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## **Teze disertační práce**

Španělsko-nizozemské vztahy v Novém světě v období existence *West-Indische Compagnie*

Spanish-Dutch Relations in the New World during the Existence of the *West-Indische Compagnie*

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# 1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the Dutch Revolt and the Eighty Years' War against the Spanish empire, the Dutchmen represented by William of Orange desired to reach the independence from the Spanish dominance in the Dutch territory, together with a freedom of religion, in order to develop the Calvinist faith and Protestant thoughts. This decades-lasting war between the rebellious northern Dutch provinces, and the Spanish empire under Philip II and his later successors, was firstly fought just at the European territory. Nevertheless, the news from America(s), narrating about the enormous wealth and search for the mythical *El Dorado* made the Dutchmen naturally curious. Following Benjamin Schmidt, "the New World came to the Netherlands long before the Netherlands ever went to the New World", in form of translations of travel accounts and historical narratives, together with numerous pamphlets, decorative maps and epic poetry. The anti-Spanish pamphleteering in the United Provinces later turned also into the American context: the Dutchmen were condemning the Spanish Black Legend, together with identifying themselves on the same level as the oppressed indigenous population in the Spanish colonial dominions.

Therefore, the course of the Dutch Revolt changed at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century into another aspect: to break the Spanish-Portuguese monopoly in the New World, as it had been established in the Treaty of Tordesillas from 1494. Thus already two months after the expiration of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621), the Dutch States General founded the West India Company - a supposedly merchant organization, which would embrace the commerce with all the western hemisphere, to which also the Dutchmen felt their rights, following the thoughts of Hugo de Groot and his concept of free seas.

However, the noble principles of the newly established Company, which consisted in merchant activities, together with dissemination of Protestant thoughts and redemption of the New World's indigenous population, briefly changed their course to a triad of Dutch key occupations: smuggling, privateering and slavery. The West India Company was accomplishing also with its primary aim: to destabilize and destroy the Spanish empire by any means. Since 1621, the Dutchmen officially entered into the world merchant hegemony, dividing the world between their West- and formerly founded East India Companies. The Eighty Years' War formally moved from the European battleground also to the New World and the whole Atlantic territory.

The Dutch West India Company progressively colonized the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao near the Venezuelan coast, and three of the Leeward Islands - Sint

Maarten, Sint Eustatius and Saba eastwards from Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands. The ABC islands were previously denominated by the Spaniards as *islas inútiles*, thus useless islands, due to their lack of gold. Nonetheless, the Dutchmen made them during their colonial rule very useful, as well as the colony of Suriname which they exchanged in 1667 with the British for New Amsterdam, current New York, thus almost at the dawn of the first West India Company.

The present thesis' aim is to analyze the Spanish-Dutch relations in the territories mentioned in the previous paragraph during the existence of the West India Company, delimited by the years 1621-1674. This period covers two crucial points of the Eighty Years' War: firstly, the end of the Twelve Years' Truce, marked with the official Dutch entrance into the Spanish *mare clausum*, and secondly the Peace of Westphalia from 1648 when Spain formally recognized the United Provinces as independent state entity, and concluded the Eighty Years' War.

The topic was thus divided in two sections, marked in between by the Peace of Westphalia: first period since the establishing of the WIC in 1621 until the year 1648, and a second period since the Peace of 1648 until the decline of the WIC in 1674. The archival material emitted by Spain and the United Provinces was analyzed by imagological approach whose aim will was to show the self- and hetero-images of both of the involved countries, and specially the shifts in those representations in different periods of the war conflict. The analyzed sources covered the official communication between the colonies and their European oppositions (thus Spain and the United Provinces), together with archivalia on the functioning of the colonies themselves. Another crucial material are the Dutch pamphlets and Spanish *Relaciones de Sucesos*, which are effectively the major carriers of the mutual imagological reflections.

The principal focus of the thesis was put on the Greater Caribbean zone (comprising the Caribbean Islands, together with their adjacent coastal mainland). Subsequently, the Dutch (temporal) possessions in Brazil (thus the colony of New Holland, which existed between 1630-1654), and on the Hudson river (i.e. colony of New Netherland with its capital of New Amsterdam, established in 1614 and maintained until 1667 when surrender to the English, and afterwards restored for a short period in 1673-1674), together with a failed attempt to colonize southern Chile in 1643, stayed outside the essential content of this thesis.

## **Hypotheses**

Regarding the Spanish-Dutch relations in the New World in the delimited period of 1621-1674, there were outlined three major hypotheses to be proven in the present thesis:

**1) The Spanish-Dutch relations and historical events will be mirroring from Europe to the New World.** This hypothesis is focused on the final stage of the Eighty Years' War, thus since the expiration of the Twelve Years' Truce in 1621 until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This period was marked by the Spanish intention of re-consolidation of power in the rebellious Provinces, following the strategy of "Netherlands first". This hypothesis supposes that equally as in Europe, where the Spaniards didn't reach their established strategy and finally lose the United Provinces by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, in the New World, the Spanish attempts to decimate their Dutch enemies will fail.

**2) Despite the war status between Spain and the United Provinces, in the New World, there will exist a verifiable level of cooperation.** This hypothesis was inspired by Cornelis Goslinga, who stated that the Dutch slave trade meant a curious dilemma for the Spaniards, as the slaves were urgently necessary in their colonies, however the satisfactory quantities could be provided uniquely by the Dutch West India Company. This thesis' aim is to prove this hypothesis by providing analysis of archival material which would demonstrate also other types of Spanish-Dutch cooperation during the first half of existence of the West India Company, marked by the Peace of Westphalia (thus during the period of 1621-1648).

**3) The Spanish-Dutch hetero-images in the New World will stay equal even after the Peace of Westphalia.** This hypothesis is focused on the second period of the existence of the West-India Company, thus 1648-1674. Contrary to the statement by Ana Crespo Solana, who considers the relationship between the formerly deadly enemies notably changed after 1648 foremost in the field of commercial cooperation, this thesis supposes that the imagological analysis of mutual hetero-images of Spain and the United Provinces will prove no major changes in the visions of the other. Rodríguez Pérez's, on the other hand, summarized that after the Peace, the mutual negative image went gradually blurring, and remaining just on the level of the Spanish vision of the Dutchmen as heretics and rebels, which is a stereotype created throughout the whole war conflict. Nevertheless, the present thesis' aim was to proof also another types of stereotypes which could be exemplary in specific for the period after the Peace, and connected explicitly with the New World.

## 2 Methodology

Upon archival research led foremost in the *Archivo General de la Nación* in Mexico City and *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, together with Dutch pamphlets from the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* in The Hague and Spanish *Relaciones de Sucesos* available in the *Biblioteca Universitaria de Sevilla*, was created a corpus of materials which gave base for the imagological outcomes of this thesis. The conclusions were also partially supported by the already done imagological research by Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez and Marijke Meijer Drees about the Spanish-Dutch relations in Europe, and Benjamin Schmidt's work on Dutch presence in the New World.

To demonstrate the mutual representations, was used the the methodological approach of imagology, created in the 1950s. The imagology is, in its principles, focused in the characteristics of the other (thus hetero-images) and myself (thus own identity, described as auto-images or self-images). The context is always united with the reflection of the observer (or spectant) into the observed (or spected) and vice versa, marking out the dynamics between those groups. Those stereotyped characterizations are being reflected in their rhetorical environment, representing the discursive characteristics. Concurrently, the image is a mental silhouette of the other, which the imagology doesn't study from a sociological point of view, but it rather aims to understand the discourse reflecting this mental silhouette than the society in general. Moreover, since the creation of the methodological framework of imagology, the original focus of searching for national characters slightly changed its course: the current (thus foremost since the beginnings of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) imagology is nevertheless not anymore focused to so general and elusive issue as the general national character, but it rather focuses on the more or less explicit image thereon.

The imagological approach was for the purposes of this thesis furthermore applied to Milan Kundera's novel *Immortality*, where he created a three-steps narrative towards imagology. Kundera claimed the "ideology" to be the base of actions, and "reality" their historical application into practice. Finally, the "imagology", as the third step, offered the reflection of "what has been done" in reality and which representation remained about it, and thus converted into "immortal". In the case of Spanish-Dutch relations, the European background (on level of ideology, reality and imagology) of the Eighty Years' War's course in Europe, offered also the insight into the ideology as a first step of the Dutch entrance to the Spanish *mare clausum* of the New World. Here, thus, begins another round of Kundera's three-steps narrative: the events after the foundation of West India Company in 1621 comprise the step

of “reality”, meanwhile the imagological point of view is analyzed upon the representations created on base of the historical events.

To conclude, the present thesis took the imagology as basic methodological framework, but moved it from its traditional fields of application and the established barrier of imagological analysis used for purposes of Europe of postcolonial period, and foremost in the field of comparative literature. The present study, on the contrary, is venturing the method into the colonial field of historical reasons for the imagological creations of both analyzed parties.

### **3 Review of Primary and Secondary Sources**

The review consists of four subchapters: literature review, online sources and databases, archival sources, and pamphleteering as resource for historical analysis. The literature review first analyzed the secondary sources for the Spanish-Dutch relations in Europe during the Eighty Years' War, as well as the focus on the specifically Dutch topics during the period. Another part of the literature review emphasized the Dutch overseas expansion to the Spanish colonial waters. The review afterwards proceeded to analyze the online sources and databases, while the third part offered an overview of archival material used for the analyzed topics. Foremost the selection of primary sources was tightly united with imagology – the analysis requires application of major carriers of image. Consequently, a special attention was paid to the pamphlets and Relaciones de Sucesos, which reflect the best the self- and hetero-images of mutual Spanish-Dutch relations, and therefore, they deserved a special subchapter at the very end of the review.

## **4 Historical Background of the Spanish-Dutch Relations in Europe**

The Eighty Years' War was the main historical reason for the creation of the modern Netherlands. This chapter described the imagological turns since the Iconoclastic Fury in 1566, passing through the development of Dutch Revolt, through the Union of Utrecht in 1579 (as a constitutional base for the emergence of the United Provinces), until the Twelve Years' Truce.

There were various turns in the Dutch-Spanish hetero-image and the other way around. The very base of the (not only) imagological conflict is being dated exactly to 1566, when the hetero-image of Spaniards towards the Dutchmen changed from humanist, peaceful and devout ideal subjects into the denomination of beggars. This hetero-image very soon after the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt developed into Protestant heretics and rebels, thus a pair of hetero-representations which were preserved even in the period after the signature of Peace of Westphalia. Meanwhile, were applied also other more specific hetero-images about the Dutchmen, as plague of Christendom, enemy of human race or later on the denomination of Dutchmen as believers of the damned sect of Luther.

The religious discrepancy was a crucial point of the outbreak of the Eighty Years' War. However, when focusing more in detail on the self-depicting discourse of both participating parties, there can be traced a notable similarity. While the Spanish pride was the only True Religion – Catholicism, the Dutchmen were boasting of the same, but in Protestant variation. The rest of self-representations was interestingly very consistent, without any notable changes during the different war-or-peace periods. Spain's self-image was based on the vision of empire, with different complementary connotations (invincible empire, empire over which the Sun never sets, New World as Iberian empire). Meanwhile, the Dutch self-representation was already since before the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt described as defender of tolerance and liberty, which was the highest political value. From the same period origins also the self-concept of protector of mercantile initiative and center of capitalist economy, which later on notably influenced the development of Dutch presence in the New World.

The Dutch economic way of thinking marked at the same time the hetero-image towards the Spaniards. Or more likely, in the Dutch case it was proven in different periods the inseparable connection between the religion and economy (or politics, but always with regard to profit). The hetero-discourse against Spaniards emphasized at the beginnings of the Dutch Revolt that Spain denied to Dutchmen the historical privileges and liberties, thus in this case referring to



Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which permitted a free choice of religious variant (thus between the Catholic or Protestant faith), a rule which was broken by Philip II of Spain. At the moment when the 1570s were still marked by the Dutch hetero-imagological discrepancy between those who were harmed by the limitation of their religious rights on one side, and granting a lifelong loyalty to the King of Spain (as claims the popular beggars' song *Wilhelmus*), after the cruel rule of Duke of Alba, the hetero-image towards Spaniards changed more than notably. Spain was suddenly represented by the blood-thirsty Inquisition desiring the total ruin of the Low Countries (once again the direct connection of religion and economy), and the Spaniards were depicted as cruel, mad and false wolves and God's enemies.

The forthcoming Twelve Years' Truce, which was concluded more advantageously for the Dutchmen, caused a notable silence in the Spanish *Relaciones de Sucesos*, as there was effectively no success to refer about. Meanwhile, the Dutch pamphleteering experienced an absolutely opposite situation: the Truce was quickly converted into an imagological capitulation of Spain, which was celebrated as the end of Roman-Catholic tyranny. And effectively, the hetero-concept of tyranny, tightly connected to the Spanish Black Legend, was one of the crucial points of the imagological development from the year 1609 forward, overpassing even the Peace of Westphalia.

The Twelve Years' Truce's pamphleteering experienced also an important turn regarding the entrance of Dutch vessels to the Spanish America. First of all, were presented the concepts of Spanish and Portuguese *mare clausum*, which should be broken by the right for free seas to anyone, thus *mare liberum* as theory performed by Hugo de Groot. And secondly, but not less importantly, the Netherlands were suddenly flooded by Bartolomé de las Casas's *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, translated into Dutch in propagandistic form against Spaniards as *Mirror of the Spanish Tyranny in West Indies*. Moreover, when the Truce was to expire, the original Las Casas' work received a strong Dutch connotation, when publishing the *Mirror of Spanish Tyranny Happened in the Netherlands*. The Truce's pamphleteering focused on the Spanish atrocities in the New World, and made a direct allusion of the proper Dutch yoke under the Habsburg rule, to the yoke of indigenous people of the Americas, proposing a cooperation with those poor Indians after the expiration of the Truce.

## **5 Spanish-Dutch relations in the New World**

The Dutchmen created their ideological background for their entrance to America on their proper experience with the Spaniards from the period of existence of the Habsburg Seventeen Provinces, and followed it also at the historical events happened in the New World.

Already few months after the Truce's end in 1621, was founded the West India Company. This Counter-Remonstrant pride gradually converted into the *deus ex machina* of the Caribbean trade. However, apart of merchant activities, its principal aim was to fight against the Dutch hereditary enemy, Spain, ideologically throughout commerce and religion. The Dutchmen thus began (at least on the level of self-image) to apply the same rule of God and Gold, as had done the Spaniards a century earlier. Moreover, the pamphleteering about the New World's venture was emphasizing the spreading of traditional Dutch liberty in West Indies. However, apart of repeatedly claiming of all the wealth which would the WIC retrieve from the Spanish empire, was also being emphasized the topic of indigenous population, noticed already before the expiration of the Truce. The West India Company was supposedly coming to the New World to save the Indians from the Spanish yoke and terror, placing the Dutch self-image on the level of redeemers, who are being greeted by the indigenous people saying "you [Dutchmen] have come at last".

However, this positive self-representation of the Dutchmen has also its counterpart: first, at the hetero-image against Spaniards, and second, in the Dutch historically confirmed behavior and reality of actions in the New World. The foundation of the West India Company had its principal aim in harming the Spanish enemy. The primary plan was to attack the Spanish empire from its very roots and surpass it by its proper means, thus by the American treasure. And this way, it is necessary to admit that this aim was fulfilled, at least during the first three decades of the existence of the West India Company. This harm to Spanish empire was marked not only by the unprecedented and never repeated seize of the Spanish Silver Fleet by Piet Heyn, but also by numerous attacks on the Spanish settlements in Greater Caribbean. However, effectively the Heyn's seize of Silver Fleet in 1628 modified both self- as hetero-paradigm of Spanish-Dutch imagological relations. While in the Dutch self-representation, Heyn's victory was compared with the one of David over Goliath, and describing the admiral as a national hero, the hetero-image towards Spaniards offered a wide range of possibilities of mockery about the scream of Spaniards which could be heard even overseas, the loss of Spanish King's precious mistress, and in general the experience of disgrace. On the other hand, from the Spanish point of view, the Dutchmen were marked as smugglers and greedy

pirates thirsting for gold and silver, together with the so rooted hetero-image of enemies. The Spaniards were calling them intruders to the Spanish *mare clausum* and infection of its colonies, and at the same time were gradually working on the Dutch Black Legend which would depict their scandalous behavior, cruelties and tyranny on the local population, thus on exactly the same hetero-images which had been formerly tightly united with the Spanish Black Legend.

The history of Dutch presence in the New World was marked by the activities of smuggling and privateering, however, in the 1640s, when it received the activity of slavery, the triad smuggling-privateering-slavery was complete. The author of this thesis perceives this triad as a kind of historical self-image, as an inner experience, which didn't effectively penetrate into the outerly presented self-image. However, at this exact moment begins the "so rich irony" of Dutchmen converting from saviors to being sinners. Interestingly enough, the concept of slavery had been in the Spanish-Dutch relations originally expressed in the Dutch pamphleteering during the Truce's period, with the connotation of Dutchmen feeling as Spanish slaves. And effectively in the 1640s, the hetero-image towards Spaniards turned into an inner self-image of Dutchmen, as since now, they were supplying slaves to their imagological enemies in the New World.

The Spanish-Dutch relations in the Caribbean were, already since the beginnings of Dutch presence (either illicit or later official under the patroonship of WIC), marked by a flourishing mutual trade. This was caused by the geographical location of the Dutch Caribbean possessions, which made virtually impossible to impose an effective Spanish ban on the cross-colonial trade. Furthermore, the enterprising Dutchmen took full advantage of the defects of Spanish mercantile system, marked by the colonial disobedience expressed in the sentence *obedezco, mas no cumplo* (I obey, but I don't fulfil). On the other hand, the Dutch WIC suffered from the same abuse. However, in the Dutch case, more common than a "simple" disobedience, were the habits of corruption, which formed a day-by-day reality of the WIC's functionaries.

Either way, the Dutch smuggling was a flourishing trade, where the Spaniards played a crucial role in form of customers. On the official level, the Spaniards tried to fight against the contraband throughout the coastguard vessels, which nevertheless didn't reach the necessary number to be effective, at least on the Venezuelan coast. On the non-official level, meanwhile, the Spaniards showed actually some kind of "tolerance" towards the smuggling activities of the Dutchmen, which was often caused by indecision about how to limit the illicit trade. There was in fact a clear contradiction between the laws and the reality of practice, which was

steadily growing. Although the Dutch and the Spanish had been at war for eight decades, the Dutch merchants were leading with the Spaniards a vibrant trade, which was in some cases permitted, and even sometimes also encouraged. The major commodity, which showed this discrepancy between the official and unofficial attitudes on the Spanish side, were effectively the African slaves.

The importation of African slaves into Spanish America before 1640 was dominated by the *asiento*, monopolistic contracts for supply slaves to the Spanish America. Spaniards themselves actually did not actively take part in slave trafficking, as the Treaty of Tordesillas assigned the African coast to the Portuguese, who were until 1641 the most important suppliers of slaves to the Spanish colonies. Dutch participation in the slave trade, which was constantly gaining more importance over the English slavers (who were supplying the Caribbean since the 16<sup>th</sup> century), presented to the Spaniards a curious dilemma: in the Spanish America, slaves were urgently necessary, but the sufficient quantities could be reached only in cooperation with the Dutch WIC. Thus soon, the Dutch became the major suppliers of slaves to Venezuelan *Tierra Firme* from the base of Curaçao, which soon converted into a flourishing center of the African slave trade. The slaves were being supplied from the Dutch (and originally Portuguese) settlements in West-African Elmina, São Tomé and Loanda. After 1640, the slaves were the most important item of merchant relations, exchanging them for hides, tobacco, cacao, or wood, which used the Dutchmen for further commerce with other empires, but also for money in cash, which was so appreciated by the WIC. It is important to mention that exactly the last mentioned way of payment, was the reason why the Spaniards were between all the slave merchants the most appreciated ones, as they were able to pay in cash.

However, apart of the slave trade as the major income of the WIC, there were outlined also moral issues, which (as well as the ideological reasons of the Dutch entrance into the Spanish *mare clausum*) suffered a turn from the initial ideals to the practice. As well as in other empires which got involved in the slave trade, also in the case of Dutchmen, slavery was in its beginnings an issue which was deeply discussed between the *Heren XIX*. At the same time, the Dutch slavery was marked by general anti-slavery writings, which started effectively as early as the first Dutch ventures in this field: the concept of slavery simply didn't fit to the established self-image of Dutch respect for freedom. This came as opposition to the traditional view that slavery was essential for development of the West Indies, together with additional arguments as e.g. that the Africans were by nature "coarse, lascivious, and not prone to civilization". At the same time the Dutchmen thought that the transfer of slaves to the West

Indies “would allow them to escape the brutality of Africa and perhaps, in due time, gain admittance to the far superior European culture”. In the end, the participation of this new venture offered a great variety of perspectives, where the profit played (once again) an important role. Thus the initially considered moral issues and objections finally resulted as “no match for the tantalizing lure of profit”.

It is interesting that such a great income for the WIC didn't deserve much attention in the Dutch pamphlets. Regarding the reason for this pamphleteering silence were offered two suppositions: it might be that it was caused by the fact that the African slaves were in the 17<sup>th</sup> century considered as a simple commodity, which didn't deserve any special attention. However, this explanation comes in direct opposition to the way how other commodities are described: precious metals or natural wealth of America formed part of the Dutch pamphleteering already more than a decade before the establishing of the WIC. On the other hand, the slaves seem to be a commodity which is not so shown off in comparison with other ones. At this point, thus, might be offered another reason for the cause of pamphleteering silence: the anti-slavery voices from the beginnings of this venture, together with the Dutch self-image of liberal land, created a taboo, wherein the representation of slave trade played just a marginal informative role, often accompanied by the descriptions of wealth and riches which was the slavery bringing to the Company. This capital was, afterwards, described to be destined for the WIC's commercial expansion, but more importantly in imagological concern: for the so emphasized aim of redemption of the indigenous population of America as a kind of ideological counterbalance for the slave trade. However, this thesis' author is absolutely aware of the fact that the archival material collected for the purposes of the present analysis, doesn't offer enough base to confirm or disprove any of the outlined possible reasons.

All in all, the period between 1634 and the Peace of Westphalia meant a significant turn for the mutual imagological relations. The majority of hetero-images prevailed already from the previous period, enriched just by smugglers and pirates as a new hetero-representation of Dutchmen after Piet Heyn's seize of the Silver Fleet. The Dutchmen, on the other hand, kept with the same offensive level, focusing on the Spanish tyranny, and by giving reasons for their colonization in the Americas as savers of the indigenous populations.

At the same time, during the 1630s and 1640s began to appear newly introduced hetero-representations of Dutchmen by the Spaniards. The inhabitants of the United Provinces were presented as violent and cruel, especially with regard to their activities in Americas. Very much emphasized was in this period the Dutch affection to alcohol, which in the previous periods played just a very marginal role. All in all, the Spaniards took their own embarrassing

Black Legend, and were able to convert it into their enemy's image. While the Black Legend uses to be attributed for the Spanish era of conquest of the New World, exactly the 17<sup>th</sup> century gave base for a creation of the Black Legend of the Dutchmen, marked initially by the negative hetero-images and inimical relations of the Spaniards towards the Dutchmen, who were gradually penetrating into the Spanish *mare clausum*. The forthcoming colonial behavior of the Dutch WIC, marked by opposite outcomes than it had been outlined in rosy color in the pamphlets about the New World's venture, gave base for what Benjamin Schmidt calls as a turn from "innocence" into the proper Dutch "tyranny" overseas.

In 1648 was signed the Peace of Westphalia, highly important for the United Provinces – the commerce with Spain was resumed, and they were, even more importantly, recognized as an independent republic. For the Dutch colonies in Caribbean, the Peace meant a significant watershed, as Spain recognized the Dutch rule over five small Caribbean islands, and the vast area under the jurisdiction of the Spanish Crown was opened up by enterprising Dutch merchants. While from the perspective of the year 1648 could be seen the Spanish-Dutch merchant relations with a bright future, the Dutch colonies in Greater Caribbean experienced their gradual slow decline. Some of the slaving centers in West Africa were retaken by Portuguese, and in 1654 was also reconquered by Portuguese the Dutch colonial possession in Brazil. The loss of New Netherland on the Hudson River in North America, and its exchange with England for the colony of Suriname, were constantly marking the ongoing decline of the first WIC.

## 6 Case Study: Dutch Engineer in Services of the Spanish King

The present Case Study is an illustrational analysis which supports one of the outlined hypotheses of this thesis. Upon the story of Dutch hydraulic engineer Adrian Boot, who was invited to New Spain as specialist to improve the Mexico City's problematic drainage, is shown that despite the negative hetero-images of the Spaniards against the Dutchmen, and ongoing Eighty Years' War, there was still space for mutual cooperation. Boot came to New Spain to professionally analyze the ongoing project of construction of *desagüe* which would solve the Spanish constant problems with flooding, whose echoes are effectively still present even in the contemporary Mexico City and its problematic sewerage system.

Boot came to Mexico City in 1614 as adviser in the acriddest problematic of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, but his beginnings as a respected professional step by step headed towards repudiation of his hosting land and ended up in his accusation to the Inquisition. Upon archival sources available in the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, and *Archivo General de la Nación* in Mexico City, was traced Boot's professional (and partially also personal) life-course, which from being Spanish King's protégé ended up in the New Spain's Inquisition. The decision of choosing a Dutch engineer came as a surprise, as the relations between Spain and the United Provinces of the Netherlands were at that moment very tense.

All in all, Boot played definitely a crucial role, however, to the best knowledge of this thesis' author, there has been never published any article which would fully analyze the professional background of one of the most important Mexican constructions, putting it together with the reasons of accusation of Boot to the Holy Office and the historical background, as consequence of reflection of the international relations between Spain and the United Provinces into the New World.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1614 Boot arrived to New Spain and immediately started his measurements and observations. For the Dutch hydraulic engineer, everything accomplished at the draining system until his arrival, was absolutely ineffective and a waste of money. Boot's proposal after his evaluation and excursion through all the drainage was to fortify the city, pump the water away mechanically and open five drainage channels to conduct the water out of the city. This approach was led with the intention of understanding the specifics of the Mexican *desagüe* with a special attention to the importance and possible benefits of the use of the lakes in the indigenous way - which was a capacity never appreciated by his predecessors.

Although at the end, both for its costs as well as for the criticism from part of Boot's rivals, his plans were not being fulfilled, still in 1630 he was considered as a good servant of His Majesty the King of Spain. However, his life was finally influenced by the problematic Spanish-Dutch relations and the historical events of the ongoing Eighty Years' War. During a long time, Boot remained protected by the royal patronage, but right after Heyn's assault on the Silver Fleet in 1628, the anti-Dutch feelings ran high and the auspices of the Spanish King no longer served to shelter him.

The Spanish King was very well aware of the fact, that Boot had a deep knowledge about coastal fortifications, and in this way possibly dangerous to the Spanish empire. Suddenly, Boot became from an expert adviser to enemy and it was necessary to silence him. And in 1636, Adrian Boot, the King's Engineer, was denounced before the body of Holy Office. The official accusation claimed him of being heretic and devotee of the false and diabolic sect of Calvin. The anonymously reported reasons were specifying cases of Boot's heresy, and suspicion of being an undercover enemy. Although all the points of accusation were denied by Boot, he was kept in the secret jail of the Inquisition at least until 1644.

To conclude, Boot is definitely not the only case of accusation of foreigners to the Holy Office. However, his explicit case proves that despite the ongoing war conflict between Spain and the United Provinces, and more explicitly after the outbreak of mutual hostilities after the expiration of Truce in 1621, Boot was living and working in New Spain for another fifteen years before being accused by the Inquisition. However, apart of proving this fact, the present thesis outlined a significant detail whose further analysis could bring light to Boot's end. There were presented for comparison Boot's signatures from different periods of his presence in New Spain. This visual outline revealed that already before the very beginning of the 1630s, Boot was adding to his signature a symbol of cross, probably to show his converted Catholic devotion. Summarizing all the accessible facts in the archives, it is probable that already since 1630, Boot was feeling a possible danger from the Holy Office, which effectively ended up in 1636's accusation.



## 7 Conclusion

Throughout the present thesis were presented numerous hetero-images of the Spanish-Dutch relations, as well as many self-images of both analyzed parties. In order to visualize the imagological changes during the existence of the West India Company, but also of the previous period which marked the base for later development of the self- and hetero-representations, was created a diagram which summarized the principal imagological focuses upon a time-line. Upon this diagram were outlined the conclusions revealing important turns of hetero- and self-images from the very beginnings of the Dutch Revolt, but paying special attention to the depicted period, delimited by the existence of the West India Company (1621-1674).

However, apart of the imagological diagram and outline of changing imagological representations (which were in the present excerpt outlined throughout the text), the conclusion offered response to the three hypotheses outlined at the introductory chapter of the thesis:

The first hypothesis was that the Spanish-Dutch relations and historical events would be mirroring from Europe to the New World. Effectively, the ongoing Eighty Years' War had its consequences also in the overseas territories. While since the first Dutch unofficial steps into the Spanish *mare clausum* in the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century fomented the hetero-image of enemies and rebels, in reality, the Dutch presence in the New World didn't create any explicit new representations from part of Spaniards towards the Dutchmen. The Spanish empire, moreover, tired and economically exhausted by the long-lasting war, was forced by the circumstances to sign a disadvantageous Twelve Years' Truce. While the Spanish intention was to put end to the Dutch illicit presence in the New World, the historical reality experienced notably different course: the Dutchmen took advantage of twelve years of calm to project their future official entrance to the Spanish American territories. In this case, the Truce had ambiguous consequence: on one hand, it offered a possibility of exploration of the New World's wealth to the Dutchmen, and on the other hand, it postponed the foundation of the West India Company until the expiration of the Truce in 1621. The renewed outbreak of war hostilities of the Eighty Years' War, together with the Philip IV's strategy of "Netherlands first", in order to re-establish the Spanish Catholic power in the rebellious provinces, nevertheless, didn't (despite partial victories of the Spanish side) result in a fruitful venture, as the United Provinces reached their independence by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

In the case of the Eighty Years' War in the Atlantic territory, the Dutchmen reached to build colonies on strategic points of North and South America, with a crucial trading base on the Caribbean island Curaçao. Since the first official colonial attempt in 1634, until 1648, the Dutch trade converted into a worldwide one, fundamentally challenging the Spanish colonial system. On the other side of those official historical events which clearly had their reflection into the American territory, there was, nevertheless, proved an unofficial Spanish-Dutch relation, which consisted in tight connection within smuggling with any type of goods, since the 1640s including the African slaves, from the inimical Dutchmen to the Spanish colonies. This kind of relation will be, nevertheless, more in detail outlined at the conclusion of the following (second) hypothesis. When summarizing the reflection of European events into America after the Peace of Westphalia, here the "mirroring" offers a slightly different course. While in Europe, the newly independent United Provinces, celebrated their Golden Age, the Dutch Caribbean colonies began their decline, marked by a total bankruptcy of the West India Company in 1674.

The second of the three outlined hypotheses claimed that despite the war status between Spain and the United Provinces, in the New World, there would exist a verifiable level of cooperation. This hypothesis was inspired by Cornelis Goslinga's statement about the curious dilemma for Spaniards, who urgently needed slaves in their colonies, and that the satisfactory quantities could be supplied just by the WIC. Although to fully support this statement it would be necessary a specific research on the archival sources (foremost from the Spanish side), it can be roughly stated that since the beginning of the 1640s, the Spaniards were buying slaves, together with other goods offered by the Dutch WIC, throughout an illicit trade. This is a supposition of well-established mutual commercial relations despite the war-period. It is based on the fact that after the signature of the peace in 1648, the commercial relations were even more flourishing, despite the fact that officially, the Dutch direct contact with the Spanish America was forbidden, and limited just through the Andalusian ports. However, the archival material of the WIC reveals that in direct opposition to this regulation, was published a command, encouraging the private merchants to trade with numerous American colonies, including the Spanish ones.

Apart of the existing smuggling and slave trade, which became after the signature of the Peace of Westphalia quasi-official ("quasi" because of the existing regulations by the Spanish side), and absolutely official after the award of *asiento* to Dutchmen in 1662, there has been proved another explicit case of Spanish-Dutch cooperation. The case study focused on the Dutch hydraulic engineer Adrian Boot, who was invited by the Spanish King to solve the drainage

problems in New Spain's capital, nowadays Mexico City. In Boot's invitation undeniably played role the ongoing Twelve Years' Truce, as Boot arrived to New Spain in 1613. However, either way, it was an interestingly fearless step by the Spanish King to convert a Dutchman in an ally, even more after almost half century of anti-Dutch propaganda. Boot's case thus effectively demonstrates that the question of war and hetero-image was just an official statement which didn't prevent a possible cooperation when needed. As proved by the archival material and outlined at the imagological diagram (at the very bottom), Boot's life was not in a great measure influenced by the re-outbreak of hostilities in 1621. Despite criticism of Dutchman's professional rivals, Boot was effectively working for the Spanish King until 1630, either at the evaluation of the *desagüe* or as designer of important New Spain's fortifications. While the Spanish situation in the New World entered into its *periodo fatal* in 1630s and the anti-Dutch propaganda claimed to destruct the enemy, this was the moment when was Boot accused by the Holy Office. Although his destiny remains unclear and his life in the secret jail of the Inquisition can be traced just until 1644, Boot's personal story reveals another piece of puzzle of the unofficial Spanish-Dutch relations during the existence of the first West India Company.

Finally, the third hypothesis supposed that the Spanish-Dutch hetero-images in the New World would stay equal (thus in this case equally negative) even after the Peace of Westphalia. This one was the most courageous hypothesis, as before the research's conclusions were available just opinions for the hetero-image about Dutchmen from the Spanish side, which were confirming the absolutely opposite. Namely Rodríguez Pérez concluded in her excellent analysis of *Dutch Revolt through Spanish Eyes* that after 1648, both the Spanish self-image, as the hetero-image towards Dutchmen, went gradually blurring, as Spain got rid of one of its biggest enemies. Moreover, Crespo Solana considers that the Spanish-Dutch relations notably changed after 1648, foremost in the merchant sphere. Her work nevertheless describes primarily the period of the second WIC, which was marked by the newly established alliance between Spain and the United Provinces against France (until then a natural ally of the Dutchmen). The mentioned "merchant sphere" might be then a reason for such a generalization, as the present thesis proved that the improvement or blurring of images was experienced just on the Spanish side.

The Spanish-Dutch hetero-image preserved the topos from the previous periods, thus heretics and rebels, however, there were no new negative hetero-images created about the Dutchmen. Meanwhile, the Dutch-Spanish hetero-image was strongly marked by the past decennia of anti-Spanish propaganda. While Spain was celebrating the Peace with pompous description

of the respectable Ambassadors of Holland and friends of Spain, the Dutchmen limited themselves to the statement that the enmity dies and the Spanish venom comes to end. However, in the following years, the Spaniards kept on being for Dutchmen tyrants, whose attitude should not be deleted from the Dutch memory, and the WIC's directors were already five years after the peace treaty busy with plans how to improve the West Indian sack and to harm the Spanish empire. Although in 1662 was awarded the slave trade *asiento* to the Dutchmen, and thus they converted into the monopolistic suppliers of Black Ebony to the Spanish America, the crucial imagological change happened as late as more than a decade later: at the signature of common Spanish-Dutch alliance against France. Despite numerous warnings by the opposition of this treaty with the former deadly enemy, the Dutchmen again decided upon the vision of wealth which could bring this alliance. The West India Company was probably hoping for a final breath to its declining economy. However, even the agreement with Spaniards, surprisingly marked by expression of the the long-lasting hopes of the [Dutch] States General for helping Spain against its enemy, couldn't save the WIC from the final bankruptcy.

## 8 Selected Bibliography

Note: the thesis itself has in reality nine chapters in total, while the 9<sup>th</sup> is exactly the bibliography. To the present excerpt was not added the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter: Appendix, which originally comprises the visual material described throughout the whole dissertation.

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### **Dutch Pamphlets**

- Knuttel Catalogue at the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, The Hague, delimited by the years 1609-1674, with special attention to pamphleteering work by Willem Usselinx
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