



6/26/2019

It is a hard knock life

Amusements and Pastime Activities on Board of the
Dutch East India Company's Ships

Master Thesis Colonial and Global History, 20 ECTS

Leiden University

Lize de Klerk

Student Number: 1545493

lizedeklerk@hotmail.com

Dr. A.M.C. van Dissel

Words: 17.957

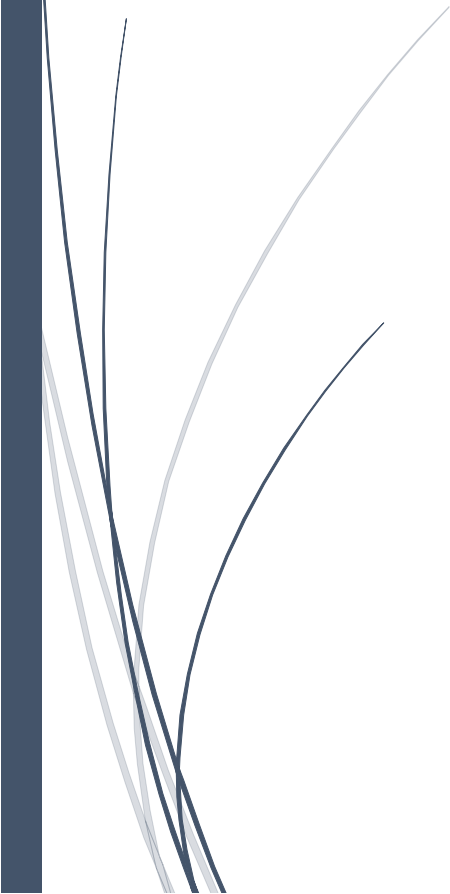


Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Historiography	4
Methodology	7
Chapter 1 Institutionalized Rituals of the VOC	10
Signalling and communication	12
Sea Baptism	17
Chapter 2 Trials and Rewards on Board	22
Theatricality of punishments	23
Rewards	28
Chapter 3 Religious Rituals of the Seafaring Personnel	31
Institutionalized Religion	32
Exceptional Religious Rituals	36
Chapter 4 Music and Pastime Amusements	40
Singing and <i>Shantying</i>	41
Playing Musical Instruments	44
Play and Pastime	47
Conclusion	54
Bibliography	58
Primary Sources	58
Archives	58
Objects	59
Printed Sources	59
Literature	61
Databases and Websites	66

Introduction

“Play is older than culture, for culture, however inadequately defined, always presupposes human society, and animals have not waited for man to teach them their playing.”¹

- Johan Huizinga

Play has been part of mankind long before the existence of societies all over the world. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century, different societies in northern Europe were expanding their territories and influence. Trading companies played a crucial role in this age of exploration. The Dutch East India Company, the VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) was one of the most dominant trading companies in this period. It was established by the Dutch government and Land's Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt in 1602 to optimize the Dutch trade with Asia.² The Company provided the Dutch not only with a trading route to Asia, which was an enormous economic advantage, it also aided the expansion of the Dutch authority to overseas territories. Because of the Company, the Dutch Republic became one of the most powerful entities during this period.³ Foucault observes that “the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present (1980s), the great instrument of economic develop, but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence.”⁴ Evidently, the Dutch East India Company's ships were vital in the Company's endeavours, but Foucault introduces another fascinating insight: the Company's ship was a heterotopia – “a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea...”⁵ This approach suggests that the ship constitutes a society, with its own function, rules, customs and manners. Heterotopia's exist in every culture according to Foucault, but which aspects

¹ J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens, A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Oxon 1949) 1.

² F.S. Gaastra, *De Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Haarlem 1982) 19.s

³ John P. McKay, Bennett D. Hill, John Buckler et al., *A History of Western Society* (Bedford 2014) 456, 569; Gaastra, *De Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 127-128.

⁴ Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, “Of Other Spaces”, *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1986) 27.

⁵ Idem, 22-27.

of culture persisted and transferred to a heterotopia?⁶ This thesis will examine the culture and its function on board of the VOC ships, and like Huizinga suggested 'play', preceding culture, is vital in any examination of culture. Therefore, and more specifically, this thesis will take an in depth look at the function of one specific aspects of culture: various types of amusements, including 'playing', rituals and music. Which amusements and pastime activities were available on board of the VOC ships, traveling to and from Asia between 1650 and 1800, and how did they contribute to the operation of the ship?

There are several reasons why this research is focused on the VOC-ships. First and foremost, a lot has been written about life on board of the Company's ships in general, however, the subject matter of this thesis has fallen behind in the historiography. Since the VOC was such an extraordinary and significant organisation in the history of the Netherlands it is highly relevant to investigate this aspect of their enterprise. Moreover, the Company's ships, with their work force, in general were among the largest ships in the Republic.⁷ The great diversity of available sources of the Dutch East India Company also helped narrowing down the subject, incorporating the Admiralty or West India Company, would be too big of an project for this thesis.

Historiography

The Dutch East India Company's history has been the subject of a great variety of scholarly research. In the Company's general histories considerable attention is paid to those employed on the Company's ships. A main focus of this quantitative research is the economical and geographical background of these people in employment. VOC historian Femme S. Gaastra, also covers this in his general histories about the Company.⁸ Moreover, Gaastra was one of the leading scholars on the research project *The Dutch East India Company's shipping between the Netherlands and Asia 1595-1795*, devoted to surveying and accumulating all the information found in the Company's logbooks on voyages to and from Asia. They compiled an online accessible database, based on this survey, with significant information on the people on board the Company's ships, divided into four

⁶ Idem, 24.

⁷ Jaap R. Bruijn, *Zeevang: Zeevarend Nederland in de achttiende eeuw* (Zutphen 2016) 11, 49-50.

⁸ Femme S. Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC – opkomst, bloei en ondergang* (Zutphen 2009) 88-100.

categories: *seafarers, soldiers, craftsmen and passengers*.⁹ In the introductory volume published of the project, the background of the people on board of the ships is briefly discussed. Just like other general histories of the VOC, the main focus is on the economical and geographical background of those on board.¹⁰ Bruijn and Gaastra do show that many foreigners were employed on board of the Company's ships, which is relevant for this research, because they show that tensions could develop between the Dutch against others – most often the French.¹¹

As stated above, the Company's labour force has been quite extensively analysed, mainly focusing on the control of labour and violence on board of the Company's ships.¹² Historians have paid little attention to actual life on board of the ships. Publications that do incorporate a discussion of everyday life on board mainly focus on three components: *Rules and Punishments, Food and Drink and Illness and Death*. *Het Grote VOC Boek* is a perfect example, at the very end of this very elaborate issue on the history of the Company, one chapter of only a few pages discusses exactly these three subjects.¹³ In the article "Calamitous Voyages", Richard Guy also addresses these topics in an analysis of four accounts of shipwreck and mutiny of VOC-ships. He shows how these stories were part of the VOC's authoritarian discourse.¹⁴ Controlling the labour force was rather important, as one can imagine, for the Dutch East India Company. Desertion was a serious issue, Wezel

⁹ J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer with assistance from A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping* <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das/index.html> en (Accessed 06 June 2019); J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer with assistance from A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries: VOLUME II Outward-bound voyages from the Netherlands to Asia and the Cape (1595-1794)* (The Hague 1979).

¹⁰ J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer with assistance from A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries: VOLUME I Introductory Volume* (The Hague 1987); Dan Sleight, *Jan Compagnie – The world of the Dutch East India Company* (1980 Cape Town).

¹¹ J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer with assistance from A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries: VOLUME I Introductory Volume* (The Hague 1987) 152-158.

¹² For example: Stoyan V Sgourev and Wim van Lent, "When too many are not enough: Human resource slack and performance at the Dutch East India Company (1700–1795)", *Human Relations*, Vol. 70, No. 11 (2017) 1293-1315; Jan Lucassen, "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595-1795", *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 66, (2004) 12-39; Mattias van Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld: Globalisering, arbeid en interculturele ontmoetingen tussen Aziatische en Europese zeelieden in dienst van de VOC, 1600-1800* (Hilversum 2014); Jaap R. Bruijn and Femme S. Gaastra, *Ships, Sailors and Spices: East India Companies and their shipping in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries* (Amsterdam 1993); Filippo Carlo Wezel and Martin Reuf, "Agents with Principles: The Control of Labor in the Dutch East India Company, 1700 to 1796", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 82, No. 5 (2017) 1009–1036; J.R. Bruijn and E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga, *Muiterij – oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC* (Haarlem 1980); Herman Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie aan boord van Oost-Indievaarders (1595-1650)* (Amsterdam 2002).

¹³ Ron Gulaj and Gerrit Knaap, *Het Grote VOC Boek* (Amsterdam 2017) 197-201.

¹⁴ Richard Guy, "Calamitous Voyages: the social space of shipwreck and mutiny narratives in the Dutch East India Company", *Itenerario*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2015) 117-140.

and Reuf show that social bonds were most effective in preventing desertion in their article “Agents with Principles”.¹⁵ The risk of mutinies also was one of the dangers the ships’ officers encountered on board on the voyage to Asia. Through a compilation of several case studies, *Muiterij – oproer en berechting van de VOC* shows that mutiny was not as uncommon for the Dutch East India Company as previously thought.¹⁶

At the start of the twentieth century one scholar, J. de Hullu, wrote five groundbreaking articles concerning life on board of the VOC-ships. He was the pioneer in this field of research: the histories of those on board of the Company’s ships. Not only does he look at *Rules and Punishments, Food and Drink and Illness and Death* like most of the scholars after him. He also wrote one, relatively short, article on the subject of amusements on board of the Company’s ships, herewith he was the first one to do so.¹⁷ J.R. de Bruijn and J. Lucassen analysed the articles written by De Hullu and published an all compiling work in 1980. Until then, only one more scholar had looked at the amusements on board of the Company’s ship – C. A. Davids analysed the seafarers’ songs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, Davids’ research is not solely devoted to the Dutch East India Company, evaluating for example warships as well.¹⁸ Comparatively, Ian Woodfield has written about English musicians in this period, focusing mainly on the British East India Company.¹⁹ Nowadays scholarship on the subject of amusements on board of the Dutch East India Company’s ships is still very scarce. In reality only one scholar, Herman Ketting, has focused solely on life on board of the Company’s ships. Focusing on the period between 1595 and 1650, he thoroughly analysed various aspects of this life, including amusements and pastime. Jaap R. Bruijn has recently published a volume on sailors in the Republic in the eighteenth century. In an elaborate examination, incorporating employment on different kinds of ships, he only briefly discusses pastime activities on board of the Company’s ships. Moreover, he does not investigate the function of these activities.²⁰ Focusing on cultural life on board of ships in the nineteenth and twentieth century does exist, Hans Krabbendam has

¹⁵ Filippo Carlo Wezel and Martin Reuf, “Agents with Principles: The Control of Labor in the Dutch East India Company, 1700 to 1796”, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 82, No. 5 (2017) 1009–1036.

¹⁶ J.R. Bruijn and E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga, *Muiterij – oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC* (Haarlem 1980).

¹⁷ J.R. Bruijn and J. Lucassen (eds.), *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: vijf artikelen van J. de Hullu* (1980 Groningen).

¹⁸ *Idem*, 45.

¹⁹ Ian Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (Stuyvesant 1995).

²⁰ Bruijn, *Zeegang*.

researched cultural aspects on board of the trans-Atlantic passenger ships between 1840 and 1960. He showed that passengers had little freedom to contribute to the rituals on board, they were predominantly regulated by the firms.²¹ In the historiography there appears an deficiency on this subject for the period between 1650 and 1840. After Ketting's period of research, the Dutch East India Company existed for circa another 150 years.

Following the path De Hullu laid out a century ago for historians to follow, which few have actually done, this research will be an in depth exploration of the various types of amusements on board of the VOC-ships between 1650 and 1800. Not only does this thesis contribute to the general historiography about life on board of the Company's ships, it also fills the gap in research about the Dutch East India Company, recognized by Bruijn and Lucassen, and it fills the gap in the timeline mentioned above. Herewith it will further complete the historiography of the function of amusements and pastime activities on board of the Dutch East India Company's ships. Previously it was mentioned that research on life on board of the Company's ships mainly focused on three subjects: order, control of labour, and violence. Mutinies for example were not uncommon. Contributing to this line of research on the Dutch East India Company, in this thesis we will investigate whether various types of amusements, some more obvious than others, helped in controlling the labour force and how it affected the differences between rank, class and nationality, on board.

Methodology

As previously mentioned, the main question of this research is as follows: which amusements and pastime activities were available on board of the VOC ships, traveling to and from Asia between 1650 and 1800, and how did they contribute to the operation of the ship? First it is necessary to make a fundamental differentiation between institutionalized amusements and pastime amusements or activities. Although there is one crucial distinction, both provided those on board with a distraction from the everyday proceedings and hardships on a Company's ship. The institutionalized amusements were ordered from above, they were regulated, sailors were obliged to engage in these amusements. Opposite the institutionalized amusements are the pastime amusements or activities, these were not

²¹ Hans Krabbendam, "Rituelen op Reis, Culturele vormgeving aan boord van Nederlandse trans-Atlantische passagiersschepen, 1840-1960", *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2015); Sjoerd de Meer and Joost Schokkenbroek, *Hoogtij: Maritieme identiteit in feesten, tradities en vermaak* (Zutphen 2013) 11.

part of the 'official' labour or obligations of the seafarers. The voluntary aspect of these last amusements and activities is important to take into consideration, in contradiction to the institutionalized amusements.

In order to answer the main question this thesis is divided in four chapters, each accommodating one of four subcategories; Rituals, Trials and Reward, Religion, and Music and Pastime. The first three chapters will argue in favour of qualifying these subcategories as part of the amusements on board, after which in the fourth chapter we will discuss the possibly more 'expected' kinds of amusements. The first chapter will be devoted to ritual, because throughout this research several rituals will be revealed that play a vital role in providing various types of amusements. To help us understand these rituals and their function, it is necessary first define exactly what a ritual is, after which we will discuss the function of ritual. After a theoretical discussion of the concept of 'ritual', the first chapter will also include a discussion of some rituals that could not be categorized in one of the other subcategories.

Various types of sources were consulted for this research. Among the primary sources are several VOC documents that are available for consultation in the National Archives in The Hague.²² Travel accounts written from the period between 1650 and 1800 serve as a major source of material, and therefore they are fundamental for this research. German travel accounts proved to be very useful, mostly written by lowly or uneducated Company servants and soldiers. They provide invaluable insights into the mechanisms of the Dutch East India Company, because they were written from an 'outsiders' perspective. The Dutch travel accounts used for this research were mainly written by higher educated

²² Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 4983, Verordening bevattende gedragsregels voor de scheepsofficieren, bootsgezellen en soldaten van schepen, 1744; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 4981, *Reglement van de Heren XVII voor het aannemen van scheepsvolk en militairen. Gedrukt, 1692*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 4985, *Resoluties van de Heren XVII bevattende orders voor de scheepsofficieren van vertrekkende schepen. Gedrukt, 1760-1786*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 6934, *Inventarissen van goederen van overladen VOC-militairen en –zeelieden, 1718-1719, 1743-1744*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC van 1742 september 4, met gewaarmerkte verklaringen van beljuw en burgemeester van Middelburg over het voorlezen van deze brief aan in VOC-dienst naar Indië vertrekkende officieren en zeevolk en de eed van trouw daarop door hen afgelegd, 1766-1794*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal voor de VOC. Gedrukt, 1658*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 14329, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal van 1742 september 4, met aanvullingen van 1747 oktober 11 en instructies van de Heren XVII voor de gezagvoerders, chirurgijns en predikanten op de schepen, 1728-1763.*

servants working for the VOC. Compared to the German travel accounts, these Dutch accounts were bound to the censorship laws of the Company. Therefore, the German accounts are indispensable, presenting us with critical information which was left out of the Dutch accounts.²³ Archaeological evidence, that was accessible and recorded, found on the VOC-wrecks was also consulted for this research. Although many archaeological projects' records remain yet inaccessible, some have been published or digitized.²⁴ A complete and comprehensive database or research guide to consult does unfortunately not exist. Also, a lot of archaeological findings still need to be documented. Subsequently, the source material from archaeological findings in this research was dependent upon those accessible records. It is necessary to acknowledge that these limitations to the available source material. Also, part of the Dutch East India Company archives is stored in London, these are not accessible for online research.²⁵ This turned out to be one disadvantage, because this archive does contain relevant information with regards to the amusements on board of VOC-ships.

This methodological approach, of combining multi-lingual literature, printed and primary sources, and archaeological finds, is rather unique compared to the previous historiography on this subject. Previous scholars writing about life on board of the Company's ships, like Ketting and De Hullu, have not yet combined the archaeological evidence with the travel accounts and other sources. This method will allow us to, through a comprehensive analysis of the available source material, identify the various amusements and pastime activities and their function

²³ Nigel Penn, "The Voyage Out, Peter Kolb and VOC Voyages to the Cape" in Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus & Markus Rediker, *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley 2007) 73-74.

²⁴ Jeremy Green, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht "Vergulde Draeck", Western Australia 1656: an historical background and excavation report with an appendix on similar loss of the fluit "Lastdrager"* (Oxford 1977); Jerzy Gawronski, Bas Kist and Odilia Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium: a contribution to the history, archaeology, classification and lexicography of a 150 ft. Dutch East Indiaman (1740-1750)* (Amsterdam 1992); Wendy van Duivenvoorde, *The Batavia Shipwreck: an archaeological study of an early seventeenth-century Dutch East Indiaman* (Ann Arbor 2008); Bruno E.J.S. Werz, 'Een bedroefd, en beclaaglijck ongeval': *De wrakken van de VOC-schepen Oosterland en Waddinxveen (1697) in de Tafelbaai* (Zutphen 2004); Hans H. van Rooij and Jerzy Gawronski, *VOC-schip Amsterdam: Gebleeven – op de kust van Sussex tusschen Hastings en Beachyhead gestrand* (Haarlem 1989); Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, *Collectiecatalogus* <http://cultureelerfgoed.adlibsoft.com/search.aspx> (Accessed 29 May 2019); Rijksmuseum, *Rijksstudio* <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/rijksstudio> (Accessed 29 May 2019).

²⁵ Nationaal archief, *Sailing Letters, 1672-1830*. <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00424?searchTerm=> (Accessed 25 June 2019).

Chapter 1 Institutionalized Rituals of the VOC

Before delving into the various kinds of amusements on board of the ships and their function, it is fundamental to understand how these were generally of a ritualistic nature; we will see that rituals and ‘amusements’ are often inherently related. This was especially the case with the institutionalized amusements, and to be able to understand these ritualistic institutionalized amusements, it is essential to understand the function of rituals on board. In the first part of this chapter we will briefly explore some of the theoretical framework of the social function of rituals, placing this in context of life on board of the Company’s ships. Thereafter we will discuss numerous institutionalized rituals, clarifying and supporting the social function of rituals on board.

First, it is necessary to specify the concept of ‘ritual’ in the context of this thesis. Ritual in Latin means ‘structure’ or ‘ceremony’, defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* as: “Actions repeated in regular and predictable ways, both in religious and secular contexts”.²⁶ This definition serves as a perfect starting point for this thesis. Thus rituals are repetitive, ritual also is “a stylized performances that symbolically enact and maintain a social order.”²⁷ Existing in all societies, culturally rituals are marked as special, and socially most rituals support existing power structures. If performed publically rituals are a social drama at the least.²⁸

Catharina M. Bell discusses the different approaches to the meaning and function of ritual within society. According to the social functionalistic approach, which offers a partial explanation, rituals are used for regulating and stabilizing the system of society. Here, rituals together with religion are social mechanisms.²⁹ This approach is particularly interesting

²⁶ John Bowker, “Ritual”, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (2003) <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-6117?rskey=sZhAeH&result=6> (Accessed 29 May 2019).

²⁷ Luis A. Vivanco, “Ritual”, *A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology* (2018) <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/10.1093/acref/9780191836688.001.0001/acref-9780191836688-e-316?rskey=sZhAeH&result=2> (Accessed 29 May 2019).

²⁸ John Bowker, “Ritual”, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (2003) <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-6117?rskey=sZhAeH&result=6> (Accessed 29 May 2019); Luis A. Vivanco, “Ritual”, *A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology* (2018) <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/10.1093/acref/9780191836688.001.0001/acref-9780191836688-e-316?rskey=sZhAeH&result=2> (Accessed 29 May 2019).

²⁹ Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford 2009) 29.

when applied to the VOC-ships. The people on board of the VOC-ships form a community, a society – collectively they are responsible for the ships voyage, very individual had their responsibilities and played a part in this collective whole. Applying the functional-structuralistic approach from Bell to this society, ritual related activities benefited and improved the social order on board.³⁰

Other studies on the function of ritual correspond with Bell, arguing furthermore that even ritualistic actions intrinsically have a meaning, rather than solely their outcome.³¹ Psychologists Liberman, Kinzler and Woodward state in their article that “rituals have inherently social functions. In particular, many ritualistic actions derive their meaning based on the conventionality of ritual.”³² This suggests that the customary aspect of ritual provides ritual with a social function of improving group dynamics. Exactly this preservation of cohesion was of vital importance for the VOC-ships, because life on board of the East India Company’s ships was tough. Three-hundred men spend over two hundred days together on a ship, the size of approximately four tennis courts.³³ The severe working conditions did not improve matters, therefore tensions and frustrations could quickly develop.³⁴ Taking these circumstances into consideration, it is not surprising that many rituals, having a social function, were in fact obligatory – imposed upon the seafaring personnel by higher administrators.³⁵ It is important to note that seafarers did not have a voluntary decision to

³⁰ Idem, 59.

³¹ For example: Harvey Whitehouse and Jonathan A. Lanman, "The Ties That Bind Us: Ritual, Fusion, and Identification," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 55, No. 6 (2014) 674-695 <https://doi.org/10.1086/678698>; Quentin D. Atkinson, Harvey Whitehouse, "The cultural morphospace of ritual form: Examining modes of religiosity cross-culturally", *Evolution and Human Behavior*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2011) 50-62 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2010.09.002>; David J. Parking, "Ritual", *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 20 (2015) 717-720 <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.12141-5>.

³² Zoe Liberman, Katherine D. Kinzler, Amanda L. Woodward, "The early social significance of shared ritual actions", *Cognition*, Vol. 171 (2018) 42-51 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2017.10.018>.

³³ Jaap R. Bruijn and Femme S. Gaastra, *Ships Sailors and Spices, East India Companies and their shipping in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries* (Amsterdam 1993) 194; Dan Sleigh, *Jan Compagnie, The world of the Dutch East India Company* (Tafelberg 1980) 48.

³⁴ Mattias van Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld – Globalisering, arbeid en interculturele ontmoetingen tussen Aziatische en Europese zeelieden in dienst van de VOC, 1600-1800* (Hilversum 2014) 309.

³⁵ Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 4983, *Verordening bevattende gedragsregels voor de scheepsofficieren, bootsgezellen en soldaten van schepen, 1744*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC van 1742 september 4, met gewaarmerkte verklaringen van beljuw en burgemeester van Middelburg over het voorlezen van deze brief aan in VOC-dienst naar Indië vertrekkende officieren en zeevolk en de eed van trouw daarop door hen afgelegd, 1766-1794*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal voor de VOC. Gedrukt, 1658*; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 14329, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal*

participate, these actions of a ritualistic nature were part of 'everyday' operation of the ship. The other rituals, those performed outside of the official proceedings, and pastime amusements will be discussed in later chapters. First, we will take a look at the regulated and legislated rituals, some were part of the discipline or religion on board, these will be discussed in chapter two and three. In this first chapter we will discuss rituals that cannot be subdivided into those categories. Can we qualify the rituals of signalling and communication, and the sea baptism, as institutionalized amusements?

Signalling and communication

Some of the most striking ritualistic actions, part of the procedures on board, belonged to an elaborate communication system of the Company's ship. Crucial actors in these were the trumpeters and drummers in service of the Company. Before we can understand their actual role on board, we need to take a look at various accounts of their employment on board of a Company ship. Was a drummer or a trumpeter employed on every Company ship that sailed out?

Ever since the first ships were commissioned to travel to Asia for the trade of spices, towards the end of the sixteenth century, trumpeters and drummers were appointed to the ships, taking part in this endeavour.³⁶ In the Dutch East India Company's employment of these trumpeters and drummers, an important distinction is made; the trumpeters were part of the seafarers, while drummers were part of the military officers on board, not officially part of the ships' crew. However, the *Reglement ter Vergaderinge van de Seventiene* (1692) and the *Instructie voor de Hoofd-Officieren ter Zee* (16 November 1744) show that not on all the Company's ships a trumpeter or drummer was appointed. This actually depended upon the size of the ship, only those longer than 100 foot would need a trumpeter or drummer.³⁷ Presumably, the vast majority of Company's ships had either one or both on board. Henssen's research shows in fact that this was certainly the case for the *Kamer van Zeeland* ('Zeeland chamber'), the second to largest independent establishment

van 1742 september 4, met aanvullingen van 1747 oktober 11 en instructies van de Heren XVII voor de gezagvoerders, chirurgijns en predikanten op de schepen, 1728-1763.

³⁶ Ralph Johan Gerard Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers in de Zeeuwse Zeevaart ten tijde van de Republiek: Plichten en Praktijken* (Ridderkerk 2011) 73-75; Ian Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (Stuyvesant 1995) 17-18.

³⁷ Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers*, 73-75.

of the VOC. Between 1671 and 1794 only on 23% of the outbound ships, from a total of 794 ships, a trumpeter or drummer was absent. Moreover, on almost 300 ships both a drummer and a trumpeter were appointed.³⁸ The VOC-ship the *Amsterdam*, from the *Kamer van Amsterdam* (the largest *kamer*), for example, a 150 foot long *spiegelretourschip*, a trumpeter (Machiel Flaming) and a drummer (Johannis Sluijters) were on the payroll.³⁹

In comparison to others on board, the wages of trumpeters and drummers were meagre, furthermore, drummers made considerable less than trumpeters. This is shown in a survey, part of the research project *Dutch-Asiatic shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, on “wages paid by the VOC to seafaring personnel on ships sent out by the chambers.”⁴⁰ This might be explainable because drummers were part of the military officers on board, however by looking at the roles these drummers and trumpeters had on board of the ships we might find another explanation. Looking at their duties and tasks will also help us determine whether or not they provided some distractions from the arduous circumstances on board of the Company’s ships, and consequently whether their endeavours qualify as institutionalized amusements.

Several kinds of sources present us answers on the actual role of trumpeters and drummers on board of the ships. Johann Christian Hoffman, a German religious servant in service of the Company, describes in his travel account that they encountered tremendous fog on their journey back to the Netherlands. Trying to hold the fleet together they used canon fire and the drums to keep their position.⁴¹ Henssen states in his publication that trumpeters and drummers did not officially had a duty to sign in case of misty weather specifically, they did have to in case of emergency.⁴² In an *Order and Zeyn-Briefff*, from Hoffman’s travel account, it is commanded however, in the 12th article, that drums should sound continuously in case of dark or foggy weather: “Bey dunckel oder nebblichten Wetter,..., soll ein jedes Schiff bey solchem duncklen Gewitter jede Stunde zum wenigsten

³⁸ Idem, 73-76.

³⁹ Hans H. van Rooij and Jerzy Gawronski, *VOC-schip Amsterdam: Gebleeven – op de kust van Sussex tusschen Hastings en Beachyhead gestrand* (Haarlem 1989) 26.

⁴⁰ Bruijn, Gaastra and I. Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping VOLUME I*, 210-211; Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 4981, *Reglement van de Heren XVII voor het aannemen van scheepsvolk en militairen. Gedrukt, 1692.*

⁴¹ Johann Christian Hoffman, *Reise nach dem Kaplande, nach Mauritius und nach Java: 1671-1676; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602-1797* (Haag 1931) 100-101.

⁴² Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers*, 92.

einen Canonschuß und jede halbe Stunde 5 à 6 Mußqueten-Schösse thun und neben dem continue die Trummel rürhen lassen."⁴³ This proves that Henssen's statement is not entirely correct with regard to the signalling duties during misty weather. He was however right about the official duty of trumpeters and drummers to sound in case of emergency. This requirement was declared in the *Artikelbrief* (a letter of rights and obligations of seafaring personnel): "Zo wanneer in tyd van nood de Trompet word gesteken, of den Trommel geslagen, zal een iegelyk, met alle dilligentie voortkomen op lijfstraffen, om zig terstond onder zyn quartier in defensie te stellen, en also met geode ordre den Vyand te resisteren,..."⁴⁴

Not only was this music used in communications to safeguard the voyage of the ship. Musical communications were also used in the ordinary procedures to regulate everyday life on board. Ian Woodfield, in his research on the British East India Company, uses the Dutch East India Company for a comparative perspective. He supports the claim that music was used for signalling on the Dutch Company's ships. On top of that Woodfield argues that "those on board were subject to a carefully ordered routine of daily life in which music played a significant part."⁴⁵ Trumpeters and drummers were used in communication signals for the start of everyday events, for example to communicate the changing of the guards, mealtime, and to announce the arrival of visitors.⁴⁶ Nicolaas de Graaf, for example, describes these duties in his account; "De Tamboers en trompetters zijn verpligt 's morgens en 's avondt de wagt te blasen en op de trommel te slaan ; gelijk zij ook gehouden zijn te doen wanneer 't kajuyts volk aan tafel is. Desgelijks zijn sy ook gehouden te blasen so wanneer eenig vaartuyg van boord vaart of aan land, of van andere schepen aan boord komt."⁴⁷ Bruijn argues that trumpeters only incidentally played their instruments to announce the start or end of the day.⁴⁸ This appears to be an understatement, we learned from Heeck's account that it was actually expected of the trumpeters to play at those moments. Sounds from the trumpets and drums were used to signal and communicate on

⁴³ Hoffman, *Reise nach dem Kaplande*, 79.

⁴⁴ Hendrik Hoogenberk, *De Rechtsvoorschriften voor de Vaart op Oost-Indië 1595-1620* (Utrecht 1940) 203; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC 1766-1794*; Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers*, 92.

⁴⁵ Woodfield, *English Musicians*, 39.

⁴⁶ Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers*, 92-93; Peter Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvyng van de Kaap de Goede Hoop* (Amsterdam 1727) 12.

⁴⁷ Nicolaas de Graaff, Marijke Barend-van Haeften and Hetty Plekenpol, *Oost-Indise Spiegel* (Leiden 2010) 118.

⁴⁸ Bruijn, *Zeegang*, 105.

board, they regulated not only the seafarers' work but also aspects of everyday life on board were controlled by music. This is not surprising considering that the sound of music must have been distinct from the constant rustle of the sea and the hustle and bustle on board.

Several artefacts were found on VOC-shipwrecks that were used by the trumpeters or drummers on board. These artefacts prove that musical instruments were indeed commonly used on board, supported by the list of equipment. At the ship-wreck of the *Hollandia*, a fragment of a trumpet mouthpiece was found. The *Hollandia*, a 150-foot East Indiaman, was built in 1742, on the wharf in Amsterdam. This ship set sail in 1743 but never made it to India, the ship hit a rock near the Scilly Isles, while it is still unknown what exactly went wrong, the ship wrecked. In the archaeological evidence from the site a lot of objects were recovered from the site, among which was this fragment.⁴⁹ Among the artefacts found on another VOC-shipwreck, the *Vergulde Draeck* (1656), are a couple of wooden drumsticks.⁵⁰

As part of the research on the *Hollandia*, Odilia Stokvis-van Boetzelaer compiled a lexicon of the equipment that had to be on board of the East Indiamen. A very important source were the East India Company's equipment books, these served as a kind of check-list. In these records not only a drum and a trumpet are listed, also the drum's accessories are specified – *kasje met 1 trompet* (case with 1 trumpet), *vat met 1 trom en toebehoren* (cask with 1 drum and fittings), *trom-band met franje* (drum carrying band with fringe), and *kasje met tromvellen* (case with drumheads).⁵¹ On top of these musical instruments two large, painted, tin speaking trumpets and two small ones of the same sort were also listed, these trumpets allowed one to be heard and understood above loud noises or at great distances.⁵² The regularity and predictability of the use of musical signals and communications qualify them as rituals, even though they were ordered from higher officials. The symbolism behind these rituals helped maintain, and possibly even improve, social order. Through these rituals several aspects of the ships' operation were organized.

⁴⁹ Jerzy Gawronski, Bas Kist and Odilia Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium: a contribution to the history, archaeology, classification and lexicography of a 150 ft. Dutch East Indiaman (1740-1750)* 10-11, 437.

⁵⁰ Jeremy Green, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht "Vergulde Draeck", Western Australia 1656: an historical background and excavation report with an appendix on similar loss of the fluit "Lastdrager"* (England 1977) 234.

⁵¹ Gawronski, Kist and Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium*, 78-79, 178-179.

⁵² *Idem*, 156.

Not only the trumpets and drums were used to signal and communicate with the rest of the ship and others, cannons, briefly mentioned previously already, played a significant role in this as well. When the Company's ships left one place or arrived elsewhere, cannon shots were fired. These actions too were of a ritualistic nature, because of their predictability and regularity, part of the official procedures on board. The following examples will show the various moments the ships' canons were used on the voyage in this kind of manner.

Elias Hesse, a German labourer in service of the Company, describes in his travel account that cannons were fired upon leaving the Indies, setting sail back to Holland: "...Darauf giengen wir den 27. Ditto, nachdem vorhero itzt erwehnter Admiral durch einen Canon-Schuß und mit der blauen Flagge das ordinari-Zeichen gegeben, im Nahmen Gottes mitder gantzen Flotte zum ersten mahl unter Seegel."⁵³ Similar accounts are given by others who kept a journal while on their journey to the Indies on one of the Company's ships.⁵⁴ Another example is Gijsbert Heeck, a surgeon, traveling on the ship *De Vereenigde Provinciën* in November 1654. In the very beginning of the account he mentions three cannon shots being fired, leaving the shipyard in Vlissingen, and setting sail to the Indies. Upon their arrival in Cape Verde, almost two months later, they fired three cannon shots again to announce their arrival at one of the islands. They were welcomed with two canon shots in reply. Continuing on their journey, passing through the Cape, on route to Batavia, there are several similar mentions of cannon shots used to salute, either to announce their own arrival or departure, or to welcome or send-off others. Arriving in Batavia they again discharged three cannon shots, confirming their safe arrival, answered from the Batavia Castle with cannon shots welcoming them in Batavia.⁵⁵ A similar use of cannons is described in the travel account of Johann Christian Hoffman, yet here the fleet is commanded to use cannon shots for mutual communication. Towards the end of 1775 the return-fleet, Hoffman had joined, set sail back to Holland. Hoffman writes that all the heads of the ships received an *Order* and *Zeyn-Brieff* (Order and Signalling letter) from the Admiral. A copy of this order is transcribed in his travel account. Through this order the directors of the East

⁵³ Elias Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerke in Sumatra: 1680-1683; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602-1797* (Haag 1931) 127.

⁵⁴ Marijke Barend-van Haeften and E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC: de openhartige dagboeken van de zusters Lammens en Swellengrebel* (Zutphen 1996) 55-112, 121-161.

⁵⁵ Gijsbert Heeck and O. Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn: 'dagelijkse aantekeningen' van de reis naar Oost-Indië in 1654 door Gijsbert Heeck (1619-1669)* (Bunschoten 2001) 22-69.

India Company instruct the ships of the fleet, trying to secure their journey back to the fatherland. Several commands are given on the mutual communication of the fleet, here cannon shots were used to transmit various kinds of information to fellow fleet members, depending upon the amount of shots fired and other kinds of signals that accompanied the shots.⁵⁶ One might question whether the aforementioned description of the use of cannon shots can be considered as rituals. However, these travel accounts show that the regularity and predictability of these kinds of salutes, which distinguish them from the use of canons in battle. Also the welcoming and departing canon salutes, containing a theatrical element as well, can be considered as tributes celebrating the arrival or departure of a ship. Because of the way these regulations were performed it would be reasonable to consider them as rituals, part of the official procedures on board.

The rituals of communication and signalling mentioned above were of great importance in the functioning of the ship. They helped regulating everyday proceedings on board and announced several specific situations, for example the arrival of visitors on board or mealtimes. Although at first one might not consider these as institutionalized amusements, most of these rituals definitely were because they provided the seafarers with a distraction from their work on board, announcing mealtimes, sunrise and sundown, and 'special' occasions, saluting other. Also, the theatricality of the salutes on board possibly amused those on board as well.

Sea Baptism

Indispensable for the argument of this thesis is the ritual of the 'sea baptism', part of the 'official' procedures on board of a VOC-ship for those on board it was of great importance during the voyage. In the following part of this chapter we will discuss why this was the case. Before it is possible to discuss the meaning and symbolism of this ritual, and determine why it could be considered as an amusement, it is necessary to examine the ritual itself. What exactly was the sea baptism, and what happened during the ritual on board of a Company ship?

The sea baptism is very old and common practice among seafarers. The ritual inaugurated new, first-time, sailors into the ship's community. During the voyage to Asia,

⁵⁶ Hoffman, *Reise nach dem Kaplande*, 76-86.

raw recruits on board of the Company's ships were baptized around the Barlengas, an group of islands in front of the Portuguese coast.⁵⁷ They were dropped into sea, from the high yard on the foremast, to subsequently be heisted back on board.⁵⁸ This exact process is described by Gijsbert Heeck: "...het van ouds bekendstaande zgn. dopen bij de Berlengas, zijnde een klein eilandje in de Spaanse zee voor de Portugese kust. Iedereen moest zich daar namelijk drie maal achtereen van de hoge ra in het water laten vallen."⁵⁹ The VOC made efforts to abandon this ritual in 1616, imposing replacement rituals through an *artikelbrief*.⁶⁰ Dutch scholar Jan Lucassen writes: "The VOC prohibited the traditional baptism at sea and other "rituals of rebellion" and replaced them with celebrations to be initiated exclusively by the those in charge of the ship. Rather than the carnivalesque conduct that might victimize superiors as well, additional food and drink was distributed."⁶¹ That the ritual could expose social tensions, between the sailors and their superiors, was exactly why it was prohibited proved researcher Henning Henningsen.⁶² However, other scholars argue that this prohibition could actually be the cause for social tensions, between the common seafarers and the higher commanders, on board.⁶³ This is very interesting, the old ritual of the sea baptism was prohibited because it challenged social order on board, but completely abandoning the festivity did not improve matters either. Here it is important to make a differentiation between the symbolism of the ritual and the way the sea baptism was actually carried out. To protect the social order and cohesion on board the ritual, with its symbolism, was not completely abandoned, only the way it was performed changed, and therefore the ritual was still effective in maintaining social order.

Interestingly, some scholars argue that the old common practice of the sea baptism never actually disappeared on the Company's ships, despite its abandonment. Richard Guy claims that the VOC was unsuccessful in completely abandoning these common practices.⁶⁴ Although there might be uncertainty whether or not the prohibition actually abandoned the

⁵⁷ Herman Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie aan boord van Oost-Indievaarders (1595-1650)* (Amsterdam 2002) 168-175.

⁵⁸ Guy, "Calamitous Voyages", 120.

⁵⁹ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 33-34.

⁶⁰ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 173.

⁶¹ Jan Lucassen, "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595-1795", *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 66, (2004) 31.

⁶² Henning Henningsen, *Crossing the Equator: Sailors' Baptism and Other Initiation Rites* (Copenhagen 1961).

⁶³ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 173.

⁶⁴ Guy, "Calamitous Voyages", 120.

old ritual of the sea baptism, there appears to be no trace of its performance in the travel accounts consulted for this research. Which is not surprising because the *Artikelbrieven* from the second half of the sixteenth- and seventeenth century clearly state that the officers on board of the Company's ships were not to permit or tolerate such ritual – they were ordered to prevent and prohibit the sea baptism. Instead, the seafarers would be given wine, which was also specifically proclaimed in the *Artikelbrief*.⁶⁵ Even though Heeck mentions the old ritual of the sea baptism in his travel account, it appears to be an reference to the origin of the current ritual of distributing extra wine among seafarers. “Aan iedere bak werd anderhalve kan Franse wijn gegeven. Dit gebeurde op bevel van de bewindhebbers der VOC wegens het van ouds bekendstaande zgn. Dopen bij de Berlengas... Bij weigering echter kon men zich dan met geld bij zijn maats vrijkopen. Daar velen geen geld hadden en liever de reis zouden staken, dan zich van de ra laten vallen, onstonden dikwijls moeilijkheden. Om deze redenen werd de wijn uitgedeeld, waarmee men zich dan kon vrijkopen.”⁶⁶ Altogether it is highly likely that between 1650 and 1800 the old practice of the sea baptism was no longer performed. However, the ritual of the sea baptism definitely continued after the prohibition of the old common practice, but the way it was performed changed.

The ritual also celebrated another special moment for those on board. Because the first part of the voyage to Asia was quite a dangerous one, the sea baptism also was a “tradition that marked the ship's escape from the ‘narrow seas’ between England and continental Europe, and its first entry onto the open ocean.”⁶⁷ Passengers on board of the Company's ships also were aware of this. The Lammens sisters, traveling on board of the Company ship *Adrighem* in 1736, wrote: “sij ons verseecken, nu in lang niet bang hoeven te weesen, want sijn nu in de vaste passaat (de noordoostpassaat),... ook soo ist van daag den tijt van doopen, want sijn reeds de Barrels (de eilandengroep Barlengas) gepasseert, dit sijn soo plaisiertjes daar men den tijt sal dienen mede door te brengen, tot nog toe is het altoos agter op, soo als sij het noemen in een seer geode armonie...”⁶⁸ This shows that people on

⁶⁵ Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC 1766-1794*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal 1658*; Hoogenberk, *De Rechtsvoorschriften*, 215.

⁶⁶ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 33-34.

⁶⁷ Guy, “Calamitous Voyages”, 120.

⁶⁸ Translation: “They assure us, we don't have to be scared any longer, because we have passed the ‘north-east passage’ ... today is also the time for baptisms, because we already passed the Barlengas, these pleasures

board of the VOC-ships used these practices for marking and recording progress, in this case the ritual was used to mark the crossing of a dangerous passage of the journey to the Indies.⁶⁹ Here another symbolic element of this ritual reveals itself, this ritual was in fact a *rite de passage*, comparable to the territorial *rite de passage* of Arnold van Gennep.⁷⁰ This interpretation of the sea baptism does also apply to the old practice of the sea baptism. Various scholars have characterized several elements of the *rites de passage* in the old practice. One interpretation of the sea baptism is described by Richard Guy, who adopted this from his private communication with Colin Dewey. The novice sailors experienced how it would be if the ship sunk, the ritual can be seen as a simulation of such, it also showed the importance of the unity of the ship, both as a cohesive physical unit and as a social unit. The survival of everyone on board depended upon the coordinated actions of the community as a whole. Herman Ketting shows many scholars agree that, through the symbolism of the baptism ritual, newcomers were welcomed into the ships community, while simultaneously parting with his previous social past.⁷¹ Although the old ritual was most likely not carried out any more, the symbolism of it remained, and also it provided the seafarers with a moment to celebrate the safe passage of yet another part of the voyage. This ritual therefore is part of the institutionalized amusements on board of the ships.

We started this chapter with a brief examination of the meaning of ritual in the context of the VOC ships. Not only the performance of the rituals improved social order on board, but we have seen that rituals intrinsically were very valuable. The sheer presence of rituals on board could benefit group dynamics and social cohesion, which was a great priority on board of the Company's ships. This is supported by the reason why the old ritual of the sea baptism was prohibited, as we have discussed later in this chapter. The governors of the VOC abandoned the old ritual because it was of great danger to the social order on board, tensions could easily arise between sailors and officers, their superiors. Instead, still respecting the ritual and its symbolism, extra provisions were handed out to the seafarers.

should help us pass the time, till now it is always at the back of the ship, like they call it, very harmonious.”
Source: Barend-van Haeften and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 66.

⁶⁹ Guy, “Calamitous Voyages”, 120.

⁷⁰ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London 1965) 15-25.

⁷¹ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 168-175, 278; Guy, “Calamitous Voyages”, 120, 138.

The ritual of the sea baptism distracted the sailors from everyday life and order on board, as we have seen in the travel accounts of various seafarers. This very aspect of the ritual improved social cohesion, because it was a moment of celebration for everybody on board, regardless of their rank or nationality. Furthermore, it was a 'rite de passage', which gave sailors the opportunity to track their progress. Because of these features of the sea baptism it is possible to qualify it as part of the institutionalized amusements on board.

A closer look at the role of trumpeters, drummers and the firing of canons provided us with some interesting insights into the official communication and signalling on board of the Company's ships, playing an important role in the everyday proceedings. Furthermore, the sounds of the trumpets, drums, and cannons could also be heard during the arrival and departure ceremonies. Providing the seafarers with a distraction from their work, these amusements also contained another characteristic. Comparable to the sea baptism, these kinds of communications and signals might also be considered as 'rites de passage', they showed the progress of the voyage. As previously mentioned, it was essential to preserve the social order and social cohesion of the ships' community. The *Artikelbrieven* regulated the proceedings on board, offenders were punished, and in a world where the level of violence was much higher than we can possibly imagine, these punishments are also quite incomprehensible. In the next chapter we will investigate these punishments on board of the Company's ships and also we will take a look at rewards, standing in contrast to punishments.

Chapter 2 Trials and Rewards on Board

Because life on board of the East India Company's ships was tough, tensions and frustration could quickly arise and develop into prolonged and serious conflicts.⁷² Another cause of conflict was the great variety of nationalities on board of the ships, to get an idea of the composition of the personnel employed on the Company's ships we will take a look at the *Amsterdam*, which stranded in 1749. On board were a total of 191 seafarers, 127 soldiers, 10 craftsmen and 5 passengers. "Three quarters of the officers came from the Republic, for sailors and craftsmen the proportion of foreigners to Dutchmen was about half, and of the soldiers as much as 87% came from abroad, largely from Germany."⁷³ A wide variety of rules and restrictions were supposed to preserve the cohesion on board – to control the large and diverse body of people in such a small place. These rules were written down in the *Artikelbrief*, and the so called *provoost* ('provost') was in charge of endorsing these orders on board. If any were broken, the felon ought to be punished.⁷⁴ The severity of the sanction depended upon the seriousness of the offence, varying from monetary penalties to corporal punishments.⁷⁵ Rather than looking at the different kinds of offences and punishments on board of the ships, like various previous scholars have done,⁷⁶ here we will discuss the theatricality of the punishments on board. Consequently, arguing that this characteristic qualifies them to be treated as forms of 'amusement' as well, which offers a new approach of shipboard punishments compared to the current historiography. Thereafter we will analyse the rewards, the opposite of punishments, on board of the Company's ships. Investigating the ritualistic nature of the punishments and rewards supports the argument

⁷² Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld*, 309.

⁷³ Bruijn, Gaastra and I. Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping* VOLUME I, 157.

⁷⁴ Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 4983, *Verordening bevattende gedragsregels 1744*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC 1766-1794*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal 1658*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14329, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal van 1742, 1728-1763*; J. de Hullu, "De Handhaving der Orde en Tucht op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie", *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (1913) 516-540 <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90001800>.

⁷⁵ Bruijn and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Muiterij*, 18.

⁷⁶ Idem; Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*; Rossum, *Werkers van de Wereld*; Sleight, *Jan Compagnie*; Wezel and Reuf, "Agents with Principles", 1009–1036; Vibeke Roeper, *Zwarte peper, scheurboek: kinderen op reis met de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Amsterdam 2002) 58-66; De Hullu, "De Handhaving der Orde en Tucht", 516-540.

that they improved social cohesion on board. Also, it provides us with an opportunity to determine whether these rituals can be valued as institutionalized amusements.

Theatricality of punishments

Several kinds of punishments were executed on board of the Company's ships. These punishments were performed with a certain theatricality, the ritualistic and public character of these punishments served their social function on board. The punishment of *kielhalen* ('keelhaul') has several ritualistic features worth mentioning.⁷⁷ According to Herman Ketting, the punishment, as well as the sea baptism, contain elements of a 'rite de passage'. In both cases the victim was 'cleansed' by placing him outside of the ship and its community. According to Ketting it is also possible to argue that during *kielhalen* the victim was thrown overboard on the 'dirty' or 'dishonest' side, while he was brought back into the ship on the 'clean' or 'honest' side.⁷⁸ Hoogenberk is convinced that this brutal punishment had a definite impact on the people on board.⁷⁹ Concurrently he implies that this punishment was publicly executed. This, in fact, seems to have been the general tendency for punishments on board of the Company's ships; all corporal punishments and death penalties were publicly executed, all on board were present.⁸⁰ This public feature of punishments, most of the time the punishment took place in front of the mainmast, generate their exemplary function (see photo 1).⁸¹ Elias Hesse describes the aforementioned: "Wie unbillich uns sonder Ursach, bevorab unser Schiffer, welchen ich sonsten einen Tyrannen genennet, die armen Soldaten und Matrosen auff dem Schiffe bestraffen lassen, ist bald nicht zu beschreiben, vielmahlen seynd diejenigen Matrosen, welche nur einen Schluck Brantwein zu viel gethan, vor den grossen Mast gebunden, und mit einem Tau Beins dicke 200. 300. Ja mehr Schläge bekommen, Darvon die Straffleidende vielmahlen gleichsam als todt zu Boden gesuncken,..."⁸² Hesse expresses his iniquity about

⁷⁷ Martin Wintergerst, *Reisen auf dem Mittelländischen Meere, der Nordsee, nach Ceylon, und nach Java; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1688-1710* (Haag 1931) (2) 147-148.

⁷⁸ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 278, 284.

⁷⁹ Hoogenberk, *De Rechtsvoorschriften*, 219-220.

⁸⁰ Bruijn and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Muiterij*, 77.

⁸¹ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 277-288; C.A. Davids, *Wat lijdt den Zeeman al verdriet: Het Nederlandse zeemanslied in de zeiltijd (1600-1900)* (Den Haag 1980) 24.

⁸² Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerke in Sumatra*, 22-23.

these proceedings, and about the skipper in particular. Notwithstanding his disbelief, this method of punishment was actually ordered in the *Artikelbrieven*, and therefore it doubtlessly was rather common.⁸³ However, it is worth mentioning that this does reinstate the distinct contrast between the skipper and the ‘common’ seafarer, the skipper displayed his power as the highest ranking officer on board.

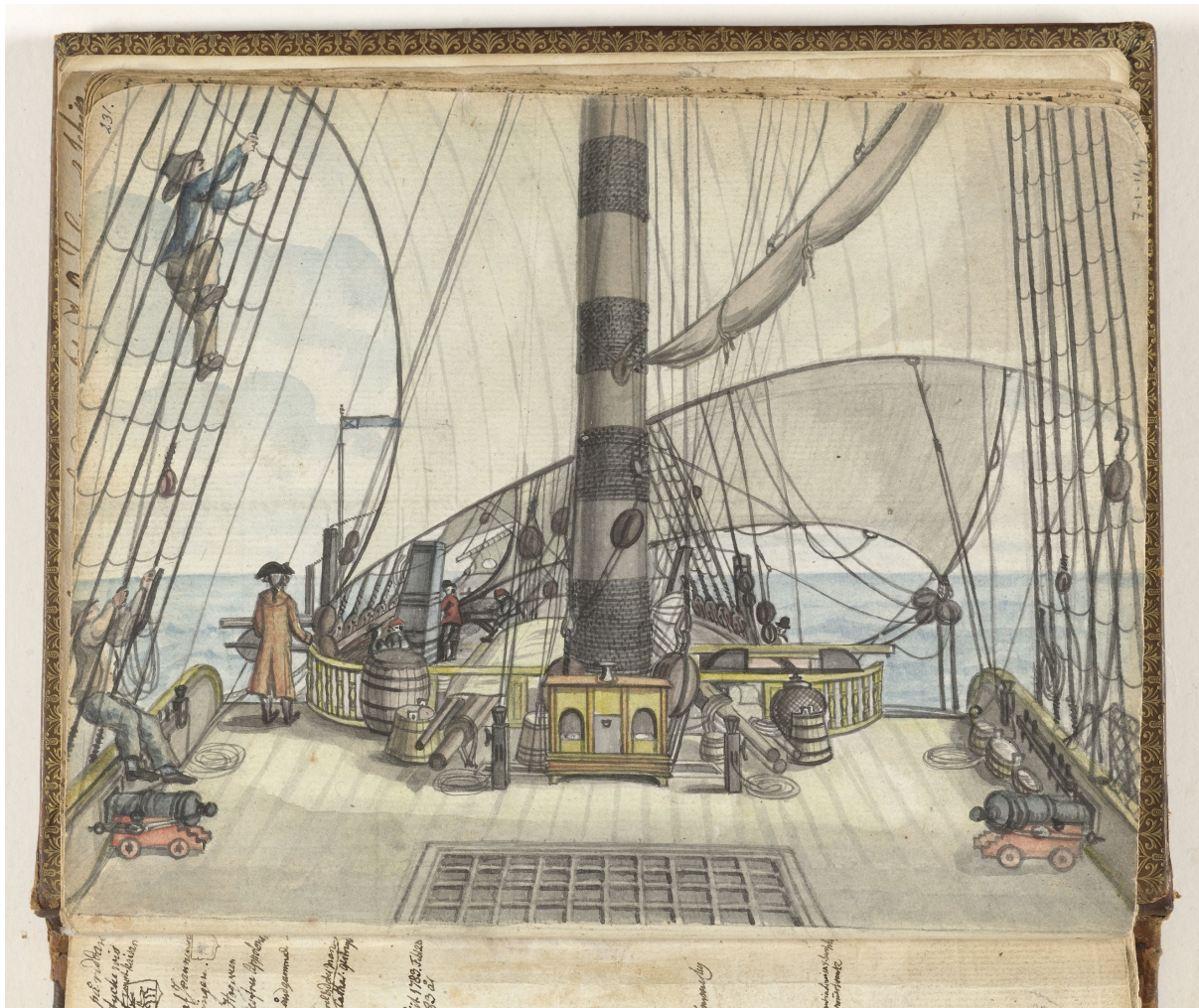


Photo 1 View of the mainmast on board of a VOC-ship. Source: Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1985-7-1-144, *Dekzicht van een VOC-schip naar de grote mast*, Jan Brandes, 1778-1787. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.150097> (Accessed 24 June 2019).

⁸³ Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 4983, *Verordening bevattende gedragsregels 1744*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC 1766-1794*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal 1658*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14329, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal van 1742, 1728-1763*.

Not only did punishments have an exemplary function, another ritualistic characteristic of the punishments is essential to recognize. In the execution of the punishments symbolism was used to show which crime was committed, and to reveal the person's identity. For example, when the seafarers were punished with a *laarzing* ('beating') the end of a thick piece of rope was used, while soldiers were beaten with their own weapon.⁸⁴ This differentiation between sailors and soldiers was rooted in the animosity between the two groups, an attitude that had been in existence on board of ships for a long time.⁸⁵ Symbolism was also used to show the spectators which crime the person had committed, this was done by incorporating the object that was used in the offense into the actual punishment.⁸⁶ Knifers, for example, were punished by using their own knife to stuck them fast to the mainmast of the ship.⁸⁷ Because bystanders could capture both felony the victim was guilty of, as well as the punishment, in the blink of an eye, the exemplary function of punishment was emphasized.⁸⁸ So, not only did the use of symbolism add to the exemplary function of punishments, it also contributed to their theatricality. The 'scene' of the punishment told or displayed a story of its own. These rituals of punishment were performed in front of the seafarers, offering a distraction from the official duties on board, even though it might not have been a pleasant portrayal. Because of the theatricality of these punishments they can be considered as institutionalized amusements.

This theatrical element of punishments was even more distinguishable in the 'unofficial', mutual justice among sailors. A couple of travel accounts describe in order to pass the time on board of the Company's ships several theatrical displays were 'put on' by the sailors.⁸⁹ De Hullu did some ground-breaking research on these plays, he was the first one to describe them in great detail. He asserts them to be modes of entertainment, while in all plays the victim gets harmed or punished in one way or another.⁹⁰ Therefore, according to Ketting, these plays were charivari's and were actually modes of punishment

⁸⁴ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 284-289.

⁸⁵ Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duiters in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen 1997) 152.

⁸⁶ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 284-289.

⁸⁷ Sleight, *Jan Compagnie*, 43.

⁸⁸ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 284.

⁸⁹ Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijving*, 12-13; David Tappens, *Funffzehen Jährige Curiöse und denckwürdige auch sehr gefährliche Ost-Indianische Reise-Beschreibung* (Hannover 1704) 20-25; Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 128-131.

⁹⁰ Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*.

among sailors, and helped to restore moral order among the community. Like mentioned above, these ‘theatrical trials’ were not part of the ‘official’ justice system and punishments on board of the Company’s ships. Rather, sailors used them to resolve or settle differences or fights between themselves, without interference of their superiors. Moreover, according to Ketting they were unaware of these events.⁹¹ David Tappens describes four of the plays that were performed on board, according to him, out of many these four were the most amusing.⁹² These are exactly the four plays that are analysed by De Hullu.

In these plays spectators were asked to take part in the play, after all the players were gathered everyone was given a part. At this moment it also became clear who would play the role of the ‘victim’ – which would be the person other sailors wanted to ‘punish’, because he had misbehaved in some sort of way. In case of the other the *smidspel* (‘smithplay’), someone from the public was ‘invited’, considerable social pressure was used to compel the person, to play the role of victim. Again, the person selected was not the most ‘friendly’ or ‘most enjoyable’ sailor.⁹³ In all four plays the one person, that was ‘chosen’ to get punished, was humiliated on one way or another. Generally the torment was quite painful, the person’s faith and suffer depended on the intentions of the other players.⁹⁴ For instance, the third play Tappens describes is called the *Paardendiefstalspel* (‘play of horse-robbery’). In this play two robbers are caught and sentenced to death, one will be hanged, the other will be beheaded. In case of the first, a rope is put around the player’s waist, and he is hoisted, around three feet, up in the air – suspended between heaven and earth. After the other player gets punished, by smudging him in excrements, the first player’s lower body was stripped naked and smudged with tar.⁹⁵

When we compare this description of the *Paardendiefstalspel* with the travel narrative of Peter Kolbe, another German in service of the Company, there are a few striking similarities, which previous scholars have not yet acknowledged. First and foremost, he also attests that amusements among sailors, simultaneously were a way of prosecution, which validates Ketting’s argument. Kolbe also describes that, to punish someone, they were

⁹¹ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 251.

⁹² Tappens, *Funffzehen Jährige Curiöse*, 20-25

⁹³ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 251-253.

⁹⁴ Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 128-131.

⁹⁵ Tappens, *Funffzehen Jährige Curiöse*, 20-25; Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 129-130; Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 252.

suspended naked in the air, which was also the case with the *Paardendiefstal*. Another amusement of the sailors was painting the behinds of some *onnozele en onbedreve* ('silly and inconvenient') fellows black. *“De tydkortingen waar mede dit onedachtzaam volk zich vermaakt, bestaan onder anderen, dat ze eenige onnozele en onbedreve onder haar uitkippen, dewelke ze naakt uitkleden en derzelfver billen zwart maken; of ze doen op hare wyze recht, namentlyk, ze hangen zodanigen naakten op onder de armen, ook maken ze zomwylen haar eige aangezicht zwart, om anderen, op welke ze het gemunt hebben, onder schyn van hem te kussen, ook zwart te maken...”*⁹⁶ Although Kolbe does not relate the amusements with the plays mentioned before, neither mentions them, there is a considerable possibility that they are connected. A possible explanation for this could be that Kolbe was a university graduate with a doctorate in astronomy. Compared to the other German voyagers who wrote a travel account, he was the most educated. On top of that, he received the blessing and patronage of Nicolas Witsen, who was not only the Major of Amsterdam, but also a director of the Company and one of the most influential men in the VOC.⁹⁷ Therefore, Kolbe was not just a soldier or another sailor on board, which is supported by the fact that Kolbe had his own cabin on the ship, common soldiers were not as fortunate.⁹⁸ Doubtlessly, Kolbe had a distinguished position, different from the other sailors and soldiers. Possibly he was not aware of every detail of these amusements, also it is highly likely that his description was censored. It is certain to say that these theatrical punishments amused the seafarers.

Another scholar, Nigel Penn, considers the events described by Kolbe as parts of yet another 'rite de passage' for novice sailors. What appears to be a narrative of several kinds of amusements, punishments, and pleasures, Penn mistakenly interprets as a description of one single continuous celebration or ritual upon approaching the Cape Verde Islands. Then he concludes that “such initiations had acquired a far greater significance since the VOC had abolished the traditional crossing-the-line ceremonies for ships traversing the equator.”⁹⁹ Although there were rituals and festivities on board of the Company's ships celebrating the passage of a certain point on the journey, as we have discussed in the first chapter, the

⁹⁶ Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvyng*, 12.

⁹⁷ Penn, “The Voyage Out”, 73-74; Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvyng*.

⁹⁸ Penn, “The Voyage Out”, 75.

⁹⁹ *Idem*, 77-78.

specific amusements Kolbe describes, were not part of this 'rite de passage', they were theatrical punishments. Opposite the ritualistic and symbolistic punishments, rewards were given to the seafaring personnel on various occasions, often part of specific celebrations, like the passing of a certain point in the journey. In the remainder of the chapter we will discuss these rewards and look at their function on board of the Company's ships.

Rewards

Extra provisions often formed the rewards given to the seafaring personnel on board of the Company's ships. Here, we will examine the rewards that were part of the institutionalized amusements. Meaning that these rewards were part of the proceedings on board, and the captain or commander decided these rewards to be distributed. Nonetheless did they provide the seafarers with distractions from the everyday routine and duties on board of the Company's ships, therefore they are vital for this research.

Like mentioned above, rewards on board of the Company's ships primarily consisted of additional provisions. This is demonstrated in the various travel accounts, showing that these rewards were often distributed in relation to passing a specific or dangerous part of the journey to Asia. First of all, we cannot ignore the extra provisions that were distributed as part of the new ritual of the sea baptism, which we have discussed in the previous chapter. This was not the only time the passage of a dangerous part of the voyage was celebrated. After safely passing the deserted island of Martin Vaz, a passage with many dangerous shallow waters, Hesse describes that all the seafaring people on board received Spanish wine and double the amount of food as refreshments.¹⁰⁰ Gijsbert Heeck describes a similar instance in his travel account. To celebrate the safe passing of the dangerous cliffs of Albrohols, everybody on the ship's crew received wine.¹⁰¹ Nicolaas de Graaf writes an almost identical passage in his travel account: *"..., en de schadelijke droogten Abrohollos voorby zijnde die aan de Brasilise Kust op 18 graden zuyder breete zyn gelegen, word, volgens gebruyk, aan yeder baksvolk een flapkan Spaanse wijn gegeven..."*¹⁰² In total there were two Albrohols reefs on the journey to Batavia, one, like mentioned above, at the Brazilian coast and one of off Western Australia. Albrohols in Portuguese literally means

¹⁰⁰ Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerkte in Sumatra*, 24.

¹⁰¹ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 49.

¹⁰² Barend-van Haeften and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 145.

‘open your eyes’ or ‘watch out’.¹⁰³ These reefs were notorious amongst sailors, and safely and successfully passing was reason for celebration, like the travel accounts show. These celebrations were ‘rites de passage’ because they marked the successful completion of yet another part of the voyage to Asia, ensuring progress through the seas.¹⁰⁴ Therefore they can be considered as rituals as well.

De Hullu argues that these festivities were even grander than those associated with the sea baptism, discussed in the first chapter. According to De Hullu, on top of the rewards mentioned above, either fresh meat was cooked and served for the occasion or some other kind of extra treat.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, fresh meat was only served on special occasions, several animals like chickens and sheep were kept on board, or fresh fish was caught on the journey.¹⁰⁶ Also, several jubilant events amplified the celebration – people danced, sang, and dressed up. Other than the plays mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, comedic performances were put on for this occasion.¹⁰⁷ However elaborate these celebrations, the fact remains that rewards were handed out to all the seafarers upon passing these kinds of difficult passages of the voyage, and were part of the ‘rites de passage’. On several other occasions the ship’s crew received rewards as well.

One of these occasions was the celebration of the skipper’s birthday, again extra food and drink was served.¹⁰⁸ Which also reinstates his superior position to the rest of the personnel on board. Hesse describes this celebration, as a ‘Cajuyts-Gäste’ (‘Cabin quest’), Hesse was part of this celebration. The captain treated all the quests with a ‘special’ meal, instead of beer or wine they were treated with stronger spirits, instead of bread they were served rice and rather than the usual salted meat, fish was prepared, although this stank in the same way.¹⁰⁹ Not only the skipper’s birthday was celebrated on board of the VOC-ships, from 1747 onwards the birthday of the Dutch stadholder, was also celebrated on board.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Guy, “Calamitous Voyages”, 120-121; Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 49.

¹⁰⁴ Guy, “Calamitous Voyages”, 120-121; Johann Schreyer, *Reise nach dem Kaplande, und beschreibungen der Hottentotten: 1669-1677; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1669-1677* (Haag 1931) 13.

¹⁰⁵ Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 127.

¹⁰⁶ Bruijn, Gaastra and I. Schöffner, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping VOLUME I*, 159.

¹⁰⁷ Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 127.

¹⁰⁸ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 158.

¹⁰⁹ Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerke in Sumatra*, 143.

¹¹⁰ J.R. Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC in de achttiende eeuw aan de wal en op zee* (Amsterdam 2008) 182.

The rewards we discussed above were part of celebrations or rituals that were part of the 'official' proceedings on board. Most often the seafarers were rewarded with extra provisions, a 'feast', compared to their everyday meals. These rewards and celebrations not only were a distraction from the hardships of everyday life on board of the ships, they also symbolised occasions for sailors to keep track of the progress of the voyage, similarly to the ritual of the sea baptism from the previous chapter. Not only the symbolism of the celebrations qualifies them to be considered rituals, but also their regularity and predictability. This ritualistic nature of these events indicates that they also had a social function, benefiting social order and cohesion on board of the Company's ships.

To protect social order, punishments were part of the justice system on board. First, the ritualistic nature of some of the punishments deserve a final remark. The punishments were regulated through the *Artikelbrief*, because of the way they were performed, these regulations become rituals. Since the people on board of a Company ship form a 'society' and every individual had their responsibilities, as mentioned in the first chapter, rituals improved social order on board. Applying this to the punishments on board, when one disregarded their responsibility and disrupted the cohesion, the ritualistic nature of the punishments could restore this very disruption of social order. We have previously seen that both the 'official' and 'unofficial' punishments contained theatrical elements. The visible and unmistakable symbolism used in the 'official' punishments demonstrates this, while the 'unofficial' punishments literally took form of a theatrical play. Because of these theatrical elements it is possible to qualify the punishments as 'amusing', because it definitely distracted the seafarers with a distraction from their everyday pursuits. Everybody on board of the ship had to be present while the offenders received their punishment, and on top of that, punishments were performed in the centre of the ship so it was hard to miss. This ritualistic and theatrical nature of punishments served to improve social cohesion, even though this was negative reinforcement, meaning that it was in the form of a punishment rather than a reward.

In case of the *chivari's* performed below deck certainly amused them because they were performed in their time off of duty, which will be discussed more elaborately in the fourth chapter. The *chivari's* improved social cohesion among those below deck, the lower ranking sailors and soldiers, because it gave them the opportunity restore morality, and the both foreigners and Dutchmen were present during these performances.

Chapter 3 Religious Rituals of the Seafaring Personnel

Religion in the Dutch Republic was a central feature of everyday life. It is commonly acknowledged among scholars that the Republic, with a hegemonic Reformed Church, was tremendously tolerant towards other religious communities compared to other countries in Europe. A well-developed civil authority existed to keep the peace in this area of considerable religious diversity.¹¹¹ Religion was deeply embedded into every aspect of Dutch society, for example, poor relief and social control were predominantly organized by the church.¹¹² On top of that, the directors of the VOC were Dutch ‘politicians’, and since the Reformed Church was the ‘official’ church of the Republic, the VOC ultimately was a Christian company.¹¹³ Therefore it is not surprising that religion also played an important role for the governors of the VOC, in fact, pastors were on the payroll of the Company. They were sent to the Company’s establishments overseas to, among other things, preach and to provide pastoral care for those in service of the Company.¹¹⁴ Bibles and psalm books were also among the Company’s goods shipped to Batavia.¹¹⁵ Moreover, pastors and *ziekentroosters* (‘comforters for the ill’) were also employed on board of the VOC-ships travelling to Asia. Since the Company was a Christian employer, pastoral or spiritual care was naturally there according to Schutte.¹¹⁶ In this chapter we will examine the function of religion on board of the Company’s ships. What religious rituals did occur and what was the influence of religion and its rituals on everyday life on board of the ship? In order to answer these questions, first we will delve into the subject of the presence of religious activity on board, looking at ordinary prayers, and its regulations. Then we will examine the role and tasks of the pastors and *ziekentroosters*. After which we will investigate irregular prayers and other religious rituals on board of the Company’s ships. It is important to emphasize that the subject of religious activities on board of the Company’s ships is often disregarded,

¹¹¹ R. Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop, *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge 2002) 5.

¹¹² Karel Davids en Marjolein ‘t Hart, *De Wereld & Nederland – Een sociale en economische geschiedenis van de laatste duizend jaar* (Amsterdam 2011) 137-151; Roeper, *Zwarte peper, scheurbuik*, 39.

¹¹³ Gerrit J. Schutte, “Christendom en Compagnie” in Leonard Blussé en Ilonka Ooms, *Kennis en Compagnie – De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de moderne Wetenschap* (Amersfoort 2002) 87-90.

¹¹⁴ Femme S. Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen 2009)

¹¹⁵ Bruijn, Gaastra and I. Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping VOLUME I*, 181.

¹¹⁶ Schutte, “Christendom en Compagnie”, 90.

or at least neglected, in the general historiography about the VOC, while the Company's religious endeavours overseas have been researched.¹¹⁷ It is necessary to explore this subject because religion played such an important role in society. Did religious rituals bring a sense of familiarity on board of the Company's ships, similar to the role of religion in society? Likewise, in some way they might also have played a significant role in protecting the social order on board, just like on land. And did they provide the seafarers with a distraction from the everyday hardships of the voyage? These are questions we will try to answer in this chapter.

Institutionalized Religion

One of the most important sources to determine the religious activities on board of the VOC-ships are the *Artikelbrieven*. Before delving into a close examination of the rules and regulations that these prescribed, it is imperative to mention that these rules were laid upon the seafaring personnel from above by the *Heren XVII*. This means that these *Artikelbrieven* provide us with a very important, but only a one-sided, account of religion on board. Interestingly, Schutte describes that many authors from the time are quite negative about the relation between the Company and Christianity, the Company's servants supposedly did not live a Christian way of life.¹¹⁸ The same attitude is expressed in the more contemporary church historiography.¹¹⁹ A possible explanation for these views could be that these authors are indifferent to the distinction between the Christian religion on board and the Christian religion in the Dutch colonies in the East. Because in relation to the Christianity on board of the VOC ships it is not difficult to argue that religion played a large role in the everyday proceedings. Just the sheer fact that the *Artikelbrieven* actually regulated Christian worship on board demonstrates this. Anyway, Schutte does not agree with the anachronistic approach of past writers and historians. He argues that the Company was

¹¹⁷ For example: Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC – opkomst, bloei en ondergang* (Zutphen 2009).

¹¹⁸ Schutte based this statement on: Marijke Barend-van Haften, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld: Nicolaas de Graaff, een schrijvend chirurgijn in dienst van de VOC* (Zutphen 1992); Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duiters in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen 1997).

¹¹⁹ Schutte's sources: C.A.L. van Troostenburg de Bruyn, *De Hervormde kerk in Nederlandsch Oost-Indië onder Oost-Indische de Compagnie (1602-1795)* (Arnhem 1884); C.W. Th. Boetzelaer van Asperen en Dubbeldam, *De Gereformeerde kerken in Nederland en de zending in Oost-Indië in de dagen der Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Utrecht 1906); Idem, *De protestantsche kerk in Nederlandsch-Indië. Haar ontwikkeling 1620-1939* ('s Gravenhage 1947); L. Knappert, *Schets van eene geschiedenis onzer handelskerken* (overdruk uit Archief voor de Kerkgeschiedenis xxi (1929) 1-46, 81-148; 's Gravenhage 1929).

established accordant to the rules of an early-modern theocracy.¹²⁰ This was indeed the case, as we have seen in the opening of this chapter.

Throughout the period between 1650 and 1800 many *Artikelbrieven* were issued, although there were some alterations to the rules and regulations related to religious activity on board, the bottom line remained unchanged. In the following we will examine several of these rules and regulations to paint the picture of mandatory religious activity on board of the Company's ships. One section of the *Artikelbrief* always contained several rules and regulations about, and for, religion, pastors and *ziekentroosters*, on board. In 1658 it starts with a rule about abusing God's name, followed by another similar rule that regulates the supremacy of the pastor's teachings. A third notion is especially valuable for this research because it literally informs us about the religious activities on board. Regulating the everyday prayers on board, the rule determines that these prayers were supposed to take place in the morning, before the early meal, and in the evening, before dinner. The actual content of these prayers will be discussed in a later stadium of this chapter. All on board need to be present at these services.¹²¹ Immediately after this follows a regulation which states how to discipline those that neglected to attend these services. Lastly, it is administered that no person is allowed to provoke or start religious disputes.¹²² Like previously mentioned, these rules and regulations for religion in other *Artikelbrieven* were considerably similar.¹²³ The travel accounts, like Peter Kolbe's, confirm the presence of religion on board of the Company's ships: "...gelyk zulks (bedestonden) dagelijks tweemalen, namelyk des morgens en 's avonds voor den eeten op uitdrukkelyk bevel van de Illustre Compagnie geschieden moet, als welke ten dien einde zoo veel in noten gezette Gereformeerde Nederduitsche Psalmboeken aan den Kapitein mede geeft, dat hy aan zijn volk ieder een boek voor niet met al uitdelen kan en moet."¹²⁴ Not only does he recognize that the Company's governors ordered the everyday prayers on board, he also indicates that psalm books were distributed among the seafaring personnel. Johann Jacob Saar,

¹²⁰ Schutte, "Christendom en Compagnie", 87-89.

¹²¹ "Voorts soo wanneer 's morgens voor de Vroech-kost, ende 's avonts voor 't Avontmael, van yemant daer toe ghecommitteert zijnde, de Gebeden gesproocken, ofte Godes Woort gelesen wort, sal een yedelijck, van wat qualiteyt hy zy, sich schicken, om 't selve met eerbiedinge te hooren." Source: Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal 1658*.

¹²² Idem.

¹²³ For example: Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 4983, *Verordening bevattende gedragsregels 1744*; Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC 1766-1794*.

¹²⁴ Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvving*, 26.

another German traveling on board of a Company ship, reports the same.¹²⁵ Another piece of evidence that supports this is the fact that on the inventory chief carpenter Jacob Hartman, who passed away in 1744, a psalm book was found in his *grote kist* ('large chest') – the luggage that seafarers were allowed to take on board.¹²⁶ Returning to the services and prayers on board of the Company's ships, Kolbe's description also provides us with a crucial insight: the religion on board was Reformed Christianity – the church with the most authority in the Republic. This was for everybody the same, even though some seafarers' religious beliefs were different.¹²⁷ These descriptions support the claim that the life of the Company's servants on board was religious, moreover it shows that religious rituals granted a break from the tough labour on board.

We have seen that one of the rules in the *Artikelbrieven* stated that it was not allowed to insult the pastor or disregard his sacredness. On many ships of the VOC a pastor or *ziekentrooster* travelled appointed by, and in service of, the Company.¹²⁸ In the following section, we will look at several examples of these religious ministers present on board, after which it is possible to delve deeper into their actual role and function on a Company ship to see what role they played in the institutionalized religious amusements.

First it is worth mentioning that one of the travel accounts consulted for this research was written by Johan Christian Hoffman, who was religious servant of the Company himself. Although he does not specify what kind of function he had on board of the ship, it shows that religious officials embarked on the voyage to Asia on the Company's ships.¹²⁹ Yet, was this a coincidence or did religious servants always accompany the ships on the voyage to the East? From the *VOC Opvarenden* database from National Archive we can extract some valuable quantitative information: at least 2318 *ziekentroosters*, 427 pastors and 67 *krankenbezoekers* were employed, between 1699 and 1794, by the Dutch East India Company.¹³⁰ The VOC-administration of the personnel on board of their ships was quite

¹²⁵ Johann Jacob Saar, *Reise nach Java, Banda, Ceylon und Persien; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1644-1660* (Haag 1930) 15.

¹²⁶ Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02 Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, Inventarisnummer: 6934, *Inventarissen van goederen van overladen VOC-militairen en -zeelieden, 1718-1719, 1743-1744*.

¹²⁷ Bruijn, *Zeegang*, 96.

¹²⁸ Roeper, *Zwarte peper, scheurbuik*, 39.

¹²⁹ Hoffman, *Reise nach dem Kaplande*, vii.

¹³⁰ Nationaal Archief, *VOC: Opvarenden, 1699-1794*.

https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00444?searchTerm=ziekentrooster&activeTab=nt_sublist_legacy (Accessed 24 June 2019).

extensive, for every ship that set sail a document was composed listing every person on board, including their function. On these lists we can also find the religious servants, for example on the VOC-ship *Waddinxveen* sailing from *Caap de Bone Esperance* in 1696 a *ziekentroosters* was on board.¹³¹ A resolution from the *Heren XVII* in November 1692 resolved that the *ziekentroosters* on board were paid a salary of 30 guilders a month, while a pastor's wage was three times as high – 90 guilders a month.¹³² This resolution shows that *ziekentroosters* were employed on board of the Company's ships if the amount of people on board exceeded 150. Except, when a pastor was already appointed to a ship, then the presence of a *ziekentrooster* was possibly excused.¹³³

Gijsbert Heeck mentions a *ziekentrooster* in the description of his voyage at least a couple of times. In one of these references he describes, that together with the *ziekentrooster*, he went to visit another ship to listen to a pastor's sermon. "Ik ben samen met de ziekenbezoeker naar het schip *Amersfoort* geweest om naar de preek van een hier pas aangekomen predikant te luisteren. Hij preekte uit Lucas 23 vers 34: "En Jezus zeide: Vader vergeef het hun, want zij weten niet, wat zij doen."¹³⁴ The *ziekentrooster* in this case did not read the sermon himself. It is important to point out that *ziekentroosters* did read sermons to those on board, it actually was one of their several tasks. However, they were not allowed to write their own sermons, that was solely the pastors' prerogative. Another main task of the *ziekentrooster* was talking to the poorly and helping them to say a prayer. Nicholaas de Graaff's description of the *ziekentroosters'* duties and tasks confirms this: "De ziekenbesoeker of sieketroosters bedieninge is 's morgens 't morgen- en 's avonds 't avondgebed uit een boekje te lessen en een vers of twee uit een psalm te singen. Sondaags moet deselve een capittel of predicatie lesen, en voor naar de selve een psalm of vers of twee singen. So iemand siek is en gevaar loopt van te sullen sterven, moet de sieketrooster deselve troosten en eenige christelijke gebeden voorlesen."¹³⁵ Compared to the pastors, who were ranked among the most important officers on board, the *ziekentroosters* were

¹³¹ Werz, *'Een bedroefd, en beclagelijck ongeval'*, 189-195; Van Rooij and Gawronski, *VOC-schip Amsterdam*, 26.

¹³² This does not necessarily mean that over the period of 150 years (1650-1800) the salary of these 'officers' remained unchanged, the *ziekentrooster* employed on board of the *Amsterdam* in 1749 for example was paid a salary of 24 guilders a month. Source: Van Rooij and Gawronski, *VOC-schip Amsterdam*, 26.

¹³³ Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 4981, *Reglement van de Heren XVII 1692*.

¹³⁴ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 22, 118.

¹³⁵ De Graaff, Barend-van Haeften and Plekenpol, *Oost-Indise Spiegel*, 115.

lower ranking officers and assistants to the pastors.¹³⁶ The Lammens sisters write that approximately two-hundred people were present at a sermon, performed by the *ziekentrooster*, on board of their ship. Although the women were not impressed with the calibre of the preaching the passage in their travel account does confirm that the *ziekentroosters* held religious on board of the Company's ships.¹³⁷ On Sunday's these religious proceedings were more elaborate, resembling the Christian tradition.¹³⁸

All these prayers and sermons, regulated in the *Artikelbrief*, were part of the 'official' religious rituals on board. The conventionality of these rituals improved social cohesion, because it was yet another moment all on board were gathered together, regardless of their rank or nationality. It is safe to say that to some extent, religious rituals of a nation's society transferred to the religious rituals on board, and the *ziekentroosters* and pastors played an important part in this. In the travel accounts, reviewed for this research, considerably more religious rituals were mentioned. In the remainder of this chapter we will take a look at all these religious activities on board, ranging from celebrations of religious festivities to blessings or funerals.

Exceptional Religious Rituals

An analysis of these other religious rituals on board is important, because of their exceptionality it is highly likely that they provided the seafarers with more delight. First, we will take a look at the most occurring religious rituals; the benedictions or blessings (*dankzegging*). In these prayers the *ziekentroosters* or pastors on board thanked God for something, most commonly this would be the weather. Martin Wintergest provides us with such an example: "da lehrete uns nun die augenscheinliche Errettung, daß man eine offentliche Dancksagung gegen Gott that, daß e runs nur wieder guten Wind gegeben hatte..."¹³⁹ Another common moment these benedictions would take place was when the

¹³⁶ Roeper, *Zwarte peper, scheurbuik*, 39-40, 112-114; Albrecht Herport, *Reise nach Java, Formosa, Vorder-Indien und Ceylon: 1659-1668; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602-1797* (Haag 1930) 16.

¹³⁷ "Want onsen seer geleerden en op de timmerschool gegaene dominé... alles ontrent de twee hondert en veertigh t heugt mij wel kerken gesien te hebben daer vrij wat grooter en beter predication gedaan wierden voor minder personen al shier tegenwoordig waren..." Source: Barend-van Haeften and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 58.

¹³⁸ Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvving*, 26.

¹³⁹ Wintergerst, *Reisen auf dem Mittelländischen Meere*, 9.

ship passed a specific dangerous part of the voyage. Together with other rituals, which we have discussed in the previous chapters, these prayers were part of the 'rites de passage'. Nicolaas de Graaff notes the *ziekentrooster* on board thanked God upon passing the *Albrohollos* for safely making this part of the voyage. "En van de *sieketrooster* een dancksegginge gedaan dat den *Hemel* haar voor die schadelijcke *droogtens* heeft bewaard waar daar eertijds soo veel schepen op zijn verzeyld en tot niet gegaan."¹⁴⁰ The celebratory character of these prayers, safely crossing a dangerous passage, is especially important in this research because these kinds of events provided tremendous relief for sailors, and endorsed faith and hope. There is one important thing to mention in relation to these sermons and prayers, they were again part of the institutionalized religious practises on board. The prayers for all such occasions were written down in the 'instructions for pastors and *ziekentroosters*'.¹⁴¹ They were part of the regulated religious activities on board of the Company's ships.

Funerals were also part of the religious rituals on board, because of the hardships and dangers of the long voyage on board of the Company's ships, people on board were recurrently faced with death. The passing away of a fellow seafarer is frequently mentioned in the travel accounts and very often the dead are buried at sea.¹⁴² On board of the Company's ships the following ritual was carried out during a funeral: first the deceased was wrapped in a piece of (sail-) cloth, after which they were laid down on a plank on the starboard side of the ship. The head of the deceased was uncovered and a prayer was said, then on the captain's command the plank was lifted up to let the body slide into sea.¹⁴³ "s Nachts is de schiemansmaat (=de *onderbootsmansknecht*) Aam Muller uit Breda overleden en volgens scheepsgebruik is hij op gepaste wijze overboord gezet."¹⁴⁴ Gijsbert Heeck refers multiple to the 'standard' ritual, mentioned above, used to 'buy' a deceased seafarer at sea.¹⁴⁵ While Elias Hesse not only describes these 'standard' rituals during a funeral of a

¹⁴⁰ De Graaff, Barend-van Haeften and Plekenpol, *Oost-Indise Spiegel*, 145.

¹⁴¹ Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14329, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal van 1742, 1728-1763*.

¹⁴² For example: Herport, *Reise nach Java*; Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerkte in Sumatra*; Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*; Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvving*.

¹⁴³ Later, on board of the warships from the eighteenth century, this ritual was even more elaborate. The deceased was carried around the mast three time, accompanied by the sound of mourning music. After which the person was send over board, before and after the plank was lifted, salvo's were fired. Source: Davids, *Wat lijdt den zeeman al verdriet*, 38.

¹⁴⁴ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 31.

¹⁴⁵ Idem, 25, 31, 63.

female passenger, she was actually buried in a coffin and additional rituals like hymns were part of the ceremony.¹⁴⁶

Other religious rituals were only occasionally performed compared to the relatively common rituals mentioned above. One of these events is a rather large celebration in the Christian calendar – Christmas, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁷ Travelers mention the celebration in their travel accounts, though they do not elaborate on any rituals of such.¹⁴⁸ According to De Hullu, the sailors did receive extra provisions on these kinds of ‘important’ Christian festivities.¹⁴⁹ The sheer absence of any kind of elaborate description of the celebration insinuates that these were not very grandiose. It is certainly possible that extra provisions were distributed and imaginable that the daily prayers were more comprehensive, since it was a Christian celebration. This does however confirm that the society’s religious rituals were transferred to the ships.

An unexpected ceremony mentioned in the travel account from surgeon Gijsbert Heeck is a wedding. The pastor from the *Phenicx* visiting the ship also wed two persons traveling on board of Heeck’s ship. A soldier married a ‘black’ woman (which in itself is unusual, yet irrelevant for this research), after the sermon they had dinner with the commander in chief, Sir Sterthemius. “Tevens bevestigde hij (ds. Bushoven) in de huwelijk staat de soldaat Hans Polacq met Magdalena van Bengalen (een zwarte vrouw) die beiden met ons de reis begonnen waren. Na d e preek bleven zij samen met de andere bevelhebbers te gast bij de heer Sterthemius en werden getrakteerd op gebraden schapenvlees.”¹⁵⁰

Religious life on board of the Company’s ships was quite similar to that on land. Multiple times a day prayers were read; this was regulated by the *Artikelbrieven* issued by the Company’s directors. On top of that, less regular religious rituals, like burials and even a wedding, were also performed during the voyage. This is not surprising since the Company was in fact a Christian trading company, and the Republic itself was also predominantly

¹⁴⁶ Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerkte in Sumatra*, 32.

¹⁴⁷ Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC*, 183.

¹⁴⁸ For example: “Den 25 Decembris feyreten wir die Heylsahme Geburt unsers Seeligmachers Jesu Christi...” Source: Hoffman, *Reise nach dem Kaplande*, 23; Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 33.

¹⁴⁹ J. de Hullu, “De Voeding op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie”, *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (1913) 552

<https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90001801>.

¹⁵⁰ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 67.

Christian with religion at the core of everyday life of its citizens. Not only were religious rituals part of life on board of a Company ship, spiritual care was also provided to the seafarers in case of illness or death. Life in employment on board of the Company's ships was full of hardships, like we have previously discussed. The religious rituals appear to have often granted a break, a distraction, from this grind. Which shows that these too can be qualified as institutionalized amusements. From various travel accounts we learned that religion also provided the seafarers with a sense of comfort and hope, because it was something familiar in a world full of uncertainty, and of strange and unknown phenomena – life on board of a ship. Again, these religious regulations are rituals because of the way they are performed and the role they play on board.

Chapter 4 Music and Pastime Amusements

So far the main focus has been on various kinds of distractions and amusements that were predominantly institutionalized. In relation to the drummers and trumpeters from the first chapter, where they used their instruments primarily for signalling and communication, there was another, less regular, function of these instruments; playing music. Whether it was commanded by the captain or as pastime activity, on board of the Company's ships music played a considerable role. In this chapter we first will take a look at other musical activities on board of the Company's that were part of the official proceedings on board. Then, before exploring other non-institutionalized pastime activities, we will consider music as a pastime amusement on board. There are several reasons why it is crucial to analyse these musical endeavours and pastime activities. First and foremost, most of these moments were not regulated by any rules or regulations in the way previous institutionalized amusements were. It is interesting to see what kind of pastime activities the seafarers amused themselves with in their pastime, especially because the seafarers were relatively 'free' to choose these kinds of amusements. This is of great relevance to this research because this 'free' time was also a great danger to social order on board, social problems could easily arise when seafarers were unoccupied.

Musical life on board of the East India Company ships has been extensively researched by scholar Ian Woodfield. He has written an elaborate account on the English musicians in the age of exploration, which for this research is surprisingly interesting. Woodfield shows that experienced musicians and trumpeters were highly valued among those traveling to the east, and the Dutch employed British players because of their experience. He also provides us with an account of the duties and tasks of the musicians on board. According to Woodfield, "once a ship put to sea, those on board were subject to a carefully ordered routine of daily life in which music played a significant part."¹⁵¹ Confirming what we have already seen in the first chapter with the signalling duties of the trumpeters, the military musicians. Also during worship music played an important role, in the third chapter we discovered that religious hymns were part of the prayers on board of the Company's ships. However, in agreement with Woodfield, these were all regulated in

¹⁵¹ Woodfield, *English Musicians*, 39.

general orders.¹⁵² Therefore, they were part of the institutionalized amusements. Beside the musical practices mentioned above, musical life on board of the Company's ships was more sophisticated.

Singing and *Shantying*

First we will take a look at the non-institutionalized musical practices during labour on board of the Company's ships. However, it is important to realize that strictly it is not possible to categorize these as pastime activities of sailors. The proceedings on board were accompanied by all sorts of standard chanting and shouting, or *shantying*, to coordinate the activities. C.A. Davids examined these kinds of musical practices, among many others, and argues that specific types of labour required different kinds of chanting. "When the men are engaged onto any hard tasks and especially on any in which it is necessary for them to move rhythmically together a little chant is sung. To the new arrivals this chant sounds very strange, but it is most useful, especially when all the men have to pull together."¹⁵³ David Tappens also describes these kinds of 'songs' and informs the reader for which actions each was used. When for example the canons were fetched, one sang: "*Afschoten, Arükenschoot, Aklein en Groot, Ahaalweg.*"¹⁵⁴

Even more interestingly, Tappens also describes other kinds of hymns or songs which were sung when the guard was changed, multiple times every day one could hear these sounds of music.¹⁵⁵ Another German traveller, Christoph Schweitzer also witnessed the practice of singing during this event in 1675.¹⁵⁶ Davids notes that these kinds of ritualistic songs, part of the changing of the guard, were called a *kwartierlied*, after the *kwartieren* ('quarters'), in which the ship's crew was divided. This *kwartierlied* is a collective term, several different distinctive hymns were sung on various parts of the day, like the *roerzang* ('helm-song') and *lied van de provoost* ('the provost's song').¹⁵⁷ A section of the *roerzang*:

¹⁵² Idem, 39.

¹⁵³ Davids, *Wat lijdt den zeeman al verdriet*, 41-43; Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC*, 153.

¹⁵⁴ Tappens, *Funffzehen Jährige Curiöse*, 171-172.

¹⁵⁵ Idem, 152.

¹⁵⁶ Woodfield, *English Musicians*, 45.

¹⁵⁷ Davids, *Wat lijdt den zeeman al verdriet*, 49-54.

*“Hier zeilen wij met God verheven, God wil ons onze zonden vergeven,
 Al onze zonden en misdaad, God is ons troost en toeverlaat.
 Kwaart, Kwaart, Graaf Maurits kwartier te roer en te waak zal gaan,
 God die verleen ons Zijnen vree, Geluk en behouden reis daarmee.
 Graaf Maurits kwartier wilt komen boven,
 Voor een goede reis willen wij God loven, God loven en denken zijnen Naam,
 Komt heruit maat kwartier in Gods naam...”¹⁵⁸*

Although De Hullu mentions and cites a couple of these songs, he neglects to investigate their underlying function on board of the Company’s ships. In the song the *Mauritskwartier*¹⁵⁹ was called to stand guard, simultaneously, the religious feature is an important element we are compelled to acknowledge. The songs favour God and ask him for a save voyage, these *kwartierslieden* therefore have a ritualistic function on board of the Company’s ships. The religious aspect of the songs referred to the common values of the seafarers, a save voyage, which also makes the songs a noteworthy part of the rituals on board. Especially, when we take in consideration that these kinds of songs were sung three times every day with the changing of the guard.¹⁶⁰ The ritualistic *shantying* and singing during the everyday work routine on board possibly had another function as well, it might have brought the seafarers a welcome distraction from the hard labour on board. Being able to listen to something during these endeavours, the crew at work could concentrate on something other than the heavy labour. These songs brought some relief to the seafarers, and in case of the *kwartierlieden*, they literally relieved sailors from duty, announcing the guard to change.

Traveling board of the Company’s ships one could frequently here voices singing some kind of song or hymn. Not all of these songs were part of the working routine of the seafarers like the ones we have discussed above. Albrecht Herport, traveling on board of a Company ship from Asia back to the Netherlands writes: “Den 11. (October) Sind wir die

¹⁵⁸ Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 56; Tappens, *Funffzehen Jährige Curiöse*, 167-168.

¹⁵⁹ On board of the Company’s ships the crew was divided in three parts, *kwartieren*: *prinsenkwartier*, *Graaf Mauritskwartier* and *Graaf Ernstkwartier*. Each *kwartier* had 8 hours a day where they did not have to work. Source: Bruijn, *Zeegang*, 68.

¹⁶⁰ Davids, *Wat lijdt den zeeman al verdriet*, 49-54.

Straß Sonda durch gesäglet, und das Land Java und Sumatra nach und nach auß Gesicht verlohren. Dazumahl hat ein jeder mit Freuden gesungen, à Dieu Batavia, wir fahren nun nach Patria. Und stellten also erstlich unseren Lauff nach Sud-West den Suden.”¹⁶¹ The people on board sang ‘a dieu Batavia, we are sailing now to Patria’, when they lost sight of Java and Sumatra, upon leaving Asia. Herport writes that ‘everybody’ on board sung this, despite the different nationalities of the seafarers. Remarkably, the two sentences are practically identical to the beginning of the first and second verse of the Valet-Lied of India Elias Hesse describes.

*Adjeu, adjeu Batavia,
Du schöne Stadt dort auff Java
Vond idr will ich nun scheiden!
Vond dir und deiner stoltzen Pracht
Nehm ich anitzo gute Nacht,
Mit tausend tausend Freuden.*

*Wir fahren nun nach Patria:
Frisch auff ihr Brüder, Sa, sa, sa!
Hier gilt kein Scharmutzieren:
All windet eure Ancker auff!
Durch Straat Sunda geht unser Lauff!
Den Ort wolln wir quittiren.¹⁶²*

Although Hesse does not mention this song was actually sung by others on board, he did sing it to amuse himself while Batavia was still in sight.¹⁶³ These two accounts show that the departure from Asia was celebrated by the seafarers. The song was part of that celebration bringing great joy to the singers.

Other songs or hymns were also sung on board of the Company’s ships; some were even ‘written’ or came in existence during the voyage. Although it is difficult to determine

¹⁶¹ Herport, *Reise nach Java*, 167.

¹⁶² Hesse, *Gold-Bergwerkte in Sumatra*, 117-126.

¹⁶³ Idem, 117.

this for most of the songs, according to Davids there are some exceptions. An example is the song *'Een nieuw lied, of het droevig Jounael, gemaekt van het eyge Scheeps volk, van het Oost-Indies Retour-schip genaemt Geertruy, voor de kamer van Enkhuyzen'*, not only does the title of the song confirm that it was written on board, a German traveller confirms this in his travel account. It is certain to say that a lot of songs, including those mentioned above, were sung regularly on board of the VOC ships.¹⁶⁴ This insight is very interesting, not only were seafarers amused by singing songs, some apparently also passed their time by writing songs about the voyage. Although, this privilege of penmanship was most likely exclusively enjoyed by the literate seafarers. Music definitely brought the seafarers closer together, which is shown in the singing and *shantying* on board, in the next part of this chapter we will investigate whether this was also the case for other musical endeavours.

Playing Musical Instruments

The songs previously discussed in this chapter were not the only sounds of music one could hear traveling on board of a Company ship. In the first chapter we have discussed the primary role of trumpeters and drummers in the musical communications on board. We have seen that the trumpeters and drummers played their instruments in special ceremonies, for example when visitors arrived and spend time on board.¹⁶⁵ Peter Kolbe describes not only the role of these players in his travel account, music on board of the ship in general is discussed in great detail. Kolbe writes that the trumpeters played on many different occasions: at sunrise or sundown, at meal-times, when the captain wants to be amused, when special guests came on board or as a treat for the crew.¹⁶⁶ Music, in these cases, was an institutionalized form of entertainment, because it was ordered through the regulations.¹⁶⁷ Even more interesting, Kolbe writes that those interested in the art of music, among the seafarers, would not only play alongside the trumpeter to amuse the captain, they supposedly also got together to play for themselves. Kolbe's account does show that people also brought their own instrument on board. Instruments like the violin or the flute

¹⁶⁴ Davids, *Wat lijdt den zeeman al verdriet*, 70-71.

¹⁶⁵ Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers*, 93-94.

¹⁶⁶ "...en het aanbreken van den dag bekend maakt door eenig morgen-lied, en den avond door het blazen van 't een of ander avond-lied. Wanneer het eetens tyd is laat hy zich weder horen, en voor het overige zoo dikwyls als het den Kapitein behaagt, of wanneer 'er eenig vreemd chaloup met Officiers aankomt, of aan boord getrakteerd worden." Source: Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvyng*, 12-13.

¹⁶⁷ Henssen, *Trompetters en Tamboers*, 92-94.

were played, others sang, the sound of music could be heard from several corners of the ship, amusing their fellow seafarers. “...Zelfs gaan ze dikwyls by malkander zitten om voor haar eige vermaak een stukje te maken, en ziet men meermalen hier eenige die op de Viool spelen, daar eenige Hautboïsten, gins eenige die op de Fluit spelen en weer op een andere plaats die zich met zingen vermaken; zoo dat’er op een schip, als het mooi weer is, meer vrolykheid bedreven word, als op het vrolykste gastmaal op het vaste land.”¹⁶⁸ This is a crucial insight into the musical performances on board of a Company ship, showing the importance of musicians in amusing themselves and their fellow seafarers (see photo 2).



Photo 2 Seafarers' pastime on board of a Indiamen, several persons are playing musical instruments. Source: Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1985-7-2-109, Scheepsvolk op Oost-Indiëvaarder, Jan Brandes, 1778-1787. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.214514> (Accessed 24 June 2019).

¹⁶⁸ Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvving*, 13, 17.

Music was not only an institutionalized amusement but also a pastime activity for those traveling on board of the Company's ships. It provided great joy to those on board, especially when the weather allowed it, music made the spirits of the seafarer even higher than a meal on land, according to Kolbe. Not only the common seafaring personnel enjoyed making music in their pastime, in the following accounts of the Lammens and Swellenberg sisters we will see that this was also the case for the passengers traveling on board. Moreover, these accounts confirm Kolbe's account that musicians were among those on board of the ships.

The Lammens sisters, traveling as passengers on board the ship *Adrighem* in 1736, write that they listened to the 'usual' music after dinner. They quite enjoyed this music performed by a group of German players.¹⁶⁹ Although the sisters were passengers on board, this account does confirm Kolbe's account of musical seafarers on board of the Company's ships. The Swellengrebel sisters too mention that they listened to music multiple times during their voyage back to the Republic in 1751, they present more detailed information about music on board. Even more, they also joined in with the musical affairs on board, playing together with the musicians. This shows that music brought seafarers of different nationalities and ranks together. At least temporarily, the difference between the players and passengers disappeared. There were multiple 'musicians' on board, playing instruments like the violin and harp, one of the sisters played the flute and another sang. "...hadde muziek, de hofmeester op zijn harp, beneffens de andere musicanten op haare instrumenten, suster Johanna, Stansie, en de secretaries, zongen luijterse (lutherse) liederen, naderhand hadde wij consert, suster Johanna, en ik op de fluijte, en een musicant op de fiool,..."¹⁷⁰ Again this confirms Kolbe's description of music on board, however we still do not know for certain that the musicians also played for themselves, because we have to take into consideration that these passengers were still guests on board. They did not have to participate in the everyday labour and therefore had more time on their hands to amuse themselves. The flute and violin were the most favoured musical instruments.¹⁷¹ In his publication about skippers on board of the VOC ships, Jaap R. Bruijn shows that various skippers actually brought their own instruments on board. One of them, Hermanus Blom,

¹⁶⁹ Barend-van Haefden and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 69.

¹⁷⁰ Idem, 122, 127, 144.

¹⁷¹ Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC*, 182.

brought a clavichord with him on board, this is a rectangular instrument with strings and very suited for travel and small spaces.¹⁷² It is certain that music on board of the Company's ship was existent, and an ordinary occurrence for those on board. Very often the Germans traveling on board had a leading role in these musical pursuits.¹⁷³ Both the seafaring personnel and the passengers traveling on board of the Company's ships enjoyed these musical endeavours on board. Although Ketting has looked at the pastime activities of those on board of the Company's ships for the period between 1595 to 1650, he did not include these musical amusements in his assessment. And although De Hullu mentions singing in relation to other celebrations, he too neglects to acknowledge music as a pastime activity in itself.

Play and Pastime

Even though Dan Sleight argues that there was little opportunity for relaxation on board of the Company's ship, we have already seen that this was not the case.¹⁷⁴ In the remainder of this chapter we will discuss various pastime activities that further substantiate this refutation. Not only in musical performances or amusements Germans played an important role on board of the Company's ships, also in theatre or play on board they were leading players. Plays or comedies were non-institutionalized amusements on board of the Company's ships. Travelers, from various kinds of background, mentioned such performances in their travel accounts. On board of the ship *Zuidpolsbroek* for example a theatrical piece called 'the lost son' was performed by a group of seven or eight German travellers. Also, in 1674, a group of Germans formed a theatre group, they played music and are also made preparations to perform a comedy and a play.¹⁷⁵ A similar account is given about a voyage of the ship *Kievitsheuvel*, during the time on board, music was played and songs or hymns were song. Also on board of this ship comedies were performed, on the day the play *Hansworst* was planned to be performed an accident happened with one of the players. Again a German player, back on land he often played a harlequin, brought his own costume. Performing the role of doctor in the play, out of enthusiasm, he frantically jumped

¹⁷² Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC*, 182.

¹⁷³ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 166.

¹⁷⁴ Sleight, *Jan Compagnie*, 48.

¹⁷⁵ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 167.

around the ship, he fell overboard and drowned. After this specific incident the captain of the *Kievitsheugel* prohibited all theatrical performances on board.¹⁷⁶ Although it is not specifically clarified for whom these theatrical pieces were performed, certain is that they were part of the amusements on board of the Company's ships. Kolbe also mentions comedies being played on board of his ship during the return voyage to the Republic. While the winds were in their favour, making great progression towards the European continent, the ship's crew had little work to do. Several pastime activities kept them occupied, playing comedies was one of these amusements.¹⁷⁷ Kolbe's account confirms that the seafarers did indeed perform theatrical plays among themselves, or at least, everyone was able to behold the performance.

The theatrical punishments discussed in the second chapter are also worth mentioning here. We have seen that seafarers used several plays to punish fellow sailors, these plays were quite elaborate and played in front of each other. Because these plays were only performed when there was time of off work, we can consider these theatrical punishments as forms of pastime amusement as well. Even though De Hullu treats them merely as forms of amusements of the seafarers on board of the Company's ships, these plays served a dualistic purpose. Lastly, it is worth mentioning one striking account of a theatrical performance on board of a Company ship. The Swellengrebel sister mention that one night, after their father went to bed and the high officers had dinner they watched a performance of the *Gijsbregt van Amstel* (a famous historic Dutch play written by Joost van den Vondel). "dog naderhand speelde *Gijsbregt van Amstel*, onze boekebinder was de gouverneur van Leijden, de capteijn, suster Johanna Stansie en ik, zaaten daar bij, om dat fraaije spel aan te zien om 11 uren gingen wij na beneeden,..."¹⁷⁸ Even though the higher officers on board most likely commanded the performance of this play, these kinds of amusements can still be categorized as pastime. Officers and passengers spend their pastime watching it, and one can imagine that if a play like the *Gijsbregt van Amstel* was played the ship personnel was aware of the performance and might have also been allowed to be present. Although this is uncertain, we can safely accept that plays and comedies in

¹⁷⁶ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 167.

¹⁷⁷ Kolbe, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvving*, 444.

¹⁷⁸ Barend-van Haefden and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 122.

general were performed on board of the Company's ships and provided amusement and a distraction from everyday proceedings for its passengers and crew.

There are several other pastime activities that seafarers enjoyed in their free time on board of the Company's ships. While all sorts of games were, by *Artikelbrief*, prohibited like we have seen in the second chapter, games were still played on board. A board game called '*Ganzenborden*' was played for example, and even skippers sometimes joined. Skippers also brought their own games on board in their personal trunk. Herman Blom, who also brought an musical instrument, had a checkerboard on board.¹⁷⁹ Board games like checkers and chess were played on board of the Company's ships.¹⁸⁰ On top of that, and even though they were forbidden, card-games and games with dices were played.¹⁸¹ One skipper, Joris Davidszoon brought dices with him on board.¹⁸² This is quite surprising since this was strictly forbidden to role dices on board. Apparently this was not a rare exception, it happened more frequently because in the archaeological excavations from the VOC ship *Hollandia* a dice was found as well.¹⁸³ Gambling was also prohibited by the *Artikelbrieven*, yet four seafarers on board of surgeon Gijsbert Heeck's ship were caught betting. Heeck writes that they were punished in public to set an example, and to prevent others on board from gambling as well.¹⁸⁴ This account again confirms the social function of the rituals of punishments discussed in the second chapter.

Other game tokens were also used for playing games on board of the ships (see photo 3). A lot of circular and rectangular game tokens were found in the wrecks of Company ships, like the *Hollandia* and the *Waddinxveen wrecks*.¹⁸⁵ In the travel account of the Swellengrebel sisters it is mentioned several times that they played games during the voyage. Interestingly, two times they also mention what kind of game they played. In the first game the players clap each other's hands while saying rhymes out loud. Another game was played with little wooden sticks which they highly likely used to make figures with. In

¹⁷⁹ Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC*, 182.

¹⁸⁰ Bruijn and Lucassen, *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 131; Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 165-166.

¹⁸¹ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 165-166.

¹⁸² Bruijn, *Schippers van de VOC*, 182.

¹⁸³ Gawronski, Kist and Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium*, 432.

¹⁸⁴ Heeck and Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn*, 32-33.

¹⁸⁵ Gawronski, Kist and Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium*, 432-434; Werz, '*Een bedroefd, en beclaaglijck ongeval*', 138.

comparison, the Lammens sisters also mention that they played games, but only once.¹⁸⁶ So even though specific games, like gambling, playing cards, and rolling dice, were forbidden on board of the Company's ships, several kinds of games were played. The archaeological source material shows that even though some games were prohibited, it did not stop the seafarers from playing.



Photo 3 Game token. Source: Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1979-332-H, Speelpenning uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder *Hollandia*, anoniem, 1700 – in of voor 1743 <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.665877> (Accessed 24 June 2019).

Three more pastime activities are crucial to mention with regard to the non-institutionalized forms of amusement, catching fish and smoking tobacco. In calm weather catching fish was a welcome and exciting amusement for the seafarers, birds were also caught but less often. All sorts of fish were caught, including sharks. To seafarers, sharks were a communal enemy and therefore capturing one was an exhilarating event, followed by a ritual of slaughter. Roelof van Gelder explains that the slaughter of a shark provided a moment for the seafarers to exert their aggression without consequences.¹⁸⁷ This highly likely because it is

¹⁸⁶ Barend-van Haefden and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 78, 124, 129, 130, 136.

¹⁸⁷ Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie*, 163-165; Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 167-168.

certain that tensions and aggressions quickly arose on board of the ships, as we have discussed in the second chapter. If these aggressions could be ventilated in this pastime activity and ritual of catching and slaughtering a shark, they would not escalate into something worse. This confirms the importance of pastime activities and rituals on board of the Company's ships in maintaining social order. The travel account of Johann Hoffmann provides us with elaborate information about the operation of catching fish as a pastime activity: "Das gemeine Volck suchte bey so angenehmen Weeter ihr Zeit-Vertreib im Fischfang und fischeten mit grossen messingern Angelhacken, an welche sie kein Atzung sondern einige weise Federlein bunden und also den Hacken hin und her bewegend, aufs Meerhangen liessen..."¹⁸⁸ Not only does he describe the course of events, he also sums up all the different kinds of fish that were caught, including sharks and dolphin. Not only the 'common seafarers' participated in this pastime activity, the Lammens sisters write that they also tried to catch fish from their cabin on the ship.¹⁸⁹ Conjointly, it is not surprising that fishing hooks were found among various archaeological excavations of VOC-ships that wrecked.¹⁹⁰ Fishing provided yet another pastime amusement, but it also had a social function. The rituals performed when a shark was caught, and more importantly, the fact that everybody on board enjoyed the activity, substantiate that it could also have increased the social cohesion.

Among the archaeological finds of various VOC-wrecks is even more evidence from another pastime amusement, smoking tobacco. A lot of clay pipes were found for the consumption of tobacco and also little boxes to store the tobacco in (see photo 4).¹⁹¹ This is not surprising since every sailor in employment of the VOC received several pipes upon boarding a ship.¹⁹² In the inventories from sailors that passed away on board, one can also

¹⁸⁸ Hoffman, *Reise nach dem Kaplande*, 18-19.

¹⁸⁹ Barend-van Haeften and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC*, 67; Herport, *Reise nach Java*, 170.

¹⁹⁰ Green, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht "Vergulde Draeck"*, 182; Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1976-8-PM, *Vishaak uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder Princesse Maria 1682-1686*. (Accessed 25 June 2019) <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.298737>.

¹⁹¹ Gawronski, Kist and Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium*, 360-373; Green, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht "Vergulde Draeck"*, 152-162; Werz, 'Een bedroefd, en beclaaglijck ongeval', 135-137; Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1975-76-ME, *Pijp uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder Meresteijn 1693-1702*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.299449> (Accessed 25 June 2019); Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1984-59-23, *Fragmenten van pijpen en pijpenstelen uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder 't Vliegend Hart 1700-1735*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.294088> (Accessed 25 June 2019).

¹⁹² Werz, 'Een bedroefd, en beclaaglijck ongeval', 135.

find evidence of this. Tobacco was found in the luggage of many, and also boxes to store the tobacco in and lighters were found among sailors' possessions.¹⁹³ One can imagine that on a ship, made of substantial amounts of wood, there was tremendous risk of fire. Even though smoking tobacco probably was a popular pastime activity on board, due to its dangers of causing a fire, it was only allowed to smoke a pipe during the day.¹⁹⁴ There is one more pastime activity worth mentioning because it happened a lot on board of the Company's ships, and possibly also while seafarers enjoyed smoking a pipe. Storytelling must have been the most regular pastime activity, a lot of the time these stories must have been life histories.¹⁹⁵



Photo 4 Fragments of pipes from the wreck of the East Indiamen 't Vliegend Hart. Source: Rijksmuseum, Objectnummer: NG-1984-59-23, Fragmenten van pijpen en pijpenstelen uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder 't Vliegend Hart 1700-1735. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.294088> (Accessed 25 June 2019).

¹⁹³ Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 6934, *Inventarissen van goederen, 1718-1719, 1743-1744*.

¹⁹⁴ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 169; For example: Nationaal Archief, Inventarisnummer: 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal 1658*.

¹⁹⁵ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 169.

Especially these last few pastime activities are very interesting, not only because they occurred outside of the institutionalized framework of amusement on board of the Company's ships. In this chapter we have seen that musical endeavours on board of the Dutch East India Company's ships were part of the proceedings on board, and they part of the pastime activities. Musical concerts were performed and musical instruments were played, not only by seafarers, but also by officers and passengers. Therefore, music was also non-institutionalized pastime activity on board of the Company's ships. Comedies and other plays were also performed on board, again these were performed both in front of officers and passengers, and among seafarers. Other, more common, activities like smoking, fishing, playing games and storytelling were also enjoyed to pass the time. These activities and amusements were of great importance because it gave seafarers something to do in their time off duty. We have seen that in case of the ritual of catching sharks, seafarers needed this kind of ritual to assert their aggression. Providing the sailors with something to do kept them from causing trouble and possibly disrupting social order on board. In general, all on board enjoyed the pastime activities described in this chapter, regardless of their rank or nationality. Moreover, in some cases, the pastime activities were enjoyed by passengers, higher officers and 'common' seafarers together.

Conclusion

In this thesis we have discussed various types of institutionalized rituals, punishments, rewards, amusements and pastime activities on board of the Company's ships. Rituals, the structures and ceremonies that were regularly repeated in predictable ways, played an essential role in this. In definition, rituals have a social function, in the first chapter we have seen that the functional-structuralistic approach reflects and characterized the social function of rituals on board. Helping and improving social order the rituals, in relation to the ship community, were very important on board of ships of the Dutch East India Company. This was demonstrated in the remainder of the first chapter, discussing the signalling and communication rituals and the sea baptism. These rituals can be characterized as institutionalized amusements because they provided the seafarers with distractions from the hardships of life on board, yet they were also ordered from above, meaning that these rituals were regulated. Regulations became rituals because of the way, where and for whom, they were performed. In the rest of this thesis we discovered that more regulations qualified as rituals.

In the second chapter we have discussed a variety of punishments on board of the Company ships. These punishments were administered by the Company's directors to control the large body of people on board. Moreover, the ritualistic nature of these punishments had two effects. Not only did it enlarge the exemplary function of the punishments, which again served to social control, it also brought about the theatricality of the punishments. This last element qualifies punishments as institutionalized amusements. Interestingly, sailors used theatrical plays to practice justice mutually, in these plays punishments literally were amusements. To celebrate special occasions seafarers were rewarded, in most cases extra provisions were distributed among them. Often these rewards were given to celebrate a dangerous passage of the journey, simultaneously giving the seafarers an opportunity to keep track of the progress of the voyage, which was the same for everybody on board, regardless of their rank or nationality. These celebratory moments brought the seafarers great joy and an opportunity to forget the tough working conditions on board. To a certain extent, these amusements were often regulated, and therefore they were part of the institutionalized amusements as well.

Part of the institutionalized amusements were also the religious rituals that proved to be an important part of everyday life on board of the Company's ships. In the third chapter we have seen that the *ziekentroosters* and pastors on board of the ships played an important role in this, daily performing the religious rituals that were regulated in the *Artikelbrieven*. Various travellers describe these, and other less regular, rituals in the travel accounts substantiating their function on board. Because these religious rituals provided the seafarers with a sense of familiarity, resembling the religious rituals back at home. They helped seafarers through the difficulties of the voyage, giving them faith and hope.

Then, we continued to discuss the music and pastime activities on board of the Company's ships. Music on board was used in several ways. In the everyday operation of the ship, for instance, it played an important role in helping the sailors work together, which helped easing the tough labour. Also, it was used to announce the guard to change, we have seen that singing relieved sailors, both literally and in a figurative sense. Music was also part of the pastime activities and amusements of both the higher officers and the common seafarers. Plays and music was performed to amuse the higher officers and passengers on board, but they also took part in playing music themselves, just like the common seafarers, if the weather allowed it. Several other pastime activities were enjoyed by those on board of the Company ships; playing games, fishing, telling stories and smoking. As we have seen in the last part of the fourth chapter, these pastime activities occupied the seafarers 'free' time. The pastime activity of fishing provided us yet with another very important insight into the function of amusements on board, it showed us that the activity, and especially the ritual of catching and slaughtering sharks, was an outlet for seafarers to exert their aggression or cropped up frustrations.

The in-depth evaluation of various kinds of institutionalized amusements and pastime activities, was necessary to answer the first part of the main question of this research: Which amusements and pastime activities were available on board of the VOC ships, traveling to and from Asia between 1650 and 1800, and how did they contribute to the functioning of the ship? We categorized various types of amusements, some maybe less expected than others, including many rituals, punishments, rewards, religion and other pastime activities. All these amusements, whether institutionalized or not, played an important role in the functioning of the ship. Comparable to the function of rituals, it is safe to conclude that the amusements helped improve and protect social order on board of the

Dutch East India Company's ships. Because the amusements were carried out in a ritualistic manner, several 'amusements' literally kept the seafarers in order during their working routine. Providing the sailors with something to do in their 'free' time, these amusements also prevented sailors from causing problems and disrupting social order. The rituals and proceedings that we qualified as institutionalized amusements distracted the seafarers from the hardships of life on board. The mere fact that most of these amusements were regulated by the *Artikelbrief* show that they were important in keeping the social order on board of the Company's ships. Most importantly, we have seen that a lot of these amusements exceeded social boundaries like nationality and rank – everybody on board enjoyed these amusements or engaged in them. Except from the skipper, he had to maintain his position as commander, and oftentimes ordered the performance of these activities. The amusements brought cohesion between foreigners and Dutchmen and the boundaries between the 'common seafarers', higher officers and passengers became less distinguishable. Altogether, this shows and emphasizes that the ship was a society of its own – a heterotopia. Social boundaries, values and standards did exist, but to some extent they were less distinguishable compared to those on land. On the ship, as we have seen, the passengers and higher officers enjoyed several amusements together with the 'common seafarers', whereas on land they would never be in contact with each other. This insight of the social function of various types of amusements is new in the historiography.

This thesis also contributes to the deficiency of research on the subject of culture and amusements on board of the Dutch East India Company's ships, identified by Bruijn and Lucassen. Moreover, it bridges the gap in historiography on this subject for the period between 1650 and 1800. In addition to this, this research introduces a new qualification of several kinds of amusements and pastime activities. Previous scholars writing about the amusements on board of the Company's ships, like Ketting, Bruijn, and De Hullu, do not distinguish various aspects of the punishments, religion and other rituals as such. Compared to Bruijn's book *Zeegang*, this thesis offers a more elaborate examination of the pastime activities and amusements, including their function. Introducing the concept of 'institutionalized amusements' into the historiography, this thesis allows us to broaden our perspective, and look at the actual function, of various kinds of amusements on board of the Dutch East India Company's ships. Compared to Krabbendam's research on the institutionalized amusements on board of trans-Atlantic passenger ships between 1840 and

1960, this thesis shows that, already in a couple of centuries prior to Krabbendam's, amusements on board of ships were largely institutionalized. In the general historiography about the Dutch East India Company, a lot of research has been done on its labour force, and on the subject of controlling a large body of people on the ships. Compared to the historiography this thesis offers a rather unique perspective on this subject, showing that amusements and pastime activities played a substantial role in the social order on board, confirming that the ships were heterotopias.

The methodological approach of this thesis resulted in an all-inclusive assessment of the available, and multi-lingual, source material and proved to be very effective. This exceptional analysis of the subject matter also resolved some misconceptions that were a result of an erroneous interpretation of the source material. Furthermore, using a coherent definition of rituals, and the function of rituals, presented an opportunity to demonstrate that various rituals can be characterized as amusements. Incorporating the not yet accessible source material in future research would provide us with the possibility to explore the amusements on board of the Company's ships even more extensively.

Additional questions might arise. Historians focusing on cross-cultural research might focus on the cultural influence the seafarers had on the local cultures of Asia and other places they touched land. Consequently, this same question could be asked vice versa. In a comparative perspective it would be very interesting to examine the contrast and similarities between other trading companies, for example the British East India Company. A comparison might also contribute new insights into the amusements on board of the Dutch East India Company's ships. Furthermore, we have seen that religion on board showed great similarities to religious practices on land, this raises the question whether this was also the case for other rituals and amusements. To determine whether other cultural aspects of a society were carried over onto the ships, future research might focus on comparing these cultural aspects on land to those on board. Possibly, this could even provide us with new insights into the amusements on board. This thesis will hopefully encourage social and cultural historians to continue exploring these subjects in the future.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archives

Nationaal Archief/National Archives, The Hague

Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC-archive (1.04.02)

- 4983, *Verordening bevattende gedragsregels voor de sloopofficieren, bootsgezellen en soldaten van schepen, 1744.*

- 4981, *Reglement van de Heren XVII voor het aannemen van scheepsvolk en militairen. Gedrukt, 1692.*

- 4985, *Resoluties van de Heren XVII bevattende orders voor de sloopofficieren van vertrekkende schepen. Gedrukt, 1760-1786.*

- 6934, *Inventarissen van goederen van overladen VOC-militairen en –zeelieden, 1718-1719, 1743-1744.*

- 11397, *Artikelbrief van de VOC van 1742 september 4, met gewaarmerkte verklaringen van beljuw en burgemeester van Middelburg over het voorlezen van deze brief aan in VOC-dienst naar Indië vertrekkende officieren en zeevolk en de eed van trouw daarop door hen afgelegd, 1766-1794.*

- 14328, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal voor de VOC. Gedrukt, 1658.*

- 14329, *Artikelbrief van de Staten-Generaal van 1742 september 4, met aanvullingen van 1747 oktober 11 en instructies van de Heren XVII voor de gezagvoerders, chirurgijns en predikanten op de schepen, 1728-1763.*

Objects

Rijksmuseum, Object number: NG-1975-76-ME, *Pijp uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder Meresteijn 1693-1702*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.299449>
(Accessed 25 June 2019)

Rijksmuseum, Object number: NG-1976-8-PM, *Vishaak uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder Princesse Maria 1682-1686*.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.298737> (Accessed 25 June 2019)

Rijksmuseum, Object number: NG-1979-332-H, *Speelpenning uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder Hollandia, anoniem, 1700 – in of voor 1743*
<http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.665877> (Accessed 24 June 2019)

Rijksmuseum, Object number: NG-1984-59-23, *Fragmenten van pijpen en pijpenstelen uit het wrak van de Oost-Indiëvaarder 't Vliegend Hart 1700-1735*.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.294088> (Accessed 25 June 2019)

Rijksmuseum, Object number: NG-1985-7-1-144, *Dekzicht van een VOC-schip naar de grote mast, Jan Brandes, 1778-1787*.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.150097> (Accessed 24 June 2019)

Rijksmuseum, Object number: NG-1985-7-2-109, *Scheepsvolk op Oost-Indiëvaarder, Jan Brandes, 1778-1787*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.214514>
(Accessed 24 June 2019)

Printed Sources

Graaff, Nicolaas de, Marijke Barend-van Haften and Hetty Plekenpol, *Oost-Indise Spiegel* (Leiden 2010)

Heeck, Gijsbert and O, Dekkers, *Een Bunschoter VOC-chirurgijn: 'dagelijkse aantekeningen' van de reis naar Oost-Indië in 1654 door Gijsbert Heeck (1619-1669)* (Bunschoten 2001)

- Herport, Albrecht, *Reise nach Java, Formosa, Vorder-Indien und Ceylon: 1659-1668; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602-1797* (Haag 1930)
- Hesse, Elias, *Gold-Bergwerke in Sumatra: 1680-1683; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602-1797* (Haag 1931)
- Hoffman, Johann Christian, *Reise nach dem Kaplande, nach Mauritius und nach Java: 1671-1676; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1602-1797* (Haag 1931)
- Kolbe, Peter, *Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschrijvyving van de Kaap de Goede Hoop* (Amsterdam 1727)
- Saar, Johann Jacob, *Reise nach Java, Banda, Ceylon und Persien; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1644-1660* (Haag 1930)
- Schreyer, Johann, *Reise nach dem Kaplande, und beschreibungen der Hottentotten: 1669-1677; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1669-1677* (Haag 1931)
- Tappens, David, *Funffzehen Jährige Curiöse und denckwürdige auch sehr gefährliche Ost-Indianische Reise-Beschreibung* (Hannover 1704)
- Wintergerst, Martin, *Reisen auf dem Mittelländischen Meere, der Nordsee, nach Ceylon, und nach Java; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1688-1710* (Haag 1931) (1)

Wintergerst, Martin, *Reisen auf dem Mittelländischen Meere, der Nordsee, nach Ceylon, und nach Java; Reisbeschreibungen von Deutschen Beamten und Kriegsleuten im Dienst der West- und Ost-Indischen Kompagnien 1688-1710* (Haag 1931) (2)

Literature

Atkinson, Quentin D., Harvey Whitehouse, “The cultural morphospace of ritual form: Examining modes of religiosity cross-culturally”, *Evolution and Human Behavior*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2011) 50-62 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2010.09.002>

Barend-van Haeften, E.S. van Marijke and Eyck van Heslinga, *Op reis met de VOC: de openhartige dagboeken van de zusters Lammens en Swellengrebel* (Zutphen 1996)

Bell, Catherine M., *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford 2009)

Bowker, John, “Ritual”, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (2003) <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-61117?rskey=sZhAeH&result=6> (Accessed 29 May 2019)

Bruijn, J.R., *Schippers van de VOC in de achttiende eeuw aan de wal en op zee* (Amsterdam 2008)

Bruijn, Jaap R., *Zeegang: Zeevarend Nederland in de achttiende eeuw* (Zutphen 2016)

Bruijn, J.R. and E.S. van Marijke and Eyck van Heslinga, *Muiterij – oproer en berechting op schepen van de VOC* (Haarlem 1980)

Bruijn, J.R. and Femme S. Gastra, *Ships, Sailors and Spices: East India Companies and their shipping in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries* (Amsterdam 1993)

Bruijn, J.R., F.S. Gaastra, and I, Schöffer, with assistance from A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries: VOLUME I Introductory Volume* (The Hague 1987)

Bruijn, J.R., F.S. Gaastra, and I, Schöffer, with assistance from A.C.J. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries: VOLUME II Outward-bound voyages from the Netherlands to Asia and the Cape (1595-1794)* (The Hague 1979)

Bruijn, J.R. and J. Lucassen (eds.), *Op de schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie: vijf artikelen van J. de Hullu* (1980 Groningen)

Dauids, C.A., *Wat lijdt den zeeman al verdriet: het Nederlandse zeemanslied in de zeiltijd (1600-1900)* (Den Haag 1980)

Dauids, Karel, en Marjolein 't Hart, *De Wereld & Nederland – Een sociale en economische Geschiedenis van de laatste duizend jaar* (Amsterdam 2011)

Duivenvoorde, Wendy van, *The Batavia Shipwreck: an archaeological study of an early seventeenth-century Dutch East Indiaman* (Ann Arbor 2008)

Foucault, Michel, and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces", *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1986), 22-27

Gaastra, F.S., *De Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Haarlem 1982)

Gaastra, Femme S., *Geschiedenis van de VOC – opkomst, bloei en ondergang* (Zutphen 2009)

Gawronski, Jerzy, Bas Kist, and Odilia Stokvis van Boetzelaer, *Hollandia compendium: a contribution to the history, archaeology, classification and lexicography of a 150 ft. Dutch East Indiaman (1740-1750)* (Amsterdam 1992)

Gelder, Roelof van, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duiters in dienst van de VOC (1600-1800)* (Nijmegen 1997)

Gennep, Arnold van, *The Rites of Passage* (London 1965)

Green, Jeremy, *The loss of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie jacht "Vergulde Draeck", Western Australia 1656: an historical background and excavation report with an appendix on similar loss of the fluit "Lastdrager"* (Oxford 1977)

Gulaj, Ron and Gerrit Knaap, *Het Grote VOC Boek* (Amsterdam 2017)

Guy, Richard, "Calamitous Voyages: the social space of shipwreck and mutiny narratives in the Dutch East India Company", *Itinerario*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2015) 112-140

Henningsen, Henning, *Crossing the Equator: Sailors' Baptism and Other Initiation Rites* (Copenhagen 1961)

Henssen, Ralph Johan Gerard, *Trompetters en Tamboers in de Zeeuwse Zeevaart ten tijde van de Republiek: Plichten en Praktijken* (Ridderkerk 2011)

Hoogenberk, Hendrik, *De Rechtsvoorschriften voor de Vaart op Oost-Indië 1595-1620* (Utrecht 1940)

Huizinga, J., *Homo Ludens, A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Oxon 1949)

Hullu, J. de, "De Handhaving der Orde en Tucht op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie", *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (1913) 516-540 <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90001800>

Hullu, J. de, "De Voeding op de Schepen der Oost-Indische Compagnie", *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (1913) 541-562 <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90001801>

Ketting, Herman, *Leven, werk en rebellie aan boord van Oost-Indievaarders (1595-1650)* (Amsterdam 2002)

Krabbendam, Hans, "Rituelen op Reis, Culturele vormgeving aan boord van Nederlandse trans-Atlantische passagiersschepen, 1840-1960", *Tijdschrift voor Zeegeschiedenis*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2015) 41-59

Liberman, Zoe, Katherine D. Kinzler, Amanda L. Woodward, "The early social significance of shared ritual actions", *Cognition*, Vol. 171 (2018) 42-51
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2017.10.018>

Lucassen, Jan, "A Multinational and its Labor Force: The Dutch East India Company, 1595-1795", *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 66, (2004) 12-39

McKay, John P., Bennett D. Hill, John Buckler, et al., *A History of Western Society* (Bedford 2014)

Meer, Sjoerd de and Joost Schokkenbroek, *Hoogtij: Maritieme identiteit in feesten, tradities en vermaak* (Zutphen 2013)

Parking, David J., "Ritual", *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 20 (2015) 717-720 <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.12141-5>

Penn, Nigel, "The Voyage Out, Peter Kolb and VOC Voyages to the Cape" in Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus & Markus Rediker, *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley 2007) 72-91

Po-Chia Hsia, R. and Henk van Nierop, *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge 2002)

- Roeper, Vibeke, *Zwarte peper, scheurbuik: kinderen op reis met de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Amsterdam 2002)
- Rooij, Hans H. van and Jerzy Gawronski, *VOC-schip Amsterdam: Gebleeven – op de kust van Sussex tusschen Hastings en Beachyhead gestrand* (Haarlem 1989)
- Rossum, Mattias van, *Werkers van de Wereld: Globalisering, arbeid en interculturele ontmoetingen tussen Aziatische en Europese zeelieden in dienst van de VOC, 1600-1800* (Hilversum 2014)
- Schutte, Gerrit J., “Christendom en Compagnie” in Leonard Blussé en Ilonka Ooms, *Kennis en Compagnie – De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de moderne Wetenschap* (Amersfoort 2002) 87-99
- Sgourev, Stoyan V and Wim van Lent, “When too many are not enough: Human resource slack and performance at the Dutch East India Company (1700–1795)”, *Human Relations*, Vol. 70, No. 11 (2017) 1293-1315
- Sleigh, Dan, *Jan Compagnie, The world of the Dutch East India Company* (Tafelberg 1980)
- Terwiel, Barend Jan, and Peter Kirsch, *Terug naar de Oost: De reis van VOC-chirurgijn Gijsbert Heeck, 1654-1656* (Zutphen 2017)
- Vivanco, Luis A., “Ritual”, *A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology* (2018)
<https://login.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/login?url=https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191836688.001.0001/acref-9780191836688-e-316?rskey=sZhAeH&result=2> (Accessed 29 May 2019)
- Werz, Bruno E.J.S., *‘Een bedroefd, en beclaaglijck ongeval’: De wrakken van de VOC-schepen Oosterland en Waddinxveen (1697) in de Tafelbaai* (Zutphen 2004)

Wezel, Filippo Carlo and Martin Reuf, "Agents with Principles: The Control of Labor in the Dutch East India Company, 1700 to 1796", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 82, No. 5 (2017) 1009-1036

Whitehouse, Harvey and Jonathan A. Lanman, "The Ties That Bind Us: Ritual, Fusion, and Identification," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 55, No. 6 (2014) 674-695
<https://doi.org/10.1086/678698>

Woodfield, Ian, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration* (Stuyvesant 1995)

Databases and Websites

Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries

http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das/index_html_en (Accessed 06 June 2019)

Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis (ING), *VOC-Glossarium: Verklaringen van termen, verzameld uit de rijks geschiedkundige publication die betrekking hebben op de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Den Haag 2000)

Nationaal archief, *Sailing Letters, 1672-1830*.

<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00424?searchTerm=>
(Accessed 25 June 2019)

Nationaal Archief, *VOC: Opvarenden, 1699-1794*.

https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00444?searchTerm=ziekentr_ooster&activeTab=nt_sub_list_legacy (Accessed 24 June 2019)

Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, *Collectiecatalogus*

<http://cultureelerfgoed.adlibsoft.com/search.aspx> (Accessed 29 May 2019)

Rijksmuseum, *Rijksstudio* <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/rijksstudio> (Accessed 29 May 2019).