Francois Valentijn's Oud En Nieuw Oost Indien and the Dutch Frontispiece in the 17th and 18th Centuries

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FRANCOIS VALENTIJN’S OUD EN NIEUW OOST INDIEN AND THE DUTCH FRONTISPICE IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

By

Maria S. LaBarge

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

May 2008
In this thesis I analyze the Dutch frontispiece to Francois Valentijn’s 1726 book *Oude en Nieuw Oost Indien* and demonstrate that it is a significant artistic statement, original in its rich and imaginative iconography and emblematic program. I describe and explain the image and its iconographic program and emblematic structure. I compare the frontispiece to many other Dutch frontispieces and artworks that likewise feature the four continent allegories and other iconographic elements. I demonstrate the ways in which the frontispiece superbly and comprehensively summarizes and visualizes the text, which is the primary purpose of frontispieces. I also show how the image emulates early eighteenth-century Dutch culture by reflecting the period’s nostalgia for Golden Age styles and subjects. In conclusion I clarify the way in which the image functions emblematically and explain the twofold meaning of the emblem and proving that the image is exceptional and unique within the context of the historiography of Dutch frontispieces.
DEDICATION

For Cory, Sarah, Mary and Peter
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the result of my graduate study in the Art History Program at the University of Miami. It would have been impossible to accomplish this task without the guidance and help from my teachers and friends there. I appreciate my academic advisor, Dr. Rebecca Parker Brienen. Her insight and rigor has accompanied me throughout the development of this study. I am also grateful to Dr. Perri Lee Roberts for her assistance and guidance. Lise Drost has been especially encouraging and I appreciate her contributions to this study. I feel particularly indebted to Martha Moffit Peacock for her keen and perceptive advice and encouragement. Finally and most importantly, my family has stood by me through many hours of research and writing and their constant support and hopes for me have been a blessing in my life, for which I will always be grateful.
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Chapter One
Francois Valentijn’s *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* and The Dutch Frontispiece in the 17th and 18th Centuries

Thesis Introduction

Dutch frontispieces are generally considered to be unoriginal overly reproduced visual paradigms, and as such have been overlooked within the study of Dutch early modern visual culture by art historians. However, the frontispiece to Francois Valentijn’s 1726 book *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* is extraordinary and it stands out from other Dutch frontispieces because of its rich and imaginative iconography and an unusual emblematic program (Fig. 1, 2). This analysis demonstrates that Valentijn’s frontispiece is exceptional in that it superbly and comprehensively summarizes and visualizes the text, which is the prime purpose of frontispieces. Second, it echoes early-eighteenth century Dutch trade and collecting culture and third, it reflects the period’s nostalgia for Dutch Golden Age styles and subjects. It is precisely because the frontispiece stands out in these three ways that it is a superb and innovative example of Dutch frontispiece traditions worthy of discussion.

Frontispiece construction began after the introduction of the printed book and frontispieces were commonly included in seventeenth century books. But they were expected to be more than ornaments to title pages. Rather, frontispieces were intended to

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visually summarize, comment, or characterize the text of the book, much like a condensed visual version of the text, even a small view into the text. Through an explanatory verse written in the image, Valentijn’s frontispiece is a superb example of the purpose of frontispieces as it is a comprehensive visual rendition of text. The image accomplishes this feat by featuring a four continents allegory that was commonly found in Dutch frontispieces and atlases during the seventeenth century. This allegory, based on figures personifying or representing the four continents, originated from European Renaissance iconographic traditions. In Valentijn’s frontispiece, figures personifying the continents of Asia, America, Africa, and Europe surround a central seated figure who personifies the **Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie** (the Dutch East India Company or the VOC). Cherubs and a figure of Fame blowing her trumpet grace the top portion of the frontispiece, heralding the news of VOC economic accomplishments. In the foreground, cherubs play with books and a cabinet. These objects symbolize the abundance of maps and written descriptions of the natural world that are contained in Valentijn’s book.

Published in 1724-1726 by Joannes van Braam in Amsterdam, Valentijn’s *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* is the most comprehensive early eighteenth-century description of the geography and natural and cultural history of the world. In eight volumes, Valentijn describes diverse regions of the globe covering China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and

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Malaysia, the Moluccas islands including Ceylon and Amboina, Bantam and the territory of the VOC headquarters in Batavia. Valentijn also comments on parts of Africa, the Dutch West Indies and Brazil, and parts of North America. His description includes historical information, some of which was drawn from ancient sources such as Pliny the Elder, Ptolemy, and Strabo. He also explains in great detail the appearance, customs and religious practices of the people of each area discussed, and he includes anecdotes regarding Dutchmen employed by the VOC. Each regional description contains many maps and drawings by Dutch engravers describing the geography and natural flora and fauna of each region. In fact, the natural history sections in Valentijn’s work are extensive and the book remains an important resource for the study of the natural history of the East Indies.

It is not known who designed the emblematic program of the frontispiece. However, the frontispiece’s emblematic program may have been designed by Valentijn because according to Margery Corbett, some seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch authors designed their own frontispiece conceits. According to Charles Boxer,

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5 Valentijn plagiarized extensively in his work, reprinting entire texts written by colleagues and ancient writers. Serton, 9-17.

6 Valentijn, Oud.

7 Valentijn was a compiler of information, not a researcher. Most of the natural history discussion in the book is reprinted from manuscripts of natural historians working in the Islands, such as Georg Everhard Rumphius. Serton, 9-17.

designing conceits (poetic allegories) was an important and popular form of intellectual entertainment typically engaged in by university students, authors, and other members of the intelligentsia, and the invention of a good device was the mark of a well-educated man. In the case of frontispiece designs, authors, poets, and artists drew upon symbolic or emblematic programs found in the works of the Italian emblematists Andrea Alciati (1492-1550), Cesar Ripa’s *Iconologia* (1593) and others, the poetry of Ovid, classical mythology, and Renaissance poetry when designing cunning devices. In the event that the author designed the allegorical program or concept of the frontispiece, the artist drafted the visual design which was then sent to the engraver.

However, not all authors designed their frontispieces. The Dutch emblem writer Jacob Cats (1577-1660) commissioned Adriaen van de Venne to design the images and frontispieces for his conduct books. Artists also designed frontispiece allegories. The Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens designed over one hundred frontispiece allegories and the Dutch artists Jacques de Gheyn, Jan van de Velde, Cornelis Huyberts, Jan Waandelar and many others also designed frontispieces. In the case of Valentijn’s frontispiece, it is unknown whether Valentijn himself helped to design the content of the frontispiece or if the emblem was constructed by the artist Mulder, who drafted the design. C. Mulder is listed on the frontispiece as the draftsman of the frontispiece, but no further information

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9 Boxer, 92-117; Corbette, 13-16; Eisenstein, 68-69, 280-302.
as yet is known about the artists or whether he or Valentijn designed the emblem. Because the frontispiece is so rich in iconographic detail, and draws so very clearly from well-established frontispiece and emblem design traditions, we can speculate that the content of the frontispiece was designed by Valentijn and Mulder, and expertly engraved by Abram van Buysen who is also listed on the frontispiece, near the publisher information at the bottom.

Valentijn’s frontispiece, first and foremost, reflects the contents of his book through allegorical narrative, insignia, and explanatory verse. The combination of image, verse, and contents of the book all work together to define the meaning of the frontispiece. This combination of text and image also makes the frontispiece an emblem, and this combination is inherent in frontispieces in general. In Valentijn’s book there is a poem which was written by the publisher that also helps to explain the frontispiece allegory. This practice was common during the era and the poems were written by the author, publisher, or poet and inserted after the title page. But Valentijn’s frontispiece is very peculiar because the explanation of the emblem is also written on the frontispiece itself, in the form of a biblical verse that the angel writes, in the bottom right corner of the image. This short verse adequately summarizes the frontispiece conceit so well that the emblem can be fully understood without the aid of the explanatory poem.

According to Martha Moffitt Peacock it has been established that Dutch frontispieces are considered to be emblematic, they are images with explanatory verses that have meanings related to book contents. Nevertheless, frontispieces have generally been discussed in emblem studies rather than as artworks. See Martha Moffitt Peacock, “Geertruydt Roghman and the Female Perspective in 17th-Century Dutch Genre Imagery”, Woman’s Art Journal, Vol. 14, No. 2. (Autumn, 1993 - Winter, 1994); “Harpies and Henpecked Husbands” in Old Age in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Neglected Topic, ed., Albrecht Classen, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007); “Domesticity and the Public Sphere” in Saint, Sinners and Sisters, eds., Jane L. Carroll and Alison G. Stewart, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2003). Interview by the author, Provo, Jan 25, 2008.

See Appendix 1.

This verse and emblematic meaning is fully discussed in the next chapters.
Because Dutch emblem studies largely revolve around the influence of Jacob Cats the distinction must be made between moral emblems such as those drafted by Dutch moralists like Cats and the classicizing emblematic traditions derived from Italian emblematists Alciati, Ripa, and others. Cats wrote long texts and simple verses prescribing proper conduct in courtship, marriage, child-rearing, and housekeeping and invented emblems based on these moral themes. The Italian emblem tradition combined text and image to represent abstract concepts such as the heavenly bodies, geography, trade and fortune, weather and forces of nature, the disciplines of philosophy and some moral themes such as the virtues and vices. Both Cats and Alciati had a profound influence on Dutch art, particularly in realm of genre painting. Valentijn’s imagery draws upon the Italian emblem tradition and Dutch frontispiece iconographic traditions to provide a visual interpretation of his text that reflects both eighteenth-century views and Golden Age art that often incorporated allegory and iconography influenced by Italian sources.

The second important function of Valentijn’s frontispiece is that it is an important reflection of early eighteenth-century Dutch culture. Its contents reflect the affluent economic climate and social optimism of the 1720s. Dutch trade supremacy declined considerably in the 1650s, yet by the time Valentijn published his Oud en Nieuw Oost

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17 Ibid.
18 Sutton, xxii-xxviii.
Indien, the Dutch Low Lands had experienced a significant economic revival.20 Trade increased drastically, with the Dutch supplying tea, spices, Indian cottons and New World sugar to the Baltic region, Russia and Europe. By featuring the four continents and praising the VOC, the frontispiece reflects the economic boom of the time and Valentijn’s text reinforces this congratulatory tone.

With this increase in eighteenth-century trade and wealth there was a renewed interest in geography and nature.21 Nature was particularly important in the early-eighteenth century, and this period produced an impressive number of herbals, botanical studies, descriptions of exotic lands and exotic nature (like Valentijn’s) and catalogues of natural history collections. David Freedberg calls this period the “Golden Age of Botanical Publications.”22 In his work on natural history, Paul Farber describes the passionate way eighteenth-century society studied and gathered large collections of naturalia, noting that, “Cultured gentlemen and ladies normally owned collections of stuffed birds and of shells, with the size of their “cabinet… reflecting their wealth, taste, and level of refinement.”23 He further distinguishes between the folk biology of seventeenth century from the attempts to create rational, systematic groupings of animals and plants in the eighteenth century, when the study of nature became an independent science apart from philosophy.24 Valentijn’s frontispiece and book reflects these renewed interests in collecting and describing the natural world in geographic and biological terms. In fact,

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20 De Vries, 483-485.
23 Ibid., 1-5. See also Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., Historia Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe, (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2005), 3.
Valentijn’s frontispiece refers to the mapmaking industry and the study and collecting of natural history in a very profound way by using established symbols that were featured in geographic and natural history frontispieces and maps. While reflecting eighteenth-century Dutch pursuits for profit and the height of VOC dominance in world trade, Valentijn’s frontispiece also mirrors contemporary interests in collecting naturalia and geography.

The third way in which the frontispiece is an ideal marker of cultural views is in the way it reflects eighteenth-century aesthetics. Critics of the period insisted that contemporary artists emulate Golden Age models for art subjects and styles. In the early part of the eighteenth century there was a “widespread sense in the Republic that an artistic period had ended and that the present was different from, and more especially inferior to, the recent past.” Critics attributed this decline to the fact after the death of Vermeer in 1675 Delft did not have any outstanding painter to rely on and thus, according to contemporary critics, local artists produced an over abundance of genre scenes. Also at a loss for artists, Middleburg, Hoorn and other cities turned to Amsterdam for art in the later seventeenth century; even productive art centers like

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25 While scientific pursuits were very important in eighteenth-century Dutch culture, and these pursuits were addressed in the bulk of Valentijn’s text and his frontispiece, this subject is beyond the scope of my thesis. Nevertheless, the symbols of science (namely knowledge of the natural world and its geography) are vital aspects of the frontispiece and its emblematic program. This paper can only briefly mention these symbols and their relationship to the double meaning of the emblematic program.


Haarlem and Utrecht lacked a booming painting tradition at the turn of the century. According to Lyckle de Vries the “only viable centers that remained were the commercial capital Amsterdam and the court capital The Hague.”29 The eighteenth-century Dutch art critic and biographer Arnold Houbraken, author of *Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schildereressen* (a collection of artist biographies, written in 1718-21), blamed the artistic decline on luxury and avarice and a general decline in art appreciation. Rather than valuing art for art, pictures, according to Houbraken, were seen merely in terms of potential profit and investment. His treatise separated Golden Age artists from the early eighteenth-century artists, and in assessing the previous century, his marked the end of the Golden Age.30 He and other critics thought that only a return to Golden Age virtues would enable Holland to “regain its former political and economic [and artistic] glory” and artists like Rachel Ruysch and Jan van Huysum were cited as models of civic and artistic virtue because they emulated Golden Age styles.31 Valentijn’s frontispiece reflects eighteenth-century optimism of a booming economy, renewed interests in geography and nature, and the idealization of Golden Age art subjects and styles.

In fact, the frontispiece is so clearly a reflection of the early eighteenth-century Dutch culture that it appears to be a product of the Dutch Golden Age because the iconography and formal styling visually summarizes the accomplishments of the Dutch Golden Age in economic wealth, exotic trade, study and collecting of geographic knowledge and nature, and emblem traditions. Yet the frontispiece is firmly rooted in eighteenth-century aesthetics and stands at the pinnacle of frontispiece construction. It is a hallmark work

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29 Ibid., 36-39.
31 De Vries, *Felicitous Age*, 37.
that reflects iconographic traditions that began in the mid-sixteenth century, reached a zenith in the early-seventeenth century, and rapidly declined thereafter. For as the Enlightenment approached, eighteenth century authors and artists ceased to use allegory and metaphor, and succumbed instead to the literalism and empiricism of the age.\textsuperscript{32} Valentijn’s frontispiece demonstrates the way in which frontispieces could visually portray book contents, serve as a visual bridge between literary subjects and cultural endeavors, and summarize bygone eras through iconography and allegory.

This thesis analyzes the important and distinct visual characteristics of the Valentijn frontispiece that set it apart from the many frontispieces produced in the Netherlands during the peak period of frontispiece designs in what has been termed the Golden Age of Dutch publishing, from the mid-seventeenth century into the early part of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{33} It highlights the manner in which the frontispiece, through iconography and style, emblematically reflects text as well as seventeenth-century art and eighteenth-century cultural and aesthetic pursuits. To fully analyze the frontispiece, it is imperative to compare it with other frontispieces within the Dutch tradition. A look at visually related frontispieces from atlases, maps, and natural history books demonstrates the innovative way that the Valentijn frontispiece incorporates and alters traditional visual information and ideas. As frontispieces have been neglected by art historians, as art objects within a historiography of like images, this thesis also serves as an introduction to Dutch frontispiece contexts and designs.\textsuperscript{34} Thus, this discussion serves two functions: it

\textsuperscript{34} Corbett, 2. As noted earlier, frontispieces have been discussed in art history literature in the context of visual culture, literary and emblem studies, or as sources for artists such as Vermeer and others. Dutch
highlights the Valentijn frontispiece and demonstrates that it is a unique and important work within the broader context of Dutch visual culture.

**Introduction to Title Page and Frontispiece Designs**

Most of the frontispieces addressed in this thesis incorporate images of four continents and symbols of natural history and geography collecting. They have been chosen specifically for the way in which they are related in form, style and iconography to each other. Several other artworks, including architecture, will also be discussed in the context of their shared subjects and iconography with frontispieces from the same period. A review of this body of images reveals that Valentijn’s frontispiece was an original design that stands out within the context of established and traditional Dutch imagery. This survey of a large number of frontispieces also demonstrates that Dutch frontispieces, in general, were often original in concept and design rather than merely redundant copies of earlier images.

An understanding of the historical development of frontispieces and title pages is essential when studying Dutch frontispieces. The terms title page and frontispiece are often used interchangeably, but in fact there are important distinctions between the two. A title page delivers all the pertinent information to the reader in written form that pertains to the title, author and publisher of the book. Title pages were first produced in the fifteenth century throughout Europe after the development and widespread use of the

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frontispieces have yet to be discussed in-depth for their iconographic and artistic merit although Tomasi does provide an introductory article on symbolism used on medical title pages, see Tomasi, 373-375.
printing press. Migrating artists and engravers spread ideas and designs through the flourishing European book and print trade. Many Flemish, German and Dutch engravers worked in The Netherlands, England and abroad. Many sixteenth-century Netherlandish frontispieces were directly influenced by Flemish and Italian models. Flemish engravers were influenced by the French severe style, a classical style that was predominantly influenced by Italian classical architecture. Flemish engravers imported this classicism into the Netherlands when fleeing Spanish occupation in the sixteenth century. This severe style was augmented by the Flemish and Dutch engravers until it became a highly ornamental style. The Flemish style incorporated richly decorated sculptures and relief. Lanterns, obelisks, tablets, cartouches, scrolls, pediments, portals, and triumphal arches were commonly used. Images produced by Plantin’s press at Antwerp and the works of Hubert Goltzius of Bruges demonstrate the perfection of the Flemish style with its fantastic, highly ornamental forms.

Although engravers and artists created original works, Corbett describes the four basic designs that developed in the Renaissance period and were most commonly used; namely, a textual format, geometric design, scrollwork and cartouche design, and an architectural form. The earliest title pages were simple designs, mostly textual counterparts to the table of contents and listing information regarding the title, author, publisher, printer, and sometimes including a dedication note. This information was printed in varied font styles and sizes and generally lacked ornament. The decorative script was sometimes based on a calligraphic or printer’s script made to resemble

36 Corbett, 1-16.
37 Ibid.
handwritten works. This style was initially devoid of images or decorations, although occasionally a few stock images were inserted at the bottom of the page such as the author’s insignia, and the printer’s emblem which might contain a picture of a book, globe or map, printers tools, or a cherub. As more imagery was introduced, title pages became grand tributes to the authors and figurative counterparts to book texts.

Another early style that probably developed in Germany was the divided geometric design where the page was compartmentalized into sections to highlight or differentiate various symbols within one image (Fig. 3). German Lutherans used the geometric on frontispieces from the 1520s on, frequently incorporating symbolic figures to illustrate doctrinal concepts. The geometric frontispiece style is similar in concept to the geometric framework found in the Ghent Altarpiece (Fig. 4).

The cartouche design which probably developed at the French court and first appeared in the 1530s was a popular form (Fig. 5). This style was common place throughout Europe and The Netherlands in the seventeenth century. This design consisted of a large cartouche or several smaller cartouches served as the dominant motif and was made to look like scrollwork with interlocking designs. Garlands, swags, masks and architectural forms were interwoven into the overall design. Motifs like obelisks or shells, seemingly random and irrelevant to the overall design, were commonly employed by seventeenth-century artists working within a Mannerist pictorial vocabulary. Gods, goddesses, nymphs, satyrs, monsters, and grotesque and allegorical figures populated these cartouche designs. Author and publisher information was written in frames, scrolls, or sculptured reliefs replicating carved inscriptions found on Renaissance buildings.

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38 Eisenstein, 59.
39 Corbett, 9; Eisenstein, 234.
40 Corbett, 5.
Sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch engravers often worked in this Mannerist cartouche style and they influenced the development of English title pages which were “typical expressions of international Northern Mannerism."41 For example, the frontispiece for Jan Huygen van Linschoten’s *Itinerario* is fashioned in a cartouche style with Mannerist elements (Fig. 6). Centered atop the fanciful architectural structure is a basket of exotic fruit, emus and parrots. The birds and fruit on top of the sculpted plinths allude to exotic locations. At the architectural base two potted exotic plants, a lily and tulip also suggesting exotic geography. These flowers are rendered in the manner of the early seventeenth-century Dutch flower painters such as Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder, Joris Hoefnagel, and Jacques de Gheyn who often painted eastern flowers in bloom.42 The book title and description appear on a centralized large cartouche above an elephant and rhinoceros that complete the exotic elements and carry upon their backs an archway through which one can see two men in a small boat pursuing a large whale.

The most common title-page style, which first appeared in Italy in the 1490s features an overall architectural design or façade (Fig. 7).43 In this style figures typically flank the entrance door or arch and sometimes several winged angels are nestled in various niches. Classical figures representing the sciences or philosophies that the text was based on, stand in architectural niches. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century title pages for scientific texts commonly feature images of Plato, Aristotle, Galen, and Pliny to represent the scientific branches of philosophy. Angels and saints were also depicted in

41 Ibid., 3.
43 Corbett, 1-16.
early title pages. Figures portraying an allegorical reflection of the book’s subject niches appear like sculptures and extend the architectural design to include a sculptural appearance while. The book title was generally printed in a cartouche, scroll, or frame hung over the top of the architectural frame or put in the pediments, plinths, or pedestals of the structure. This title-page design became a sort of façade to the book, or as Tomasi has described, a “metaphysical entryway” into the text.44

These title pages do not reproduce actual buildings or facades; rather this popular style retained basic architectural forms reflecting the stylistic changes in motifs and symbolic elements that developed throughout the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Corbett explains the architectural style as, “not architectural drawings: rather they are fanciful, even fantastic, essays on architectural themes. In style they reflect in turn the exuberant caprice … of Mannerism and the stately pomp of the Baroque.”45 Nevertheless, this architectural motif became the basic form in which allegorical figures could be placed for the purpose of relating to the books’ text and remained a popular form throughout the seventeenth-century.

While Corbett and Eisenstein present a good overview of the development of title-pages, they and others say little about frontispieces. By the early-seventeenth century, book designs began to include two pages; namely, the title page bearing the title and book information and the frontispiece, which was placed to the left of the title page, engraved with images conveying an iconographic or allegorical program that reflected the subject matter of the book. Generally a frontispiece has no title or text and functions only as a narrative complement or visual extension, of the book’s contents. Many seventeenth and

44 Tomasi, 373.
45 Corbett, 3.
eighteenth-century frontispieces provided vistas of faraway places, exotic commodities, and collections of nature. The image may be emblematic when it includes a poem or verse that explains the allegory of the frontispiece.\textsuperscript{46} Because the burden of expense in producing books lay with the publisher, producing costly frontispieces for books that did not sell well meant a revenue loss for publishers, therefore frontispieces were only commissioned by publishers who expected their volumes generate an ample return in profits. Therefore, the study of frontispieces gives the modern viewer an idea of which authors were considered worthy of investing in by publishers due to the expected popularity of their works to readers.\textsuperscript{47} Seen in this way, frontispieces were used by publishers to entice subscribers and readers, through decorative and symbolic imagery, to purchase books.\textsuperscript{48}

As mentioned, frontispiece conceits or devices were often devised by the author who drew upon symbolic or allegoric programs found in emblem and poetry books. Authors did not generally design the artistic arrangements and design of the frontispiece, but rather the meaning and symbolic concepts of the frontispiece.\textsuperscript{49} But artists also designed frontispieces. The Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens designed more than one-hundred title-pages and frontispieces for both Flemish and Dutch publishers. He was consistently given complete license for developing the allegorical program without the direction of the author.\textsuperscript{50} But according to Held, Rubens is the exception and most

\begin{footnotes}
\item[46] Drysdall, 25.
\item[47] Landwehr, 1-9.
\item[48] Held, 1-8.
\item[49] A conceit, as defined in footnote 2, is a fanciful idea, an elaborate metaphor. It is used in poetry and emblem making as a central idea or theme. Making little poetic conceits and emblems was a popular mental pastime among poets, authors, scholars and the literary elite. Many authors designed the symbolism and allegories for their frontispieces, not artistically, but poetically, in terms of concept and idea. See Eisenstein, 280-289.
\item[50] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
devices were first conceived of by the book’s author to be designed later by artists and engravers.\textsuperscript{51}

Early frontispieces feature figures and symbols derived from medieval symbolism. But as Renaissance scientists, travelers, and philosophers gathered new information about the world, a fresh symbolism was needed express updated knowledge paradigms.\textsuperscript{52} Tomasi writes,

\begin{quote}
The iconographic apparatus which Renaissance scholars had inherited from their medieval predecessors, the antiquated visual devices contained in the herbaria, bestiaries, Salernian corpora and Arab miniatures of the period, proved to be completely inadequate and in the end disintegrated before this irrepressible flood of new information – a flood so vast that it demanded an entirely new encyclopedism for its organization.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

For new symbolism, writers and artists turned to classical literature and mythology as vehicles for meaning and these symbols were developed and copied in trans-European title pages and frontispieces.\textsuperscript{54} In the Netherlands, for example, this search for allegories to symbolize the wealth and cosmopolitan nature of Dutch society led to the expansion of the four continents imagery as reproduced in Valentijn’s frontispiece and other Dutch artworks.

Classical mythology and the emblematic and allegorical guidelines outlined by authors like Andrea Alciati, Pierre Cousteau, Hadrianus Junius, Barthélemy Aneau, Otto Vaenius (Otto van Veen), and Cesare Ripa in his \textit{Iconologia} were resources seventeenth and eighteenth-century authors (like Valentijn and Linnaeus) drew upon for inventing

\begin{itemize}
\item Boxer, 92-117; Held, 1-8; Corbett, 3; Eisenstein, 279-280.
\item Tomasi, 372.
\item Ibid.
\end{itemize}
their frontispiece devices. As these allegorical conceits became increasingly complicated, clues in the form of inscriptions or explanatory poems became necessary for the reader to interpret the allegorical meaning. In this way, the visual expression of the frontispiece was based on the interweaving of the textual content and the author’s wit. It required the reader’s knowledge of classical and allegorical literature, combined with the reading of the book’s text, to comprehend the full meaning. Designed to draw the reader’s attention and curiosity, frontispieces give us insight into to what topics interested Dutch and European readers throughout the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Frontispieces contain a high level of allegorical material, insignia, and symbols. The compositions, free from the burden of text, convey the textual information in symbolic, graphic forms. The frontispiece was designed to be less a visual duplication of the text and more a summary or commentary on it. Deciphering the frontispiece was meant to be a challenging intellectual exercise or puzzle and the meaning of which was meant to be obscure and hidden so that it would provide the reader with a pleasurable mental challenge. Furthermore, because of the relationship between the image and book’s contents, it was only through a complete reading of the text that a reader could fully appreciate the frontispiece’s allegorical meaning. In this respect publishers hoped that frontispieces would entice readers to want to solve its puzzle by buying and reading the book.

55 Corbett, 19-21; Tomasi, 372-4; Drysdall, 28-30.  
56 Corbett, 19; Boxer, 117; Eisenstein, 280.
Books and the Dutch Publishing Industry

While the seventeenth century is considered the Golden Age of Dutch art, the eighteenth century has been called the Golden Age of Dutch publishing.\(^57\) Dutch authors and publishers supplied The Netherlands and Europe with travel narratives, geographic descriptions, texts on natural history, images of tropical landscapes, catalogues that described Dutch collections of nature, emblem books, bibles, histories, atlases and maps.\(^58\) As historian Benjamin Schmidt argues: “As the global seventeenth century got underway, a remarkable profusion of geographic materials issued from the Dutch Republic – an explosion of books, maps, prints, paintings, curiosities, and other objects pertaining to the representation of the non-European world – effectively mapping to the rest of Europe the shape of the expanding globe.”\(^59\) This vast Dutch publishing industry had an extensive Dutch and international European market. Amsterdam and Leiden were important book publishing centers for the international market in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and The Hague became an important center in the eighteenth century.\(^60\) Book makers typically sold their publications through independent venders as well as through their own publishing firms. Dutch language editions were displayed at the Frankfurt and Leipzig book fairs and books published in foreign languages including Latin, Spanish, French, and English, were sent to fairs throughout

\(^{58}\) Ibid.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 24.
Europe where Bibles, emblem books, travel diaries, geographical description, atlases, books on natural history and medicine were best sellers.61

Some of the most important and influential texts published during the seventeenth century were travel narratives and natural history treatises reflecting Dutch interests in trade and travel.62 Literature specialist E.M. Beekman names the *Historia General de las Cosas de la Nueva Espana*, by the Franciscan friar Bernardino de Sahagun and Jan Huyghen van Linschoten’s *Itinerario*, published in 1596 as the most important texts of the early seventeenth-century because of their contributions to the trade and mercantile industries.63 Both of these works were important guides for explorers and voyagers into the new worlds of the East and West Indies.

With its extensive collection of natural history images, geographic descriptions, ethnographies and geographic description, Valentijn’s multi-volume work is considered one of several important books published during the early-eighteenth century.64 Beekman and other historians list Francois Valentijn’s *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*, the works of Georg (Georgius) Everhardus Rumphius, the *Ambonese Herbal*, 1702, and the *Ambonese Curiosity Chamber*, 1705, as the most important works of the early-eighteenth century for their contributions to ethnographic and natural history studies.65 The botanical treatises Albert Sebus’s *Thesaurus*, Georg Clifford’s *Hortus Cliffortianus*, and the scholarly collections of many others, contributed to eighteenth century scientific knowledge of exotic plants. These many volumes represent Dutch interest in natural

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63 Beekman, *Fugitive*. 27.
64 Ibid., 57.
history and particularly in the plants and animals of foreign lands that was widespread at
this time. A man of his time, Valentijn’s work reflects his personal interests in natural
history because he was an avid collector of exotic curiosities such as shells and coral and
his collection has been considered to be one of the important collections of the period.66
Valentijn’s Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien appealed to a large audience, (having over 600
subscribers that prepaid for his voluminous geographic description), and its frontispiece
reflects these eighteenth-century cultural interests in geography and natural history.67

Chapter Overview

This introductory chapter presents a brief overview of the history of title page and
frontispiece designs. It explains the function of frontispieces as visual commentaries to
book contents rather than as strictly visual narratives of texts. It also introduces the
literature of classical allegories, which were developed in Italy and used in Dutch art.
Understanding this will be useful in the analysis of Valentijn’s frontispiece and prepare
the reader to better understand the many layers of meaning in Valentijn’s frontispiece.

Chapter two introduces Valentijn’s frontispiece and the contents of his Oud en Nieuw
Oost Indien. It addresses his book as a work of natural history, a collection of maps and
geographic descriptions, and an ethnography describing the religions and customs of
many cultures encountered by the Dutch around the world. All the features on the
frontispiece are described and analyzed, (including the important VOC insignia) and
show that they mirror Valentijn’s text. This analysis incorporates data from the studies of

66 Dance, History of Shell, 31-45.
67 Lach, Literature, 352-61.
economics, trade, travel, and social history, demonstrating that the frontispiece is an expression of Dutch eighteenth-century society, particularly in regards to the activities of trade and collecting. Further, this analysis clarifies the way in which the frontispiece is both a summation of the book, as well as a nostalgic summary of Golden Age pursuits for profit.

Chapter three discusses four continents allegories which are frequently appear in Dutch frontispieces, poetry, art, and architecture throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century. The four continents allegory on the frontispiece is explained as a combination of the traditional continents personifications with the addition of a central figure that represents power and even global dominion. Here I address early works featuring part or all of the allegory, including atlas title pages by Abraham Ortelius, and Gerardus Mercator as well as an early frontispiece by Jacob van Meur, a harpsichord lid painted by Karl van Mander, and the sculptural reliefs of the Amsterdam Town Hall. These works demonstrate the cultural significance of the four continents iconography featured on Valentijn’s frontispiece. This imagery was so commonly used in Dutch art that an abbreviated form of this imagery could be used without any loss of meaning as in Valentijn’s design. This survey of four continents images illuminates the importance of the allegory as a fitting symbol for Valentijn’s image to abridge early eighteenth-century economics and nostalgia for the glory of the Golden Age.

The early eighteenth century was a vibrant period for gathering large collections of scientific knowledge that included naturalia, atlases, natural history descriptions, collection catalogs, and botanical studies; practices that were engaged in by amateur
naturalists, and professional collectors alike. Valentijn’s book is a natural outgrowth of these scientific interests in geography and knowledge of the natural world reflecting eighteenth-century scientific pursuits in geography and natural history which are symbolized by the use of insignia, the four continents imagery and images of natural history, collecting and maps. Although the symbols of collecting and geography cannot be fully attended to in this discussion, it is important to understand that the full meaning of Valentijn’s emblem is a celebration of the wealth of the world, including the naturalia of the physical world and that this aspect of the frontispiece mirrors the many natural history descriptions in the book.

The fourth and final chapter concludes this study by reviewing the frontispiece designs and functions. It summarizes the similarities and changes between the Valentijn image and many other frontispieces heretofore discussed. A return to emblem-making was a token of the nostalgic climate of the early-eighteenth century and thus the way in which Valentijn’s frontispiece functions as an emblem in the Italian tradition will be addressed. This conclusion reflects on the importance of the image as a summation of early eighteenth-century society, namely the decade of the 1720s where trade and favorable economic conditions were achieved and massive nature collections were assembled. The artistic culture of this period experienced wistfulness for Golden Age subjects, iconographies and styles, and this is reflected in the iconography and style of the Valentijn image. In view of these collaborative studies, the symbolism and allegorical conceit combined with the emblematic message proves that Valentijn’s frontispiece is an

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important emblematic work that comprehensively abridges the text of the book, reflects a contemporary interest in trade, science and collecting, and nostalgia for the Golden Age.

Methodology

While terra incognita, the study of frontispieces as art images reveals the changing designs and meanings in Dutch designs and iconography throughout the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Netherlandish frontispieces have a history of evolving symbolism that reflects changing ideas within their culture of origin. The historiography of the development of iconography bridges the gaps between cultural ideas; literature, and art for as frontispiece designers sought to allegorize popular literary ideas, they created a visual vocabulary which in turn often informed the visual arts, and this interconnectedness of ideas is visible via the study of frontispiece symbolisms, text and literary trends, and artworks of the period. Yet art historians have largely ignored the study of frontispieces, relegating them to the realm of visual culture or emblem studies.69 Some historians have written about frontispieces in the way that emblems have been researched, as bridges between meaning and art, but as yet no comprehensive study features frontispieces in the context of other frontispieces.70 Historians like Simon Schama have commented on frontispieces and other engraved images in what David Freedberg calls “brilliant expository,” but these discussions are generally limited to brief descriptions of these images to be used in the service of visual culture studies rather than

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69 Emblems are defined in footnote 2. They are defined as those images that contain imagery, titles, and text, such as the emblems of Cesare Ripa, and the Dutch emblematists Jacob Cats or Jan Luyken.

detailed analysis. These studies bring forth many frontispiece images but do not fully interpret them.

But studying frontispieces through emblem studies only discusses frontispieces in terms of meaning. Dutch emblem studies have long been under the sway of moral, didactic, or religious interpretations, and a disproportionate of these centers on the moralist writings of Cats. Eddy de Jongh and his followers popularized Cats and Dutch emblem studies and emphasized the hidden realities behind every visual object in art.

Eric Sluijter, in “Didactic and Disguised Meanings” indicates that de Jongh’s iconographical approach, (which originated in Erwin Panofsky’s iconography methods and Dutch emblematic literature) has been the most successful approach to understanding Dutch art throughout the 1970s and well into the 1990s. But Mariet Westermann complains that in the de Jonghian method has applied emblematic meanings to artworks through applying literary allusions to artworks. But these meanings have been applied to artworks even when there are no actual relationships to text. She suggests that de Jonghian emblematic interpretations should well be replaced with new approaches.

When Svetlana Alpers challenged Jongh’s methods by downplaying the importance of the allegorical and emblematic nature of Dutch art, she stated that emblematic art was “going against the most basic Calvinist tenet” which held fast only to

71 Freedberg, 407.
72 For a discussion of the works of Jacob Cats and other emblematists see Thomas Heywood, Pleasant Dialogues and dramma’s (Louvain: Uystpruyyst, 1903). See also Manning’s The Emblem which is a definitive source for introductory emblem studies.
74 Sluijter, 175.
the word and not the emblematic image.\textsuperscript{76} She proposed that measuring art by the doctrines of faith was “fruitless” and unproved.\textsuperscript{77} If de Jonghian methods do not apply to all of Dutch art, Alpers’s error in assuming, as many do, that emblematic works in Dutch arts are religious and moralistic in nature. Many frontispieces are emblematic but reflect secular and intellectual ideas and praises of cultural accomplishments rather than providing religious moral instructions. Furthermore, the Netherlandish tradition of emblem making and allegory has strong secular and classical ties which are manifest in the myriad of frontispieces produced in the Low Countries. The symbolism in Valentijn’s frontispiece originates from Italian emblem traditions that evolved throughout the seventeenth century into an entirely and uniquely Netherlandish product reflecting the classicism of Dutch Golden Age and eighteenth-century styling.

Thus the strongest resources for deciphering the iconography and emblematic nature of Valentijn’s frontispiece are the international iconographic traditions codified in the writings of Alciati and Ripa, as well as in the iconographic (and secular) traditions of Dutch frontispiece art. Ripa’s \textit{Iconologia}, is particularly helpful in discerning the frontispieces’ meanings because it was a popular resource for artists and emblematists. Several versions of Ripa’s \textit{Iconologia} have been particularly helpful, including Mason Tung’s \textit{Ripa Concordance}, the 1603 Rome edition, and the 1669-1670 Dutch edition.\textsuperscript{78}


\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.

The popularity of Ripa’s work, and its multiple editions and translations into several European languages including several Dutch versions as mentioned above, makes this source essential for the study of frontispieces featuring international iconography. Studies by Francis Yates, Elizabeth Eisenstein, and Charles Boxer are also important resources for understanding how allegories function as emblems. Yates explains the use of pneumonic devices in classical education, whereas Boxer describes the educational training in Dutch universities that encouraged conceit making. Eisenstein explains the classical and hieroglyphic origins of emblem making. This non-moralistic approach to allegory and emblem-making is also explained by Drysdall who explains the use of device and allegory in designs for Dutch political and secular purposes. These sources further our understanding of the way classical allegories were applied to Dutch frontispieces, which is applicable to the way in which we understand Valentijn’s frontispiece to function as an emblem.

Along with iconographic methods, an integrated methodological approach is also required in order in the study of Dutch frontispieces. Simon Schama, Jan de Vries, Jonathan Israel and many others have uncovered many fine details regarding Dutch culture and history and have cited many Dutch frontispieces for the way in which they contribute to these views. In an overview of Netherlandish art history, Mariet Westermann summarizes visual culture studies and many of the new methods for the

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80 Boxer, 92-117.
81 Eisenstein, 68-69, 280-302.
82 Drysdall, 23-25.
study of Netherlandish arts that are likewise useful for broadening the perspective of the study of frontispieces. Westermann explains, “Post iconographic ventures into poorly charted visual territory – *fijnschilders*, early modern naturalism, perspective theory, and optics – have widened the field of what is interesting about Dutch art.” She applauds the “expansion of the historiography of Dutch art, a process driven in part by institutional needs for new topics of study.”

David Freedberg mirrors Westermann’s praise for diverse methodologies when he issued a call for a multidisciplinary approach to the study of art. He admits that art historians make too much of iconography and connoisseurship at the expense of context, and he suggests historians use an integrated system of statistics, economic studies, taxonomy, social history and history in order to more fully place art in its proper cultural context. While critical of the study iconography and connoisseurship, Freedberg also criticizes social historians for providing abundant contextual information at the expense of the formal analysis of artworks. He complains that a “significant and revealing shortcoming of the new social history of art is that while context is often richly provided, the work remains somehow isolated from the context, with its peculiarity and individuality as a work of art un-illuminated.” Freedberg argues that the study of the botanical engravings is an ideal topic for the art historian to develop an approach that is at once interdisciplinary, inclusive of appropriate contextual information and yet still describes artworks within art history.

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84 Westerman *After Iconography*, 351-372. She mentions the studies in collecting by Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, botanical drawings by David Freedberg, the work of Joahneth Spicer, and other scholars working in the new social history of art.
85 Ibid., 359.
87 Ibid., 406-409.
88 Ibid., 406-407.
89 Ibid. 409
But the study of Dutch frontispieces is actually better suited for developing an interdisciplinary approach that keeps artworks central to the discussion. Frontispiece studies facilitate the art historians’ primary aim of analyzing artwork because of they contain much iconographic material and reflect popular trends in styles and subjects. Furthermore, the historiography of Netherlandish frontispieces, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, covers a wide range of subjects and iconographies driven by evolving ideas within Dutch culture. This is not to say that the study of natural history images is not a fruitful and important topic for broadening the epistemology of image and culture; but rather, the study of frontispieces, with the emphasis on imagination, allegory, and symbol, is an approach devoid of the burden of determining where the line is drawn between scientific renderings and fine art. With the combination of interdisciplinary data, historical context, and iconographic analysis, the connections between frontispiece allegories, subjects, context, and culture may be delineated. Furthermore, the study of the connections between allegory, symbol, and meaning in frontispieces answers Freeberg’s cry for “epistemological illumination” of artworks.90

There are many ways to study and view Dutch art, but none of these approaches discussed have been applied in an integrated, systematic way to the study of Dutch frontispieces. In doing so, this study will be charting new ground for few authors have written specifically about Dutch frontispieces as art. Luca Tongiorgi Tomasi’s very brief study of scientific imagery from Dutch frontispieces is helpful, as is Wolfgang Harms discussion of European sixteenth-century imagery on the frontispieces of natural history.
treatises and the source of this imagery in medieval to classical sources. Margaret Corbett and Ronald Lightbown’s study of seventeenth-century English frontispieces is also useful in deciphering some Dutch frontispieces, especially in light of the fact that many English frontispieces were reprinted from Dutch plates. By combining and applying knowledge from a wide variety of sources, this study of Dutch frontispieces sheds new light on the development of symbolism, allegory, and emblem making in Dutch art.

This study is a multi-disciplinary approach drawing on social history, visual culture studies, economic, statistics, and iconographic and emblem studies. The conclusions drawn from this integrated study contribute to the “epistemological map” of Dutch art, establishing a body of knowledge that will encourage further iconographic, contextual, and emblematic studies related to culture and art. This study also fulfills Freedberg’s call for focusing adequate attention to individual works of art within the context of the new social history of art. Additionally, this study answers Westermann’s call for the exploration of diverse topics and perspectives in order to further broaden the epistemology of Dutch art.

92 Corbett, 34-35.
94 Freedberg, 415.
95 Westerman *After Iconography*, 366.
Conclusion

Art historians have yet to make a serious study of frontispieces, which until now have been solely under the purview of social and literary historians, and emblem studies. As such, to fully analyze one frontispiece requires a visual context from which the unique features, developments, and peculiarities of that frontispiece can be discerned. This study establishes a method for studying frontispieces, by providing an introductory catalogue and visual framework from which the Valentijn frontispiece can be analyzed and understood. This study also notes the uses and changes of specific iconographic conceits such as the four continents allegory and other symbols and the way in which these were commonly used in frontispieces to convey meaning. Within this visual framework the Valentijn frontispiece clearly stands out as a paragon of the potential to comment, summarize, and glorify book contents, reflect the literary and cultural interests of the period, and abridge artistic traditions from earlier periods.
Chapter Two

The Frontispiece to *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*

The Frontispiece: Overview and Materials

Valentijn’s image might be characterized singularly as a tribute to the VOC, the veritable economic force that it was. When the image was made, the VOC had been bringing exotic commodities from throughout the world into Dutch harbors for over one hundred years. In 1639, when the VOC was a young company still expanding its monopoly, the important Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel wrote, “Wherever profit leads us, [the Dutch] to every sea and shore, for love of gain the wide world’s harbours we explore.”⁹⁶ This ode, written for Marie de Medici to commemorate her triumphant entry into Amsterdam in 1638, which included a visit to the East India House, the executive office of the VOC, reflects a general sentiment of praise for profit held by contemporary Hollanders.⁹⁷ The allegorical frontispiece for *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* also reflects praise for the Dutch quest for wealth and the bounty of exotic goods brought to The Netherlands under the Company’s direction during the early eighteenth-century (Fig. 1).⁹⁸ The image echoes other eighteenth-century pursuits as well, wherein the designer, artist, and engraver of the frontispiece wove together an artful display of personifications and

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⁹⁶ From Vondel’s ode to Maria de Medici on the occasion of her state visit to the East India House at Amsterdam in 1639, from the version by Donald Keene, *The Japanese Discovery of Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), as quoted by Boxer, 28.
⁹⁷ Ibid. Maria de Medici was born in Florence to Francesco I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Johanna, Archduchess of Austria. She was the second wife of King Henry IV of France. The French spelling of her name is often used when denoting her French affiliations through marriage. She ruled France briefly after the death of her husband but was exiled from France when her son, King Louis XIII took the throne to unite squabbling political factions, at which time she traveled to Amsterdam.
⁹⁸ Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost Indien*, i.
symbols that unmistakably reflect Dutch economic aims. Additionally, the image also includes iconographic symbols that reflect eighteenth century pursuits for knowledge that were carried out by amateur geographers, travelers, and collectors. These pursuits for profit and knowledge were significant cultural activities in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries that are represented by Valentijn’s descriptive text. This chapter discusses the iconography and style of the as a reflection of Valentijn’s text, cultural endeavors of the eighteenth-century Dutch elite and traveling classes, and is a visual summation of the Dutch Golden Age styles.

Valentijn’s crowded frontispiece is full of complex visual details, including figures personifying the four continents of the world, which contribute to the meaning of praise for wealth. In addition to personifications of Asia, America, Africa, and Europe that surround the personified VOC, a figure of Truth, in the background on the right, opens a drapery to reveal a caravan representing overland trade routes in Asia. Opposite on the left are lightweight ships, the Dutch Indiamen that carried freight from the Far East to The Netherlands. Cherubs and a figure of Fame blowing her trumpet grace the top portion of the frontispiece while on the foreground a group of cherubs play with geography and atlas books, and a curiosity cabinet. On the right a figure dressed in priestly garb portrays the author, Francois Valentijn, who served as a minister for the Dutch Reformed Church in Batavia. Meanwhile an angel, to the right on the foreground completes the emblematic program by providing an explanatory verse.
Formal Aspects of the Frontispiece

The frontispiece is an engraved image with finely modeled lines that vary in thickness and terminate in diminished lines indicating that the engraving was executed by a process that combined metal engraving with wax etching which enabled the engraver to achieve the appearance of a color wash drawing with subtle shading while retaining linear clarity.99 This combined process was commonly used in The Netherlands during the early-eighteenth century and gives the Valentijn image its curvilinear and fleshy appearance.

Artistic thought went into the design of perspective, form, rhythm, and other various formal elements in the frontispiece’s radial composition, in order to facilitate the crowded image’s ability to convey much meaning. The busy circular arrangement gives the image a feeling of motion and activity as if hordes are pressing forward as some figures crowd around the center while still other figures advance from the background and the overall tone is one of diligence and purposeful activity. The figures relate to the VOC, the central focus of the image, leaning, gesturing or tilting the head or torso inward. The figures do not relate to each other so the viewer senses that the images are allegorical rather than actors in a narrative statement. The central personification of the VOC is the most important figure, not through monumental size or stature, but by her central position and the way that the other figures emerge from behind, encircle, and visually frame her. Each figure is ideally rendered, drawn in correct anatomical proportion and modeled to reveal a soft fleshiness clearly influenced by the work of Rubens. All the figures and objects in the image have a sense of weight, with deeply cut

shadows in their drapery. Their contours of musculature and diverse textures are achieved by the combined etching and engraving process.\textsuperscript{100}

Motion is implied in the image through the rhythmic pattern of repeated figures in similar postures. The composition is open in the background, yet the crowded figures wind around the center giving it a closed appearance. The composition overall is asymmetrical but balanced and unified by the manner in which the figures are arranged. Because of the overall flow of the curvilinear lines and the circuitous movement of the figures, there is little tension in portrayal of the figures enabling the overall meaning of the image to emphasize the importance of the VOC figure. This arrangement of figures and symbols superbly allows for allegory and symbol to work together in a united purpose which is to reflect the book’s text. The Rubenesque styling reflects Golden Age tastes and eighteenth-century nostalgia. The image’s glorification of the VOC and highlighting of geography and collecting firmly plants the image in its own time, as a representation of the cultural activities and values of the period.

The Frontispiece Iconography and Meaning

A finely dressed female personifies the VOC. The VOC insignia which is prominently displayed on her chest identifies her. This monogram was frequently decorated official VOC documents, business offices, and other objects and was recognizable as a common company logo by eighteenth-century viewers (Fig. 8, 9, 10).\textsuperscript{101} The VOC personification is derived from Ripa’s emblem of Magnanimity, which was portrayed as a crowned and sumptuously dressed woman with a lion as her animal


\textsuperscript{101} Zandvliet, \textit{Encounter}, 202.
According to Ripa, the lion is an important part of the allegory as it never hides from hunters but rather generously distracts them so other animals of the forest can flee. In the frontispiece, the VOC figure is enthroned and crowned to suggest her power and leadership while a lion rests under her skirt suggesting rule and generosity. Her right foot rests on a cornucopia overflowing with fruits of abundance, which she provides, and her left foot rests on an astrolabe and a serpent-entwined staff of Mercury. The astrolabe was an important tool that was used in early maritime navigation and the staff or caduceus of Mercury, was commonly used to symbolize commerce. These tools indicate that maritime trade and commerce were controlled by the VOC, while the addition of a globe to the allegory (on the figure’s right) suggests VOC global dominion.

The VOC is surrounded by personifications of the four continents that defer to her, supporting the theme of VOC magnanimity and control of a global seaborne empire. Allegorical symbols of the continents were developed and commonly used throughout the seventeenth century and particularly during the Dutch Golden Age, though they were developed in Italian emblems in the mid-sixteenth century. The return of this imagery on the frontispiece reflects the nostalgic sentiments and aesthetics of early eighteenth-century artists. Felicity Nussbaum explains the significance of the four continents allegory and its continued popularity in the eighteenth-century:

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102 Maser, 64.
103 Ibid.
104 Hall, 55.
105 Ibid., 207.
106 Boxer.
107 Alciati’s emblems were first published in 1531. Sebastian Brant published Das Narrenschiff in 1548, and Cesare Ripa began publishing his works in 1598. Many other emblematis published between the years of 1500 (Erasmus) and 1600. Italian influenced emblems were popularity of in Dutch arts during the seventeenth century. Alciati, 10-15.
During much of the eighteenth century, the European vision of the world was characterized as constituting distinct quadrants of the world. Its four corners were of course fictitious, an act of the colonial imagination, as were many of the conventional assumptions about them, though by the eighteenth-century it was well recognized that the globe could be circumnavigated. These “corners” of the earth were frequently represented iconographically as female figures in ornamental frescoes that decorated the four corners of a drawing room... or as naked, veiled or feathered figures in the cartouches of eighteenth-century maps.108

Traditionally America was pictured bare breasted, wearing a feathered headdress. She usually carried a bow and arrows and sometimes corn. She was generally accompanied by an armadillo, but in some works she is seen with an alligator.109 Europe was generally represented as a woman in Roman armor accompanied by a horse to signify military superiority, but on occasion, she could also be depicted as a muse surrounded by symbols of the arts and letters.110 Asia was usually represented wearing a veil or turban with jewels, standing beside a camel and burning incense suggesting exotic spices.111 Africa was commonly dressed in a loin cloth or grass skirt holding elephant tusks and accompanied by a lion.112 In Valentijn’s frontispiece the continents have been abbreviated or simplified in form from traditional seventeenth-century personifications. The artist Mulder omitted the traditional animals that usually accompany the allegorical

109 Ibid., 2; Maser, 105; Le Corbeiller, 209-223.
110 Yassu; Nussbaum, 2; Maser, 102.
111 Ibid.; Maser, 103.
112 Ibid.; Maser, 104.
figures and greatly simplified them, leaving only their costume and a few select exotic commodities to identify them.

In the frontispiece, on the left behind the VOC, is the personification of Europe. Europe is dressed in Roman armor suggesting Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and military superiority. Europe is usually holding a book to suggest literature or knowledge, but here she attends the procession of figures empty handed.113 Next to Europe is the personification of Agriculture who is identified by the plow which he holds high in his right hand to represent the cultivated agricultural products of the East (spices, fruits, nuts, and plants) that were brought to Europe by the VOC and accounted for the bulk of the VOC’s profits.114

On the left side of the frontispiece are two Indian figures, just below the figure of Agriculture, representing East Asia. The standing female personification is dressed in a turban that is decorated with large gemstones, including a strand of jewels above her deeply cut bodice. She carries an incense burner to denote her eastern origins and in front of her is the other representation of Asia, a seated male figure.115 He is dressed in a turban and holds a treasure chest of jewels, a reference to the lucrative gemstone and coral bead trade between The Netherlands and India.116 Africa, standing on the left side

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113 Maser, 102.
114 The spice market comprised nearly 64–84% of Dutch imports. Because the luxury goods that the Dutch imported into Europe were non-competing goods, in that spices, silk, sugar, porcelain and other goods were not produced in Europe, these import goods could be sold for very high prices. By procuring the monopoly on spices and favorable contracts for other luxury goods, the Dutch, gained significant profits even after the high expenses of shipping these goods. As profits rose investors grew very wealthy and The Netherlands experienced an unparallel quality of life economically in comparison to its other European neighbors. The trade revenues were primarily responsible for the expendable income that contributed to making the seventeenth-century the Dutch Golden Century. Kevin H. O’Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *After Columbus: Explaining the Global Trade Boom 1500-1800*, (Cambridge, MA : National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc., 2001), 50.
115 Maser, 103.
of the frontispiece, is shown as a male figure wearing a grass skirt. He leans inward and holds elephant tusks, a reference to the lucrative ivory trade.\textsuperscript{117}

In the shadow of the VOC, to the right, is a personification of America. Ripa described America as a male saying that the, “personification of America is a dark man, a native chieftain certainly, who sits among many objects associated with America.”\textsuperscript{118} But in this frontispiece, as in many Dutch engravings, America is represented as an Indian female wearing a feathered headdress. Maarten de Vos, a Flemish artist who had studied in Rome, designed a personification of America that, according to Schmidt, became the model Ripa adopted, with minimal variation, for his 1603 version of the \textit{Iconologia} and Valentijn’s America is based on this later female model (Fig. 11).\textsuperscript{119} On the frontispiece she carries a bowl filled with what could be a strand of pearls or coral, gold dust or some other precious commodities (all listed by Ripa in his allegory), which she offers to the VOC.\textsuperscript{120}

At the top and to the left of the VOC figure, an angel blows a trumpet proclaiming the fame of the VOC and the wealth of The Netherlands.\textsuperscript{121} Also behind the VOC figure are cherubs and a nude female figure representing Truth who, along with cherubs, opens a drapery to reveal the significant trade activities of the VOC.\textsuperscript{122} Behind Truth’s head is the flame of the sun, which illuminates these activities to the world.\textsuperscript{123}

In the background, behind Truth, the artist has included a view of VOC activities: on the right is a fort with traders and a caravan and to the left is a ship. The fort is most

\textsuperscript{117} Yassu; Nussbaum, 2; Maser, 104.
\textsuperscript{119} Schmidt, \textit{Dutch Imagination}, 134.
\textsuperscript{120} Maser, 105.
\textsuperscript{121} Hall, 119.
\textsuperscript{122} Maser, 50.
\textsuperscript{123} Hall, 313.
likely meant to represent Dutch VOC headquarters in Batavia, on the coast of Jakarta in the Malaysian archipelago.\textsuperscript{124} The artist Andries Beeckman was commissioned by VOC directors to paint a view of Batavia and this painting, which hung in the Directors offices in Amsterdam, provided an overview of the city and the diverse people who lived there (Fig. 12).\textsuperscript{125} There are also many prints of the fort to be found in travel books and atlases of the period. The Danish artist Johannes Rach produced several high quality prints of Batavia during his service as a gunner with the VOC.\textsuperscript{126} Rach’s prints, like Beeckman’s work, details the rich culture and architectural development of the fort and city of Batavia (Figs. 13, 14, 15).\textsuperscript{127} Valentijn’s description has several views of Batavia including a detailed print of the port, and these images, combine to present a view of this thriving trade center during the Golden Age and well into Valentijn’s eighteenth-century. Furthermore, eighteenth-century readers would have been familiar with diverse views of Batavia and other exotic Dutch ports through the works of Beeckman, Rachs, Frans Post and others, which provided readers with visual information from which they could create their own mental maps of exotic ports (Fig. 16).\textsuperscript{128}

In Valentijn’s frontispiece, advancing forward from the fort, is a caravan symbolized by a man and a camel, and followed by traders, all of whom bring exotic wares. The ship to the left in the background is a Dutch \textit{Indiamen}. The \textit{Indiamen} was a small swift vessel designed by the Dutch shipbuilders for carrying cargo throughout the East and West Indies and was used throughout the period. The representation of the ship

\textsuperscript{124} Jan Pietersz conquered the coastal town of Jacatra and it was there that the Dutch began building the fort at Batavia in the early 1620s. Zandvliet, \textit{Encounter}, 31-32.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 52-75.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
in the image refers to sailing as well as the pride Dutchmen felt for this engineering wonder. ¹²⁹

Other figures in the frontispiece are symbolic as well. Next to the figure of America is a man wearing cloak and large triangular hat representing a Dutch minister, and he peers outward towards the viewer from the right side of the image. This bearded figure is rendered with more detail and in a much less classicizing manner than the other figures suggesting this is a portrait (Fig. 17). This figure is meant to be a portrait of the author Francois Valentijn who, with many other Dutch ministers, preached the gospel of the Dutch Reformed Church throughout Indonesia. More than a convenient tribute to the author, the portrait highlights Dutch religious and Calvinist ideals and is an important symbol on the frontispiece and in Valentijn’s text. The inclusion of this portrait is a form of praise for the author’s efforts as a minister and represents the earnest missionary efforts engaged in by the Dutch throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Dutch, like the Catholics and Portuguese, preached Christianity in all territories within their control and influence. Many pages within Valentijn’s description are dedicated to describing the religious beliefs of the people in the East Indies and throughout Asia and his own missionary efforts. He also comments on Dutch efforts to convert non-believers and retain VOC employees working abroad and outside of the direct influence of The Netherlandish culture.

The Dutch established seminaries in Jaffna and Colombo in the mid-seventeenth century in order to further gospel instruction and train ministers and teachers. ¹³⁰ Under the direction of the VOC, Valentijn served for seventeen years as a minister for the

¹³⁰ Arasaratnam, 53.
Reformed Church in the Moluccas Islands including Ambon, Banda and Java until 1713. During this period he wrote a Malay dictionary and translated the Bible into Low Malay, (which was the common language), although neither of these works was published.  

Valentijn was also a contributing author to the book *De successu evangelii apud Indos Occidentales, in Novâ-Angliâ*, 1699, that discusses missionary work in Amboina, Colombo, Jaffna and other islands and reflects the cultural interests in religion of the eighteenth century. Throughout his text, Valentijn describes the religious beliefs and customs of each land he describes. In Valentijn’s description of India, he admonishes his readers, “…so that one may not have all too low an opinion of the Cingalese [sic] and the Malabars [Tamils] living on this island, even though they were such wild and unashamed heathens, we have deemed it necessary to append here some of their moral lessons…” Valentijn reviewed at least sixty-five important Tamil treatises that were written over a period of fifteen centuries in order to show Indian moral and ethical traditions.  

Dutch ministers enjoyed an elevated social status and autonomy over their labors and responsibilities and many, like Valentijn, pursued scientific or literary studies in addition to their clerical duties. For his book, Valentijn used his time and position while abroad to gather information from VOC officials, including letters, journals, manuscripts of other VOC employees, maps, and sea charts. He also harvested from his own personal experiences as a minister and his studies of diverse religious beliefs and customs around the world. His interests in religions and diverse cultures are suggested by his portrait on the frontispiece, which applauds Valentijn for his contribution as a

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131 Serton, 9.
132 Valentijn, V. 1, 386 as quoted by Arasaratnam, 51.
133 Ibid.
134 However final ministerial decisions on important matters were left to company officials. Serton, 8.
minister and author, while highlighting Valentijn’s contributions and participation in the eighteenth-century VOC agenda in trade, colonialism, and missionary work.

On the top and bottom of the frontispiece there are a total of seven putti. Once considered the messengers of the gods in Greek art, the putti are used in the frontispiece as an artistic device to highlight the importance of certain objects within the image. In so doing, the putti emphasize the importance of several features in the frontispiece that represent Dutch cultural pursuits during the eighteenth century, namely, geography, collecting, and ethnographic studies. Five putti are in the foreground, showing books and curiosities to the viewer. The foremost cherub looks at two books, both of which are opened to reveal images from India, one of which is a full-page portrait of a Mughal ruler. Several portraits of Indian rulers are included in Valentijn’s history of India, including portraits of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century ruler, Aurangzeb, Mughal emperor of India from 1658-1707 (Fig. 18). According to Zandvliet, the Mughal portraits reprinted in Valentijn’s book were most likely the work of Simon Schijnvoet who had copied Indian miniatures while working for the VOC as a deputy sheriff, landscape gardener, writer, and draughtsman. Valentijn’s book includes not only Mughal portraits but copies of Indian miniature paintings as well. Valentijn’s interest

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135 Hall, 256.
137 Zandvliet, Dutch Encounter, 123; Fisch, 29-39, 89-94.
138 Many collectors and artists, including Rembrandt and Rubens, collected Indian paintings, many of which were copies of Indian miniatures from artists like Schijnvoet and others who sold to these copies to travelers and VOC employees who brought these back to Europe for the exotic commodities and collecting market. The terms Indian, Mughal and Persian are often used interchangeably, but, erroneously. Persian miniatures were made in a style reminiscent of illuminated manuscripts and Chinese silk paintings. When the Mughal rulers conquered Northern India, their artists and mixed Hindu styles with their own traditions of Persian style illumination to create narrative paintings of the ruler’s lives and territories, and as traditions creating a unique narrative Indian style. This style also incorporated European portrait traditions. The
in the artwork of India is a reflection of the love affair collectors had with learning about exotic lands and cultures and the practice of collecting *artificialia* (artworks and decorative objects) from exotic lands, which continued throughout the entire seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries.

**Geography and the Frontispiece**

The seated cherub, in the frontispiece, rests his hand on a map which represents the many engraved maps included in Valentijn’s text. Geographical knowledge was vitally important to voyagers during the Dutch Golden Age and to the success of the Dutch mercantile economy in the 1720s. The Dutch were very involved in the study of geography in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the many atlases, maps, sea charts, topographical prints, and paintings, produced in the Netherlands reflect this interest.

Valentijn copied many of the one thousand or so maps included in his book from VOC cartographers and other diverse sources. However, some were printed for the first time in Valentijn’s work. Each geographical section discussed by Valentijn is preceded by one or more maps and most of these are of the islands and lands in the East Indies.

Although not entirely accurate or up to date, *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* was a useful and rather popular geographic resource.

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Indian portrait style, as seen in the little book on the frontispiece, and the many portraits copied and printed within Valentijn’s text are copies of seventeenth-century Indian portraits of Mughal rulers and Indian narrative paintings. Valentijn included several pages of these copied portraits to illustrate his history of Indian rulers when discussing India’s history. Regrettably, time and space do not allow further discussion of the interesting intercourse of art between Europe and India that is suggested by Valentijn’s interest and reproduction of portraits and miniatures he included in his text. Much of my knowledge of Indian art stems from studies with Brian Dursum and Marci Whittmer (faculty at the University of Miami) and a year of intense research on Indian *ragamalla* paintings which included a several weeks of study in New Dehli, India and at the Chicago Art Institute, which has in possession, the only complete *ragamalla* set (36 miniatures per set) in the United States.

139 Valentijn, *Oud*, Vol 1-5b; Arasaratnam, 54-55.
Through travel and trade, Dutch geographers set about describing land masses in relation to surrounding bodies of water, and by the end of the seventeenth century, much of the oceans and exterior landmasses had been charted. But mapping interiors was the task for eighteenth-century geographers, for by 1700 only very limited parts of the earth, mainly the coast lines, had been measured.\textsuperscript{140} Dutch geographers contributed to the project of geography and the development a flourishing mapmaking, printing, and publishing trade.\textsuperscript{141} Dutch presses published maps and descriptive geography, travel accounts, topographic paintings, and engravings of exotic locales.\textsuperscript{142} Holland became the preeminent mapmaker of Europe and produced a copious amount of “geographic print materials” that were published in many forms.\textsuperscript{143} From Dutch presses came a steady stream of literary descriptions, maps, atlases, and geographies. By the 1670s Dutch publishers exported geographic material, including travel descriptions, great collections of maps, atlases like the important and decorative Blaeu and Mercator atlases, throughout Europe. Dutch geographies were printed in Dutch, German, French, English, and Latin, and many of these works were reprinted in a variety of versions. England’s most accurate seventeenth-century atlas, the \textit{English Pilot} (1671), published by John Seller, was according to Schmidt, produced “from old worn Dutch plates.”\textsuperscript{144} Readers eagerly sought updated geographies and descriptions of exotic lands and true and false descriptions spread throughout literary circles and Valentijn’s work filled this demand. His was an enormous undertaking that was highly regarded in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{140} Serton, 9-10.
\textsuperscript{141} Schmidt, \textit{Mappings}, 22-23.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 25
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 22-26.
\textsuperscript{145} Serton, 8-11.\phantom{0}
Dutch interests in geography are seen in the many maps in Valentijn’s *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien* and the map on his frontispiece. Valentijn’s symbol of a map on the frontispiece is not only a reference to his text and eighteenth-century geography, but is also a cultural icon that represented Dutch culture.\(^{146}\)

European and Dutch mapmakers divided the world visually into four continents rather than the defined continents we have today, in order to make geography comprehensible while geographers were still attempting to measure the earth.\(^{147}\) This geographic division of the globe is reflected in the iconography of the four continents. When the four personifications were featured together in art, as in Valentijn’s frontispiece, the allegory represented geographic location as a whole along with its parts: in other words, the allegory symbolized the entire world as made up of four parts.

**Collecting and the Frontispiece**

Valentijn’s frontispiece is as much a visual compendium of symbols as his text is of descriptive information. On the foreground of the image two playful putti look at the shells in an open drawer of a small chest. Valentijn was a notable collector of natural history, particularly seashells, and the shells and cabinet in his frontispiece function as symbols of his copious and lengthy descriptions of the plants, animals, and shells in the book. Valentijn was an avid shell collector and he provided many pages of prints of shells in his description, particularly in his section on Amboina.\(^{148}\) At times Valentijn

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\(^{147}\) Serton, 9; Nussbaum, 10.

\(^{148}\) Eckhard Hollman, *Maria Sibylla Merian, The St. Petersburg Watercolours*, (New York : Prestel, 2003), 56-64. See also Dance and *Oud*. 
wrote in a very personal way describing his collecting passions. While in Batavia he wrote,

I also saw a *Nautilus* in the house of a friend, which was found by his men washed up on the shore there, worthy of a place in the finest collection I know of, since I have never seen another of such a size. It was fully a foot and a half across, and at the back (where as a rule such are barely a finger’s breadth thick) fully the width of two large thumbs, but here it had been broken in pieces against the rocks (which was a pity). I was astonished at its size, since the largest I had seen anywhere would have appeared very small in comparison. *I had a great desire for it,* although broken, but the owner would not give it up, so that I must forego it. Where now such occurs there are doubtless others of the same kind, but no one here is interested in anything but money.\(^{149}\) [emphasis mine]

Valentijn could have used dried plants, animal specimens, or catalogue drawings to symbolically convey the natural history portion of his work, but he determined that shells would suffice, probably because of his personal interests in shells, and because shells were used on Dutch frontispieces to symbolize eighteenth-century collecting practices.\(^ {150}\) These symbolic references to natural history and collecting reflect the organization and content of Valentijn’s text, and the Dutch collecting spirit for collecting *naturalia* and knowledge of the physical earth.\(^ {151}\) Valentijn’s frontispiece would not be complete as a reflection of the text without these visual references to natural history and collecting.

Dutch enthusiasm for collecting *naturalia* was equal to their interest in geographic print materials. Schmidt describes the Dutch as “keen publicists” with a “well developed printing industry [that] put into print whatever they could acquire and

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\(^{149}\) Valentijn, Vol II, 259, as quoted by Arasaratnam, 43.

\(^{150}\) See Chapter 4.

\(^{151}\) Dance, *Shells*, 1-41.
would in their view be useful and of interest.” Dutch publishers supplied the curious with a ‘freshly decontextualized, vertiginously decentered world … sundry bric-a-brac – admirabilia mundi … intended for a vast and cluttered mental cabinet of curiosities.” ¹⁵²

The pursuit of knowledge and curiosity of the material world drove rarities sellers and cartographers to sell “exotica” to eager consumers.¹⁵³ Such seemingly decorative images like the curiosity chest or shells in Valentijn’s frontispiece represent an entire industry of publishing, buying, selling, and collecting nature. These interests and pursuits continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during, what Freedberg called, the Golden Age of botanic treatises, drawings and collecting.¹⁵⁴ Valentijn’s inclusion of natural history descriptions in text and image reflects these cultural activities.

Valentijn’s Frontispiece as an Emblem

In the right hand lower corner of the frontispiece, an image of an angel writes the 23 and 24 verses of the 107th Psalm on a sheet of parchment, “Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: The earth is full of thy riches.” The angel summarizes the frontispiece allegory with a scripture praising the pursuit of wealth as if God himself justified it. This wealth originates from the four continents, or the earth at large, and the emblem glorifies the VOC for gathering these riches. Valentijn confirms this point in his praise for the company at the conclusion of his description of the Cape of Good Hope. He praises Dutch successes in the east saying,

¹⁵² Arasaratnam, 52; Schmidt, Mappings, 34.
¹⁵³ Nussbaum, 10.
¹⁵⁴ Freedberg, 377-418.
… the courageous Netherlands from time to time, and indeed with such strong and positive proofs of courage in the conquest of so many lands and kingdoms in the East, that (speaking without vainglory) we judge, that no other Europeans can in any way be compared with them for power, riches, renown and the possession of countries, seeing that they are also those, who in token of their great power in those lands, can depose and appoint Kings and Emperors at their good will, and do marvels there, at which the whole world must be amazed … 155

Such enthusiastic praise colors much of Valentijn’s text and the explanatory verse in the frontispiece qualifies this underlying attitude by providing a tone of godly approval. The meaning in Valentijn’s image is a key to how frontispieces can function emblematically. Just as the frontispiece is meant to be a visual counterpart to the text, the verse and book title are counterparts to the frontispiece imagery and give the image additional meaning.156 Through text and image, Valentijn’s frontispiece summarizes the various aspects of his text, and is an ideal example of an emblematic frontispiece. In creating emblematic frontispieces authors generally based their conceits on established emblem books (like Ripa’s *Iconologia*), and images from frontispiece traditions, and Valentijn’s image reflects both influences; it has strong resemblance in meaning and style to emblem classicists, and yet the frontispiece is similar in subject and style to many other Dutch artworks.

**Conclusion**

All the descriptive images on the frontispiece, thus far discussed, comment on the nature of Valentijn’s text as a study of political history, religious customs, and descriptive

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155 Serton, 267.
156 Drysdall, 5-10.
accounts of art and culture. They visually describe Valentijn’s work as a historiography of all things of interest to eighteenth-century readers.\(^\text{157}\) The symbols also indicate that Valentijn’s book is a compendium of natural history, geography, and pursuits for wealth.

During the Golden Age and into the eighteenth century, the Dutch were the largest importers and distributors of sugar, spices, porcelain, tea, and cloth from the East, grain, timber, Swedish metals, French salt and Baltic herring.\(^\text{158}\) The Dutch owned, operated and protected fortified factories (storage and business facilities) from Archangel in Russia to Recife in Brazil, and from Nagasaki in Japan to factories in New Amsterdam, and throughout all of Indonesia and Malaysia. The VOC seaborne empire created a period of vast wealth in an economy based on the acquisition of trade goods. Supplying jobs in various sectors, from shipping, ship building, warehousing, merchants and merchant shops, map makers travel writers, and geographers, the VOC kept people working in a country that has few natural resources, while supplying lucrative exotic goods and spices throughout Europe. The VOC enterprise contributed to a uniquely Dutch mania for trading, investing, collecting, and capitalizing on the exotic. The unparalleled expansion of Dutch trade “to distant and exotic lands, as far as shines the sun” was celebrated by poets and foreigners alike.\(^\text{159}\)

The scope of published materials, maps, landscapes, portraits of Mughal rulers and indigenous people, illustrations of various personal accounts of VOC employees and even images of musical instruments in Valentijn’s description of exotic lands and peoples is immense. Countless images of plants, fish, birds, shells, and other animals make

\(^{157}\) Valentijn; Arasaratnam; 48-53; Serton, 5-12.

\(^{158}\) Wilson, 1-4.

\(^{159}\) Boxer, 29.
Valentijn’s compendium an extensive reference for information on an encyclopedic scale, the largest study to have been published during the early-eighteenth century.\footnote{Arasaratnam, 48-52.} The frontispiece narrative glorifies Valentijn’s text and celebrates the VOC. This praise is reinforced by the heavenly inscription the angel writes. The four continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America represent the dominion of the VOC and the lands enriched by company trade. The putti show the viewer aspects of trade and travel that were important to eighteenth-century viewers and readers, namely the collection of knowledge of the natural world. The image includes a portrait of the author, Valentijn (which is not uncommon in frontispieces), to show the importance and success of Dutch missionary labors to further underscore the belief, repeated in the Psalm verses, that the wealth of the world was a gift from God sent to the Dutch. Perhaps Valentijn’s enthroning of the VOC, encircling her about with icons of the distant parts of the world, and highlighting the importance of geography and natural history in the frontispiece to his eight volume \textit{Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien} is not an overstatement, but rather is a splendid image that abridges Dutch economic wealth and the importance of travel, geography, and collecting in the Golden Age and into the early-eighteenth century.
Chapter Three

The Continents and Tribute in Valentijn’s Frontispiece and Dutch Art

Origins of the Four Continents Allegory

Before Valentijn used the allegory of the four continents bringing tribute to the VOC, a variation of the conceit had already been in use for over one hundred years in Dutch art and literature. In architecture, sculpture, paintings, engravings, verse, theatre, and poetry, Dutch artists employed the four continents allegory to glorify the city of Amsterdam, Holland, trade, and wealth throughout the seventeenth century. The abundance and endurance of this subject demonstrates its importance in Dutch culture. This discussion explores the origins of this imagery; the frequency which it was replicated in Dutch arts and shows that the recurrent use of this allegory in the varied arts suggests that the metaphor was familiar and readily understood by Dutch viewers. The historiography of the allegory demonstrates that changes to the allegory, including abbreviated versions, did not change its fundamental meaning. Thus Valentijn could change the meaning of the allegory’s, from Golden Age praises of Amsterdam to glorifying the VOC, while using the same traditional symbols. This chapter will address the development, use, and changes that occurred in the allegory in Dutch art and book frontispieces.
The Four Continents and the Central Personification: Amsterdam and the VOC

Enthroned

The four continents allegory, as seen on Valentijn’s frontispiece, has two parts. It is made from the personifications of the four parts of the world in combination with the central figure personifying the VOC, which we have seen was based on the emblem Magnanimity. Ripa did not create this particular combination; rather Ripa developed the individual continent personifications. In Dutch art, artists included the central personification to create the tribute allegory and in the development of Dutch iconography these two parts were successfully paired. The earliest representations of both parts of the allegory can be seen on sixteenth and seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish atlas frontispieces. One of the earliest examples of the continent personifications is on the title-page for Gerardus Mercator’s *Atlas Minor*, published by Jodocus Hondius in 1610 (Fig. 19). But the title-page by the Flemish mapmaker Abraham Ortelius, on his *Atlas* published in Antwerp in 1570 by the Plantin Press, features an early image showing the central figure type, personifying Europe in the title page, that became part of the tribute allegory (Fig. 20).

Mercator’s *Atlas Minor*, featuring the continents, is based on an architectural format with niche figures. Atlas holds a terrestrial globe and two geographers in ancient drape, representing Pliny and Ptolemy, measure the globe. Two figures situated on pedestals to the right and left of the title plate are vaguely suggestive of continent

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162 Atlas personified is first seen on this frontispiece. In Greek legend, Titian also called Atlas was condemned to hold up the sky for eternity to prevent its falling on the earth for his rebellion against his father. Once Mercator put Atlas on the frontispiece holding up the earth, the image became synonymous with map collections or Atlases. The ancient geographers Pliny and Ptolemy were considered the authorities and their images were often put on atlas frontispieces and maps to lend an air of authenticity and exactness to the maps. Ibid., 67.
personifications but clear representations of the continents are also featured on the title page. Crowned Europe, on the left, holds a scepter of rule and a cornucopia suggesting abundance and wealth. To the right stands a figure representing Asia, holding an incense burner with smoke rising from its base. The Asiatic lily in her right hand strengthens her association with the East. The figures are meant to represent geographic locations on the globe and suggest two of the four continents. Many frontispieces show the four continents personified by figures and by exotic commodities but, like Mercator’s, not all four continents representations contained a central figure.

Another early example of the combination of four continents that proved to be inspirational for Dutch artists was the title page of the second volume of Gerardus Mercator’s important atlas, the *Nova Totovs Terrarum Orbis*, published in 1633 (Fig. 21). Unlike his atlas of 1610, discussed above which suggested the continents of Asia and Europe, the frontispiece to *Nova Totovs* includes the four basic continent personifications. In an elaborate architectural façade, *Atlas* holds a celestial globe with a terrestrial globe at his feet. The personifications of the continents stand in architectural niches and on top of the classical façade. America sits on top of the façade wearing a feathered headdress. Africa, also positioned on top of the façade, leans against a crocodile. The continent personifications stand in the niches and all are conveniently labeled Europe, Asia, Peru and Magalamica respectively. (Before the globe had been fully circumnavigated, Europeans once believed that a landmass existed south of Tierra del Fuego which they called Magalamica).¹⁶³

Jan Jansson, another important Golden Age map maker used the four continents device in his *Nouvel Atlas* or *Theatre du Monde*, which was published in Amsterdam in

¹⁶³ Allen, 164-165.
The four continents of Europe, Asia, Africa and America stand in architectural niches, with a dedicatory emblem honoring the King of Spain in the form of an elaborate coat of arms.

The use of the four continents in Netherlandish and Flemish maps and frontispieces was common in the seventeenth century. According to Zandvliet, artists referred to the *Iconologia* for this imagery but they also consulted the engravings in Jan Huyghen Linschoten’s *Itinerario* to portray people and objects from Asia. The *Itinerario* (1595) was the first description of Asia to be printed in the Netherlands. Van Linschoten had worked for the Portuguese as a clerk in the retinue of the archbishop of Goa; he wrote the *Itinerario* to record his experiences, describe the peoples, and flora and fauna of exotic locales, and to share with the Dutch the secret Portuguese voyage routes, maps and charts that he had become familiar while in their employ. Artists engraved the maps and images based on Linschoten’s verbal and written descriptions. Thereafter, Dutch artists referred to the images found in the *Itinerario* as guides for their engravings of exotic peoples from the East. From map imagery, allegorical personifications of Ripa, and engravings found in the *Itinerario*, Dutch artists had several sources upon which they could draw in extending the early continental tribute conceit.

The central figure, often representing a state or an abstract idea such as faith, was added to the four continents allegories through the course of developing iconography in the seventeenth century. An early representation of this central figure is seen on the frontispiece by the Flemish mapmaker Abraham Ortelius on his *Atlas* published in Antwerp in 1570 by the Plantin Press (Fig. 20). The title-page, in an architectural style,

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features a seated female, representing Europe, who holds a scepter and a cross. She sits next to a large globe and the placement of her cross over the globe suggests her political and religious domain and power.\textsuperscript{166} Classical figures stand at either side of the title plate and one figure rests on the foreground, but they all lack accoutrements that would suggest geographic location or the continents. At first glance, this frontispiece appears to be related to Valentijn’s allegory, but it is only the central figure that is relevant in meaning to Valentijn’s developed allegory. Just as Ortellius’s seated female figure connotes political power and dominion so does Valentijn’s VOC figure connote economic power and dominion. This symbol of power was continued throughout the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century and became a stock figure type by the time it was featured in Valentijn’s frontispiece.

\textbf{Four Continents Allegories in Dutch Engravings and Frontispieces}

Dutch frontispieces and artworks demonstrate the profusion of continental tribute allegories. Some feature only the four continents personified as figures with commodities, but many others pair the continent figures with the central figure. When alone, the continents generally suggest location or commodities from the region symbolized. When the continents are featured together, the allegory usually means to convey the world. Paired with the central figure, the continents contribute to the meaning of tribute and praise. An early frontispiece showing tribute was engraved by Jacob van Meurs for the book \textit{Historische Beschryvingshe Amsterdam} (\textit{The Historical Description of Amsterdam}) (Fig. 23). The frontispiece was engraved in 1664 after an original

\textsuperscript{166} Allen, 36.
painting now in the collection of the Kweekschool voor de Zeevaart, 1604.\textsuperscript{167} This early image shows Amsterdam enthroned and personified as a queen holding the staff of Mercury, suggesting that she insures peace through commerce. A lion stands nearby to help identify The Netherlands.\textsuperscript{168} She is probably meant to be an international figure, who, like Solomon, received tribute from all over the known world. As described in the Bible: “… all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.”\textsuperscript{169} Behind the king, a drapery opens to reveal the sea and a ship, suggesting trade and travel. Surrounding him are the continents with their traditional attributes. America stands to Amsterdam’s left (on the right side of the frontispiece), and is personified by a female figure wearing a cloak, and holding an exotic bird, most likely a Brazilian macaw. Asia is personified by a turbaned man, carries an incense burner with aromatic spices. He stands with his attending camel. The figure of Europe is personified as a queen dressed in royal garb, kneeling in deference before Amsterdam. Her open bag of oranges and other fruits were brought to Europe through Dutch trade. She has bags of money hanging from her waist signifying commerce and wealth and she is accompanied by her attribute, the horse. The personification of Africa kneels to Amsterdam’s right wearing a feathered headdress and a grass skirt. His accompanying leopard stands nearby.

\textsuperscript{167} Boxer, 1.

\textsuperscript{168} Associating the Netherland Provinces as a lion was first conceived of by Frans Hogenberg for Austrian Michael von Aitzing’s map book De Leone Belgico where his map of the Low Countries called the Leo Belgicus was shaped in the form of a lion. In his description, Hogenberg referred to Netherlanders as fighters with the strength and courage of a lion. Claes Jansz Visscher recreated the allegorical map called the Lion Map with cartouches framing the map and frontispieces of the period also feature lions as symbols for the Low Countries. See H.A.M. van der Heijden, Leo Belgicus, An illustrated and annotated cartobiography, (Alphen aan den Rijn : Canaletto, 1990), 17-18.

\textsuperscript{169} 2 Chronicles 9:14, Bible, New James Version.
In the foreground of the frontispiece, a river god in the form of an old man sits near rushes, holding an oar and pouring water from a jug. Traditionally this figure was used to symbolize the great rivers of either Eden, or Europe.\textsuperscript{170} In this frontispiece, the old man symbolizes one of the main European rivers and may represent the important Rhine River (Rijn in Dutch) that was used by Dutch merchants for conveying trade goods. It may also be a reference to the rivers used in the Inter-European-Baltic trade industry, which the Dutch controlled.\textsuperscript{171} The ship on the sea in the background is revealed by a putto who parts the drapery of Truth. Combined, all these figures demonstrate the distances that the Dutch traveled to bring commerce to the diverse continents by way of ocean voyages and ferries upon the many inland waterways. The overall conceit clearly combines the personifications of the continents and the subject of bringing tribute to the king, a political symbol for The Netherlands, making the overall meaning a glorification of Amsterdam as the center of world trade, shipping, and wealth. This meaning is consistent with the subject of the book it faces which is a description of the city during the Golden Age.

Many other title pages reflect the importance and scale of Dutch trade. In the title page to the 1630 and 1633 editions of the book \textit{Nieuwe Wereldt, (The New World)} by Johannes de Laet, an allegorical queen personifies the Dutch Republic (Fig. 24). She receives tribute from three American Indians who “approach respectfully, bearing plates of pearls and gold, their leader astride an armadillo.”\textsuperscript{172} The Indians carefully approach in deference to the queen’s power, which is suggested by her elevation above them. Tribute, in the form of trade goods, is clearly represented by this simple and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Hall, 265.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Munro, 7; Wilson, 175-192; North, 17-19.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Schmidt, 219.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
straightforward image. Showing an alternative approach to the tribute device, the 1644 title page for *Begin ende Voortgang van de Vereenigde Neederlandtsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (A History of the VOC), features a figure representing Asia sitting prominently upon the title-plate (Fig. 25). She sits with attendants against a backdrop of palm trees that clarify her location in East Asia. Asia overlooks local traders who deliver exotic commodities to the “eager Dutchmen.” In the background a caravan with camels and exotic birds indicate overland journeys to distant locations from which exotic commodities have been gathered. The image reinforces the subject of continental tribute through the personification of Asia, and the continent is suggested through the foliage, animals, and tribute of exotic goods that the Indonesians have brought. The meaning of tribute is clearly implied because it is clear from the text that the trade wares were intended for the Dutch market. Furthermore, from the way in which Asia sits upon the title cartouche and the trading activities occur behind and below her, the image appears as if Asia herself is bringing the commodities to The Netherlands.

This theme is seen again in the 1664 title page to the book *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam* (Description of Amsterdam), written by P. von Zesen, which combines continents bringing tribute to Amsterdam, in similar design and iconography to the one produced for *Historische Beschryvingshe Amsterdam* and other tribute allegories (Fig. 26). A queen representing Amsterdam is surrounded by her advisors and symbols of global trade. An advisor holds the staff of Mercury to symbolize commerce. The continents of Asia, America, and Africa bring treasures from their lands. Asia wears a

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turban and kneels in the left foreground while across from him Africa, dressed in a grass skirt, kneels with the elephant tusks he offers to the queen. America bows in complete deference on the foreground, his feathered head resting on the ground in front of the queen. Palm trees in the background suggest distant tropical lands of the East and West Indies, from where exotic tribute arrives. The image is one of pomp and power, with Amsterdam put on a pedestal above the subservient continents and lands they represent.\(^{175}\)

Likewise, in Phillipus Baldaeus’s *Beschrijving der Oost-Indusche Kusten Malabar en Choromandel, (A True and Exact Description of the Great Island of Ceylon)* 1672, the title page features a number of Ceylonese traders who bring trade goods such as textiles, animals, jewels and other precious goods which are laid out for Dutch traders (Fig. 27). Four palm trees in the background suggest the island of Ceylon.\(^{176}\) Instead of an image of a queen or a personification of the Dutch Republic, a Malaysian prince oversees the bringing of tribute. In many locations throughout the East Indies, local princes gathered trade goods from local tribes. The commodities (usually spices) were brought to Dutch ships as tribute or taxes in exchange for Dutch trade goods or to buy protection from hostile tribes and Portuguese or Spanish traders. Though this image supplants the typical queen or king for a local prince, the central figure is still engaged in overseeing tribute. The meaning of tribute from the far reaches of the east is clear in this image when viewed in context with the many other images of tribute in Dutch frontispieces.

\(^{175}\)Lach, *Visual Arts*, 192.

\(^{176}\)Atwater, 131-132.
The continents are a common subject in Dutch travel frontispieces. In the frontispieces to the books Historische Beschryvingshe Amsterdam, Nieuwe Wereldt, and Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam the continents bring tributes, and when grouped together, they collectively represent the world. In Begin ende Voortgang van de Vereenigde Nederlandsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie and Beschrijving der Oost-Indusche Kusten Malabar en Choromandel, only the continent of Asia is shown in the frontispieces, but Asia is paired with tributes of exotic wares, and the meaning of these frontispieces also reflects tribute and wealth for The Netherlands. This common theme of tribute is represented by figures and commodities, and is an integral part of all the frontispieces we have just discussed, including Valentijn’s.

Painting and Imagery: The Tribute Allegory

The theme of prosperity and tribute can be found in many works of art from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An early example of the subject of Amsterdam enthroned at the center of global trade called Allegory on Amsterdam as the Center of World Trade is painted in oil on the lid to a Dutch harpsichord. The harpsichord was bought in Antwerp under the direction of Jan Pietersz, the official organist for Amsterdam. In 1604 it was placed in the old Town Hall where it was on display to citizens and visitors. The lid was painted by Pieter Isaaksz in 1606 at the Amsterdam city council’s request (Fig. 28). Although he was born in Denmark, Isaaksz was the son of a Dutch merchant, and Isaaksz himself had invested heavily in the newly founded VOC

177 Zandvliet, 159.
Karel van Mander, the Dutch artist and writer, designed the harpsichord’s iconographic program.\textsuperscript{179}

The lid features an image of Amsterdam personified as a woman enthroned. Two women attendants stand behind her and carry pearls and a ship, symbols for luxury goods and trading.\textsuperscript{180} Beside Amsterdam stands Neptune with his trident. Amsterdam holds her left hand above a terrestrial globe, which represents the earth and shows her domain. This image was probably influential in the design of many subsequent allegories of Amsterdam and the VOC, including the Valentijn frontispiece. Next to the globe are two soldiers holding nautical instruments that highlight Amsterdam’s ocean voyages.

In the background of this image are three ships, one of which bears the coat of arms of the Dutch Stadtholder Prince Maurice. It was probably meant to represent an early fleet that included the flagship \textit{Mauritius}.\textsuperscript{181} In the image, the \textit{Mauritius} heavy laden with exotic goods arrives from the Far East. Beyond the ships, in the background, is a map of the world suggesting distant lands and in the lower the right corner of the foreground there are small Asian figures and architectural structures. There is a tablet in the foreground of the lid with Latin verse that reads,

\begin{verbatim}
Exclusam Hesperia perituram Hispane putasi
Me? Frustra: nam cura Dei mihi pandit ad Afros
Primo iter, atque Indos, et qua patet extima China
Quaque etiam priscis non cognitus Orbis in Orbe
Perge favere Deus, daque his agnoscere Christum
\end{verbatim}

(\textit{Did you think that, barred from the Spanish West, I would be lost? Wrong: because with God’s help I opened the way to Africa and India, to where exotic China stretches out, and to a part of the world that even the Ancients did not})

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
Together, the verse and image on the harpsichord lid reflect the optimism of Amsterdam and declare Amsterdam to be the center of world trade and prosperity. Although the continents are not personified in this early work, Asia and Africa are suggested by the map, and figures of Asians, Asian architectural structures, and the exotic goods being unloaded from the ship suggest the East and wealth. Furthermore, this early work contributes to the establishment of the theme of the glorification of Amsterdam, which is later modified in Valentijn’s frontispiece to a glorification of the VOC, the source of Amsterdam’s wealth. The belief that God gave the Dutch their economic wealth is implicitly declared in the harpsichord lid and Valentijn’s image as well.

In the painting *Triumph with Goods from the East and the West*, ca. 1648 by Jacob van Campen, the continents are suggested by the goods displayed in the painting (Fig. 29). The painting was part of the decorative program of the Oranjezaal of the Huis ten Bosch, the summer palace built by Amalia von Solms who dedicated this central hall to the memory of Frederick Hendrick of Orange. The painting’s prominent location in the Huis ten Bosch affirms its importance. Julie Berger Hochstrasser describes the paintings as a “bold … encomium for the material conquest of the globe that Dutch trade was achieving.” A maiden, representing the Dutch Republic leads a procession of figures that bring shells, tropical fruits and birds, Chinese porcelain and

182 Ibid., (translation by Zandvliet).
184 Hochstrasser, 274.
baskets from Brazil.\textsuperscript{185} The maiden is a symbol of the Republic’s control in global trade and wealth just as the VOC is in Valentijn’s frontispiece.\textsuperscript{186} The continents are not expressly portrayed in the map or as personified figures, but they are suggested by the commodities, collectible exotic goods from foreign places, and by references to global trade and wealth. The central position of the woman in Van Campen’s painting and the abundance of goods that surround her emphasize her importance at the center of the trading world.\textsuperscript{187} It is a painting that both praises and reflects the times signaling “the wealth and prosperity of The Netherlands under the stadtholder …[as] overseas trade and imperial conquests are praised as exotic birds, Brazilian artifacts, Chinese porcelain, and rare fruits are displayed.”\textsuperscript{188} The painting is part of an elaborate memorial cycle that documents the political accomplishments in trade and wealth of the nation under the leadership of the recently deceased stadtholder Frederik Hendrik who had determined “the political and cultural ambitions of the Orange court.”\textsuperscript{189}

**Architecture and Sculpture**

Frontispieces and paintings are only a small portion of the images and works of art that reproduce the subject of the four continents and tribute in Dutch art. In 1648 the burgomasters of Amsterdam commissioned the construction of a new Amsterdam town hall to replace the crumbling medieval town hall (Fig. 30).\textsuperscript{190} The foundation was built a few months after the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia and the Peace of Munster, and

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Westermann, 36-39.
\textsuperscript{187} This abbreviated form of the continental tribute allegory may be one of the operating conceits in some Dutch still–lifes featuring exotic objects from diverse regions: which is a topic that bears further study and exploration.
\textsuperscript{188} Chong, 21.
\textsuperscript{189} Westermann, 38-39.
\textsuperscript{190} Westermann, *Worldly*, 155.
work continued throughout the 1660s. The building was to be the seat of government on a palatial scale and included a bank, a court, and a prison.\textsuperscript{191}

This was an optimistic period for people living in Amsterdam, and the Town Hall embodies the peace and prosperity of the time. This prosperity, gained through ambitious merchants and effective state power, had made The Netherlands the center of global trade and travel. Seventeenth-century Amsterdam was the “warehouse of the world, the seat of opulence, the rendezvous of riches, and the darling of the gods.”\textsuperscript{192} In fact, economists have argued that “by mid seventeenth-century, no port could challenge Amsterdam’s leading position.”\textsuperscript{193} The architectural and sculptural program of the Town Hall clearly reflects the Dutch position as a dominant trade empire. The Town Hall, with its “…sheer grandeur and august proportions, seemed to advertise the disproportionate power exercised by the city and its regents in the affairs of the Republic.”\textsuperscript{194}

The Town Hall, designed according to the principles of Dutch classicism by the Dutch painter and architect Jacob van Campen, is presently used as the Royal Palace. Daniël Stalpaert, the city architect, completed the project. When the building was constructed, it was the largest in The Netherlands and it was intended to rival the ancient and modern palaces of Rome, the magnificence of St. Peter’s, and the scale of the Escorial and the Palazzo Ducale in Venice.\textsuperscript{195} The building is based on a basilica plan with two large balanced rectangles on either side with courtyards and large rooms that are connected by wide corridors and staircases. The walls feature pilasters and garlands,

\textsuperscript{191} Schama, 225.
\textsuperscript{192} De Vries, 406.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 408.
which were made of rough hewn sandstone imported from Germany.\textsuperscript{196} The ceilings are barrel vaulted and the interior is richly decorated with Italian marble.

Artus Quellinus, a Flemish sculptor trained in Rome, designed the many marble friezes and pediment sculptures on the Town Hall. Above the east pediment he placed an 8,000 ton sculpture of the Maid of Peace (\textit{Vredesmaagd}) (Fig. 31).\textsuperscript{197} The Maid holds an olive branch for peace, Mercury’s staff for commerce, and has a cornucopia at her feet for prosperity. She represents the importance of commerce and trade in seventeenth century Dutch culture in the same manner as the seated maidens and queens receiving tribute in the frontispieces discussed earlier.\textsuperscript{198} Just as queens and princes in tribute allegories receive wares from all over the world, the Maid on the Town Hall overlooks and receives the exotic wares that were being brought into to Amsterdam harbor. Jan Vos mirrored these themes of wealth and prosperity in his poem \textit{The Increase of Amsterdam} 1662, where he writes that he hopes “wealth may find some rest in the shadow of peace.”\textsuperscript{199}

The east and west pediment sculptures on the Town Hall continue the theme of Amsterdam personified receiving homage. The east pediment shows a seated figure representing Amsterdam as the point where all oceans and trade routes converge at the “centre of this web of commerce” representing Amsterdam’s command and presence over seafare.\textsuperscript{200} Venus, mermaids, sea gods, and ocean creatures surround the personification of Amsterdam and pay her homage.

\textsuperscript{196} Westermann, \textit{Worldly}, 155.
\textsuperscript{197} Schama, \textit{Embarrassment}, 240-241.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 240.
\textsuperscript{200} Wilson, 3.
The west pediment offers a related image wherein the *Maid of Amsterdam* is surrounded by personifications of the four continents including Asia, Africa, Europe and America, all of whom deliver their trade goods and treasures to her. The continents are attended by animals; monkeys escort Asia (instead of the traditional camel), an alligator accompanies America, and a camel and elephants escort Asia and Africa respectively. The *Maid of Amsterdam* rests her feet on a globe signaling her global authority. In Van Campen’s original design, the sculptures displayed the arrival of trade goods, but in Quellinus’s reworking of Van Campen’s design, the four continents deliver their goods personally to Amsterdam. Within the context of Dutch trade and travel it is understandable that the Town Hall would reflect the interests of the Dutch seaborne empire and the splendor and wealth of its largest and most powerful city, Amsterdam with its main ports and warehouses.

The Town Hall interior also extends the themes of prosperity and glory. Inside, the Citizen’s Hall (Burgerzaal) is designed to be a theatre of the world with Amsterdam at its center. Laid into the marble floor is a map of the eastern and western hemispheres. The ceiling is painted to represent the northern lights, and Amsterdam is personified in sculptural relief above the main doorway into the room (Fig. 32). An eagle holds a crown above her head and lions sit obediently at her feet. Personifications of wisdom and power attend her. Atlas, holding the globe on his shoulders, stands above this sculpture. Katherine Freemantle explains the iconography of the Citizen’s Hall. She writes,

> By virtue of its decoration the citizen who visited the Burgerzaal found himself in a small universe in which he might take his rightful place, crossing the two hemispheres.

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as he walked across the floor, as Amsterdam's trading vessels crossed the world in reality, with the heavens above him, the sun rising to the east and setting to the west, and the four elements round him.203

In other words, the overall theme of this room was designed to highlight Amsterdam’s position at the very center of the universe.204

Verse and Prose

Praise for the wealth of Amsterdam and The Netherlands was not limited to visual representation in the form of sculpture, engravings, and paintings. Writers of the period like Caspar Barlaeus, Jan Vos, and Joost van Vondel composed long poems to celebrate the wealth of Amsterdam, to commemorate the completion of the Town Hall, and to celebrate triumphal entries like that made by Marie de Médici, into Amsterdam in 1638.205 In his poem, dedicated to Marie de Médici, Barlaeus compared her heritage with the “greatness of this city in trade, and the good fortune and happiness of its citizens.”206 Theatrical productions also commemorated Dutch pursuits and accomplishments in wealth and trade. In 1648, a theatrical play was performed on the Dam to honor peace and Amsterdam. In the play, peace is connected to prosperity and the imagery of the continents. Tribute is clearly declared:

Bless’d Amsterdam, surrounded by water-multitudes, now yields Neptune’s fork as empress of the freshwater and salt waves. Her head is bewigged with a crown of prows. Fame bestrides her throne and blows her trumpet of praise. Justice, the strength of cities, Freedom, the aged Discipline,

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204 Ibid.
205 Schama, 299.
206 Casparus Barlaeus, *Marie de medicis entrant dans Amsterdam, ou Histoire de la Réception faite à la Reyne mere du Roy très-Chrétien...par les Bourgmaistres et Bourgeoise de la Ville d’Amsterdam*, 1638, preface, as quoted by Schama, 299.
Religion and Peace are arrayed at her right side. She has Trade, Plenty, Wealth, Unity and Faithfulness, whose nature is sincere, at her left hand. All her city wards are swarming with foreign traders. Black-colored Africa gives her ivory, blood coral and gold. America gives her sugar cane, and silver, and wood which the unexplored forest of the west may boast of. And Asia gives her silks, and pearls, and flowers, with censers and other treasures. Their princes stand amazed now that they see the rich city on the Amstel blazing so gloriously on her throne. Good fortune gives her hand. Those who denounce disastrous War greet her from afar as the Mother of Peace.207 [emphasis author’s]

Whole volumes were written praising Amsterdam, its wealth, and Dutch progress. Tobias van Domselaer’s Beschryving van Amsterdam (Description of Amsterdam) 1665, was highly complementary of Amsterdam as was Melchior Fokkens’ 1662-64 Beschryving der Wijdt-Vermaerde Koop-stadt Amsterdam (Description of the widely renowned merchant city of Amsterdam).208 Both celebrated Amsterdam’s wealth through trade. These gazetteers were similar to present day chamber of commerce publications promoting local towns. Gazetteers celebrated city commerce, landmarks, and historical features. They were commissioned by civic leaders and usually contained information that travelers would require, such as lodging, locations of churches, times of the ferries, and even departure and arrival times of long-distance merchant voyages.209 Gazetteers advertised the key attractions in Dutch towns, and promoted public monuments, churches, commercial buildings, and private residences. Gazetteers frequently contained histories and martyrologies of civic heroes.

207 “The Mother of Peace” (Beschryving der Vertooningen), Gerichten I, p. 585-586, as quoted in Fremantle, Baroque, 55-6.
208 Schama, 300.
209 Schama, 298-300.
Writers of gazetteers were not shy in celebrating the Republic and praising it as the “emporium mundi.”\textsuperscript{210} Sometimes these literary works included prints from artists like Simon de Vlieger, Jan van de Velde II, Claes Janz and Visscher.\textsuperscript{211} Literary works and engravings like these were, like so many other images, a tribute to Amsterdam and commerce gained through Dutch travel. For example, the engraving \textit{Panorama of Amsterdam}, from the \textit{Profile of Amsterdam from the I, with Subsidiary Scenes}, printed in 1611 by Claes Jansz Visscher, is a tribute image of the busy cosmopolitan Amsterdam port within a documentary format (Fig. 33). Between one and two thirds of all Asian luxury goods imported into Europe entered the Netherlands through Amsterdam ports, and the image expresses the magnitude of the Dutch trading industry.\textsuperscript{212} In the engraving the \textit{Maid of Amsterdam} (Quellinus’s statue on top of the Amsterdam house discussed above) overlooks the busy port and “receives with great pleasure all the most prominent peoples of the world, all with their most excellent trading goods.”\textsuperscript{213} The engraving pictures the magnitude of the Dutch trade and exotic mercantile industry in 1611 but does not convey the immense growth of the trade empire during the Golden Age or Valentijn’s eighteenth century.

Civic literary praise was presented in other forms as well, and tributes are frequently found on tombstones, medallions, tracts, and poetry.\textsuperscript{214} Engraved on the pedestal of Quellinus’s \textit{Maiden} statue in the Town Hall, sculpted in the late 1660s, was this dedication that mirrors Valentijn’s verse of praising God-given wealth:

\begin{tabular}{l}
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\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 298. \\
\textsuperscript{211} These woodcut and copper-plate engravings were used and reused in different literary editions and sold as single prints. Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{212} O’Rourke, 29. \\
\textsuperscript{214} Chong., 300. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
So, Amsterdam has risen through the hand of God to the peak of prosperity and greatness . . . The whole world stands amazed at its riches and from east and west, north and south they come to behold it. The Great and Almighty Lord has raised this city above all others . . . yea he has even taken from them the shipping of the east and the west (for in former times Antwerp and Lisbon also flourished) and has spilled their treasure into our bosom.”

Clearly, tribute was a common theme in Dutch art and entailed the four continents imagery with a central personification of power.

Antecedents of the Central Personification

In tracing the development of the four continents allegory and the addition of a central personification, it is important to note Flemish influences. Ortelius’s seated female figure from the first Flemish atlas was a stylistic type that was reproduced in many other Flemish and Dutch works, such Peter Paul Rubens’s frontispiece, Geographia Blaviana, for Joan Blaeu’s Dutch atlas, The Atlas Maior (also known as Le Grand Atlas), published in Amsterdam, 1663 (Fig. 34). The Atlas is a collection of some of the finest maps and section title-pages ever published in Holland and Rubens’s frontispiece is a clever design that incorporates a four continents allegory. The manner in which Rubens’s styled the figure of Geographia was particularly influential in the

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215 Ibid.
216 According to Julius Held and Christopher Brown Rubens designed over 100 title pages, and many of these were for the Plantin Press and other publishers. It is believed that this particular frontispiece was adapted from one of Rubens’s designs before his death in 1640. See Cornelis Keoman, Joan Blaeu and His Grand Atlas, Introduction to the Facsimile Edition of Le Grand Atlas, 1663, (Amsterdam: Theatrvm Orbis Terrarvm Ltd., 1970), 1. Held, 1-8; Brown, 353-355.
styling of the seated female figure in Valentijn’s frontispiece. Furthermore, this image type was well known and influential for Dutch artists because it was adapted for the sculpture above the doorway at the east end of the Citizen’s Hall (Burgerzaal) in the Amsterdam Town Hall above the doorway and on the east and west pediment sculptures. Quellinus no doubt intended the figure to represent the city of Amsterdam and the security and prosperity she insures, but it is also clear, according to Freemantle, that Quellinus patterned the figure after Rubens’s earlier personification of Austria made for the Triumphal Entry of Prince Ferdinand, who went to Antwerp to rule as Governor-General, under the Hapsburg Empire in 1635 (Fig. 35).²¹⁷

In 1642 Caspar Gevaerts published a historical overview of Rubens’s writings and engravings for the decorations for the Triumphal Entry of Prince Ferdinand of Austria into Antwerp in his book *Pompa introitus … Ferdinandi.*²¹⁸ The book describes the Arch of Philip under which Prince Ferdinand passed when entering the city. The arch was fitted with Rubens’s seated figure symbolizing the Austrian Empire. This figure of Austria is very much like Ortelius’s figure of Europe and is clearly a precedent for Valentijn’s VOC figure both in form and meaning. Rubens’s Austria figure was seated with symbols of the zodiac surrounding her, and the Hesperus star above her head.²¹⁹ To

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²¹⁷ Freemantle, *Themes*, 222-263.
²¹⁸ Ibid., 263-266.
²¹⁹ Ibid.
her right and left were the sun and moon, and she held a cross-shaped scepter
symbolizing her success at bringing the Indies into Christianity.\textsuperscript{220} Rubens’s Austria
figure holds a caduceus, and exotic commodities; ears of corn from the Americas and
Oriental poppies suggested economic power through trade.\textsuperscript{221}

Rubens’s collected Roman coins and, according to Freemantle, he was inspired by the
iconography and formal styling of their figures.\textsuperscript{222} In fact, Freemantle suggests that
Rubens adopted the iconography of the \textit{Roman Universal Mother} or \textit{Magne Matriae} as
imprinted on the coin of Faustina for his figure of Austria (Fig. 36). The figure on the
coin is an earth figure, \textit{Cybele}, accompanied by her lions and Freemantle believes
Rubens’s adapted this figure, altering the pose to be a full frontal view and adding the
zodiac signs and earth orb.\textsuperscript{223} Ruben’s personification of Geography in the Blaeu
frontispiece is based on an emblem of \textit{Cybele} with her lions also. In adapting Rubens’s
Austria for the figure of Amsterdam, Quellinus’s eliminated the zodiac symbols but
retained the image of a stately female figure with lions, an otherwise nearly identical
figure to Rubens’s Austria.

It is clear that Quellinus was influenced by Rubens for the seated figure of
Amsterdam. Rubens’s inspiration was clearly based on Roman sources, but Italian
sources were also influential in the development of the iconography and posing of the
seated female figure. For just as we can see in Ortellius’s title-page a similar figure
which is seated beneath an Italian arch of grape vines that would have been inspired by

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.\textsuperscript{222} Ibid.\textsuperscript{223} Ibid.
Michelangelo’s *Pieta* and many Flemish and Dutch artists engraved diverse copies of Michelangelo’s sculptures. Jacques de Gheyn II’s engraving of a Madonna is clearly similar in style to the *Pietá* (Fig. 37). The late-sixteenth century engraver, Cornelis Cort, engraved copies of Michelangelo’s tombs of Lorenzo and Giuliano de Medici, and he must have been particularly mindful of Michelangelo when he engraved *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1576, published in Amsterdam (Fig. 38). No doubt this was what Cort had in mind when he designed his emblem *Magnamity*, in 1560, translating the ecclesiastical power associated with the Virgin Mary into an emblematic symbol (Fig. 39). And as noted, Ortelius’s atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, features the stately female type on the atlas frontispiece as a type for Europe. This earliest of atlases does not feature the figure of *Atlas* or four continents allegory in their mature emblem, but does display the enthroned female type that was repeated on many Dutch frontispieces and artworks. Moreover, because of the popularity of Blaue’s *Atlas* and the depiction of Amsterdam in the Citizens Hall of the Town Hall, which was seen by Amsterdammers throughout the period, this central figure type was a familiar form that Dutch viewers associated with economic power.

This seated female figure type was incorporated into Valentijn’s design, not as an emblem of political power as in the Citizens Hall, nor a religious icon (Europe holding a scepter with a Christian cross) as in Ortelius’s title-page, but as a symbol of economic power and wealth, the VOC. While Rubens’s influence in contributing to the promulgation of this female type by the popularity of his work is certainly noted as well

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225 Manfred Selink, 212.
226 Allen, 36.
as earlier sources for the style, it was in the hands of Dutch artists that this type was incorporated into a uniquely Netherlandish four continents tribute allegory. This is not to say that the allegory of tribute and continent personifications was strictly a Netherlandish image, but that the allegory was uniquely applied to summarize Golden Age pursuits for wealth. In summary, Dutch Golden Age styles were directly influenced by Italian classicism and eighteenth century art critics insisted on a return to these classical themes and styles. In Dutch iconography, the continent personifications represent geographic locations, but the tribute allegory becomes fully developed in the Golden Age in the union of the two parts; the continent representations with the inclusion of the central figure, and in Valentijn’s image, the allegory praises not Amsterdam, but the VOC as the source of Netherlandish wealth.

Conclusion

From the earliest voyage to the East Indies by Cornelis de Houtman in 1595, to successful voyages throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Amsterdam enjoyed unprecedented wealth and growth. Amsterdam became Holland’s largest and richest city. Images of trade, collections of exotic goods and commodities, and personifications of Holland, Amsterdam, or the VOC demonstrate the Dutch belief that they were the center of world.227 Such opulence and wealth continued throughout much of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth century and this wealth was celebrated in the poetic praises and images including Valentijn’s.

During the seventeenth century Dutch artists developed the allegory of continental tribute to glorify Amsterdam, The Netherlands, as well as the VOC as demonstrated by

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227 Wilson, 3.
Valentijn’s eighteenth-century frontispiece. The allegory was created by combining continent personifications like those on Mercator’s title page with the central seated female figure found on Ortelius’s title page. Artists adapted the allegory to suit their needs throughout the seventeenth century until they had created an allegory that fully reflected Dutch trade and travel culture. A long tradition of personifying Amsterdam or Holland as a seated female figure, from Isaaksz’s harpsichord lid to Quellinus’s Amsterdam figure in the Citizens Hall, his Maid of Amsterdam on top of the Hall overlooking the Dam, and his intricate manifestations in the overall sculptural program of the Amsterdam Town Hall, are hallmark expressions of the tribute allegory in Dutch Golden Age art. In its most abbreviated form, the continental tribute theme is seen in van Campen’s procession of global commodities and various frontispieces featuring commodities from the East and West. So common was this imagery, in fact, that Valentijn could use it in an abbreviated or simplified form, eliminating the attending animals and many of the plants and commodities generally associated with them, without any misunderstanding on the part of viewers.

The abundance of art works employing the device of continental tribute clearly indicate that the Dutch considered themselves at the very center of world trade.\footnote{228 Ger Luijten and Ariane van Suchtelen, \textit{Dawn of the Golden Age} (Zwolle: Waanders, 1994), 521-522.} \footnote{229 The last frontispiece to use the four continent imagery that was published in Amsterdam is Carl Linneaus’s frontispiece to the \textit{Hortus Cliffortianus}, 1738, a garden catalogue by the Dutch collector Georg Clifford. Linnaeus’s frontispiece is a prime example of the decline of the metaphor, but it is an interesting image in that the personifications no longer symbolize continents or geography but rather exotic nature. The scientific elements in Valentijn’s frontispiece relate to Dutch collecting culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and are probably sources of inspiration for Linnaeus as earlier catalogue as collecting frontispieces do not generally feature the four continents (although natural history texts often do).} By the time Valentijn designed his frontispiece, the use of four continents paying tribute to the Dutch Republic had been a symbol of Dutch prosperity for over a century.
As a product of its time, Valentijn’s frontispiece exemplifies an eighteenth
century resurgence of interest in Italianate allegory and styles as Netherlanders looked
back nostalgically to the Golden Age.\textsuperscript{230} But Valentijn’s emblem is unique, differing
from precedent frontispieces, in that the allegory is applied in a new way, to glorify the
VOC.

\textsuperscript{230} De Vries, \textit{Felicitous Age}, 29-46.
Eighteenth-Century Collecting Culture

As the Dutch circumnavigated the world, they increasingly became more interested in describing and publishing it.\textsuperscript{231} Holland’s prolific publishing industry, from the Golden Age into the early-eighteenth century, issued numerous editions of geographic materials, maps, atlases, travel descriptions, topographical paintings and engravings. These geographic print materials dominated the publishing industry and European consumers could obtain geographies printed in German, Latin, English, French, Swedish and Spanish, availing “themselves of the flood of products that streamed so impressively from the Dutch Republic.”\textsuperscript{232} Arasaratnam describes this industry, explaining that, “the Dutch were keen publicists, and, with their well developed printing industry, put into print whatever they could acquire and would in their view be useful and of interest” including an ample supply of geographies, atlases, botanicals, herbals, and collection catalogues.\textsuperscript{233}

During the Golden Age, Holland was the preeminent source for extravagant atlases by the printers Joan Blaeu, Johannes Janssonius, Frederick de Wit and others. By 1670 the Dutch were the reigning geographers of Europe, producing leading accounts of

\textsuperscript{231} Schmidt, \textit{Mapping}, 25.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid., 31-32.
\textsuperscript{233} Arasaratnam, 52.
Asia, Africa, and America published in French, English, and Latin. The business of publishing and selling world views became a large domestic and inter-European industry.

The immense stock of geography, cartography, natural history, tropical painting, and travel literature produced in the Dutch Republic—was indeed an “embarrassment of riches.” Yet they were riches meant to be moved from the shop, atelier, and merchant ship to the shelf, study, and Kunstkammer of consumers across Europe. To do so, the Dutch created an image—pursued a marketing strategy, as it were—that presented the increasingly contested globe as a decontextualized, decentered repository of bountiful curiosities and compelling collectibles. Less and less involved themselves in colonizing overseas, the Dutch could now afford to present a neutral, widely agreeable, perhaps even bland image of the world. Rather than the local and provincial, they now strove for the global and universal—at least, it merits reiterating, from the colonial European perspective—in projecting a world of alluring, enticing, spectacular richness. By the opening of the global eighteenth-century, that world had become simply exotic.234

By the eighteenth century, The Netherlands was the main publisher and exporter of both exotic geographies and natural history books. These geographic and natural history materials were considered valuable commodities in the publishing industry and Amsterdam and Leiden were important publishing centers producing these exotic materials.235 Schmidt describes the general tone of Dutch naturalia literature as an “eclectic” packaging of the world into a “sprawling compendia of curiosities” with a focus on the creatures, habitats and unknown landscapes of the globe, and collections of natural history rather than focused descriptions of Dutch deeds and settlements.236 But serious works of geography and natural history were also produced, making the early

234 Schmidt, Mappings, 37.
235 Ibid., 25-34.
236 Ibid., 25.
eighteenth-century a Golden Age of Dutch publishing. This peak period in Dutch
publishing produced many important volumes, including Philipp Cluver’s, (Cluverius)
*Introductions in universam geographium*, which was published in 67 editions by 1725,
and Pieter van der Aa, whose 28 volume geography series, ca. 1706-1712, became a
standard reference throughout most of the eighteenth-century.²³⁷ Valentijn’s popular *Oud
en Nieuw Oost Indien* was an important geographic description representing, like other
impressive books of the period, the scientific interests of eighteenth-century readers in
comprehending the world.²³⁸

Like the subject of geography, to say that collecting and studying nature was a
part of eighteenth-century Dutch culture would be an understatement. Merchant vessels
were in continual contact with the natural wealth of remote islands, and they arrived in
Amsterdam daily bulging with exotic wares and *naturalia* from the East Indies making
Holland the center of the domestic and European *naturalia* trade market.²³⁹ Dutch
collections of all sizes and types are indicators of Dutch cultural interests in possessing
nature and evidence of a complex network of global selling and collecting of nature.²⁴⁰

Valentijn participated in Dutch pursuits to describe nature. Valentijn gathered a
large collection of natural history prints and provided ample descriptions of plant and
animal life to satisfy readers’ curiosity. He attempted to discuss all plants considered
important during the period; namely, plants useful for foods, medicines, and trade. The
VOC culinary gardens were particularly noted and described. He discussed silkworms,
mulberry trees, and the silk production industry. He paid particular attention to spice
plants like ginger, cardamom, pepper, tobacco, and edible roots like melons, asparagus, radishes, parsnips, cucumbers, pumpkins, rosemary, lettuces, fennel, mint, mustard, beans and other useful plants.  

Much of Valentijn’s accounts natural history are straight forward descriptions. In his volume on Ceylon where, among other important and useful plants, he describes the cinnamon tree, Valentijn wrote,

There are three sorts of cinnamon here; first, the fine, which is peeled from the young and middle-aged trees; the second, the coarse, which comes from the thicker and older trees; and the third, the wood or wild cinnamon, which is also found in Malabar and in other quarters of which I can hardly fetch one-fifth the price of the real cinnamon. But the real cinnamon is found nowhere except on this island (Ceylon-Sri Lanka). However our Company is sole master of the wild and of the good cinnamon completely.

Valentijn’s descriptions satisfied the curiosity of eighteenth-century collectors and their viewpoints that nature, as a source of economic profit, was to be cultivated and marketed for health, and wealth.

The very plants and accoutrements of the four continents personification figures implied marketable commodities, collectible nature, and exotic location. Thus while a frontispiece or work of art may use the allegorical figures to suggest location, the natural history of that location could stand on its own as a symbol for itself without the personified figure. Most commonly, particularly in the eighteenth century, frontispieces for naturalia collections featured cabinets of various sizes, objects of natural history, maps and globes, and sea shells, (a favorite collectors object of the period) to summarize
books on geography and nature. Valentijn’s frontispiece features a cabinet, shells and several atlas books and geographies. These objects are significant and firmly ground the frontispiece in the eighteenth century because they reflect contemporary interests and they are derived from seventeenth and eighteenth-century Dutch iconographic traditions.

It is precisely because Valentijn’s frontispiece incorporates symbols from natural history and geography frontispieces that the image may be distinguished from other Dutch frontispieces. These symbols of natural history and geography were purposefully included in the frontispiece in order to fully reflect eighteenth-century Dutch culture and the book’s contents as a collection of information of the world and its inhabitants, flora, and fauna. Furthermore, these symbols complete Valentijn’s emblem, for without them, the emblem would be a singular statement on Dutch and VOC pursuits of wealth fashioned after Italianate emblem and aesthetic traditions. But because the frontispiece includes symbols of natural history and geography, the emblem becomes a comprehensive reflection of Valentijn’s text and of eighteenth-century Dutch collecting culture, and it was for this audience that Valentijn wrote his book. Though a discussion of Valentijn’s interests and symbols of natural history and their antecedents in earlier Dutch collecting frontispieces must be reserved for another discussion, Valentijn’s frontispiece echoes, through allegory and other symbols, his book, Golden Age styles and iconography, and eighteenth-century economics, collecting and elitist interests, and nostalgic aesthetics.
Valentijn’s Emblem

On Valentijn’s frontispiece, the Biblical verse, written by the angel, clarifies the meaning of the frontispiece emblem: “Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works: In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.” The angel clarifies the visual allegory by writing praise for the Dutch pursuit of wealth. This wealth, according to the image, originates from the four continents, or the earth at large. Through the insignia and the personification of the VOC (as “Magnanimity”), the image and text both praise Dutch self-aggrandizement and pursuits for wealth and power. The image glorifies the VOC as the central force responsible for gathering in these riches, described on the image as trade commodities, tusks, jewels, and spices.

Yet the complex emblem contains a second layer of meaning, for if the Biblical verses are interpreted in combination with Valentijn’s text, and his references to nature in the frontispiece, (through the symbols of shells, the curiosity cabinet, and geography books which the putti in the foreground play with), the verses praise for the ‘earth’s fullness of riches’ also means the abundance of God’s creations -- the natural history of the physical world.245 Because the bulk of Valentijn’s text is a very long description of the diverse lands, flora, fauna, and peoples of the world, it is fitting that his emblem symbolizes his text through visual references to geography and exotic commodity, and the overall meaning of the image must be understood as a reference to both the riches of natural world and the wealth the VOC had amassed.

245 As defined in footnote 2, referring to Valentijn’s emblem is to comment on all aspects of the frontispiece, including meaning, explanatory verse, imagery, and the book’s contents which the frontispiece summarizes. The entire combination of these elements must be considered to derive Valentijn’s full meaning. This is the mentally engaging aspect of deciphering and creating emblems.
The explanatory poem written by the publisher Braam alludes to this additional meaning by clarifying the allegorical figures. By identifying the figure of Curiosity, (Nieuwsgierig) Braam says that the figure seeks earnestly for knowledge and so sets her eyes on the statuette of a king representing the kingdom, or the realm of earthly knowledge.246 This figure of Curiosity is hidden in the frontispiece behind the cherubs and the curiosity cabinet in the foreground. The figure looks similar to the cherubs, and holds a statuette (probably Indian in origin) in her hands. She gazes intently on the statuette and holds it up for the viewer to see. She unifies the putti and objects of the foreground as they all relate to the study of the natural world. Braam’s poem explains that these earthly treasures of natural history are “Hereby God’s wonders on earth and sea and belong to whoever rises early to see the early light of day” (the botanists and natural historians working in the East).247 These symbols of natural history, combined with the glorification of the VOC, embellish the meaning of the emblem allowing it to completely represent Valentijn’s text: the earth’s treasures are defined as the artificialia, naturalia and knowledge of the world’s inhabitants these treasures are gathered from the four parts of the globe by the VOC.

With the emblem’s double meaning, and all its symbols, it fulfills its primary purpose – to be a visual summation of the text. Its layers of meaning are understood from a thorough reading of symbol and verse in context with the book’s contents. The image comments on the text in the form of a brainteaser, a puzzle made from symbolic imagery. Its meaning can only be realized by assembling all the parts of image and text, including verse and the text in the book. The correspondences between meanings, symbol and text

246 The explanatory poem and interpretation are reprinted in Appendix I. Written by Joannes van Braam, publisher, in Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien, 3.
247 Ibid.
makes the image a superb frontispiece that stands out splendidly among Dutch
frontispiece traditions.

**Conclusion**

Valentijn’s frontispiece reflects prevailing eighteenth-century cultural interests in
trade, travel, geography, natural history, collecting, and the pursuit of wealth. By
reviewing many frontispieces sharing symbolic features in common with the Valentijn
image, this study has shown the ingenuity and character of the frontispiece, as well as the
way in which it employs traditional frontispiece symbolism and iconography to fulfill its
purpose as a visual summation of literary information.

Geographic symbols developed on maps and frontispieces to represent possession,
place, and commodity. These symbols are continued on Valentijn’s image and were
understood by educated readers accustomed to these types of images in maps and atlases.
The meanings of these symbols reflect the nature of Valentijn’s book as a compendium of
geographic information. Geographers began to more fully measure the interiors of
distant lands in the eighteenth century, having determined the size of the oceans and
islands in the seventeenth century. As a result, many important geographic descriptions
and atlases (like Valentijn’s) were produced in The Netherlands in the early eighteenth
century and Valentijn’s geographic symbols, descriptions and maps reflect the interests of
the time in geography.

During the early-eighteenth century, there was also a continued interest in Dutch
society in collecting nature, precursory to the upcoming enlightenment period with the
efforts of Linnaeus, Diderot and others at cataloguing the world and creating extensive
encyclopedias of natural history. Many important Dutch botanical treatises, natural history descriptions (like Valentijn’s), medical treatises and expansive collection catalogues were produced. The symbols customarily used on collection catalogue frontispieces featured cabinets of various sizes and shells, as seen also on Valentijn’s image. These objects symbolize Dutch passions for collection and a shared effort by collectors to categorize and organize nature, foretelling the accomplishments in ordering nature by Linnaeus which came only a decade after Valentijn’s *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*.248

The image’s ability to abridge text is also accomplished through the use of traditional symbolism, placing the image firmly within the context of Dutch frontispiece traditions. The most obvious of these traditional emblems include the four continents personifications conventionally used to represent geographic location throughout the seventeenth century and particularly during the Dutch Golden Age. But Valentijn’s frontispiece is exceptional in the manner in which earlier symbols have been combined to give the work new meanings. For example, the four continents personifications on the Valentijn image were understandably abundant in seventeenth-century frontispieces related to travel in order to symbolize location and also occasionally referred to the commodities they brought in from the diverse regions or continents of the globe. This meaning of the four continents allegory remained consistent throughout the entire seventeenth and well into the eighteenth century and may be found in Dutch frontispieces, paintings, and architecture. In Valentijn’s image, the focus of the personifications is on the commodities they carry in order to represent the trade goods brought to the Netherlands, largely through VOC trade. Even though the traditional

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248 Koerner; Farber, 6-22.
attending animals have been eliminated from the personifications, the overall meaning is still readily understood.

As in many Dutch works of the seventeenth century, the Valentijn frontispiece also includes a central figure receiving tribute, but in this image the figure represents the VOC, economic power, and wealth rather than national or political power. This central personification is also patterned after a long tradition of female types in Dutch and Flemish art. Valentijn’s emblem of the VOC as Magnamity is clearly derived from Ripa, but in form the figure is a type that dates back to the Renaissance, and even the Roman empire. Imagery in atlas frontispieces, such as Ortelius’s for the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum or Rubens’s Geographia Blataviana for Blaue’s popular Le Grand Atlas, as well as the personification of Amsterdam in the Citizens Hall of the Amsterdam Town Hall informed the Valentijn’s VOC figure. The traditional meanings associated with this artistically classicizing style were connected with religious and political power and it is clear that the central personification of the VOC also suggested power. Furthermore, the image was designed during a period of resurgent economic increase and optimism, in the 1720s and reflects the author’s beliefs that the VOC would continue to dominate world trade and wealth, which are reflected in his words of praise (in his book) for the company and its directors. The iconographic elements and formal styling of the frontispiece, wherein the continents represent both exotic location and commodities, glorifies VOC power, global domain, and wealth.

Valentijn’s frontispiece is a significant visual compendium, superbly summarizing Valentijn’s book while reflecting Dutch eighteenth-century pursuits for wealth, and collecting nature and geographic knowledge. The image reflects renewed
interests in Italian-inspired allegories, emblems, and classical styling. Yet all of the accomplishments of the frontispiece are realized through adhering to and building upon a historiography of existing symbols used throughout the Golden Age and early-eighteenth century in frontispiece designs. Valentijn’s frontispiece is exceptional because it is an emblem with layers of meanings that superbly and comprehensively adapts and abbreviates these symbols to summarize and visualize the text, visually and functionally emulates early eighteenth-century interests in trade, geography, and collecting while adhering to theorists’ calls for a return to Golden Age art subjects and styles.
FIGURES

Fig. 1
(C. Mulder, *Frontispiece, or Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*, by Francois Valentijn; published by Johannes van Braam, Amsterdam, 1724-1726, facsimile edition, Special Collections, Richter Library, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL.)
Fig. 2.  
*(Title page, for *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*, by François Valentijn; published by Johannes van Braam, Amsterdam, 1724-1726, facsimile edition, Special Collections, Richter Library, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL.)*
Fig. 3
(Jacob Matham, *Frontispiece for Dat Nieuwe Testament*; printed by Jacob de Meester for Passchier van Wesbusch, Haarlem, Amsterdam 1602.)
Fig. 4
(Hubert and Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432, Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium.)
Fig. 5.
Fig. 6
(Title Page, Jan Huygen van Linschoten’s *Itinerario*, 1598.)
Fig. 7.
(Hendrick Hondius, Title page for *Institutio Artis Perspectivae Hagae Comitum Hollandiae*; Amsterdam, The Hague, 1622.)
Fig 8.
(Register of the Purchase and Sale of an Indian Slave and Her Children. Compiled by VOC and British officials on Ceylon, 1769-1805. Manuscript on paper, 33 x 42 cm. State Archive, The Hague.)
Fig. 9.
(Ornamental Shield and Ceremonial Broadsword: Regalia of Johan van Leene, various materials, 775 grams, 75.3 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.)
Fig. 10.
(Romeyn de Hooghe, Map Detail, *The Conquest of the Sultanate of Macassar* in 1669, engraving on paper heightened with watercolour and gold, 40 x 55 cm, Rotterdam.)
Fig. 11
(Adriaen Collaert after Maarten de Vos, *America*, ca. 1589, engraving, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet.)
Fig. 12
(Andries Beeckman, *Batavia*, c. 1661, oil on canvas, 108 x 151.5 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Inv. No. 5K-A-19.)
Fig. 13
(Johannes Rack, *The Square and the Amsterdam Gateway Seen From the Fort*, c. 1762, 35.5 x 52 cm, engraving, Jakarta, Perpustakan Nasional, inv. No. BW3.)
Fig. 14
(Johannes Rack, *Buildings in the Batavia Fort*, c. 1762, 35.5 x 52 cm, engraving, Jakarta, Perpustakan Nasional, inv. No. VL.1.)
Fig. 15
(Johannes Rack, *The Dutch Church in Batavia, Seen From the Rear*, 1769, 35.5 x 50 cm, engraving, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. No. NG-400-T.)
Fig. 16

Fig. 17

Fig. 18

(Aurangzeb, Mughal Ruler), From: *Oud en Nieuw Oost Indien*, by Francois Valentijn, published by J. van Braam, Amsterdam, 1724-1726, facsimile edition, Special Collections, Richter Library, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL.)
Fig. 19
(Frontispiece to *Atlas Minor*, by Gerardus Mercator; published by Jacobus Hondius, Amsterdam, 1610.)
Fig. 20
(Title Page, volume 2, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, (Theater of the World), from Abraham Ortelius, 1570.)
Fig. 21
(Title Page, volume 2, *Atlas*, by Gerardus Mercator, Amsterdam, 1633.)
Fig. 22

(Title Page, volume 2, *Theatre du Monde*, by Jan Jansson, Amsterdam, 1656.)
Fig. 23
(Jacob van Meurs, *Amsterdam Receiving the Tribute of Four Continents*, from Amsterdam, 1665.)
Fig. 24
(Title page detail, from *Nieuwe Wereldt* by Johannes de Laet, Leiden, 1630.)

Fig. 25
(Frontispiece from *Begin ende Voortgang van de Vereenigde Nederlandingse Geoctroyerde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 1644.)
Fig. 26

(Title page to *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam*, by P. von Zesen, 1664.)
Fig. 27

(Title page, Phillipus Baldaeus, *Beschrijving der Oost-Indusche Kusten Malabar en Choromandel, or A True and Exact Description of the Great Island of Ceylon*, Amsterdam: Johannes van Waasberge and Johannes van Someren, 1672.)
Fig. 28
(Pieter Isaacsz, Allegory of Amsterdam as Centre of World Trade, 1606, oil on panel (harpsichord lid), 9.4 x 165 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Inv. No. sk-A-4947.)
Fig. 29
(Jacob van Campen, *Triumph with Goods from the East and the West*, 1648, east wall of the Oranjezaal at Huis ten Bosch, oil on panel, The Hague.)
Fig. 30  
(Jacob van Campen, Amsterdam Town Hall, now Royal Palace, Dam Square, Amsterdam, 1647.)
Fig. 31
(Artus Quellien, *Vredesmaagd* (Maid of Peace), Royal palace, Amsterdam, 1660s.)
Fig. 32
(Artus Quellien, *Amsterdam*, East end Burgerzaal, Royal Palace, Amsterdam, 1660s.)
Fig. 33
(Claes Jansz Visscher, “Panorama of Amsterdam,” Detail, from Profile of Amsterdam from the I, with Subsidiary Scenes, 1611.)
Fig. 34
Fig. 35
(Peter Paul Rubens, *The Austrian Empire*, from Gevartius, *Pompa ... introitus Ferdinandi*, 1642.)
Fig. 36

(Coin of Faustina. from *Pompa ... introitus Ferdinandi*, by Gevartius, 1642)
Fig. 37
(Jacques de Gheyn II, *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Angels*, ca. 1690, after Jacques de Gheyn II, Zacharias Dolendo, engraving, 16.7 x 12.3 cm.)
Fig. 38
(Cornelis Cort, *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1576, after Bernardino Passeri, engraving.)
Fig. 39
(Cornelis Cort, *Magnanimity*, 1560, engraving.)
De koninglyke vrouw, die kroon en scepter draagt;
Verbeeldt de MAATSCHAPPY der geurige Oosterlanden;
De Leeuw van Nederland, die haaren zetel schraagt,
Schiet blixems uit zyn oog, en dreigt, met scherpe tanden,
Al wie haar’ handel floort. Dus rust haar slinker voet
De rechter op den hoorn van vollen overvloed.
’s Lands VRYHEID slut haar’ stoel, gehandhaasft onbezweken,
Haar rechterband wyst op den Oosterwereldkloot;
Dien nu de gryze tyd ontdekt in later’ dagen.
’t Betulband ASIE geeft al haar schatten bloot,
Gereed de MAATSCHAPPY haar offer op te dragen;
Waar aan de Vorsten van dit zegenryk gewest,
En goud en ryk gesteente en parelfnoeren bieden.
Hunne oogen zyn op ’t licht der WAARHEID sterk gevest,
Die opent de gordyn, en doet de schaduw vlieden.
HISTORIKENNIS, die door duistere eeuwen boort,
En d’oudheid achterhaalt op haar gezwinde wieken;
Hier door Godts wonderen op aarde en zee bekoort,
Beschryft de Landen, die het daglicht op zien krieken.
’t Nieusgierig oog beschouwt hier menig vorstenbeeld,
Beschimpt d’Afgodcry, of pryst de zeegewaschen;
’t Geweer legt op den grond, van moortvenyn bedeelt,
Dat op hun hoogen throom kan koningen verrassen.
De FAAM verbreid den lof des SCHRYVERS, zonder end,
Alom daar ’t Vry land zyn vlug ge kielen zend.

Joannes van Braam

The royal woman, who wears a crown, carries a scepter.
She represents the company of the fragrant spices of the East lands.
The lion of the Netherlands carries her seat,
Lightning shoots from his eyes, ready to threaten with his sharp teeth all that handle it.
Her left foot rests on the astrolabe, a sign of seafaring.
Her right rests on a cornucopia of abundance.
All free countries support her upright,
Her right hand points to the eastern part of the world.
Now discovered from the obscurity of former days,
Turbaned Asia exposes all her treasures.
For the company she readily offers to give to the kingdom of the rich west,
Gold, precious stones and stringed pearls.
Their eyes are focused directly on the Light of Truth,
Who opens the curtain and the shadows flee.
Fame, who flies through all mysterious ages,
Retrieves ancient knowledge on her swift wings.
Hereby God’s wonders on earth and sea belong to
Whoever rises early to see the light of day.
Curiosity, who anxiously seeks to know all,
Fixes her eyes on the earthly kingdom.
Descriptive praises of the ocean waves,
A rifle lying on the ground, portray the dangerous deeds.
That on a high throne, the kingdoms are surprised,
And the angel proclaims without end,
What Fame spreads, to Free land the fast ships send.

Translation by the author and Robert and Ineke van den Dungen Bille.
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