

# Tennis as a Metaphor in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch Songs by Theo Bollerman April 2018

- Part 1: Tennis as a metaphor in two Dutch “Geuzen” songs
- Part 2: Latest information on the first tennis court in Dutch Brazil ca 1645

# Tennis as a Metaphor in Two 16<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch “Geuzen” Songs



# Tennis as a Metaphor in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch Songs – historical background

- By marriage and inheritance: Holland became part of the Habsburg empire
- The Catholic Spanish King Philip II, son of Charles V, ruled Holland from 1555 and also England 1554. In 1559 he left it to his half-sister Margaretha van Parma to govern the Netherlands
- Economic troubles and severe punishment of the Protestants caused unrest in the Northern Netherlands
- The Dutch won their “Nexit” in the Eighty Years’ War with the Spanish Kings: 1568 – 1648
- Prince William of Orange (called ‘the Silent’) led the revolt
- His son Maurits had to fight a lot of battles



# Habsburg Empire ca. 1550







1566 Petition of the 200 Dutch aristocrats in Brussels asking Margaretha of Parma for freedom of religion

Her advisor said with contempt:

Ils ne sont que des geux (they are just beggars)

“Geus” became a honorary title



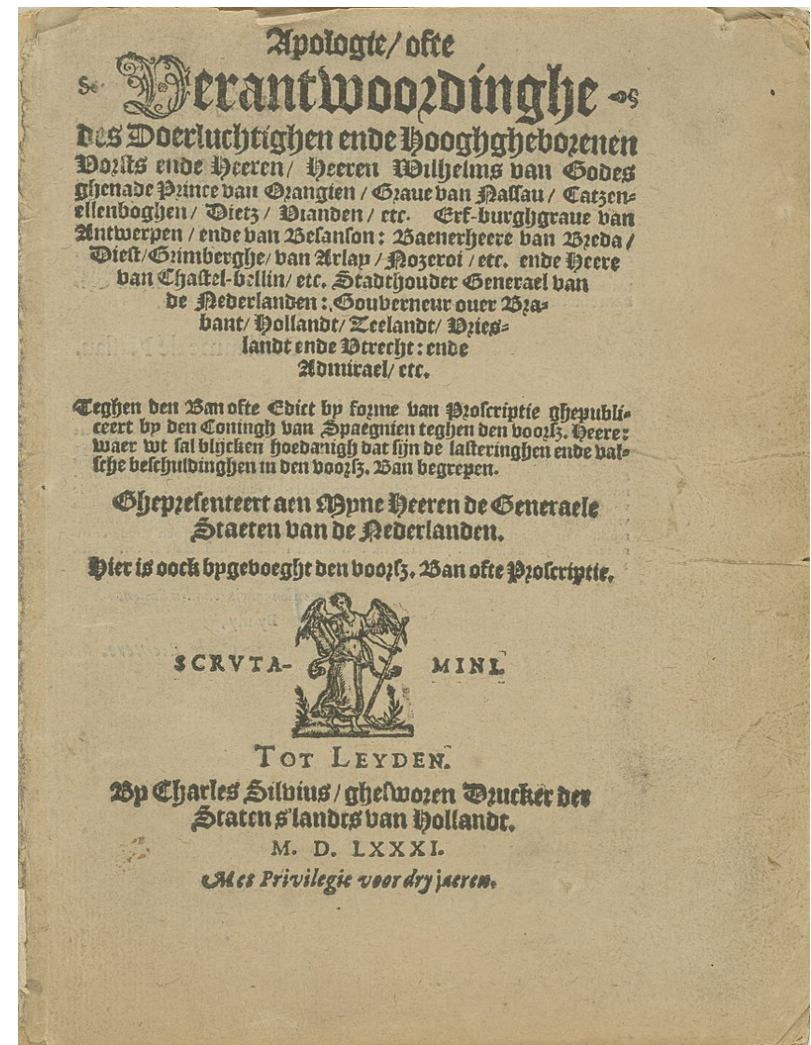
1568 Battle of Heiligerlee is considered  
the start of the 80 year war:  
first victory against the Spaniards





# The severe Duke of Alva became “Gouvernor of the Netherlands” 1567- 1573

- 15<sup>th</sup> March 1580: Prince William of Orange exiled by King Philip II – he put a price on his head
- 13<sup>th</sup> December 1580: William publishes the pamphlet ‘Apology’, a bestseller in Europe





# 1581: Leaving the Spanish King, the Parliament of Holland decides





# Act of Leaving

The King is there to protect the people; the people are not there to protect the King.

**If the King acts as a tyrant, the people have the right to leave him.**

Large parts of this text were used also in the Declaration of Independence 1776

PLACCAERT VANDE  
STATEN GENERAEL VANDE  
ghevnieerde Nederlanden, Bijden vvelcken, mits  
den redenen in't langhe in't selfde begrepen, men  
verclaert den Coninck van Spaegnien vervallen  
vande Ouerheit en heerschappije van dese voorf.  
Nederlanden : ende verbiet sijnen naem ende zegel  
inde selue Landen meer te gebruycken, &c.

**D**e Staten generael vande ghevnieerde Nederlanden / Allen den ghenen die dese teghentwoordige sullen sien ofte hoozen lesen / saluyt. Also een pegetlick kennelick is / dat een Prince vande Lande van Godt ghestelt is hooft ouer sijne onderlaten / om de selue te bewaren en beschermen van alle onghelijck / ouerlast en ghewelt / ghelijck een Herder tot bewaernisse van sijne Schapen : En dat d'onderlaten niet en zijn van Godt gheschapen tot behoef vanden Prince / om hem in alles wat hy beveelt / weder het goddelic oft ongoddelick / recht oft onrecht is / onderdanich te wesen / en als slauen te dienen : maer den Prince om d'onderlaten wille / sonder de welcke hy egheen Prince en is / om de selue met recht en redene te regeeren / ende vooz te staen / en lief te hebben als een vader sijne kinderen / en een herder sijne schapen / die sijn lijf en leuen sett om de selue te bewaren . En so wanneer hy sulckis niet en doet / maer in stede van sijne onderlaten te beschermen / de selue soect te verdrukken / t'ouerlasten / heure oude vrijheit / priuilegien / en oude hercomen te benemen / en heur te gebieden ende gebruycken als slauen /  
A ij moec

# Politics, politics, wrong decision

1581: The Dutch needed support of larger countries;  
William of Orange selects François-Hercule of Valois,  
Duke of Anjou, as Sovereign of Holland.

He was the youngest son of Henri II (here right)  
(engaged to Elisabeth I)





# The Court of Anjou

in the Abbey of St Michael in Antwerp: in 1582 a tennis court was built for the Duke





1582–3:

Anjou strengthens his position but  
wants real power



So he organized a surprise attack on Antwerp, January 1583, to get his army also in Antwerp.  
But the French were defeated!





# The losing French were mocked in a song called “The Tennis Game of the Frenchies”

The song was directed at Anjou, as William of Orange still wanted him as a governor – but without his soldiers.



# “The Tennis Game of the Frenchies”

Noble Franchoos,, Subtijn  
Courtoos  
Wat hoor' ick van u spreken?  
Dacht ghy een Roos',,, over een  
poos,  
Op uwen Hoedt te steken,  
Die de reyn Maecht,,  
T'hantwerpen draecht?

Men candt niet wel ghelooven;  
Brabon die waecht,, 'tLijff  
onvertzaecht,  
Hy laetse niet berooven.

Noble Frenchmen, subtle  
courtier,  
What have I heard about you?  
Did you really want to put the  
rose  
On your hat,  
that belongs to  
The Virgin of Antwerp? (*to  
deflower the virgin*)  
One can not believe  
The Brabander, without fear,  
Will not get himself robbed.

Ghy swoert den Eedt,, int  
Hertochs cleedt,  
Dees reyn Maecht voor te  
stane;  
Met t'Sweyrdt bereedt,, te  
wreken d'leedt,  
Hoe ruymt ghy nu de bane?  
Coemt weer met vreucht,, end'  
u doch veucht  
By ons Neerlandts Noblesse;  
In dien ghy meucht,, bethoont  
ons deucht,  
Roept niet: Vive la Messe .

You, in Duke's clothing, swore the  
oath  
To protect this Virgin;  
  
The sword away, to revenge the  
misery  
How do you clear the road now?  
Come again with joy and join  
  
The Dutch nobility again  
If you want, show respect  
  
Do not shout "Vive la Messe"



Sonder Helmet,, u Volck seer  
net,  
Reedt twee end'twee te  
peyrde;  
Elck **had't Racket,, om kaetsen  
met,**  
Maer gheensins met den  
Sweyrde  
En sochten sy,, den vyandt, tf  
  
Maer wel Antwerpen schoone  
;  
Te rooven vry,, dit claghen wy  
  
Ws Vaders Fransche Croone.

Without helmet, your clean  
people  
Rode on horseback two and  
two  
***All had rackets to play tennis  
with***  
But with the sword  
  
they attacked not at all the  
enemy  
But the lovely Antwerp;  
  
To rob her, this is our  
complaint  
With your father's French  
crown.

Ghelt, Pant, noch **loff**, wt  
s'Hertochs Hoff,  
En sachmen haer by-setten ;  
Maer Ballen groff,, fijn Cruydt  
als stoff,  
Daer moesten wy op letten;

De kaetsen sterck,, werden int  
perck,  
Gheteeckent met Lichamen;  
Elck een had'werck,,  
t'was Leeck oft Clerck,  
Al die te Spele quamen.

*No money, pawn, nor **praise**  
(love!) from the Duke's court  
**One saw put in as a bet;**  
But **rude balls** with gunpowder*

We had to pay attention to  
that;

***In the court , the good chases  
were***

***Marked with bodies;***

Everybody had done their job,  
layman or clergyman  
All who joined the game.

# Dutch/flemish words in tennis etymology

- **Loff**, meaning praise: you have got nothing but praise – also: the bet at stake is just praise, we won't play for money
- **Rekets**: re-kets/kaats: thing to hit back with
- **Kets-darm/kaats-darm**
- **Inzet**: wager, the amount of money you put into the bet
- Love
- Racket
- Cats (kaats) gut
- Set

Caetse lanck, hadden sy  
franck,  
In t'Kipdorp aen de mueren ;  
  
Den Hinckaert manck met  
cleynen danck,  
Deed' daer de Ballekens  
rueren;  
Sy waren Loot,, t'welck ons  
verdroot,  
Wy stonden int Spel binnen;  
Dus elck den poot,, om spelen  
boot,  
De Kaets' sachmen ons  
winnen.

All along the ***tennis court*** they  
had played  
At the walls of the  
“Kipdorp”gate;  
The ungrateful limping man  
  
Fired away on that spot his  
balls  
They were made of lead,  
which grieved us  
We were receiving  
But we defended ourselves  
very well  
  
***So that we won all the chases.***

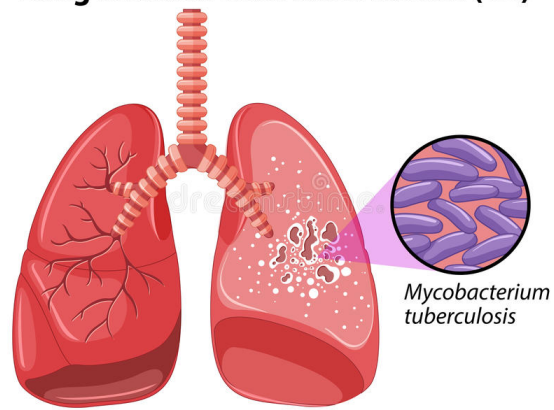


## Other stanzas

7. We awaited the useless services  
and returned fast with fierce shots  
so that the chase was ours
8. They were very sorry, because without  
honour they had to acknowledge their loss.  
They had to pay very quickly and generously  
for the beautiful balls so that our damage  
was recompensed.



Lung infected with tuberculosis (TB)



10th June 1584:  
Anjou dies of  
tuberculosis

10<sup>th</sup> July 1584:  
William of Orange  
is murdered by the  
Catholic hireling  
Balthasar Gerards,  
posthumously made  
an aristocrat by  
Phillip II





Prince Maurits (1567–1625),  
son of William,  
in 1584 too young to be a governor...



Another wrong decision by the  
Dutch Parliament:  
They asked Elisabeth I for help;  
she sent Robert Dudley,  
Earl of Leicester.  
He became 'Guardian of the  
State' from 1585 to 1587.  
Soon he was hated to a very  
high degree.



'Thanks' to him, Holland became a Republic in 1588



In 1587 “*Stadhouder*” Maurits was given power and developed rapidly



Holland became  
the second Republic in the world,  
the city-state of Venice being the first.

- “The Republic of the 7 united Netherlands”
- The southern part of the Netherlands, Flanders and Wallonia (a total of 10 provinces), were conquered by the Duke of Alva and stayed catholic, whereas the northern provinces became mainly protestant.



1591: Maurits of Orange started to beat the Spanish: Victories at Zutphen and Deventer became immortalised in song

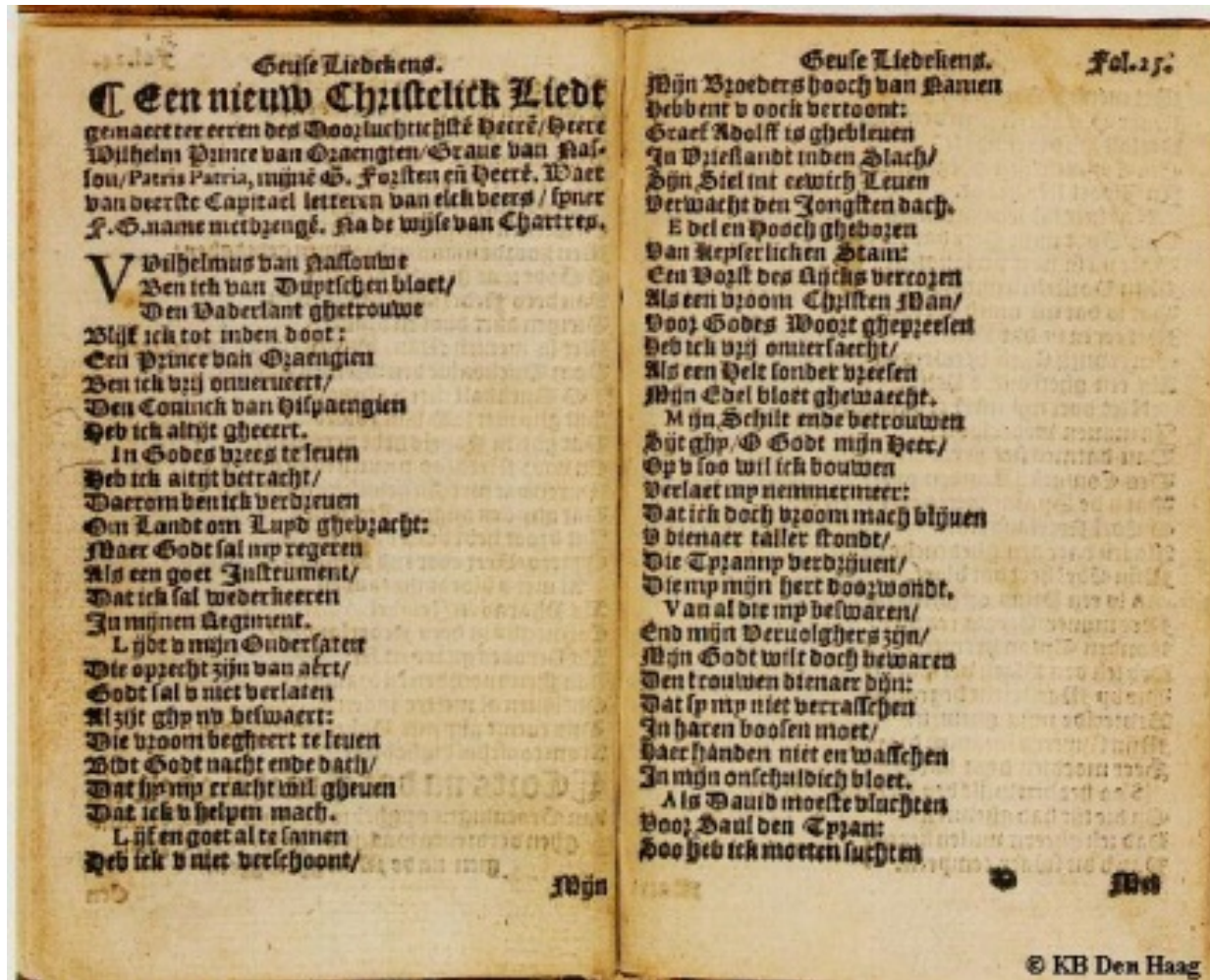


# Every interesting event in that period was put into words and often became popular songs

- They used especially melodies that were popular with the opponents. In that way the humiliation of the mocking text could be enlarged.
- The songs were printed on a leaf and sold.
- They were called “geuzenliederen” (beggar songs).
- The most popular ones were reprinted in songbooks.



# In the “Beggar” songbook: “The Tennis Game of his Excellency”



Geuzenliedboek including Wilhelmus



# The second song with tennis as a metaphor

- But as these lyrics were mostly plagiarized we don't go into it
- The same melody as the former one
- Written by Cornelis van der Nieuwvaart
- Considered a lesser poem

# Treaty of Münster (1648): Spain recognised finally Holland as an independent state





## Part II

# The First Tennis Court in South America





## Part 2 – Tennis in South America

- Holland threw the Portuguese out of the northern part of Brazil in the end of the 16th century
- Maurits von Siegen Nassau (yes, related to the Orange family) became governor of Dutch Brazil
- His home, built in 1633, is the nowadays Museum Mauritshuis, which is home to paintings like Vermeer's 'the girl with the pearl earring', 'the anatomical lesson' Rembrandt etc.

1633: Mauritshuis museum built by Maurits von Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) – behind: the Inner Courtyard, now center of government



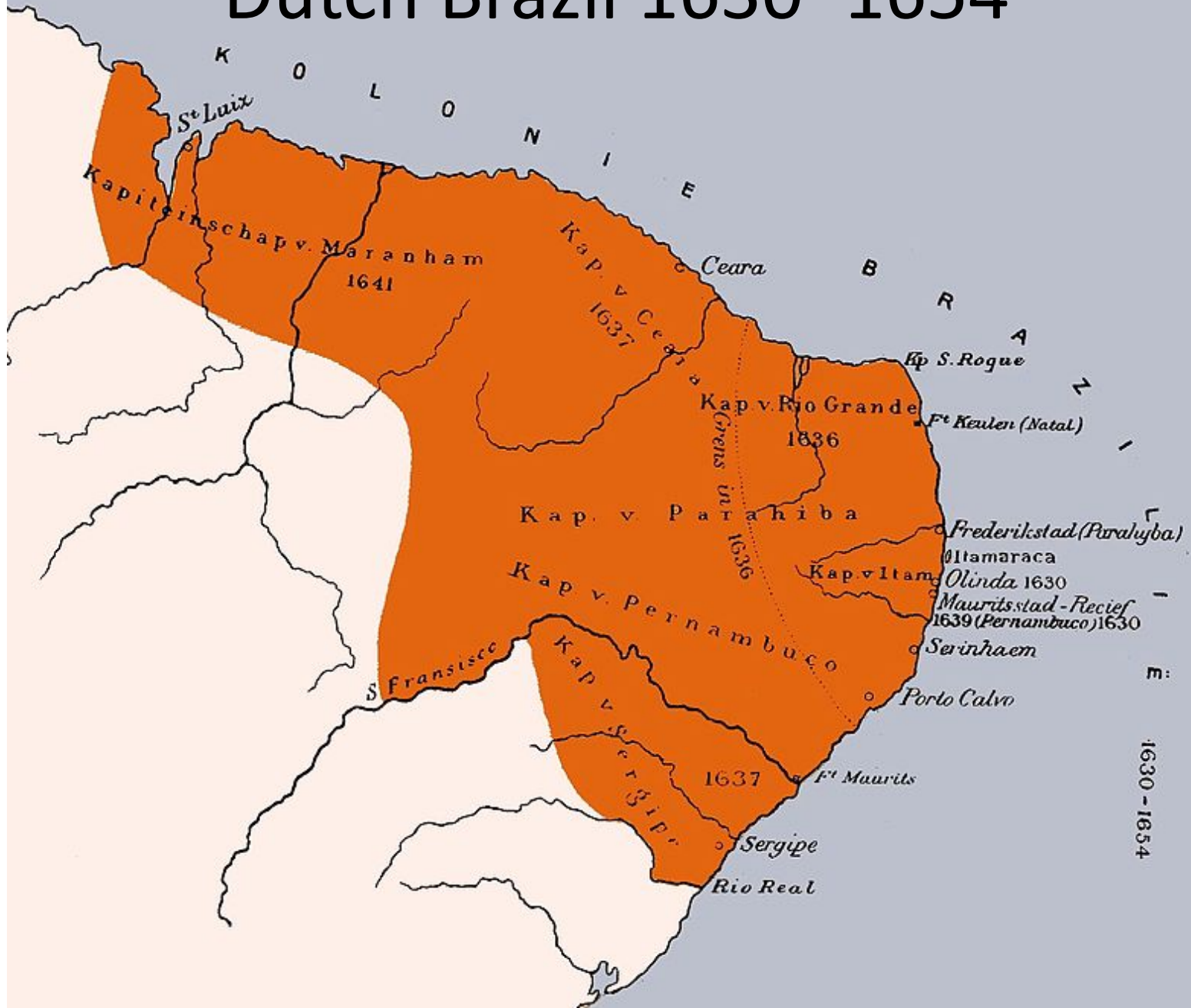


# Governor of Dutch Brazil 1636-1644





# Dutch Brazil 1630–1654



# Maurits built Mauritius –

He behaved like a King and was criticized for it.  
But he was friendly towards the natives and was  
interested in their culture and nature



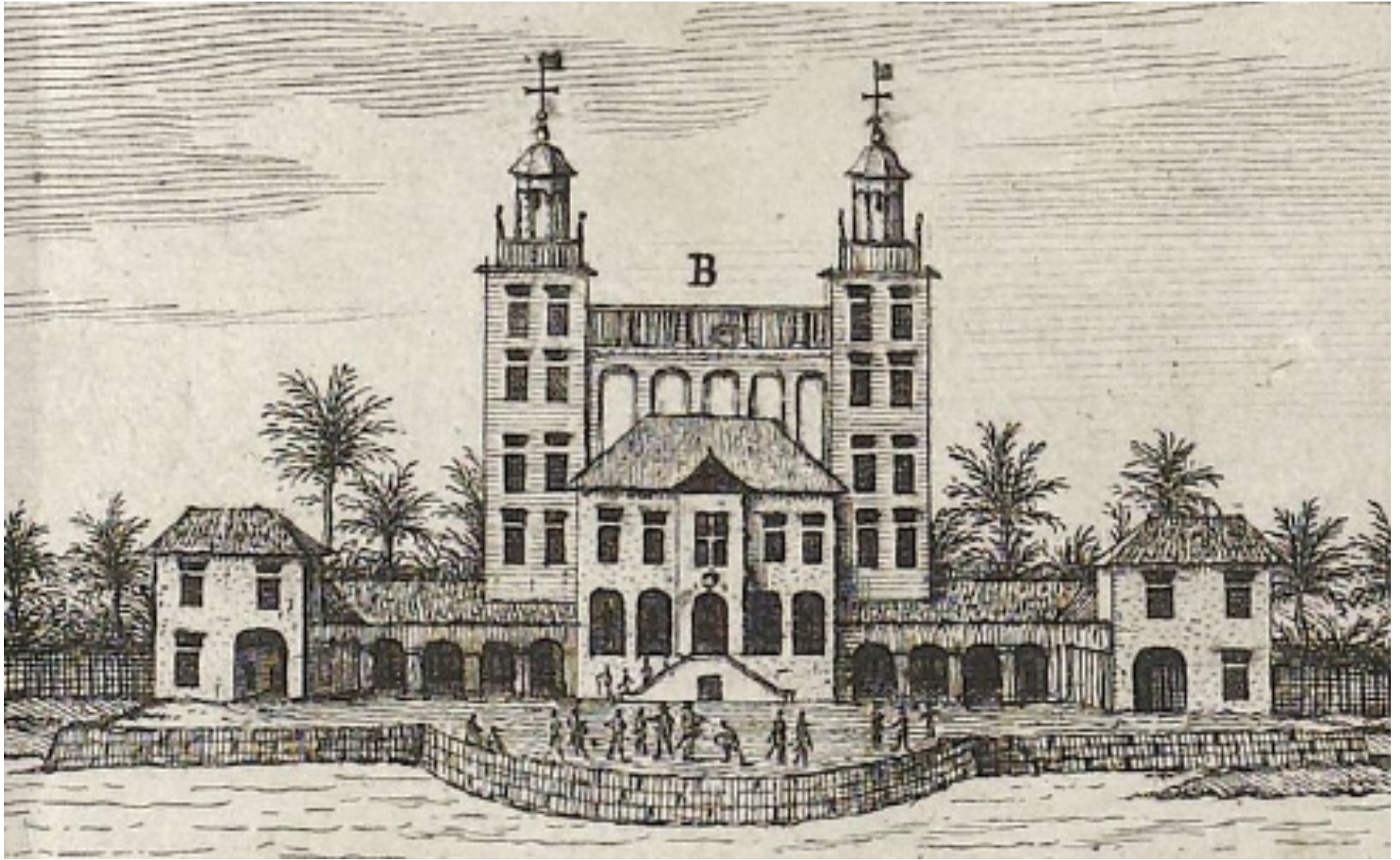


# He protected the arts





He built the Kinglike and colossal  
Vrijburg (Freeburgh) Palace in 1640





# Arnoldus Montanus

## 'Beschrijving van America' (1671)

waerover te komen, bevulven al-  
lerley klein vaertuig. De gemeine  
schatkist is diervoegen ten achteren:  
dat naeuwelijx iemand betaeling ont-  
fangt. De meesters van de zuiker-  
moolens willen geen zuiker leveren,  
dan voor gereed geld: alzoo te ge-  
moed zien een verhuifing der Neder-  
landers. Dit verhael van den Brasil-  
sche toestand is schriftelijk ter hand  
gesteld aen d'Algemeine Staeten en  
Bewindhebbers by *Van der Dussen*.  
Maer *Maurits* maekte de leedige  
grond voor *Ernestus-schans* op *Anto-  
nio Vaex* tot een vermaekelijke hof,  
lanx de rievier *Biberibi*. De buitenste  
cingel vertoonde een dubbelde dreest  
cocosboomen: en besloot aen d'eene  
kant een vyver vol allerley visch: te-  
gen welke een tweede vyver lag, die  
rondom een konijn-berg vloeyde.  
Ter zijde af stond een *kaetsbaen*, en  
nevens de zelve een bloemhof, kon-  
stig in ronde beddekens verdeelt. De  
wonderlijke boomen *bakbovens* be-  
floegen geschikter orde een langwer-  
pig vierkant perk: welk eindigde te-  
deinde de grond vol moerat  
burgwallen: en sloeg een be-  
derievier *Biberibi*, tusschen  
en *Maurits-stad*, en een and-  
de stroom *Capirovaribi* tusschen  
*Maurits-stad* en 't vaste land. Te  
als *Albuquerque*, uit naem de  
sche koning, *Brasil* bestierde  
en breed gezintwift onder  
geefsen: of niet dienstig was  
*Olinda* te verlaeten: d'ingez-  
na 't *Reciffo* te doen verhuif  
't *Reciffo* door een brugge vast-  
ten aen 't eiland *Antonio Vaex*  
dese plaetsen onwinnelijk,  
de schepen vry bequaemer lag  
*Olinda*. Doch dewijl d'*Holland*  
schielijk over den hals quame  
't een en 't ander steeken. *Ma-  
rits* besteede de brugge over  
vier *Biberibi*, tusschen 't *Re-  
Antonio Vaex*, voor twee hon-  
veertig duizend guldens. De  
meester had nu vijftien steene  
uit de grond opgehaelt: wan-  
de diepte der stroom, van  
*Vaex* aengenadert, begonde t

Beschrij-  
ving van  
den hof en  
't paleis  
*Fryburg*.

# Montanus: description of America

- It mentions that a kaetsbaan (tennis court) was built next to the rabbit hill and beautiful gardens.
- Sadly, we have no picture
- A century later this tennis court is mentioned again!



# Joseph de la Porte, ‘ ‘The New Traveller: Description of the Old and New World’’ (1771)

## The Indians of Guyana:

- “The women do several types of housework and play in the afternoon on the tennis court”
- “They grasp the “palet” with two hands and hit the ball with so much power and speed, that no Indian dares to stop them.”

But the Portuguese came back and  
threw the Dutch out – The End





# Mauritsstad is now Recife

