg*'s crew are recorded in the Company's pay books, which have been made partially available via an online database: Velzen, A. J. M. van, Gaastra, F.S. & Parmentier, J, Nationaal Archief, Archiefdiensten van Delft en Rotterdam, Zeeuws Archief, Westfries Archief & Universiteiten Leiden en Gent: VOC – *Seafarers online database.* http://vocopvarenden.nationaalarchief.nl Accessed 1/22/2011.

[453] The totals for crew given above are rather vague because accounts differ regarding the number of men who departed Patria on the *Nijenburg*. The Company's paybooks fail to distinguish between the members of the original crew and those of the relief crew, who are recorded as joining Company service on the date of the ship's departure. The total crew associated with the *Nijenburg*'s 1763 voyage therefore

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Sources on the mutiny

The capture and trial of the *Nijenburg*'s crew drew a great deal of popular attention in the Republic. The first news of the mutiny was quickly followed in 1764 by a "true account of the mutiny on the VOC ship *Nijenburg*," which purported to be the diary of an anonymous officer who was forced to operate the ship under the mutineers' command.[454] This was followed by two further publications, both credited to the captain, one telling the story of those mutineers who landed in Brazil, up to their capture and repatriation, the other purporting to be the captain's diary through the whole ordeal.[455] The events of these accounts were summarized in the popular annual *Nieuwe Nederlandsche Jaarboeken* for 1764, together with engravings showing the executed mutineers' bodies on the Company's monumental gibbets at Kijkduin by the Texel roadstead (Figure 3.1: Design for gibbets erected at Kijkduin, 1764; Figure 3.2

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includes two captains (the ill-fated captain Ketel and captain Christoph Hartz, sent to relieve him) and a total of 371 men. Mollema gives a total of 238 crew on the original departure but does not cite his source for this figure, while DAS II gives 198. I have followed DAS II throughout, as the more accountable source. VOC – *Seafarers online database*. Mollema, J. C: *Een Muiterij in de achtiende Eeuw: het afloopen van het Oost-Indische Compagnieschip Nijenborg in 1763* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink,, 1933).

[454] The "*Echt Relaas*" appears to have been based on a combination of the captain's diary, the surgeon's report and the testimony from the trial on the *West Stellingwerf*. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas.*

[455] Ketel, J: *Eerste Vervolg van het Echt Relaas en Dagverhaal, wegens het Afloopen van 't Oost-Indisch Compagnie-schip Nyenburg…* (Amsterdam: Dirck Swart, 1764). Ketel, J: *Echt Journal van het Voorgevallene op de Reize met het Oostindische Compagnie-Schip Nyenburg…* (Amsterdam, 1764).

Design for how the gibbets should appear to vessels in the Texel roadstead).[456]

Finally, the proceedings from the trials conducted in Patria were themselves printed, making available the full testimony of all prisoners brought before the court and their sentences.[457] News of the punishment of the mutineers was spread actively by the Company, not only through prints of the gibbets but also in mariners' songbooks, printed and distributed by the VOC.[458] The infamy of the *Nijenburg* mutiny spread so widely that when a mutiny broke out aboard the Netherlands' warship *Zeven Provincieen* in 1933, historian J. C. Mollema was moved to write a new account of it, as an archetypal case of the breakdown of order at sea, while the ship is remembered today with a *gevelsteen,* a commemorative stone set in a wall to mark the site of the captain's house in Amsterdam.[459]

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[456]*Nieuwe Nederlandsche Jaarboeken*, 22 (Leiden, Amsterdam: P. van der Eyk en D. Vygh, J. van der Burgh, 1764). The design and proposed location for the gibbets were included with the sentences of the West Stellingwerf trial. AN Staten Generaal 9407.

[457] *Crimineele Procedures*.

[458] A copy of the *Nijenburg* song is reproduced in Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

[459] Mollema: *Een muiterij*. Details of the *gevelsteen* are recorded at http://gevelsteen.blogspot.com last accessed 1/8/2011.
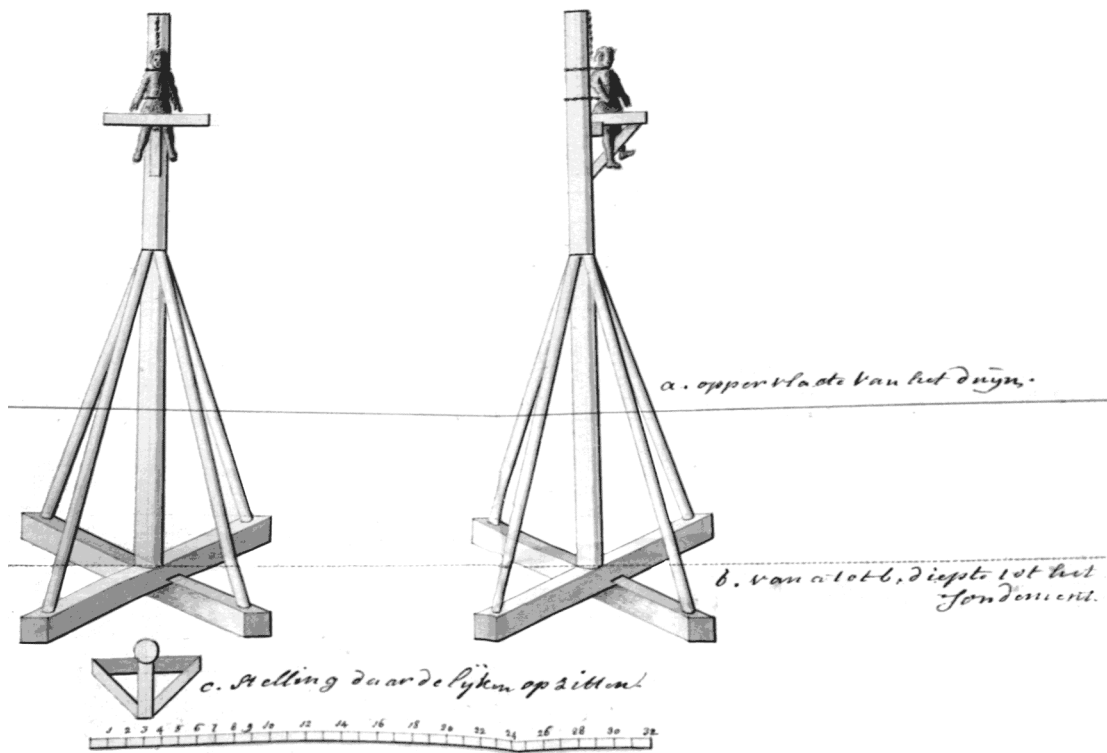
Figure 3.1: Design for a monumental gibbet, to be erected at Kijkduin, 1764. AN Staten Generaal 9407.
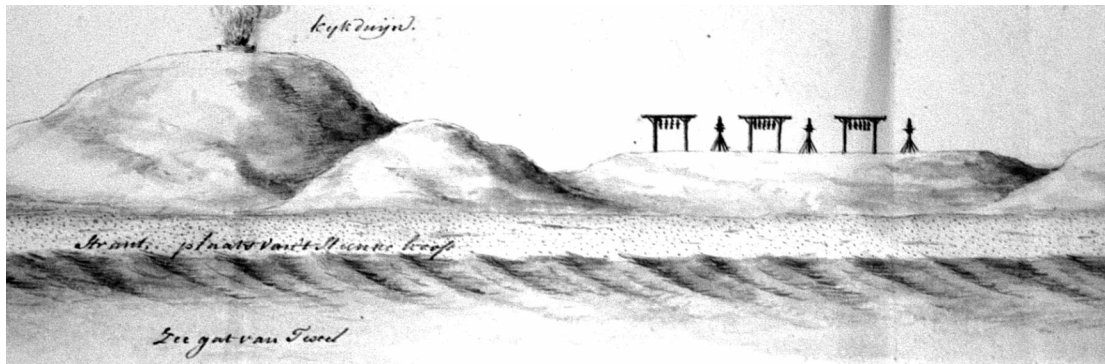

Figure 3.2: Proposed placement of the gibbets, to ensure visibility to vessels in the Texel roadstead. AN Staten Generaal 9407.

All records of the mutiny show some problems as sources. The popular accounts were clearly written for consumption by audiences in the Republic, and share some of the conventions of the popular genre of "disaster literature" explored by Blackmore, Mentz and Lamb.[460] The trial records on which they are based are hardly less problematic, however, being edited, abbreviated reports rather than complete court minutes, with testimony paraphrased into reported speech, with frequent use of the formula *niet te weeten*: "not known," rendering the court's ignorance indistinguishable from that of the prisoners.[461] The result is a group of records that shows a coherence and concern for logical progression toward the sentences with which they conclude. These cannot be read simply as records of "what really happened," in the courtroom, much less on the ship.

In addition, the various courts shaped the testimonies they received through their manner of questioning. The Admiralty courts were based on ship's "war councils" of seven men, consisting exclusively of admirals and captains of warships of the Amsterdam Admiralty assisted by Company *fiscaals* who

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[460] Blackmore, J., *Manifest Perdition: Shipwreck Narrative and the Disruption of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Brito, B. G. de: *The Tragic History of the Sea* [ed. And trans. Boxer, C. R. foreword and additional translation by Josiah Blackmore] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). Blackmore, J: "The Shattered Carrack: voice and submersion in Early Modern Portuguese shipwreck literature" and Mentz, S: "God's Storms: shipwreck and the meanings of ocean, 1550-1750," papers presented at *The Semiotics of Shipwreck: a symposium on the representation and resonance of maritime disaster,* National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 19-20 November 2010. Lamb, J., *Preserving the Self in the South Seas 1680–1840* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[461] *Crimineele Procedures*, Staten Generaal 9404-7, Societeit van Suriname 929.

acted as "secretaries," maintaining records, ordering the testimonies and procedures of the court, and suggesting punishments.[462] They appear overwhelmingly concerned with matters of disciplinary order and of adherence to the Company Articles.[463] Abandoning the ship in peril was explicitly forbidden by VOC Article 44, which stated that in case of fire or sinking the men were to remain with the ship and work together to overcome their danger, rather than fleeing in the boats.[464] Both Admiralty courts therefore concentrated heavily on the question of whose orders their prisoners were following when they left the ship for the boats at Cape Roque. Similar matters concerning the chain of command were of no account to the Surinam court, which instead was primarily concerned with the violence done on the night of the mutiny, and which sought to verify the reports it had been sent by the VOC, line by line. The collective abandoning of the ship to French authorities at Cayenne was not even remarked upon by the court, and the issue of who was in command during the abandonment—mutineer or rightful captain—was likewise not a matter of discussion. Each court framed its own

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[462] *Crimineele Procedures*. The same court composition was repeated at all trials. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij*.

[463] Maritime Articles were well known to Admiralty judges; the VOC's Articles of Employment were based on Articles of War drawn up for the command of land and sea forces during the 80 Years War, and still in effect in the Amsterdam Admiralty. Standard punishments for their infraction were also well-known in the Admiralties, and since Admiralty courts were empowered to judge VOC mariners, the dividing lines between military and Company order are blurred in these cases. Nicolaes Witsen provides sets of Admiralty and mercantile Articles. Nicolaas Witsen. *Architectura Navalis et Regimen Nauticum. Ofte Aaloude en; Aaloude en hedendaagsche scheeps-bouw en bestier* (Amsterdam, 1690, reprinted Franeker: Van Wijnen, 1994), 443-468.

[464] Hoogenberk: *Rechtsvoorschriften, VOC* 4952.

standard list of questions, from which, however, each also wandered as

surprising answers diverted it from its goals, without ever returning to

previous prisoners in order to investigate these surprising answers. The most

striking example of this regards how men were recruited and what they knew

of the Company's regulations: each court began under the assumption that the

crew were volunteers who had heard the Articles read aloud several times.

Each court eventually came to learn that many of the crewmen had been

effectively impressed into VOC service, and that many had not attended the

"branding of the chests" that marked their formal inculcation into the

Company, at which the Articles were read prior to embarkation.[465] In each

court's records, however, these facts appear as mere curios, and the

circumstances of recruitment, although of interest, do not seem to have

affected the courts' decisions regarding sentencing.

The testimony itself is, of course, strongly colored by the deponents' memories

and reconstructions of events, their efforts to exonerate themselves, sometimes

by casting suspicion on their fellows, and their attempts to communicate with

panels of officials that had their own, evidently interested interpretations of

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[465] Although the VOC never operated press gangs nor officially sanctioned the work of *zielverkopers*, from the courts' attitude we may conclude that their methods were tacitly approved by Company, Admiralty and colonial authority alike. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen. Schaeffer, R. K: *The Chains of Bondage Broke: the proletarianization of seafaring labor, 1600-1800* (unpublished diss., SUNY Binghamton, 1984).

shipboard order and conduct.[466] In each trial "facts" tend to follow from

multiple deponents in chains: matters once established as being of interest to

the court are repeated by the next several prisoners in sequence, suggesting

that there was some communication between prisoners during the trial either

in communal cells or in the courtroom itself.[467]

Testimony about spatial orientation is often imprecise and requires careful

interpretation. Both prisoners and court officers tend toward rather "thick"

description, assuming a great deal of familiarity with the layout and workings

of East Indiamen. Only unusual deviations from the norm are commented on,

while vague, short-hand expressions such as "achter op" and "beneden" ("up

at the stern" and "below," respectively) are used to explain where mariners

were and what they could witness, without these terms ever being closely

defined. Different mariners use different terms for the same spaces aboard,

while simple disagreements in testimony render some spatial relationships

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[466] The strong agreement between the trial papers and the *Echt Relaas* had lead de Jonge, Kuijk and Oskamp to speculate that the latter volume might have been compiled from the former. Regarding the role of collective memory and preparation against the event of trial, Lauren Benton describes how pirates and other criminal seamen would rehearse their stories after each action, in anticipation of being called at some later date singly and collectively to account. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. and Oskamp, L. (eds): *Echt Relaas*. Benton, L: "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47 (2005), 700-724.

[467] One of the most striking cases of this sequential repetition concerns whether the prisoner heard the Article of Employment at the "branding of the chests," a ceremony that immediately preceded the embarkation of crew, which involved their "swearing into" service. Once this court began asking the prisoners whether they had sworn to uphold the Articles, it transpired that many of the prisoners either had not been present, or had not heard the Articles because their fellows were being too loud, or had not understood them because they did not speak Dutch. *Crimineele Procedures*.

uncertain. The following reconstruction is therefore tentative. It has the advantage, however, of revealing how the space of the ship was perceived by various soldiers and sailors, the slippages and gaps between their perceptions suggesting multiple readings that greatly complicate the canonical image of the typical ship laid out in previous chapters. In particular the question of how each prisoner came to abandon the ship for the boats—whether on direct order from the captain, by the rumor of such an order or because of the actions of others nearby, or even by being forced into the boats at sword point—reveals a contingent, uncertain environment of command and action, very different from that suggested by the Company's pseudo-military ranks and the explicit statements of the Articles.

Reconstructing the space of the *Nijenburg*

For charting the socio-spatial order of the ship, the trial records allow three separate conditions to be identified: the "normal" running of the ship before the mutiny, the moment of mutiny itself, when the Company's order was challenged and control seized by the mutineers, and the mutineers' subsequent ordering of the ship, until its seizure by French authorities.

The pre-mutiny condition must be largely reconstructed out of rather partial accounts: the story of the ship explored during the trials begins on the night of the mutiny and refers to the situation that preceded it only in order to clarify subsequent events. In addition, the principal document that might have given

information as to the pre-mutiny state of the ship, the logbook, has been lost.[468]

There is therefore no account to be had of the normal running of the ship that

is not colored by the events of the mutiny and trials. Nonetheless, the picture

that emerges of the pre-mutiny condition shows several deviations from

Company norms, which are examined in depth in the following pages.

Regarding the night of the mutiny, issues of orientation became paramount:

seamen's testimonies identify where they and others were, providing a

remarkably fine-grained description of particular critical parts of the ship: in

accounting for their actions or inaction, the ship on the night of the mutiny is

frequently recast into a collection of discrete spaces, only tenuously connected.

Finally, after the mutiny the social and spatial order were reconfigured in

various ways by the mutineers. The mutineers' spatial interventions were

aimed more at repurposing the power structures of the ship than

appropriating the spaces that expressed those structures, however. Popular

stories of mutinies emphasized the overturning of power and the resulting

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[468] The whereabouts of the log remain a mystery. That it was available to the court in preparing for the trial is certain: it is mentioned in the briefing documents given to the court at Suriname by the authorities in Patria, and we may assume that authorities in Suriname had access to it while conducting the trial. Log books were considered extremely important and jealously guarded by the Company, partly because of any information they might contain that would be of interest to corporate spies or foreign powers, including cartographic revisions, trade data and prices for goods in various ports. The Articles stated that they were to be kept confidential until they were handed in to the Company's record keepers at the end of each voyage. *Crimineele Procedures*. VOC 4952. Davids, K: *Zeewezen en Wetenschap: de wetenschap en de ontwikkeling van de navigatietechniek in Nederland tussen 1585 en 1815* (Amsterdam: Dieren, 1986).

disorder among mutinous crews producing a Saturnalia where officers were humiliated and supplies (especially of alcoholic drink) wasted, where the captain's cabin was despoiled by the mutineers and the captain himself executed or imprisoned.[469] On the *Nijenburg*, however, there was little destruction and the officers were permitted to remain in their positions of power, provided they worked inside the novel order created by the mutineers and according to their demands.

De Bruin and van der Wal contend that a second mutiny took place aboard the *Nijenburg* after the bulk of the mutineers left at Cape Roque. It is not clear, however, if this second mutiny entailed any changes to the spatial order aboard, and I have not attempted to draw conclusions from the very scant evidence given.

Visual sources for the construction of the ship

We are extremely fortunate that a drawing of the *Nijenburg* itself exists.[470] The drawing confirms that the ship, built at Hoorn in 1757, was a standard second-rate *retourschip*, 140 Amsterdam feet in length, with a cargo capacity of 880 tons, following the design of 1749.[471] This rate appears to be described by the

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[469] Johnson, Captain C. & Cordingly, D: *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates* (New York: Lions Press, 1998). Rediker, M. B: *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic pirates in the golden age.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

[470] De Jonge, Kuijk & Oskamp: *Echt Relaas*. The drawing of the *Nijenburg* is in the collection of the Nederlandse Scheepvaartmuseum: NSM A.0145(160) [nr 0003].

[471] See chapter 1: The typical ship.

plan of the *Noord Nieuw Landt,* drawn up by VOC shipwright Pieter van

Zwijndrecht in 1750, which conforms to the 1749 rate's specifications and

proportions (Figure 3.3: P. van Zwijndrecht: VOC ship *Noord Nieuw Landt,*
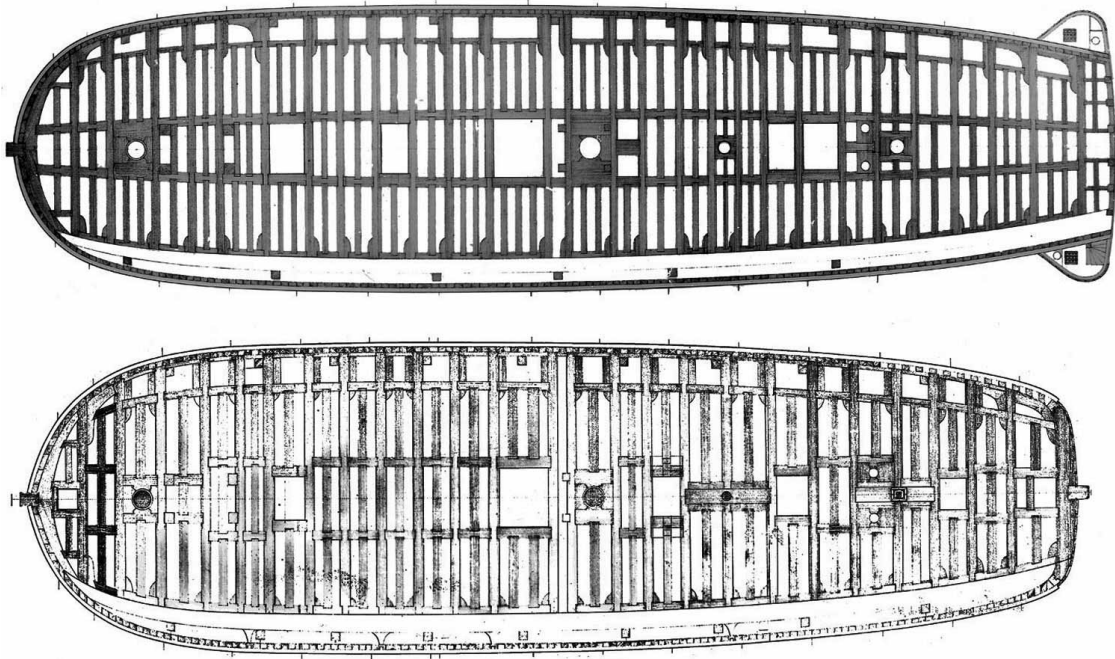
deck plans, 1750).[472]

Figure 3.3: P. van Zwijndrecht: plans for the upper and lower (termed Second and First) decks of the VOC ship *Noord Nieuw Landt*, 1750. Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrick, Rotterdam, Netherlands. MMPH T1127-15 and T1127-16.

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[472] Image provided by Maritiem Museum Prins Hendrick, Rotterdam, Netherlands: T1127-15; 16. In reconstructing the spaces of the mutiny, as far as possible the general outline of the *Noord Nieuw Landt* plan has been used, except that the trial papers contain no evidence of the spiral staircase shown in the gallery on the plan linking the officers' saloon on the upper deck with the captain's cabin on the quarterdeck. I have assumed that this staircase was absent from the *Nijenburg* since, had it been available it would have been used by officers seeking to escape the mutineers or by John Saxen, one of the captain's boys, in avoiding the mutineers while scouting the officers' quarters on the night of the mutiny. *Crimineele Procedures*.

The general layout of the *Nijenburg* seems to have conformed to that given in Chapter 2 for the post-Bentam *retourschip*, with a single large, open space on the lower deck occupied by hammocks and *bak* tables but free of cannons, and the officers' cabins on the quarterdeck arranged in a horseshoe behind the wheel. Sources for the physical form of the vessel are far from complete, however, especially regarding the interior division of the hull space, which would likely have been adjusted for each voyage as the demands of carrying crew and cargo fluctuated. It therefore remains impossible to draw a definitive plan of the vessel at the time of the mutiny, while the trial testimony contains some tantalizing suggestions regarding physical deviations from the standard model, including mention of a "small" *bottelarij* (steward's supply room) mounted in the open air on the upper deck and a stairway joining the quarterdeck with the *voorkajuit*, immediately in front of the saloon.[473]

Before the mutiny

Viewed from the quarterdeck or the bookkeeper's desk, the socio-spatial organization of the *Nijenburg* appears generally to have conformed to the typical model; no gross deviations from the Company's protocols appear in the testimonies. Below decks, however, the informal, unofficial norms that helped to form the typical ship appear to have been largely absent: in particular the organization of the lower deck on the *Nijenburg* was very unlike that described by de Hullu and Ketting as characteristic of the VOC ship.

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[473] *Crimineele Procedures*. Staten Generaal 2407.

As noted in chapter two the lower deck was canonically the site of a strong 'lower class' social order and identity, which helped to organize the ordinary seamen and soldiers. This identity helped to define a field of competition, which disciplined and socialized individuals to work within the power structures aboard and to invest their own identities in their own proper subdivision of the crew. One of the most important subdivisions, according to Ketting, was that between the sailors and soldiers.[474] The inferior station of the soldiers on the orlop helped create solidarity among the members of both groups, since it gave the sailors someone to look down on and the soldiers an intimate enemy. In each case resentment and violent impulses were directed by each group toward the other, and away from the officers and the Company as a whole.[475]

The image of the social situation on the *Nijenburg* is very different: there is no hint of any collective rituals or other means for promoting social cohesion beyond the Company's functional divisions of watches and *baks*. Moreover, the field in which crewmen were supposed to compete was never effectively established: the very few experienced Indies hands, although respected among the crew for their expertise, were shown to have little influence over their crewmates and did not manage to instill in them the attitudes and

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[474] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk,* 252-255.

[475] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk.*

worldview characteristic of Jan Compagnie.[476] There is also no sign of the *orlop* being used for accommodation. Instead soldiers and sailors were mixed together on the lower deck without any clear separation between them. The common soldier's complaint, that his food was inferior to that of the sailors, also cannot be maintained in the case of the *Nijenburg*. Several of the *baks* contained soldiers, sailors and craftsmen together; as *bak* mates they would have received their food communally. In short, there is no evidence that the structures for reproducing the Company's typical shipboard social order were themselves being reproduced.[477]

It is an open question how much difference the lack of rituals and structures made to the social cohesion and working effectiveness of the crew: none of the ships that underwent mutinies in the latter part of the eighteenth century showed marked cohesiveness, and in most cases the records of life on those ships are not detailed enough to provide any conclusions regarding rituals. It is clear, however, that without the usual divisions and rivalries between Company-defined groups, other sources of communal identity flourished on the *Nijenburg*. Where social divisions were between Company-defined categories, they all served to reinforce the unifying umbrella identity of Jan

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[476] The most visible of the old Indies hands, one Jan Meijer, known to all as Jan Oostindien, was deferred to and consulted on matters of operating and repairing the ship. He was unable, however, to prevent his fellow sailors from taking the mutineers' money, or the ejection of Coenraad Palm, both of which acts he spoke out against. *Crimineele Procedures.*

[477] On the structures for reproducing the identity of Jan Compagnie, see Chapter 2: the space of the typical ship.

Compagnie, which would serve to separate the men as Europeans from the environment of the Indies. Without these novel divisions, however, the men retained identities based on nationality or common languages and on experiences prior to their enlistment. These other bases of identity became extremely important in defining social groups and loyalties during and after the mutiny. They were also reflected, however, in the pre-mutiny arrangement of the lower deck.

Watches, *baks,* and the mutineers' self-organization

Against typical practice, it seems likely that the *Nijenburg's* crew had some influence over the *baks* to which they were assigned on embarking.[478] The crew were divided into two watches rather than the more common three: each watch was accordingly assigned one side of the ship, the *baks* that made it up subdividing the length of that side.[479] The prospective mutineers of the

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[478] The VOC had no formal policy regarding how *baks* should be assigned and there is no equivalent to the watch and quarter bills used by the Royal Navy, which recorded the duties to which particular men were assigned and the allocation of messes and hammock space on warships. Rodger, N. A. M: *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986), 25-7. Lavery, B: *Shipboard Life and Organization 1731-1815* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1998) 23, 270. According to de Jonge, Kuijk & Oskamp the steward was charged with assigning *baks*, this is not confirmed in the case of the *Nijenburg*, however. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*

[479] Since the ship's log is missing it has been impossible to confirm this inference conclusively. However, there is considerable reason to believe it to be true. No deponent in any trial mentioned any but the Prince's and Graaf Maurits watch, while one deponent, Eksteyn, stated that he was not familiar with the mutineers because they belonged to the starboard watch. Finally, when the mutineers took over the ship they operated only two watches and no reorganizing of the crew was recorded to fit them into this work structure. Working from Bentam's model for a first rate ship, and adjusting the scale to fit the 1749 second rate, each *bak* would have had, at maximum, a share of the lower deck roughly 8 and a half by 18 Amsterdam feet. That is, one

zwavelband all managed to be allocated to the "Prince's watch," which was berthed on the starboard side of the lower deck.

They further concentrated themselves on four *baks*, which became known as the *zwavelbenders hoek* or "match gang's corner" (hereafter "*hoek*"). This concentration would have aided planning the mutiny considerably: the members of a watch ate, slept and worked on the same schedule. The watch might therefore be assumed to define a sailor's social opportunities, while the members of a *bak* were generally assigned to the same duties and were assumed to support one another.[480] The Admiralty courts paid close attention to the *baks* as important social institutions, expecting members of the same *bak* both to confide in and to watch over one another. Some deponents offered that they were never the mutineers' *baksgasten* or "*bak* guests" as evidence that they were not involved in the mutiny.[481] The courts' questioning regarding

tenth of the length of the habitable portion of the lower deck, excluding the gun room and cable tiers, by half the width of the ship. Interior partitions for the galley, steward's cupboard and other storage would have reduced this in practice. We know that a number of "boys" and favorites were allowed berths in officers' cabins and other spaces aboard. The total hammock count might therefore be up to 10% lower than the roughly160 men who were entitled to eat at their *baks* on the lower deck. *Crimineele Procedures*. DAS II, Kist, B: "VOC shipbuilding Policy 1740-1750" in Gawronski et al: *Hollandia Compendium: a contribution to the history, archeology, classification and lexicography of a 150 ft. Dutch East Indiaman (1740-1750).* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1992), 34-75.

[480] de Hullu notes that this support extended to caring for the sick, which was organized at the watch and bak levels, and ensuring that all members of each bak received provisions. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen.

[481] Jacob Boos claimed, unsuccessfully, never to have been a guest at the mutineers' baks. Taleau, another convicted mutineer, claimed that he never mixed with the mutineers because he was a carpenter and they were all soldiers and sailors. *Crimineele Procedures* I, 107, 135.

deponents' *baks* revealed that they indeed played a significant role in ordering the ship both before the mutiny and after, when the mutineers created new *baks* around which to organize themselves.[482]

Not enough information is given in the trial testimonies to allow for a full reconstruction of the disposition of *baks* aboard. A partial reconstruction, however, allows for some conclusions to be drawn regarding the social environment of the lower deck and the level of surveillance in operation there. 179 of the men aboard would have been assigned to *baks*. If each *bak* contained the typical seven or eight men, there should have been a total of 23-26 *baks*.[483] The trial records provide names for 23 *baks*, of which we know three were located on the upper deck, under the quarterdeck, crowded into the space that contained the pumps, water vats and some sailing equipment. Of the 20-23 *baks* on the lower deck only a few can be placed. These include the corporal's *bak*, which was used by the mutineers on the night of the uprising, and two of the *zwavelbenders' baks.* All of these were adjacent to the *bottelier's* (steward's) *bak,* which stood by the mainmast, right in the middle of the ship. This placed the mutineers not only in one of the busiest, most heavily trafficked spaces of the lower deck, squeezed between the *bottelarij,* or steward's pantry, and the galley, but also under the watchful eye of the steward himself, one of the men

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[482] *Crimineele Procedures*.

[483] De Hullu provides this standard size for a *bak*: nothing in the *Nijenburg* trial evidence contradicts this figure. One of the *baks* formed after the mutiny to contain the two "battalions" of "mutineer officers" consisted of seven men, the other of eight. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen. *Crimineele Procedures*.

most closely associated with policing the space below.[484] Despite this apparently quite public location, the zwavelbenders' *hoek* was the site of several activities that imply a low level of supervision, including recruiting and planning for the mutiny and, one day before the uprising, a meeting of all 14 core mutineers. It is possible that there was less supervision of this space on the *Nijenburg* than on a typical ship: the steward's *bak* usually stood opposite that of the cook and the kitchen gang, who were exempt from the watch system and who, unlike the sailors, spent much of their waking time below.[485] On the *Nijenburg*, however, the cook's *bak* was located on the upper deck, its space below taken by seamen who followed the watch schedule. In any event, there seems to have been little surveillance of the lower deck in general: the *zwavelband* was known to exist, but officers took no pains to discover what it was or why it had formed.

If the carpenter and convicted mutineer Taleau is to be believed, rumors of an imminent rebellion spread around the lower deck some days before the uprising but fear prevented its being reported to the officers, suggesting first a considerable social distance between the general crew and any figures of

[484] The steward was responsible for keeping track of all provisions used; he was held personally accountable for any that went missing. Like supply masters in military services, stewards generally had a reputation both for tight-fistedness and for making an illicit profit out of "spoiled" rations on the side. Hoogenberk: *Rechtsvoorschriften*. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk*.

[485] The cook and his assistants had separate pay schedules from the sailors and were required to keep hours dictated by the preparation of food. The steward's team were collectively termed the *ruimwerkers* or "hold-workers" and were charged with

authority, and second that alternative structures of power and coercion held sway on the lower deck, outside the Company's gaze.[486]

The *hoek* first became a place of covert, collective resistance to Company order a few weeks before the uprising with the theft of the officers' wine, which was stored on the lower deck, sealed away behind specially constructed partitions.[487] Working together, the men secretly levered open the partitions, removed bottles of wine and distributed them among both the *zwavelbenders* and other crewmen, all without attracting the attention of the nearby steward or his mate.[488] Empties were passed sternward, to be disposed of between watches by whichever man was charged with swabbing below decks. This collective action against the Company's laws no doubt helped to bolster solidarity among the mutineers.

The discovery of the theft also determined the moment of uprising. The steward's mate appears to have had a personal vendetta against several *zwavelbenders:* his insults, cruelty and propensity for withholding food and water were cited as primary causes for the mutiny: in particular he repeatedly

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retrieving provisions from the hold under strict supervision. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen.

[486] *Crimineele Procedures* II, 39.

[487] Testimonies conflict regarding the exact placement of these partitions. The most detailed account is given by Jacob Selner, who stated that they were at the forward end of the lower deck, near the cable locker. Staten Generaal 2407.

[488] Staten Generaal 2407.

withheld the daily ration of drinking water from several *zwavelbenders*, who were therefore forced to find other sources.[489] The theft both of wine and of drinking water from the communal water vats was discovered on the evening of June 14: armed guards were immediately stationed at the water vats, and an investigation was slated to begin the next day. The mutineers could not risk losing members to the imprisonment that would inevitably follow, so they struck that same night.

Sources of social identity on the lower deck

Beyond the collective identity of the *zwavelband*, as noted above, divisions in nationality and religion played large roles in structuring the society of the crew and in determining a seaman's prospects. These divisions loomed large in the causes and events of all the mutinies studied. In attempting to recruit men to their cause, would-be mutineers frequently appealed to their ties of common origin or "national" identity: the rallying cry for the *Nijenburg* mutineers was "come, German brothers," that of the *Barbestein*, "Luxembourg arise!"[490]

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[489] The term used in the trial papers is *standwater*. The meaning of this term in context is not clear: it may refer to collected rainwater or runoff taken opportunistically. Staten Generaal 2407.

[490] The polyglot form of the *Nijenburg* mutineers' cry, "*Allons Duytsche broeders valt aen, hout, smijt en steekt*" ("come, German brothers, join us, strike them") indicates something of the complexity of the question of emergent nationality, containing French, German and Dutch elements. The cry of the *Barbestein* mutineers, "Luxembourg en haut" was likely the cry of their regiment. It may be objected that the nation and national identity are anachronistic concepts for the period and people under discussion. Nonetheless, distinctions of origin between the mutineers, whether they were French, German or Luxemburger, and officers, generally Hollanders, appear extremely important to the mutineers. Most of these terms are also shown to

The mutineers were overwhelmingly foreigners, predominantly of German origin, and very often recruited through *zielverkopers*. Conversely, on the *Nijenburg* the officers and 'loyal crew' were mostly Hollanders. Both mutineers and later the officers of the courts seem to have felt that nationality should determine the side one took in the mutiny: men identified as "Germans" by the mutineers were accused of treachery if they refused to assist in the uprising, while the Dutch sailor Paulus de Ruyter was singled out by several deponents and denounced by the Admiralty courts as the only "untrue Hollander," for telling the mutineers about valuables aboard such that they might loot them.[491] After the uprising the mutineers further played on national identities in order to drive a wedge between the bulk of the crew and the officers, fostering distrust of the Hollanders.

Before the mutiny the division between Hollanders and other "nationals" on the *Nijenburg* seems to have been tied to the opportunities for training and socialization into the company that were offered. While the VOC recruited ordinary seamen from across Europe and even from Asia, aboard the *Nijenburg* the officers and the few ordinary seamen who had maritime

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be matters of active negotiation during the mutiny, however, with mutineers accusing Germans who failed to respond to their call of being "Hollanders" regardless of their origins. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: *Muiterij*.

[491] Jan Pietersz, the boatswain's boy, described de Ruyter as *ontrouwe* ("untrustworthy" or "untrue"), a charge that was repeated in the *Echt Relaas*. *Crimineele Procedures* II, 141. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas.*

backgrounds and experience were overwhelmingly Dutchmen. Likewise, the

great majority of trainees aboard, who served as the officers' "mates" and

"boys," were Dutch.[492] This was partly a result of nepotism: the captain's son

appears in the pay books as the gunner's mate, while the master gunner's son

was listed as a boy-trainee.[493] Such favored youngsters tended to form a

separate class, being groomed for positions as officers.[494] The status of "boy"

conferred immediate advantages at any level, however: the "boys" of officers

on the quarterdeck would typically lodge with their sponsors in their cabins.[495]

The boys of junior officers were guaranteed a place beside that officer, even if

it was only at his *bak*. Thus, wherever a specialist lodged, whether a cabin, *bak*,

the gunroom or some other space, would become a site of apprenticeship and

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[492] The position of "boy" was not an official one, and is therefore not listed in the pay books. Those 'boys' who testified, however, were all of Dutch origin, including one of the Captain's boys, John Saxen, the first mate's boy, Lambert de Groot, the dominee's boy, Dirk Kleynhout and the boatswain's boy, Hendricks. *Crimineele Procedures*. VOC – *Seafarers online database*.

[493] In these cases the Dutch convention of fathers bestowing their own patronymics on their sons is clearly helpful: captain Jacob Ketel's son was called Ketel Jacobsz., while constable Willem Muus' son was Muus Willemsz. Other family ties likely existed aboard, but the names do not allow for such easy identification. The presence of both the captain's and constable's sons aboard is also noted in Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

[494] *Crimineele Procedures*. Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen.

[495] Boys were keen to defend their spatial and social separation from the general crew, even when that separation brought no physical comforts. Johan Saxen, one of the three captain's boys, did not lodge with the captain in his cabin but in the heavily-trafficked *voorkajuit*—effectively a corner of the crowded and multifunctional space under the quarterdeck separated from the *baks,* capstan, water vats, steward's cupboard and many other ship's systems only by the stairs leading down to the lower deck. Nonetheless, Saxen's corner becomes a privileged position in his account of the mutiny, by the saloon door where he could witness the theft of the weapons and under the stair to the quarterdeck, where he could hear the noise of the mutineers; a corner that became a hiding place on the night of the uprising and a theater of power afterward. *Crimineele Procedures*.

preferment for that specialist's profession, contributing to the sense of the ship as a collection of discrete fiefdoms.[496]

The result was a division between career seamen, mostly Hollanders, who enlisted freely at an early age and often received training and promotion, and those who fell into VOC service through desperation or through the machinations of the *zielverkopers*, who predominantly spoke languages other than Dutch, and who rarely rose to ranks of authority. These last, without sponsors, were liable to suffer the worst of the punishments that were daily handed out and that were, according to quartermaster Adolff, a VOC of hand of long standing, unusually severe on the *Nijenburg*.[497] They could find their places threatened even in the general run of the *baks*. Two of the primary instigators of the mutiny, Johann Wolnar and George Cremer, were ejected from their *baks* for unknown reasons in the first weeks of the voyage. While Wolnar quickly found a place at an alternative *bak* and suffered no ill effects, Cremer spent three days without any *bak* and consequently received no food during that time from the kitchen gang, until the members of another *bak* took pity on him.[498]

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[496] The association of certain spaces with particular kinds of training may also be the reason for the surgeon's medicine chest or the navigator's tool chest being used as landmarks aboard, the chests acting as the sites of instruction, marking those who gathered around them as potential future doctors or steersmen.

[497] Staten Generaal 9407.

[498] Both men were instrumental in the organization of the muiterofficiers *baks* after the mutiny. *Crimineele Procedures*.

Regarding the small group of experienced ordinary seamen aboard, there is little evidence for the role they played among the larger group of novices. One Jan Meijer, known generally as Jan Oostindien, was clearly a seasoned VOC man and enjoyed an exceptional reputation for wisdom and experience among the crew.[499] The other experienced hands attracted no such praise and seem to have kept to themselves. Before and after the mutiny the cable locker appears to have functioned as a kind of private haven for some of these old hands. This deep, cramped space, filled with ropes and other sailing supplies, was the permanent lodging and exclusive domain of two seasoned mariners, the boatswain and the hold man. The latter, Pieter Smit, seems to have communicated only with a few of the more experienced seamen aboard, and to have been left substantially alone both by the Company's officers and by the mutineers to administer his own affairs and to carry out his duties, undisturbed by the bulk of the crew.[500] On the night of the uprising, Smit remained in his refuge: he testified that he was asked for handspikes – the long wooden poles used to turn the capstan – for use as weapons. Smit threw these up to the foredeck, without himself emerging to see who claimed them.

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[499] Jan Oostindien's good reputation is mentioned in the *Echt Relaas* and repeatedly in the *Crimineele Procedures*. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

[500] Smit's affectless testimony is rendered all the stranger by the incurious reception it received from the court. During the mutiny, asked for weapons, he tossed handspikes out of his cable locker refuge, without wondering to whom he was passing them. When the boatswain returned to his bunk in the locker, bleeding from injuries, Smit appears to have asked no questions. The court, and the Company, nonetheless appear entirely satisfied with his conduct. *Crimineele Procedures* I, 17-19.

Seamen who attempted to hide in and above the locker were neither helped nor hindered: Smit only tended the wounded boatswain when the latter returned to his bunk. After the mutiny the cable locker seems to have been identified by the mutineers as a loyalist centre: it was placed under continuous guard but otherwise left undisturbed.[501]

The night of the uprising

The first hint of trouble the officers received on the night of the uprising was at the moment the mutineers charged up onto the quarterdeck. The guards posted earlier that day at the water vats, medicine chest and gun room door seem to have been entirely ineffective: all were disabled without raising the alarm, while their swords became the mutineers' first weapons.[502] Finding the first mate and captain fled and the senior surgeon in the act of fleeing, the mutineers attacked second mate Pieterson, ignoring the three sailors at the wheel, who continued to steer until diverted to guard duty by Wolnar. There was no concerted resistance from any of the officers or their boys: the master gunner and *dominee,* or preacher, were wounded when their individual quarters were broken into, while the boys uniformly hid behind chests or bunks in the cabins until the clamor was over. The greatest opposition to the

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[501] Smit appears to have maintained his own, unique order aboard to an extraordinary degree. This may reflect his status as the holder of specialized knowledge or as a respected older seaman with no pretensions to authority. Jan Oostindien alone appears to have had the trust and respect of both the VOC officers and the mutineers, partly because of his steadfast refusal either to take any privileges over his fellow seamen or to deny help to anyone. *Crimineele Procedures* II, 17-19.

[502] Staten generaal 9405.

mutiny occurred when the boatswain and the third carpenter carried the fight to the mutineers, running from the forecastle to the afterdeck in order to attack; both were driven back, having wounded a mutineer each, while also receiving wounds.[503] The carpenter deserves special mention for having had his own reasons for fearing a mutiny: he had been instrumental in capturing, imprisoning and presenting a number of the mutineers for recruitment while working for *zielverkopers* ashore. After the mutiny he was ostracized and victimized by his former captives.[504]

The *Echt Relaas* presents the events of the mutiny with an unmistakably ironic tone, the confusion of the officers being shown to verge on farce, with third mate Hendrick Cogh barricading himself in the saloon to escape the mob of mutineers, yet being unable to hinder the mutineers who broke down the door and seized and distributed the weapons under his nose, while his superiors clung onto the outside of the ship, as though they, and only they, had been shipwrecked by the uprising.[505] The trial papers show a series of more structural problems in the arrangement of the ship and relations between the officers and crew that made defense against mutiny impossible.

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[503] Staten generaal 9405.

[504] *Crimineele Procedures* I, 16.

[505] Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*, 17. The testimonies of seamen Ihle and Selner given at Suriname present an alternative, but hardly less flattering, account of the first officer's flight, claiming that he hid in the chicken coop on the poop deck and had to be coaxed out of it. Staten Generaal 9405.

Boundaries

Mutinies necessarily involve the breaking of boundaries aboard, in particular between the spaces of officers and men. A concern for boundaries unsurprisingly recurs throughout the testimonies. The overturning of the pre-mutiny order and establishment of a mutineers' order aboard involved the crossing, deletion and reinscription of boundaries, commented on both by deponents and by the officers of the court, who repeatedly asked the prisoners who among them had entered and "played the boss" in the forbidden places of the cabins and saloon, in order to establish both active involvement in the mutiny and authority among the mutineers. Boundaries also played an important role in enabling the mutineers and preventing unity among the crew on the night of the uprising.

With only 14 men the mutineers were directly outnumbered by the ship's 20 senior and junior officers.[506] These were unable to face the mutineers as a group, however, largely because of the organization of space aboard. The dispersal of the officers among cabins, rooms and *baks* on three decks meant that no one location had a substantial body of men of known loyalty, who

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[506] As noted above, the Company's paybooks do not provide the exact number of the officers and crew on the *Nijenburg* in 1763. From the trial proceedings I have been able to confirm the presence of 16 officers: the captain, first and second mates, and two third mates, the constable and his mate, the provost, the corporal, the boatswain and mate, the schieman and mate and the steward and mate. The merchant, although not directly involved in the ship's order, was also a high-ranking officer in the VOC and is counted as an officer here. In addition I have inferred that the three quartermasters and sergeant listed in the pay books were present on departure in 1763, since this would follow Company protocol. *Crimineele Procedures*, Staten Generaal 2405, VOC – *Seafarers online database*.

would be capable of co-coordinating a defense of any part of the ship. Where the spaces "before the mast" were communal and interconnected, those "achter op" were separated, without means of access between them that did not pass through the spaces open to the mutineers. Most isolated of all was the gun room, which had no access to the saloon despite being located directly beneath it: even though the room was theoretically quite defensible, with strong partitions and access to cannons and powder, the master gunner and his two companions had no recourse but to surrender when they discovered that the saloon had fallen.

The organization of weapons and the means to fire them also prevented opposition to the mutiny. Third mate de Kok stated that the boatswain had a pair of pistols at his *bak* but no powder to charge them. He describes climbing to the foremast top, intending to use the grenades stored there, only to discover that no fuse was available to light them. Both the atomizing of the officers and the separation of firearms from powder seem to have been features that were more marked on the later eighteenth century VOC ship than on those of the seventeenth century: the plan for a mutiny in 1667 required the simultaneous seizure of the saloon and the gun room during meal time, when all of the officers would be guaranteed to be present in those rooms.[507] Such a plan would necessarily involve a very hazardous confrontation with the

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[507] Roeper, V & Gelder, R. van (eds.): *In Dienst van de Compagnie: leven bij de VOC in honderd getuigenissen (1602-1799)* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum—Polack & Van Gennep, 2002), 63-67.

senior officers in a single group, in the room where their weapons were stored. The mutineers therefore reportedly considered it necessary to recruit 40 men to their cause before taking action.[508]

Boundaries also seem more subtly to have limited the flow of information around the ship during the mutiny. Much has been written regarding the lack of privacy on ships, the degree to which sound traveled between decks, and the consequent intimate knowledge available to all crewmen regarding all goings-on aboard.[509] Against this popular wisdom the *Nijenburg* testimony contains a strong sense of separation between the different spaces of the ship, each seeming to form its own self-contained realm, while only a few individuals, notably the boatswain and second boatswain, seem to have been alert for trouble outside their own nook. Describing the night of the mutiny, several mariners stated that they learned that a struggle was under way only when an officer or a mutineer burst into their part of the ship, suggesting that they did not know about or could not react to events elsewhere, even when the physical distances involved were not great. Sounds may have traveled between these regions, but they seem to have arrived largely stripped of meaning: many men even stated that they slept through the mutiny, awakening only after the mutineers returned below as masters of the ship.

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[508] Roeper & van Gelder: *In dienst*, 64.

[509] Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, werk*, Dening: *Mr. Bligh's Bad Language*, Melville: *White Jacket*.

This distance between the spaces of the ship appears to coincide with a certain distance in command structure and visibility between the fore-deck and the quarterdeck, and between upper and lower decks. One of the main concerns of the Admiralty officers at the trials was to establish how and why various crew members left the ship to enter the boats, when the ship later grounded off Brazil. The court repeatedly asked if those testifying had heard any order from the captain to leave the ship, to establish whether the prisoners were guilty of disobeying the Company's Articles.[510] Most deponents freely admitted that they had heard no such order, but said they had heard orders from junior officers or other minor figures, or had inferred such an order, seeing others jumping into the boats, and did not remain on deck waiting for the right voice to speak up.

The picture that emerges from these accounts is of a space where no single voice commanded. Both in accounts of the lowering of the boats, and in those of the night of the mutiny, it is clear that those at the front of the ship, on the forecastle, in the rigging, or amidships, in the waist, did not wait for or expect orders from the after-deck. Rather, they looked to the petty officers nearby, and followed their examples. Indeed the trial papers reveal how important the junior officers on the fore-deck were to the running of the ship, and just how distant the captain could be from the ordinary seamen, against the expectations of the Admiralty officers in court, since many sailors could not

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[510] The question whether prisoners had heard the Articles read out is repeated at each trial. At each trial some prisoners complained that they had never heard them.

name the captain or senior officers at all.[511]

The mutineers took great advantage of the confusion during the night of the uprising to divide the ship into manageable sections and to command the situation by keeping potentially troublesome crewmen busy. One tactic they used was to set men who had played no direct role in seizing the ship to guard various spaces aboard, including the saloon, where the officers were imprisoned and the *voorkajuit* just outside it, where the looted weapons were piled. Many deponents stated that even while keeping guard at one of these critical points they had no idea of the larger situation unfolding, only that they had been charged with holding a staircase or guarding weapons to prevent anyone except those that had set them to the task from using them.

The ritual transfer of power

Finally, boundaries clearly defined the transfer of power from the officers to the mutineers, highlighting the spatial nature, both of the mutiny and of control aboard in general. The mutineers relied on the separation of upper and lower decks to stage the uprising and its resolution. They first made themselves masters of the quarterdeck and foredeck, then secured the weapons and the officers in the saloon, before finally returning below to

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[511] After the first batch of seamen had been questioned and these gaps in expected knowledge had come to light, the standard roster of questions grew to include "do you know the name of the ship on which you served?" "do you know where you were going?" and detailed questions regarding the circumstances of the deponents' recruitment. *Crimineele Procedures*. Staten Generaal 2405.

announce to the rest of the crew that, having seized these spaces, they had

taken over the ship. The process of claiming the decks was achieved by

sweeping opposition off them: with a few exceptions the officers and men

withdrew before the mutineers, vacating the upper deck to take refuge in the

rigging and other hiding places. The ceding of these decks to the mutineers

opened a space from which Wolnar was able to invite first the officers and

then the crewmen back into a new hierarchy, with himself at the top. The

process of clearing and inviting had something of the character of a ritual of

transfer, with all parties signaling the reality and force of the hand-over of

power in a highly formal way. Indeed, understood as a ritual for inaugurating

a new order of power aboard, the progress of the mutiny shows strong

similarities with Arnold van Gennep's and Victor Turner's descriptions of the

rite of passage, following the classic three-phase scheme including suspension

of the usual order, separation of ritual actors in a liminal phase, and finally

reintegration of the crew with the mutineers in command.[512]

The separation of the officers was achieved either by their flight from the

mutineers or by imprisonment in the cabins. After returning to the deck under

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[512] van Gennep described the rite of passage as a ritual means for effecting status changes on its participants. In order for this change to be effected the subject must first be removed from society (phase 1), entering a state of indeterminate status (liminality; phase 2), and at the end of the ritual must be reintegrated with society, and confirmed in a new status (phase 3). Effectively the ritual suspends the normal social order, allowing changes to that order may be wrought; the closure of the ritual reinstates the normal rules of society, modified by the changes. Gennep, A. van: *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960). Turner, V: *The Ritual Process: structure and anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

Wolnar's guarantee of safety the captain and first mate were sequestered with the other senior officer in the saloon and merchant's cabin for several hours. The officers' imprisonment presents a classically liminal phase; the officers were shorn of their ranks, becoming equals among themselves and subordinate in relation to the mutineers, who forced them to remain silent and eventually individually to swear loyal service to Wolnar and the other mutineers. The next morning the officers were conditionally reintegrated with the rest of the crew, returning to their previous positions in the status hierarchy with respect to each other and the general crewmen, but in a subordinate position relative to the mutineers.[513] The officers remained tainted with a residual liminality, however: they were subject to renewed imprisonment in their cabins whenever the mutineers faced threats to their own authority; their full reintegration depended on their successfully steering the ship to Brazil.[514] The captain in particular, as the chief officer in charge of navigation, found his fate repeatedly suspended by the mutineers, who threatened to kill him unless he produced land within a series of deadlines.[515]

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[513] Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*, 19-23.

[514] Staten generaal 2405, Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

[515] The apparent lack of progress of the ship after the mutiny was a typical feature of crossing the equatorial zone, where no trade winds blew. These "doldrums" were known and feared by sailors; the VOC sailing instructions included a special method for crossing them that would ensure that ships would catch the south Atlantic current and be propelled down the coast of Brazil and eventually to the Cape of Good Hope. DAS I. It is possible, however, that the mutineers interpreted the lack of progress after the mutiny as a sign of their loss of control of the ship. Loss of progress and destination are typical features of disaster narratives where the disaster follows a breakdown in shipboard order. See chapter 4.

The junior officers likewise passed through a period of seclusion and liminality, being tied up and kept at the corporal's *bak* for some hours. They were reintegrated after the swearing in of the senior officers, on whose status their own depended.[516] Little is recorded regarding this moment, when the mutineers' control acquired on deck was displayed below. But the spectacle of the junior officers first being mortified by the mutineers and then swearing to cooperate with their captors before the crew, in their communal living space, effectively collapsed the distance in command, in space and in communication that defined the night of the uprising and hampered resistance: it confronted the crew with the mutineers' victory and made it public.[517]

The mutineers themselves did not have the luxury of withdrawing after the inception of the mutiny to resolve their changes in status because they were all needed to maintain direct control over the ship, officers and crew. They did, however, pass through a period of weakened social structure immediately after seizing power, in which they showed little social hierarchy among themselves, suggesting something like a liminal phase. During this period

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[516] The corporal's *bak* appears to have been associated with discipline before the mutiny; its appropriation as a place for holding the junior officers does not seem to have been accidental. The officers imprisoned here were tied up by the *provoost*, or ship's corporal, the junior officer charged with maintaining discipline below: whether the mutineers enjoyed this as a bit of irony at the expense of the officers, or whether they simply appointed the *provoost* to this duty because they knew he was competent at it, remains unclear. I have retained the Dutch *provoost* here to avoid confusion with the soldiers holding the rank corporal that were also carried aboard.

[517] "Mortification" is the term Goffman applies to the process of depersonalization, degradation and humiliation undergone by prisoners and mental patients on arrival at their institutions. Goffman: *Asylums*.

Wolnar and Johannes Croos, who remained the instigators throughout, attempted to attract other German-speakers to join the mutiny through appeals to nationality and brotherhood. Otherwise the mutineers merely held onto the gains of the night until morning; they kept the officers and junior officers tied up, the decks clear and large numbers of the general crew on guard duty around the ship.

After the mutiny

According to Lammers' model of mutinies we should expect the completion of the seizure of power to swell the mutineers' ranks, revealing a broad penumbra of supporters who would be willing to participate in the possibilities of the new situation aboard, even if they were not trusted with the uprising itself. This did not happen on the *Nijenburg*, however. Despite the mutineers' initial attempts to find supporters among the general crew, very few of the latter appear to have been eager to align either with their former commanders or their new ones, yielding three distinct camps among the crew. The mutineers therefore formalized their separation both from the VOC officers and from the general crew on the morning after the uprising by announcing, from the quarterdeck, a new shipboard order.

This order made the mutineers of the *zwavelband* into a separate cadre of *muiterofficiers* (mutineer-officers), who would command the ship and the crew over the heads of the Company's appointed officers, and who would, as it turned out, bear the brunt of punishment when all were recaptured by the

VOC.[518] The creation of this new group had large implications both for the progress of the mutiny and for the spatial order that developed aboard. Indeed, the formal distinction between the mutineers and the crew makes the *Nijenburg* mutiny appear much like a hijacking: a temporary seizure of the ship by a small group in pursuit of its own separate aims and identity.

Viewing the mutineers as hijackers helps to explain their actions and shipboard order after the uprising: unable to rely on goodwill or 'brotherhood' from the general crew, they found themselves in a position rather like that of the officers before them, having to direct and subordinate the crew in order to achieve their aims. The mutineers faced two challenges that the officers had not had to deal with, however. First, they were forced to rely on the officers for navigation and had to act through them to command the ship. Their authority was therefore always to some degree dependent on the group they had recently ousted. The mutineers were accordingly concerned to disrupt the operation of the ship as little as possible, reinforcing the crew's obedience to the officers through immediate and harsh corporal punishment or the threat of death by stabbing or being thrown overboard, fearing that excessive disruption could threaten the ship or their own

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[518] The announcement delivered the morning after the uprising appears to have marked the formal end of the 'seizure' phase of the mutiny, and the beginning of the regularized business of running the ship under the mutineers, with the purpose of making landfall at Bahia. There is little discussion in any of the sources regarding this event. The *Echt Relaas*, however, states that the crew were called individually to pledge loyalty, and that the officers were separately required to swear, in the merchant's cabin, that they would bring the mutineers to a safe port. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*, 29.

precarious positions as its commanders. Apart from helping to project a sense of normality, the use of the officers as a filter between the mutineers and the general crew may also have helped calm crewmen who were fearful of what might happen to them if they were brought to justice: deponents successfully exonerated themselves at trial by stating that they continued to obey their officers' orders, regardless of how those orders might have been subverted.[519] Second, they faced potential competition for command from the officers. Even though there is no direct evidence of remaining loyalty to the VOC officers among the general crew, the potential for an officer-led counterplot clearly haunted the mutineers, who were acutely aware of the vulnerability of their position, having so recently seized it from the Company's men. After the uprising, therefore, except when issuing commands and directing the ship, the officers were isolated from the crew, being kept either in their cabins or spatially separated from the men, under close watch by the mutineers, to prevent any secret messages being passed.

Most of all, the mutineers maintained firm control over the rights of both officers and crewmen to access sensitive spaces on the ship, keeping guards stationed, as they had on the night of the uprising, at what they had identified as the critical control points of the ship: the staircases between decks, the doors that led to the officers' quarters and the gunroom, and the entrance to

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[519] Despite their later actions aimed at implicating individual seamen in their cause, the mutineers here appear to have wished to avoid implicating the crew collectively by issuing commands in conflict with those of the officers. *Crimineele Procedures*.

the foredeck and cable locker, which continued to host the few experienced sailors aboard.[520] In addition, two cannons were hauled out of the saloon and set up on either side of the *voorkajuit* facing forward, loaded with "sharp shot." On the day after the uprising these were manned by guards told to shoot anyone who excited their suspicion: they were later rearmed at moments when the mutineers suspected counter-rebellion.[521]

The result was that the mutineers capitalized on the shipboard order already established, while changing how and what that structure communicated through a series of interventions that recast the space to fit their own ends. The spatial organization of the ship remained superficially the same, while the meanings of the spaces were subverted or inverted at every level. The mutineers continued to lodge on the lower deck among the general crew, while the officers were permitted to keep their cabins and the saloon. The cabins were transformed effectively into prisons, however, by stationing guards at their doors, while the *zwavelbenders hoek* was clearly separated from the general crew's space and transformed into a theater of command for the ship.

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[520] Staten Generaal 2407.

[521] Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*. The trial papers give no direct information on this remarkable point.

Theaters of power

I have chosen to describe the mutineers' interventions in the ship's spaces as "theaters," of action and power, because they were clearly intended to communicate the new order to the crew. The mutineers were repeatedly mocked and criticized in the popular accounts and at the trials for a certain theatricality in their presentation. They distinguished themselves from the rest of the crew by adopting elevated military titles and extravagant uniforms, which were sewn for them by the sail makers and the merchant's wife out of expensive cloths taken from the officers' private stores.[522] They participated in drunken revels on the quarterdeck, held court on the lower deck and threatened to throw crewmen they distrusted overboard, in public displays that appeared to teeter on disorder. In each of these cases, however, underlying the theatricality there seem to have been practical motives, related to the reworking of the shipboard space. Taken together the mutineers' theaters encapsulated the rules and promise of their new order, just as the spatial organization of the Company ship encapsulated its hierarchy and means of operation.

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[522] The doctor's report given to the Suriname court stated that the *muiterofficiers* wore hats trimmed with gold borders. One *muiterofficier*, Valk, testified that these had been made with cloth bought from the officers, and that the merchant's wife and corporal had sewn gold borders onto them. Croos in particular had been concerned with being dressed in a distinctive costume appropriate to his rank. In addition, after landing in Brazil the mutineers adopted a lordly bearing, riding horses and drinking, while forcing those VOC officers they had brought ashore with them to walk and beg them for food. *Crimineele Procedures* II, 15. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

The *muiterofficiers' baks*

On the lower deck the *muiterofficiers* expressed strict discipline among themselves, turning their *hoek* into a place from where they could continuously supervise the general crew, and preventing its use as a centre for plotting counter-mutinies. The formal order of military-style ranks that the *muiterofficiers* created for themselves was ridiculed in the *Jaarboeken* and other popular publications as a sign of vainglory.[523] These ranks served two functions, however, which appear to have been very important to the mutineers. First, they contained no duplicates, denoting a strict hierarchy among the mutineers without ambiguity or overlap, from "general" Wolnar and his junior partner Croos at the top to the "boys" at the bottom. Such a strict, explicit determination of hierarchy may have been necessary for the reintegration of social order among the mutineers and for clarifying their division from the rest of the crew, who had previously been their peers.[524] Second, the titles asserted the mutineers' separate identity from the order of VOC officers, borrowing from the systems of ranks used in land armies, and therefore recalling the structures of order associated with the mutineers' lives

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[523] De Bruin and Van Der Wal note that the *muiterofficiers* awarded themselves the *fraaiest* ("finest" or "richest") ranks possible. An undercurrent of ironic humor at the mutineers' expense runs through the *Echt Relaas*: from their attempts to shoot whales with *snaphaunces* to their inability to execute Palm, a sailor accused of conspiracy against the *muiterofficiers*, the mutineers are presented as arbitrary, bellicose and stupid. The researcher is accordingly faced with a strong 'grain' in such sources, to read across. Bruin, G. de & Wal, A. J. J. van der, '"Allons Duytsche Broeders,'" 69. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*, 31.

[524] The order of ranks appears to have been effective in preventing disorder among the mutineers, with only one fight, between two of the men, being reported among them after the uprising.

prior to their embarkation. With a strict separation of land- and sea-based rank structures, there was no danger of confusion over ranks with the VOC officers who continued to be charged with running the ship: these would retain their own hierarchy and functions, but would have no authority over the mutineers' alternative order.

The *muiterofficiers'* separation and order was expressed spatially in two newly created *baks*, reserved exclusively for their use.[525] Each *bak* was dedicated to a "battalion" of *muiterofficiers*, which commanded and policed one of the ship's two watches. These *baks* were placed somewhat further forward on the lower deck than the old *hoek* had been, near the fore-hatch.[526] Crewmen who joined the mutineers after the uprising were given places at the *baks*, always at the bottom of the *muiterofficiers'* rank structure: the first such recruits were taken on as "boys" and served as *bak* guards.[527] Admission to the *baks* conferred privileges far above those of the rest of the crew, however, and Wolnar specifically reached out to the lowest-status workers aboard to illustrate this

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[525] These new *baks* were called the *Batavier* and *Johannes baks*: one was devoted to each battalion. Heydigsvelt, later himself condemned as a mutineer, testified that during the first two days after the uprising the crew had access to the mutineers but that following the formation of the two new *baks* the mutineers drew apart, eating by themselves. *Crimineele Procedures*, 114.

[526] *Crimineele Procedures*, 122.

[527] These men were Stijssel, Eksteyn and "two other boys." All had held very junior ranks in the previous order. Their new positions as "boys" to the *muiterofficiers* improved their shipboard status considerably and ended their mistreatment by the officers. *Crimineele Procedures*.

point.[528] As *muiterofficiers* they were entitled to call for extra rations and drink whenever they wished, and to grant extra rations to the general crew, which was done frequently, to the consternation of the steward who feared the rations would run out.

As the exclusive space of the *muiterofficiers*, the *hoek* became a place for "private" audiences: crewmen were summoned to the *hoek* when the *muiterofficiers* wanted to question them or to invite them to join the *baks*. At trial, to be identified as a *bak*-guest of the mutineers was almost tantamount to being named a mutineer oneself. Third mate Theunis de Kok, who appears to have acted as a conduit for information between the *muiterofficiers* and the Company's officers, was held in grave suspicion of mutiny by the court because of his frequent invitations to dine and drink with the mutineers: the support of the first mate, who bore no such taint of association, was required to clear his name.[529]

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[528] These low-status positions were known by ironic honorifics, as *zwabber-kapiteins* and *pluimgraafs*, that is, "captains of deck-swabbing" and "lords of the chickens," i.e. livestock-tenders. *Crimineele Procedures* I, 104.

[529] *Crimineele Procedures*. The *Echt Relaas* paints an ambivalent picture of de Kok, suggesting that nobody aboard was sure of where he stood. The third mate is exonerated in the narrative, however, by his keeping a days-long vigil in the mast top in order to sight land before the expiration of the mutineers' ultimatum, thereby preventing the captain's execution,. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

The quarterdeck

Whereas the *hoek* was used to signal affiliation, the quarterdeck became a site for soliciting recruits among the crew. In the popular accounts, drunken revels on the quarterdeck are presented as typical behaviors of maritime lawlessness, classified with thefts and violent and arbitrary punishments as signs of dangerous disorder.[530] Such revels were an important aspect of the mutineers' relations with the general crew, however. Under the Company the quarterdeck served as a place of annunciation, from which the officers would address the crew assembled below them in the pit. Crewmen were allowed onto the quarterdeck only when summoned by the officers, principally to operate the wheel or the mizzenmast rigging. In contrast the mutineers frequently invited individual crewmen to join them on the quarterdeck, where they could be seen enjoying the mutineers' largesse, receiving wine or a share of the Company's money. Such invitations were a daily spectacle, serving both to show the crew collectively that the mutineers would treat them better than the Company had done, and to gain, if not the explicit support of individual crewmen, then at least the suspicion of their fellows.

The public nature of the quarterdeck was strictly delimited, however. It has already been noted that the officers' cabins remained closed to the crew. Apart from maintaining the officers' positions and their seclusion, another purpose

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[530] On the characteristic behaviors of sea criminals, see Rediker, M. B: "The Red Atlantic, or, 'a terrible blast swept over the heaving sea,'" in Klein, B. & Mackenthun, G. (eds.): *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York, Routledge, 2004). Johnson, C: *Robberies and Murders*.

was served by this: the *muiterofficiers* discussed the ship's position and consulted the charts only in the captain's cabin, well out of the crew's sight. In this regard the *muiterofficiers* and the VOC's officers acted alike: they argued about navigation and long term plans behind closed doors, only bringing their decisions out onto the deck.[531] For some major decisions the mutineers would call councils of the whole crew onto the quarterdeck. Such councils were not held, however, when the captain revealed to the *muiterofficiers* that he was not sure of the ship's position, or when the ship appeared not to have moved for some weeks.[532] According to the *Echt Relaas*, in counsels held in the officers' quarters the mutineers appeared much more desperate and unruly than they did before the crew. On one occasion, while some of the *muiterofficiers* entertained crewmen with wine on the quarterdeck, the officers in the

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[531] This function of the captain's cabin (separated even from the common spaces of the officers), of a navigational "kitchen " in which information was "cooked" into a course, later to be presented in public, appears analogous to the function of the chemistry lab's famously observed by Owen Hannaway: it certifies results and in making them public, presents them as a form of service. Hannaway, O: "Laboratory Design and the Aim of Science: Andreas Libavius versus Tycho Brahe," *Isis* 77 (1986), 585-610.

[532] The mutineers' consultations in the captain's cabin are recounted in detail in the *Echt Relaas*. It is noteworthy that under the VOC's order the authority attached to the quarterdeck rested on a network of factors including the captain's expertise, cartographic knowledge and the presence of navigational instruments together with that of the steering gear. Under the mutineers' order the expertise of the captain was veiled and the mutineers had direct command only of the steering gear. Their suspicion that the captain was misleading them regarding navigation therefore presented two distinct threats: first that they would be hindered in deserting or led into a trap and second that if it became known that they did not command the captain's network of expertise, then their authority aboard would be undermined. This last consideration likely lay behind the mutineers' threats to kill the officers: although this act would itself invite disaster, it would at least remove them as competing holders of authority. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas*.

merchant's cabin were being told that if there was any trouble or if the ship

did not make good progress toward a friendly port the mutineers would have

no compunction in using the gunpowder to "make the ship spring in the air,"

having already hidden casks of powder around the hold against just such a

need.[533]

The pit and punishment

When making public displays of coercive force the mutineers used the pit as

their theater of punishment, threatening to throw seamen or officers off the

ship from this location. In this they followed Company precedent, since

ejection from the pit was the way the VOC disposed of murderers and

refuse.[534] Only one man was ever actually thrown off, however: Coenraad

Palm, a sailor accused of fomenting a counter-rebellion. Palm proved

extremely difficult to get rid of, however, surviving gunshots and stab

wounds, and becoming tangled in the rigging during his ejection: he was

eventually pardoned and reintegrated with the crew in response to pleading

from the preacher.[535] The officers were threatened repeatedly with ejection

because of the lack of apparent progress toward Brazil. On each occasion,

however, the preacher's pleading persuaded the mutineers to relent, allowing

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[533] Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas* 27.

[534] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen.

[535] The incident in question is reproduced in detail in the *Echt Relaas* but only
mentioned briefly in the *Crimineele Procedures*. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L.
(eds.): *Echt Relaas*, 31.

just one more chance for land to be produced. Only once did the mutineers employ the spectacle of violence against crewmen as the Company was wont to do, by lashing them before the crew over a cannon: this was done to the first mate when he was suspected of attempting to organize a counter-rebellion. Otherwise casual beatings reportedly were more common under the mutineers than under the officers, but no cases of the public humiliation of lashing a crewman were recorded aboard the mutineers' ship.[536]

Theater of promise: the *voorkajuit*

The mutineers' theatrical method is revealed most clearly at the center of the ship, however, in the *voorkajuit*, or *kerk*.[537] This space was not a focus of regulations and taboos like the quarterdeck, but it was an extremely important location aboard, standing at the nexus of many of the routes crewmen took to navigate around the ship and at the boundary between the crew's and the officers' space. On the *Nijenburg,* and possibly on other ships, in addition to serving as the place from which prayer was led, it was associated with the care of the crew, containing the medicine chest and access to the drinking water vats.[538] After the mutiny, guarded by men with swords and cannons, the

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[536] Hullu, J. de, Bruijn J. R, Lucassen J: Op de Schepen. Schaeffer: *The Chains of Bondage Broke*.

[537] "Kerk" in Beylen, J. van: *Zeilvaart Lexicon: Viertalig Maritiem Woordenboek*. (Weesp: De Boer Maritiem, 1985).

[538] The medicine chest appears to have been an important landmark aboard: several deponents described events as taking place "by the medicine chest." Medicines, many of them expensive tropical food products or containing alcohol, were looted from the

vookrkajuit was repeatedly used for displaying the mutineers' power and promise, first in the form of weapons looted from the saloon, later in the form of the Company's money and bullion looted from the merchant's cabin.

The Company's money played a central role in ordering the mutineers and the ship after the uprising. After taking command, the mutineers were careful always to distinguish between the Company's property, which they looted freely, and the personal possessions of the crewmen and officers. Many officers had brought luxury goods aboard for their own use or for private trade at Batavia. These included wine, foods and fine clothing, stored either in the officers' cabins or in compartments accessible to the steward, who would bring them to the officers on request. Whenever the mutineers wished to take from these personal stores, they paid the owners for their goods—albeit at prices they dictated, and with the VOC's stores of coin.

It seems likely that this practice was aimed at demonstrating that the mutineers were not pirates or oppressors with regard to the other people on the ship, but fundamentally decent and reasonable men forced to take extreme action against an unjust situation. Their free appropriation of goods belonging to the Company but not to those aboard implicitly separated all those on the ship from whom the goods were bought or to whom they were given from the VOC as an institution. The mutineers subsequently used the Company's

chest on the night of the uprising and during the period of the mutineers' command. *Crimineele Procedures*.

money to further separate the crewmen, by aligning individuals with the mutineers, or at least separating them from hope of reintegrating with the Company's order.

The morning after the uprising, the VOC's chests of gold bars and coin were hauled up onto the quarterdeck and broken open, the contents being counted in front of the crew. The gold bars were taken below to the smithy, between the mast and the corporal's *bak*, to be hacked into convenient pieces. The chests were then re-sealed and stored in common sight on the *voorkajuit*, under guard. Over the next two weeks the money was shared out among the crew, who were often not eager to receive it. Croos first offered the money publicly, tying it explicitly to affiliation with the mutineers, saying: "Let him who wants money and to go ashore with us come up."[539] When only a few crewmen responded, the mutineers resorted to calling on them for individual, private interviews. At these meetings between 20 and 200 ducats would be pledged to each crewman, together with a piece of gold deemed to be in proportion, on a scheme that seems to have indicated alignment with the mutineers' cause: *muiterofficiers* received the largest shares, members of the non-aligned crew received graded amounts, which seem to have implied a hierarchy of favor in the new order, while the known VOC loyalists received nothing.[540] According

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[539] *Crimineele Procedures*.

[540] The shares given to *muiterofficiers* were considerably larger: according to Croos he received 800 ducats, while Wolnar took 1100. In each case coins were accompanied by a piece of gold, of a value unknown to the mutineers. *Crimineele Procedures*.

to boatswain Haak, only about 30 men aboard, including all the officers, did not receive any of the money. Hoeber, a Swiss soldier, testified that he tried to refuse the money, but Wolnar told him that if he did he would "be weighed in the scale along with the Hollander dogs," and struck him with his sword: he accordingly took the money.[541] When this process had been completed, the chests were opened again and the money divided into bags bearing the crewmen's names; these were then resealed in the chests.[542]

The symbolism of the money chests, kept visible and behind guard, is not difficult to divine: they showed the shared nature of the enterprise that the mutineers had launched. On the one hand , the money was critical to the mutineers' plan: alongside the ship itself and the stores it carried, it was to serve as a means for buying collective freedom in Brazil for the entire crew. It was therefore to be kept together until the secession was achieved. On the other hand, the named "pepper bags" containing each man's share acted as incriminating evidence of collaboration, should the ship be overhauled before it managed to reach a safe harbor.[543]

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[541] *Crimineele Procedures.*

[542] The mutineers' bookkeeper, Ihle, kept careful records of this division and continued to maintain records of further sharing out of money, which happened at least twice more with certain crewmen, presumably as negotiations and affiliations changed aboard. Staten Generaal 2407.

[543] The symbolism does not seem to have been exactly borne out in fact. It is notable that Croos, in particular, kept most of his share in a small white box inside his sea chest in the *hoek*: he sent his "boy" to retrieve it before abandoning the ship at Cape Roque. Many of the other *muiterofficiers* who went ashore at Cape Roque also had supplies of money and gold with them. *Crimineele Procedures.*

The amounts of money dispensed also served to sow doubts and insecurity between the members of the general crew: they signaled status and affiliation in the new order, even if the recipients of larger sums did not go to lodge on the *muiterofficiers baks*. The effect was that they acted rather like the Company's own reward scheme for men who exposed mutiny plots, to discourage the trust needed for any combination against the mutineers. Jacob Boos stated that the mutineers' power lay in an atmosphere of general distrust and fear, remarking: "Nobody could trust his neighbor; in fact, we didn't even dare to speak with each other about [resisting the mutineers]."[544] The quantity of money each man received was certainly taken by the courts as a sign of his importance to the mutineers' order. In this way the coercive aspect of sharing out the money proved effective in the end, with all the men who faced death sentences or severe physical punishment being among those who had received the largest sums.

After Cape Roque

Little is recorded regarding spatial changes aboard after the flight of most of the mutineers at Cape Roque. Those who left in the boats appear to have defected from the common cause and, indeed, left the symbolic chests behind. The chief consequence aboard the ship seems to have been an increased openness among those *muiterofficiers* who remained and a more consultative

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[544] *Crimineele Procedures* I, 143.

method of leadership, with counsels of the whole crew being mustered on deck to decide collectively on the ship's new destination. The separation between mutineers, officers and general crew remained in effect: the first and third mates, taken in the boats by the fleeing mutineers, were replaced from the depleted ranks of officers and declared Company loyalists: the preacher and a quartermaster were promoted to navigation positions and given cabins, regardless of their competence to hold such posts, while the new chief mutineer, Johann Brand, remained below.

The most significant change to the ship came from the loss of its boats, however. This made the ship into a floating prison, even within sight of shore, since the ship would certainly ground long before it reached a point where the crew could escape without boats. It also fundamentally changed any negotiation the *Nijenburg*'s men could conduct with shore-based authorities, since the men could no longer reach land without the cooperation of such authorities.

Addressing this problem led to the creation of one new theater, in the form of a carpenter's workroom on deck, which produced one small boat and a raft for exploring the shore while sailing from Pernambuco to Cayenne.[545] On arrival at Cayenne, however, Brand appears to have abandoned the mutineers'

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[545] The boat was lost during its explorations with all crew: unbeknownst to the men on the ship it had been captured by French authorities and the crew imprisoned. Jonge, N. de, Kuijk, L. & Oskamp L. (eds.): *Echt Relaas.*

theaters of action altogether, surrendering the crew, the money and the guns to French lighters and submitting to incarceration in a dockside building ashore.

With some irony, the authorities at Cayenne reinstated the Company's division of the *Nijenburg*'s crew on land, lodging the officers, and particularly the captain, the doctor, the merchant and his wife on an upper floor of the building and the rest of the men, including the *muiterofficiers* who had negotiated the surrender, together below. The colonial governor had been forewarned both of the situation aboard the *Nijenburg* and of the powder kegs primed to blow it up, having intercepted the scouting boat sent ahead of the ship and imprisoned its crew.[546] The spatial separation in the building allowed for the officers to be questioned individually, apart from the men, with the result that the Company was contacted and most of its money recovered before the bulk of the crew were asked about their version of events.

Conclusion

It can be seen from the reconstruction above that space and power were intimately connected on the *Nijenburg*, both before and after the mutiny. It can also be seen that the men created and arranged their own spaces aboard in

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[546] In a further irony the details of the mutiny were obtained not by interrogation but by intercepting a letter the men from the raft had attempted to send to the ship, via their prison guards. This letter stated that all was lost, that the Cayenne authorities could not be trusted, and that, should those on the ship fall into French hands, their only recourse would be to blow up the ship. Bruin, G. de & Wal, A. J. J. van der, '"Allons Duytsche Broeders.'"

order to serve their own social agendas, below the Company's gaze and alongside its standardized structures. The Company's Articles and ship plans formed a kind of loose cage for captains and crews: they allowed for a great deal of freedom and variation in shipboard order, inside a firmly codified system of routines and punishments. Indeed, they assumed and depended on secondary orders, initiated both by the officers and by the men, which have been set out in their ideal form in Ketting's description of below-decks practices. Where the secondary orders were produced outside the Company's idiom and expectations, however, they could easily undercut Company authority and support rebellion. In short, the Company had formal means for punishing mutineers once they had been caught and used rewards to make the recruitment of mutineers more difficult, but it left the reproduction of a social order that would prevent mutinies in the unreliable hands of tradition.

Further, the same elements of shipboard space and social structure that the Company used to communicate its own order could be recombined, in a kind of *bricolage*, by mutineers to support and communicate alternative orders and meanings. This *bricolage* made use simultaneously of the meanings previously assigned by the Company and of the mutineers' own novel practices and performances; under their order the quarterdeck became simultaneously an exclusive place of privilege and a theater where the Company's order was overturned. Likewise the *voorkajuit* relied for its function as a display case on its prior use as a center of medical and possibly pastoral care. In actor-network terms, the spaces retained or perhaps remembered their places in the

Company's networks. The mutineers were therefore able to appropriate and redeploy their network associations, fitting themselves into the places in the network previously occupied by the Company's appointed officers. The result was not only that the mutineers derived a form of legitimacy from using the spaces of power aboard, but also that they were able to employ those spaces to adjust selectively the statuses and social networks of other crewmen, whom the mutineers bound to themselves by circumstance and association, even if they could not extract loyal support from them individually.

The mutineers' order in "workrooms"

As noted in Chapter 2, the space of the *Nijenburg* during and after the mutiny is also amenable to an analysis in terms of cognitive and communicative "workrooms" and "distances," as described by Arisaka in her commentary on Heidegger's *Being and Time*.[547]

Associations of use, based on expertise, can be seen in operation before the mutiny – the distance experienced by the members of the *zwavelband* from the ship's normative order, made evident by their treatment by junior officers, their restricted access to water and their prospects for training - is cited during the trial as a cause for rebellion. The mutineers expressed this distance as one based on national identity; the ship was a Hollander institution run by and for

[547] Arisaka, Y: "On Heidegger's Theory of Space: A Critique of Dreyfus" *Inquiry* 38: 4 (December 1995), 455-467. For the full discussion of workrooms, see Chapter 2: the space of the typical ship.

Hollanders, according to Hollander expertise: as Germans they were excluded. The junior officers, on the other hand, addressed the *zwavelbenders*, as ignorant novices to Company order, calling them lazy gallows-birds, rascals and animals; anything but seamen and soldiers.[548] The *zwavelband* also succeeded in generating a workroom that was distant from the gaze of the steward and other junior officers, the interior workings of which were unknown except by its members.

During the uprising the combination of status distance between the officers and men with a spatially expressed distance between workrooms, based more on restrictions of access than on the actual lengths of travel between them, played an important role in the mutineers' favor. The widespread ignorance professed by crewmen on the lower deck regarding fighting on the quarterdeck and in the saloon seems to have relied on an idea that such events were "too far away" to be heard, even though they were noted and reacted to by the foredeck's junior officers: men who were physically further removed but socially and functionally closer.

Further, the mutineers' strategy of taking control of the ship's systems by placing themselves between the officers and men made ingenious use of the ship's workrooms and separations. The officers' spaces, set apart from the

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[548] It is notable that throughout all the trial documents the mutineers are referred to principally as *spitsboeven*, that is "rascals" or "brigands," avoiding the connotation of valid grievances that "mutineer" might entail.

crew and arranged to clarify their status and relationships, aided the mutineers in finding and isolating the captain and mates. The cabins on the quarterdeck in particular, which served to separate the officers for the captain's use, allowing them to be called individually to duty, also worked as readymade prison cells: their radial arrangement at the stern of the quarterdeck even resembled a kind of reverse Panopticon, ordinarily allowing all the officers to check the status of the wheel, but on the night of the uprising allowing a single guard at the wheel to control all the officers at once.[549]

By severing the navigation officers from the junior officers, the mutineers decapitated the Company's social order, interposing themselves effectively between the functions of head and hand, planning and execution, navigation and sailing. The critical spatial element in effecting this separation was not the quarterdeck or the saloon itself, but the space that connected these officers' domains with the rest of the ship: the *voorkajuit.* It was here that the mutineers made their first base aboard on the night of the uprising, stationing guards and piling their weapons to claim the one place where the quarterdeck, upper deck and lower deck all met. Once they had silenced the captain and secured this junction they benefited from the arrangement of the ship's systems, which

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[549] On the *Barbestein* the vulnerability of the cabins was made even more apparent: the officers were effectively sealed inside them by the use of iron stakes driven into the deck to close the doors. Bruijn & van Eyck van Heslinga: "Luxembourg en haut." Regarding the Panopticon, I follow Foucault's and Markus' discussions. Foucault, M: *Discipline and Punish* (New York, Pantheon, 1978). Markus, T: *Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993).

were divided among interdependent workrooms ready to be coordinated by the captain's command, but unready to collectively resist a usurper in the captain's position. In particular the objects needed to defend the ship were arranged in such a way as to be safely separate from one another until the captain ordered them united for action, the powder and fuses being kept below in the gunroom, while the handguns and grenades were kept above in the saloon and tops and all dependent on the *voorkajuit* that linked them together.

After the uprising

After the uprising the mutineers' theaters of control showed their own workrooms clearly, displaying both to the crew and to the *muiterofficiers* themselves the mutineers' preoccupations and priorities, their goals and the basis of their authority. The mutineers' workrooms rearranged the spaces of the ship beyond their own bounds as well. By moving the center of control to the *hoek* they kept the bulk of the unaligned crew close at hand, while pushing those elements that represented Jan Compagnie literally to the margins, the junior officers being sequestered away from the men and behind guard in the cable locker, under the foredeck and in the gun room, the senior officers likewise isolated in their cabins. Access to food, drink, and the means of destroying the ship were kept close at hand in the person of the steward, who alone held the key to the hold and stayed beside the *muiterofficiers' baks* at their constant call.

By using both the *hoek* and the quarterdeck as spaces of resident authority, the mutineers could use both ends of their status, as quondam crewmen and present masters, in their negotiations with the crew. A meeting conducted below meant an informal presentation of the mutineers that recalled the personal patronage of the great hall: it showed an alignment of interests between the mutineers and their fellow crewmen as opposed to the officers who, emphasizing their status distance from the men, had withdrawn *achter op*.[550] The mutineers thus dressed in the guise of proletarian co-conspirators to share the wine they'd liberated from the officers and, in theory, cement their *gemeinschaft* with those they invited as guests and confidants. On the quarterdeck they dressed in their uniforms and presented their public, disciplinary faces in promises and proclamations, accusations of treachery and threats of retribution.[551] An invitation to revels on the quarterdeck, however, meant a carnival relief from the status of crewman for those invited. There the mutineers sat in barbaric state, "playing the boss" indeed, surrounded by the vista of the horizon, commanding the ship's progress toward Brazil, freedom and wealth ashore. The drinking and dancing during these revels, aided by the Company's looted money and profligate use of the officers' food and drink promised something rather akin to the "lord of six weeks" experience of the

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[550] Girouard, M: *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

[551] Melville notes the practice of US naval officers putting on their impassive, unreachable "quarterdeck faces" whenever a crewman was lashed before the mast, these faces contrasting with their more personable, sympathetic and socially engaged self-presentation at other times. Melville, H: *White-jacket or, The World in a Man-of-war* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

return to Amsterdam, this license being the proper reward of the hardworking seaman.[552] The mutineers' ability to bestow this relief on those they favored presented them as kinder masters, with better contract terms, than the VOC.

The mutineers and the Company as masters

It is a tenet of actor-network theory that macro-actors—large institutions, states and companies, which present themselves as monolithic entities—exist through a process of "translating" smaller actors' wills into a single will for which they speak.[553] Callon and Latour have further argued that such a large actor must necessarily have a simpler nature than the smaller networks and actors that make it up, helping it to successfully communicate its representations or "translations" to wider and more varied "audiences" of network-elements, in order to aggregate them all into its own frame.[554] The Company's shipboard order, consisting of a loose institutional framework formed by the VOC Articles embellished by local actors aboard each ship, seems to bear out this argument. Likewise, the shipboard order that the

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[552] "Lords of six weeks" was a disparaging term used in the Republic to describe the wasteful and outrageous behavior of returning VOC seafarers, who were reputedly inclined to spend all of their accumulated wages from their five year contracts in binges of eating, drinking and employing prostitutes. Boxer, C. R: "The Dutch East-Indiamen: Their Sailors, Their Navigators and Life on Board, 1602-1795," *Mariner's Mirror* 49.2 (May 1963), 81-104.

[553] "By translation we understand all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself~ authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force: 'Our interests are the same', 'do what I want', 'you cannot succeed without going through me'." Callon, M. & Latour, B: "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan."

[554] Callon, M. & Latour, B: "Unscrewing the Big Leviathan."

mutineers created, being composed of elements of VOC order overlaid with the mutineers' own agendas, appears to support Callon and Latour's argument by being more complex than the order it replaced and, moreover, aiming at an obscuring complexity with regard to who exactly it purported to "translate." In some regards, however, the mutineers' order seems simpler, or at least more direct in its communication, than the Company's.

Between the *hoek* and the quarterdeck, at the crossing point of the ship, the mutineers kept their most obvious means of influence and violence ready to hand, in the chapel/fortress of the *voorkajuit*. It was here that the vulnerability of the mutineers and the instability of their enterprise were most clearly revealed, in the price the mutineers had already paid for their freedom, visible in the Company's stolen goods, and the weapons the mutineers would be forced to use on the crew in the event their order failed. This display of riches and weapons also exposed another order before the crew, however, one which the Company's officers kept concealed behind the saloon door: it showed both the profit to be gained from the Indies voyage and the coercion needed to make it happen.

CONCLUSION

During the past few decades a great deal has been written about a "spatial turn" in historiography and in the humanities generally.[555] The globalization of capitalism and resistance to it have been important topics in this literature, while displacement and "placelessness," related to globalization, have been major themes in the works of, for example, Henri Lefebvre, Marc Auge and Homi Bhabha.[556] By their natures such discussions rarely deal with the qualities of specific places: they are as a whole notably free of diagrams or plans or other means of visualizing and discussing with precision the spaces they cover. I have attempted here to write a history of the VOC *retourschip* that relates its spatial arrangement to the society that operated aboard it, the various programs it served, and ideologies in which it was involved. This work, then, represents a contribution to "spatialized" history, but one that takes a different tack from the aforementioned authors, being tied to a specific group of spaces, using plans and diagrams to explore those spaces in detail. Moreover, this study attempts to show a particular place important to globalization, rather than dealing with placelessness, even though the ships it

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[555] Warf, B & Arias, S (eds.): *The Spatial Turn: interdisciplinary perspectives* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009). Ethington, P. J: "Placing the Past: 'Groundwork' for a Spatial Theory of History," *Rethinking History* 11.4 (December 2007), 465–530. Thrift, N: "Space," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 23.2-3 (2006): 139-146. Jessop, R: "Theorizing Sociospatial Relations," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 (2008), 389-401.

[556] Lefebvre, H: *The production of space*, trans. Nicholson-Smith, D. (Malden: Blackwell, 2007). Augé, M: *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity* (London:

addresses went everywhere: becoming in the process, as Marcus Rediker has observed, the "longest arms" of empire.[557] Through shipping networks both the production of and markets for sugar, coffee, tea, cotton and other commodities became globalized, as did the maritime labor market that made such global transfer possible.[558]

I have clung to a place-based approach partly for reasons of disciplinary orientation and partly from a personal inclination toward the concrete and attestable. Case studies form an indispensable part of the architectural historian's arsenal: they invariably complicate clear theoretical arguments and reach out in multiple, often inconvenient directions, prompting investigations that must address the particularity of each case as well as whatever general point the case was supposed to illustrate. A number of other reasons for investigating the spaces of the ship have become clear to me through my researching, discussing and writing about the topic, which I can state as historical propositions.

Verso, 2006)., Bhabha, H. K: *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994). Harvey, D: *Spaces of Global Capitalism* (London, New York: Verso, 2006).

[557] Rediker, M. B: "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism," keynote speech delivered at the conference *Mutiny & Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution, A Global Survey*, IISG, Amsterdam, 16-18 June, 2011.

[558] Ewald, J. J: "Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other Migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1914" *American Historical Review*, 105. 1 (Feb. 2000) 69-91.

The first is that no matter how placeless or abstract the spaces of global

capitalism may appear, the wheels of commerce are always physical and

literal, and their physical reality is vitally important to understanding the

cultural and economic systems they support. In order for global capital to

work, the ship had to work as a machine and a social system. When the

society of the ship and the authority of its officers broke down, fault lines in

the larger engines it supported became apparent.

Second, the history of global shipping can offer a window into the ways in

which capitalist institutions produce their working spaces, in particular the

ways in which capitalist enterprises incorporate and reconfigure other,

traditional social forms and relations. North European seafaring had been

involved in commerce and adaptive labor networks for centuries before the

advent of the joint stock corporations. Nonetheless, seafarers reproduced (in

memory if not always in practice) a set of traditions and a social hierarchy that

was based on solidarity around the individual vessel, paternalism between the

master and his crew, and labor relations characterized by partnership and

profit sharing.[559] The VOC's first ships could not have operated without these

traditions: its Articles were built atop them, as a pre-existing social order. The

blanket of tradition grew ever more threadbare through the Company's

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[559] Davis, R: *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (London, Macmillan, 1962). Jackson, R. P: "From Profit-Sailing to Wage-Sailing: Mediterranean Owner-Captains and their Crews during the Medieval Commercial Revolution," *Journal of European Economic History*, 18. 3 (Winter, 1989), 605-628. Rediker, M. B: *Between the devil and the deep blue sea: merchant seamen, pirates, and the Anglo-American maritime world, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987).

lifespan, however, as the Company increasingly recruited men with no maritime background and relied on an ever-smaller cadre of experienced mariners. Indeed, in the case of the *Nijenburg,* it was so reduced that it failed to provide the ex-soldiers of the *zwavelband* with any kind of shipshape identity, out of which they might refashion themselves as Company servants.

Third, I propose that those social conditions characteristic of colonialism, involving inflexible hierarchies and the formation of "third cultures" adapted to the working world of the colony, did not originate only in ethnized or racialized encounters between European colonists and non-European colonized populations: instead the structures of colonialism might be found replicated throughout the VOC's expropriative enterprise, particularly aboard ships where, traditionally, neither desertion nor renegotiation of labor terms was tolerated.[560]

These propositions might have been tested through investigations of many different times and situations in the development of commercial shipping or of colonial exploitation, from the Genoese trading-post empire of the fifteenth century to the plantation colonies of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, or even through an investigation of contemporary international

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[560] On the importance of desertion as a means of collective bargaining, see Rediker, M. B: *Between the devil and the deep blue sea.*

shipping.[561] *Retourschepen* might be termed the "charismatic megafauna" of

early efforts at globalization, however: combining a discrete shipboard polity

with the quest narrative inherent to the voyage, they have served as the basis

for stories of adventure, colonial encounters, and exploitation.[562] As active

agents of colonial expansion, they reveal aspects of the VOC's operational

reality and its self-image that are not manifested by its office buildings or the

street plans of its colonial enclaves, or by the stories the Company told

regarding its colonies and its purposes. *Retourschepen* are also both historically

and architecturally interesting: on the one hand , they were clearly

instrumental in furthering European expansion between the sixteenth and

nineteenth centuries, on the other, they were unusually large and

sociospatially complicated—enough to sustain a detailed architectural

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[561] Curtin, P. D: *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 119.

[562] The term "charismatic megafauna" has been used since the 1980s to describe those well-known animal species, such as giant pandas and whales, that are used by environmental organizations to stir up interest and attract funding. "Species inflation: Hail Linnaeus. Conservationists—and polar bears—should heed the lessons of economics," *The Economist*, May 17, 2007. Ann Rigney has noted the inherent teleology of the ship at sea and its resulting popularity among storytelling historians and politicians. Rigney, A: *The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 43-47. Rigney, A: "The Point of Stories: On Narrative Communication and Its Cognitive Functions" *Poetics Today*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), pp. 263-283. Gilroy, Bose, Rediker and Linebaugh have all argued for the active role of ships in provoking and fostering regional or global ties of thought. Colin Dewey has offered an alternative view, on the ways East India ships brought the price of Empire back home. Gilroy, P: *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Bose, S: *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Linebaugh, P & Rediker, M. B: *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000). Dewey, C. D: *In Deep Water: The Oceanic in the British Imaginary, 1666-1805* (unpublished diss. Cornell, 2011).

analysis, with differentiated spaces and functions tied to a variety of social positions and conditions, in a way that smaller or less well described vessels cannot.[563]

The *retourschip* in somewhat longer durée

The relevance of the *retourschip* and its development might best be seen by placing it into a longer historical context than the lifespan of the VOC: it represented a particular moment in the histories of Indian Ocean trade and European imperialism. The period between 1500 and 1800 in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia saw an exceptionally high rate of seaborne violence, introduced by European powers, together with a reconfiguration of trade and production in several commodities, leading ultimately to the formation of colonial empires.[564] Contests for dominance between European states and policies of "armed trade" generated a novel "frontier" environment at sea for which the *retourschip*, with its mixture of protection and cargo capacity, was

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[563] This may be a failing on my part: Pierre Bourdieu was able to discern a whole world in two partially-separated rooms in the Kabyle house. I may state two points in my defense, however. First, the archival records from which I have drawn are neither as plentiful nor as pointed as Bourdieu's interview evidence. Second, both the type or class of the normative Berber house and the intercession of memory operate in unanalyzed, ways, submerged in Bourdieu's study. To pursue my topic as Bourdieu did, and to the same generalizing conclusions, would therefore be to negate the methodological task I set myself. Bourdieu, P: "The Kabyle House or The World Reversed," in Bourdieu, P: *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 271-283. Goodman, J. E: "The Proverbial Bourdieu: Habitus and the Politics of Representation in the Ethnography of Kabylia" *American Anthropologist* (2003) 105(4):782-793.

[564] Pearson, M. N: *The Indian Ocean* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003). Furber, H: *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976). Smith, W. D: *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

well adapted.[565] In contrast the period before the arrival of Vasco da Gama has been characterized as one of relative commercial peace and partnership in the Indian Ocean, while the nineteenth century saw a significant reduction in armed conflict between colonial powers and the spread of a more consistent legal maritime space, offering a safer environment for trade and shipping overall.[566]

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[565] Pearson: *The Indian Ocean* ,ch 5. On the creation of a frontier discourse in a space where previously there had been recognized settled polities, see Tsing, A. L: *Friction: an ethnography of global communication* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[566] Such at least is the general orthodoxy among Indian Ocean historians. For the earlier period there are no firm figures, and rates of violence are difficult to assess. Goitein's studies of merchants' letters among the documents of the Cairo Geniza reveals a law-abiding maritime space in the Indian Ocean in the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. In this space the threats to trade principally involved contests of power and succession on land, and interpretations in land-based courts of the natural hazards and contingencies of sea travel. Goitein, S. D: "From the Mediterranean to India: Documents on the Trade to India, South Arabia and East Africa from the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Speculum*, 29.2, part 1 (Apr. 1954) 181-197. Goitein, S. D: "Portrait of a Medieval India Trader: three letters from the Cairo Geniza" *BSOAS* 50.3 (1987), 449-464. Goitein, S. D et al: *A Mediterranean society; the Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967-1993). There are some reasons to be cautious in espousing this view. Anthony Reid suggests that the trading oecumene of island Southeast Asia was already being threatened by violence before the advent of the Portuguese and Dutch. Claude Guillot has likewise noted a significant shift from trading ship to warfleet production in Banten and several other Southeast Asian cities during the fifteenth century, suggesting that Europeans were not entirely to blame for disrupting an otherwise idyllic situation. Reid, A: "Introduction: a time and a place" in Reid, A. (ed.): *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era, Trade, Power and Belief* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1993). Guillot C: "Urban Patterns and Polities in Malay Trading Cities", *Indonesia*, 80 (Oct 2005). There were certainly disturbances, including maritime violence from expansionist polities and various kinds of "pirates" in the seas off East African and Southeast Asia after 1800. Nonetheless, large, unarmed commercial shipping and passenger lines were able to operate freely by the 1840s, an eventuality that would have been unthinkable in the seventeenth century. Naqīb, K: *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula: a different perspective* (London, New York: Routledge and the Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1990). Risso "Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Piracy: Maritime Violence in the Western Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf Region during a Long Eighteenth Century" *Journal of World History* 12.2 (2001) 293-319. S. Bhattacharya. "The Indian Ocean in the nineteenth and Early twentieth Centuries" in Chandra, S (ed.): *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce and Politics* (New Delhi, Newbury Park; Sage, 1987).

This violent moment, or mode, of capitalist expansion was born out of inter-state warfare. The VOC and its sister organization the WIC were created during the 80 years war of Netherlands independence from Spain, to serve in the first instance as instruments for prosecuting that war. Although they were formed from private capital and (eventually) yielded profits to private citizens, these instruments served the ends of the state, their successes being taken as national victories. The war against Spain was conducted both through the use of arms and, at a more structural level, through a form of economic assault on Spanish and Portuguese overseas empires, with the aim of depriving Spain of its income from Asian and American trade while establishing the Dutch Republic as the sole provider and entrepot for Indies goods in Europe.[567] During the first half of the seventeenth century the armed trading galleons that came to be called *retourschepen* had no rival as tools for conducting this form of warfare.

Ideational and ideological backing for the mode of armed trade on a chaotic, wartime frontier was constructed, in different aspects, in the writings of Godefried Udemans and Hugo Grotius. Udemans identified the Spaniards as the enemies of all mankind: he excused all forms of violence and expropriation, including piracy, plunder and the enslavement of native populations in the Indies, as the acceptable consequences of a "just war"

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[567] Israel, J: *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740*. (Oxford, New York: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1990).

against Spain, which was moreover part of a necessary, great work in the service of God.[568] In his celebrated doctrine of *mare librum*, or free trade and access over the seas for all, Grotius, on the other hand, identified the ocean and its trading potential as universal goods fit for general exploitation.[569] Grotius' *mare librum* appears to support a kind of equalizing, democratic attitude to the use of the sea. The impetus for it, however, was justifying the VOC's seizure of the Portuguese carrack *Santa Catarina* and its extraordinarily rich cargo.[570] According to Grotius the freedom to trade was a right that had to be guaranteed by force: the Portuguese, who denied the Dutch their rights, were therefore justly punished by Dutch seizure of their assets.[571] More generally, Grotius' doctrine favored whichever power could bring the greatest capacity for shipping and violence to bear on the seas of the Wild East. It was not a coincidence that in the seventeenth century the Netherlands dominated European shipbuilding, nor that, in the *retourschip*, it had optimized the combination of protection and cargo carrying capacity.[572]

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[568] Eijnatten, J van: "War, Piracy and Religion: Godfried Udemans' Spiritual Helm 1638" in Hans W. Blom (ed): *Property, Piracy and Punishment: Hugo Grotius on war and booty in De iure praedae - concepts and contexts* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009) 192-214.

[569] Pearson: *The Indian Ocean* ch. 5. Grotius, H: *The Freedom of the Seas.* Trans. Ralph Van Deman Magoffin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1916).

[570] Borschberg, P: "The Seizure of the Sta. Catarina Revisited: The Portuguese Empire in Asia, VOC Politics and the Origins of the Dutch-Johor Alliance (1602 — c.1616)" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 33.1 (February 2002), 31-62.

[571] Borschberg, "Seizure of the Sta. Catarina," 33.

[572] Israel, J: *Dutch Primacy.* Sicking, L: *Neptune and the Netherlands: state, economy, and war at sea in the Renaissance* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004).

The closure of the 80 years war in 1648 changed the Netherlands' primary antagonist from Spain to England and the methods of naval warfare from favoring *retourschepen* to purpose-built "ships of the line." As a result, *retourschepen* lost their military role in the Atlantic. Further, Lauren Benton has described how, during the subsequent century, a regime of spreading British legal power over the Atlantic space brought previously wild colonial frontiers into a legal oecumene.[573] Where the Dutch cited Grotius' *mare librum,* the English favored his contemporary John Selden's *mare clausum,* or the extension of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the seas.[574] As *mare clausum* spread, through the expanding efforts of warships, the *retourschip's* peculiar mixture of cargo and protection costs became a liability rather than an asset: whichever power could guarantee protection in the Atlantic (through direct state involvement) could afford to separate the cost of protection from shipping and, instead of supporting expensive armed trader galleons, operate cheaper and more efficient single-purpose freighters, such as the *fluits* and *hoekers* that the Dutch had pioneered in the Baltic since the sixteenth century.[575]

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[573] Benton, L: "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47 (2005), 700-724.

[574] Steinberg, P. E: *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Selden, J: *Of the Dominion, or, Ownership of the Sea.* Trans. Marchamont Nedham. (New York: Arno, 1972).

[575] Barbour, V: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping in the Seventeenth Century" in Emmer, P. & Gaastra, F. S. (eds.): *The organisation of interoceanic trade in European Expansion, 1450-1800* (aldershot: variorum, 1996).

The difference in operating costs between a *retourschip* and a *fluit* or *hoeker* was substantial, and can be seen vividly in the shipping registers of the Company's final decade. Throughout the VOC's history its outward bound ships left port packed to the gunwales with men and supplies, and returned equally packed with Asian cargoes, their homecoming crews greatly reduced by diseases, war, desertion and in the eighteenth century especially by malaria.[576] Outward-bound vessels bore the whole weight of the colonial enterprise. Homecoming vessels carried the whole profit potential of the Company in their hulls. The space given over to the crews of *retourschepen* was therefore a calculated compromise between efficiency and safety: a small crew could place a ship in jeopardy if disease or bad weather reduced it further en route, but every man carried aboard represented cargo space lost to his hammock, his food and his water. In the Company's final year, the *retourschip Makassar* made it back to the Netherlands from Batavia with a crew of only 45, demonstrating that such a feat was possible.[577] In general, however, between 100 and 130 persons was considered a safe return crew, numbers frequently being made up in the Company's last decades by the addition of Chinese

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[576] Brug, P. H. van der: *Malaria en Malaise: de VOC in Batavia in de achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1994).

[577] DAS II. The return of the first rate *Makassar* with such a skeleton crew was clearly a sign of desperation: most of the other returning ships in its fleet were seized by English forces, and the Company ceased trading that same year. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that it was, indeed, possible to complete the return route with fewer than 50 men.

recruits.[578] This crew total was true both for *retourschepen* in the Company's first decades, which had a cargo capacity of between 500 and 600 tons, and for eighteenth century first rates with a capacity of 1150 tons. Jaap Bruijn has explained this curious constancy as an increase in efficiency, the tonnage-to-weight ratio of a late eighteenth century *retourschip* being comparable with that of an early seventeenth century *fluit*.[579] Equally constantly, however, *fluits* and *hoekers* remained more efficient, regularly operating with crews of around 30 men in the eighteenth century, whether their hulls could hold 400 or 1000 tons of cargo.[580] Part of this difference may be attributed to the presence or absence of guns and the concomitant need for gunners. Part must be related, however, to the form and rig of the ships, *fluits* being in general less demanding on their crews than *retourschepen*.[581]

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[578] Curiously, it appears from DAS II that Chinese sailors were almost always added in groups of the same size, comprising 26 men. Lucassen, J: "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595–1795" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 66 (25 Feb 2005): 12-39. DAS II.

[579] Bruijn, J. R: "Productivity, Profitability, and Costs of Private and Corporate Dutch Ship Owning in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries" in Tracy, J. D. (ed): *The Rise of Merchant Empires: long-distance trade in the early modern world, 1350-1750* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 255-286: 277.

[580] Barbour relates tonnage directly to crew numbers, stating a ratio for Baltic *fluits* of around 20 tons per man. The VOC shipping registers do not bear this relationship out clearly, however. These figures are based on a survey of returning ships from 1785 to 1795. With some exceptions not correlated with tonnage, *fluits, hoekers* and *pinks* pressed into *retour* route sailing employed around 27-36 men. For a direct comparison, in 1790 an unusually large *hoeker,* of 1090 tons, carried a crew of 38 men, while a *retourschip* of 880 tons carried 107 men. Barbour: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping." DAS III.

[581] Barbour: "Dutch and English Merchant Shipping."

Despite their inefficiency for cargo carriage in the Atlantic, *retourschepen* remained effective east of the Cape, where English claims to *mare clausum* were much more tenuous, as the free operation of pirates Henry Everie and William Kidd demonstrated.[582] A mode of continuous warfare and state competition through trade continued through the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, such that *retourschepen* justified their dual role as fighting traders by engaging the forces of other companies, of Indies rulers and of seaborne diasporas, displaced by the VOC's own mercantilist actions.[583]

A series of setbacks, principally within Europe, changed the fortunes of the Dutch Republic in the first half of the eighteenth century, however, setting the stage for Anglo-French rivalry in the second half. Jaap Bruijn has described how the Dutch Admiralties were reduced to the status of a "second rate power" by the War of Spanish Succession and chronic underfunding after 1713.[584] Jonathan Israel has further described how a loss of state power and

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[582] Ritchie, R. C: *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[583] Philip Curtin credits the Dutch invasion of Makassar as one important cause of the rise of the Bugis diaspora, noting: "by the early eighteenth century, the [Bugis] migration had become a set of interconnected, militarized trade diasporas of a size and complexity at least as great as that of the Dutch intruders who had set it in motion." Curtin, P. D: *Cross-Cultural Trade*, 163.

[584] Bruijn, J. R: *The Dutch navy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993). Brandon, P: "To Defend Trade and be Masters at Sea at One and the Same Time'. The Evolution of the Early Modern Dutch System of Naval Protection" Paper presented at the Eniugh Congress 2011, session: *War, State and Capital: European Connections and Global Repercussions in the Early Modern Period*, 16 April 2011. http://wwwdup.uni-leipzig.de/~eniugh/congress2011/programme/event/?tx_seminars_pi1[showUid]=81 Accessed 7 July 2011.

market control allowed for the signing of new international treaties and agreements, in Europe and beyond, that steadily excluded the Dutch.[585] In addition, the collapse of the spice market at the end of the seventeenth century significantly reduced VOC profits and the *retourschip's* prestige, since it no longer bore the most valuable Indies cargoes (a position yielded to English East Indiamen, with their Indian cloths and tea). The penetration of massive British and French naval forces into the Indian Ocean during the Seven Years' War, in the 1750s, rendered the *retourschip* as obsolete militarily on the seas east of the Cape as it had been for a century in the Atlantic. With growing naval support the English East India Company was able slowly to spread *mare clausum* across the Indian Ocean. During the fourth Anglo-Dutch war, in the early 1780s, *retourschepen* were seized by British navy vessels in the Sunda Strait, and it could be said that the mode of armed trade using *retourschepen* had definitively been brought to a close, the future belonging instead to the faster, lighter-armed and more specialized Blackwall frigates of the English East India Company.[586]

The VOC fell to persistent debts and shortage of capital; its ships arguably fell to a persistent protection deficit, which was demonstrated decisively by British forces, first during the fourth Anglo-Dutch war, and second during the

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[585] Israel: Dutch primacy, 377-405.

[586] DAS I offers a variation on this argument, while emphasizing that, for all of the VOC's other problems, its shipbuilding capacity and quality were undiminished, even as the Company collapsed. DAS I.

early phase of the Napoleonic wars, when Dutch ships were impounded en masse. The *retourschip* had represented an efficient and effective response to the requirements of armed trade. As the relevance of this paradigm was reduced, so the *retourschip* lost its role. Nonetheless, the VOC could not afford to abandon the *retourschip*, first because it did not operate any separate fleet of warships to protect its cargo carriers, and second because it had to maintain its prestige and military power among its Indies clients and allies. After the restitution of the Netherlands East Indies and re-establishment of regular shipping, the vessels that carried the colonial trade were no longer associated with war or the fortunes of states: their spatial divisions were simpler, their crews smaller and their forms less standardized, reflecting a more open market in shipping than the mercantilist mode.[587] The loss of standardization makes these vessels less interesting for the kind of analysis conducted in this dissertation.

This narrative rehearses a rather old-fashioned view of the decline of the VOC's sea power, which nonetheless in its broad outlines appears to be valid. Such an old-fashioned view has generally been allied to a number of other decline narratives that have been applied both to the VOC and to the society and culture of the Netherlands in the eighteenth century: a loss of trading spirit, a decadent "periwig period" in the Republic, and a generalized stasis in

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[587] Eyck van Heslinga, E. S. van: *Van Compagnie Naar Koopvaardij: De Scheepvaartverbinding Van De Bataafse Republiek Met De Koloniën in Azië 1795-1806.* Hollandse historische reeks 9. (Amsterdam: Bataafsche Leeuw, 1988).

the Company.[588] These narratives have been called into question or adjusted by a number of more recent authors.[589] The image of the Dutch *retourschip* as a fossilized, backward form, expressing a company that had abandoned innovation for the comforts of routine, requires a similar revision.[590] The qualitative differences between the Dutch *retourschip* and English, Danish or Swedish East Indiaman in the 1780s were not great. Blaise Ollivier criticized Dutch shipbuilding as "old-fashioned" in the 1730s, but the well-respected designs for British and Swedish East Indiamen published by Fredrik af Chapman in the 1770s were generally in line with Dutch shipbuilding of the same period.[591] The VOC *retourschip* did not, then, stand still during the eighteenth century. Instead, pains were taken to simplify it and in every way to render it more efficient.

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[588] Adams, J: *The Familial State: ruling families and merchant capitalism in early modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[589] Gaastra relates the decline of the VOC to a crisis of capitalization and debt. Adams attributes the supposed "malaise" of the "periwig period" to increased cooperation between burgher families in the Republic. Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.* Adams, J: *The Familial State.*

[590] DAS I attempts to account for the slowness and lack of safety of Dutch ships at the end of the eighteenth century, relative to the ships of the Swedish and Danish East India Companies, with the conclusion that poor training of Dutch navigators, lack of coppering on Dutch hulls and the refusal to adopt three-deck or *gladdeck* (continuous deck) designs were contributing factors. DAS I, 93-106.

[591] Ollivier, B & Roberts, D. H: *Eighteenth Century Shipbuilding: remarks on the navies of the dockyards in 1737* (Rotherfield: Jean Boudriot Publications, 1992). Chapman, F. *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria* (Stockholm: Tryckt hos J. Pfeiffer, 1775, reprinted Berlin: Delius / Klasing, 1968).

Efficiency has been a byword of Dutch historical studies: in the VOC's case it generally meant a constant effort to reduce costs, increase the reliability of its deliveries, and maintain a constant flow of Indies products to Europe.[592] Within the bounds of the paradigm under which it operated, the Company worked incrementally to make the *retourschip* as efficient and cost-effective as possible. In the 1740s its armament was significantly reduced and rationalized to occupy only the upper decks and gun room. Working and living environments were likewise rationalized, by moving the capstan and containing the cable tiers, to reduce that clutter necessary to carrying men and proportionally increase the part of the ship given over to cargo. The whole fleet was standardized in 1697 and the 1740s to three rates (only two of which were actually used) and a higher overall tonnage, reducing the proportional cost of carrying crewmen.[593]

Ironically, the attempts at cost reduction on the *retourschip* may partially account for the sense that the VOC's seafaring declined during the eighteenth century. We may say that the Company also exercised a cost-control policy over its manning. Wages and crew complements remained largely constant through the Company's history, despite ever growing labor scarcity and

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[592] Israel, J: *Dutch Primacy*.

[593] Gaastra has demonstrated that although the total number of ships sent from Patria in the seventeenth century was similar to that of the eighteenth, the overall tonnage was greatly increased, Gaastra, F. S. *Dutch East India Company.*

recruitment problems.[594] Men became harder to find at all levels, but none

more so than experienced ordinary seamen. While complaints against the

VOC's seamen in the seventeenth century had concerned their moral

character, by the end of the eighteenth century the greatest concern was over

competence.[595] The simplification of living and working spaces to produce an

environment that was rationally rather than traditionally ordered might be

seen as part of an effort to reduce training costs. The late eighteenth century

mutinies suggest at least that social "training" was being neglected, even to

the point of ceasing to read the Articles regularly before the crew, if

mutineers' testimony is to be believed.[596]

Nonetheless, the ships continued to run with low accident rates and VOC

crews continued to serve five years or more in the Indies networks before

returning to Patria. During the Company's final decade large numbers of

hired ships and crews were used, presumably including experienced

mariners. These had significantly higher rates of wrecking on the return

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[594] Davids, K: "Maritime labour in the Netherlands, 1570-1870," in Royen, P. C. van, Bruijn, J. R. & Lucassen, J. (eds.), *"Those Emblems of Hell"? European sailors and the maritime labour market, 1570-1870*, Research in Maritime History 13 (St. John's, Newfoundland 1997) 1-9; 41-71.

[595] Both Admiral van Kinsbergen and VOC Governor Isaak Titsingh published proposals for improving the quality of Dutch seamen in the late eighteenth century, calling for improvements to the "seamen's nurseries" of the fishing and trading fleets, responding to a general lack of experience in the workforce: Kinsbergen, J. H. van: *Myne Droomen* (Amsterdam: s.n. 1800). Titsingh, I: "Bedenking over de Schaarsheid van Zeevarende Volk" in Hoefnagel, N: *Plan of Welmeenende Voorstelling ter Verbetering van Neerlands Zee-weezen...* (Amsterdam: Dirk Schuurman, 1779).

[596] *Crimineele Procedures*. (Amsterdam: Petrus Schouten, 1764).

journey from the Indies than VOC operated ships, even those on which a

quarter of the crewmen on the latter were Chinese hands who (again

presumably) had not sailed into the Atlantic before.[597]

The topic of training is difficult to assess: no direct evidence for shipboard

training regimens is available from any period of the Company's history.

Infrequent mutinies aside, however, we may conclude that the reduction in

quality and sailing experience of the men did not significantly change the

ships' ability to deliver cargoes, and thus that those aspects of training

necessary to the ship's mission were not compromised, even if cherished

social traditions were abandoned.

If the costs of training were indeed reduced, this fact would be of value in

studies of later, colonial shipping and world systems theory. The *retourschip*

occupies a place in world systems theory on both sides of Wallerstein's divide

between luxury and bulk goods.[598] In the seventeenth century it transported

bullion, spices and high-priced piece goods; in the eighteenth century the

value of the goods decreased. In Wallerstein's argument the distinctive

contribution of the Dutch was to bring cheap bulk carriage methods to bear on

rich Indies trades. Jonathan Israel has observed that luxury goods acted as a

lever for the introduction of global shipping to lower-value goods, resulting in

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[597] DAS III.

[598] Wallerstein, I. M: *The modern world-system II: mercantilism and the consolidation of the European world-economy, 1600-1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

the adoption of novel staples in Europe, including sugar, tea and coffee.[599]

Many changes in the world economic system were necessary in order to allow

this transformation to happen. The VOC certainly played a significant role in

effecting these changes, not only by forming networks for exchange, but also

by regularizing long-distance shipping and developing systems for organizing

cargoes, ships and crews, thereby moving shipping far down the ladder of

costs.

The decreasing "quality" of crewmen may also be expressed as part of a

longer-term dynamic. Through the period of the Company's operation the

general status and power of European mariners sank decisively.[600] Where

sailors were frequently participants in profit- and capital-sharing enterprises

in the sixteenth century, they were uniformly waged in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries.[601] Seamen in the East India Companies were initially

courted with some residual profit-sharing, represented by a space in the cargo

hold and a share in prizes.[602] This share was steadily reduced, however, and

eliminated in the eighteenth century, rendering VOC seamen proletarianized

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[599] Israel, J: *Dutch Primacy*.

[600] Schaeffer, R. K: *The Chains of Bondage Broke: the proletarianization of seafaring labor, 1600-1800* (unpublished diss., SUNY Binghamton, 1984).

[601] Pérez-Mallaína, P. E: *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century (*Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press,1998).

[602] Ketting, H: *Leven, Werk & Rebellie aan Board van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-1650)* (Aksant: Leiden, 2002).

industrial laborers.[603] At the same time Asian slaves and extra-European

lascars became a regular part of the VOC's crews and the emergent, European-

operated global maritime labor market generally, forming a multi-ethnic,

mobile seafaring proletariat that would flourish together with global bulk

freight shipping in the nineteenth century.[604] During that century lascars saw a

secular drop in wages, setting a new floor for maritime workers' status: Janet

Ewald notes that under nineteenth century British Asiatic Articles they

received only a half to a fifth of the money paid to European mariners on the

same vessels, which were themselves extremely low.[605] The *retourschip*, as a

machine for turning unskilled landsmen into subsistence-level specialized

labor, played a critical role in enabling the new reality of the global mariner in

European shipping concerns.

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[603] Rediker, M: *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.*

[604] The British East India Company employed many 'Asiatics' in Asia from an early date: the stereotypical image of the English private trader is of an English captain commanding an entirely Indian or Asian crew, generally via an interpreter who occupied the place of "native" boatswain. Jaffer, A: "Serangs, Lascars and Mutinies Aboard British Merchantmen in the Indian Ocean Region, c. 1780-1858," paper presented at *Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism during the Age of Revolution: A Global Survey*, Amsterdam, June 16-18, 2011. Lucassen, J: "The International Maritime Labour Market (sixteenth-nineteenth centuries) in Bruijn, J. R, Lucassen, J & van Royen, P: *Those Emblems of Hell? European Sailors and the maritime labour market, 1570-1870* (Newfoundland 1997).

[605] Ewald, J. J: "Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other Migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, c. 1750-1914" *American Historical Review*, 105. 1 (Feb. 2000) 69-91.

APPENDIX 1: RANKS AND POSITIONS ABOARD VOC SHIPS

At least five distinct professional divisions or career ladders coexisted aboard VOC ships, comprising merchants and administrators; sailors, sailing officers and ship-borne support staff; surgeons and sick-visitors; soldiers; and craftsmen. Each division had its own systems of ranks and preferment. The rank titles and functions that constituted the explicit shipboard social order are listed below, as an aid to the reader.[606]

Merchants held the highest status aboard. In descending rank order, they included the *opperkoopman* (senior merchant), *koopman* (merchant), *onderkoopman* (junior merchant) and *assistent, secretaris or scrijver* (clerk).

Next came the navigation officers. Chief among these was the *schipper* (master), later termed a *captein*. Then in descending order the *opperstuurman* (first mate), *onderstuurman* (second mate) and two or more *derdewaaks* (third mates).

Junior officers were divided by function as well as by rank order. The *hoogbootsman* (boatswain) and his *maat* (mate) were in overall charge of the

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[606] The list presented here broadly follows that given by Ketting. Translations are provided, where possible, from van Beylen. Ketting, H. (Jr.): *Leven, Werk En Rebellie Aan Boord Van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-±1650)* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2002), bookmark. Beylen, J. van: *Zeilvaart Lexicon: Viertalig Maritiem Woordenboek.* (Weesp: De Boer Maritiem, 1985).

sailors and of the sailing equipment, ropes and other gear. He alternated

watches with his second-in-command, the *schieman* (second boatswain) and

his mate, assisted on each watch by a *kwartiermeester* (quartermaster). These

officers might also be assisted in keeping the equipment ready by a *kabelgast*

(hold man). Collectively these junior officers controlled the sailors, who had

their own social divisions and pay scales, from the experienced *Matroos* or

bootsgezel (seaman) to the novice *hooploper* (apprentice) or *jongmatroos* or

simply *jongen* (boy). The junior officer in charge of food and drink, the *bottelier*

(steward) and his mate were directly senior to the *kok* (cook), his mates and

assistants, including the *versebalie* ("refresher" of salted meats and fish), and

the *ruimwerkers* (men charged with fetching supplies from the hold). The

Konstabel (Chief gunner) and his mate were in charge of all ordnance and

weapons aboard, as well as the *bosschieters* (gunners) and the *provoost* (ship's

corporal), who maintained order, preventing gambling, consumption of

alcohol, and unsanitary behavior below, and tended any prisoners in *boeien*

(shackles). Ordinary sailors might also serve as a *trompetter* (musician, for

passing signals between ships) or *pluimgraaf* (livestock herder): neither

position conferred any improvement in status.

Surgeons were something of a social anomaly aboard ship, cutting across

sailors' and merchants' organizations. The *oppermeester, opperchirurgijn* or

opperbarbier (senior barber/surgeon) occupied a cabin on the quarterdeck. The

onderbarbier or *chirurgijnknecht* (second surgeon), *derde chirurgijn* and other

surgeons had no special place aboard, however: they lodged on the lower

deck or in the gun room. The *ziekentrooster* (sick-visitor) on *retourschepen* was likely also to be the *dominee* (preacher), and was afforded a place in the saloon or a cabin beside it.

Soldiers were organized under a *sergeant* and one or more *korporaals*. These were senior to the *landspassaat* and *adelborst* (officers in training), who in turn were senior to the general *soldaat* (soldier) or *tamboer* (drummer or signalman).

Craftsmen carried aboard ships ranged from carpenters and smiths to sailmakers, coopers, rope makers, swordsmiths, masons and bricklayers. Where multiple professionals in a single craft were found aboard the same ship they were inevitably ordered by seniority, being the *opper-* ("first"), *onder-* ("second") or *derde-* ("third") in their profession aboard the ship.

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