

# **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND PUBLIC HONOR**

*Comparing Punishment and Social Mobility  
of European Soldiers and Enslaved African  
in New Netherland, 1638-1664*

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**S1603345**

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## INTRODUCTION

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1641, the prosecutor of the West India Company in New Amsterdam accused an Englishman named Jan Habbesen of stealing a bed sheet from the local tavern. Even though four witnesses testified that Habbesen had stolen the sheet from a closed bed in the inn, the alleged thief did not remember anything regarding this event. The reason for this, according to Habbesen, was that he had been drunk on the night of the crime. Habbesen was given until the late afternoon of that day to confess or, “if he stayed stubborn”, he was to be tortured for a confession.<sup>1</sup> On November 22, the lawsuit continued. By now the prosecutor had found six witnesses attesting that Habbesen had stolen the linen. The defendant, however, maintained his previous statement. Only after going through torture, Habbesen confessed to have stolen the sheet from the inn. On top of that he also confessed to have eaten a piece of bacon that was stolen from *Old Jan* the previous year. Jan Habbesen seemed to have lived an unremarkable life. The first time he appears in the sources was two years prior to this lawsuit, when he pledged allegiance to New Netherland and the Dutch West India Company with eight other Englishmen, living in and around New Amsterdam. Besides being in debt with Abraham *Page* for 27 guilders and fourteen stivers, Habbesen seemed to have been an ordinary member of this early modern North American society.<sup>2</sup> Now, however, because he was being prosecuted for stealing linen, another crime that Habbesen had been involved in arose to the surface. Someone had found out that he had tried to escape from New Netherland by stealing a canoe, “leaving behind many debts.” Therefore, the director and council in New Amsterdam, consisting of six top administrators of New Netherland, had no choice but to punish Jan Habbesen with a birching and to banish him from New Netherland for eternity. If he was ever to be found in New Netherland after his banishment, he was to be “chained to work with the honorable company’s enslaved Africans, to set an example.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New York Colonial Manuscripts (hereafter NYCM), Vol. 4, 107 (14 November 1641), New York State Archives (hereafter NYSA).

<sup>2</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 47-48 (11 August 1639), NYSA.

<sup>3</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 108-9 (22 November 1641), NYSA.

Ibid., 147-8. Quote translated from: “inde kettingh sal gesloten worden ende nevens de E. Comp.’s negros te arbeiden, alle andere soodanige ten exempel.” Note on translation: I translated the word “negros” with “slaves.” The Portuguese word “negro” as well as the Dutch word “swarte” were synonyms for the word “slave”, which was never used by the contemporary New Netherland sources.

From a twenty-first century perspective, Habbesen's punishment - birching, banishment and potentially forced labor - seems harsh, when compared to his crime - stealing a bed sheet. Nevertheless, it was not uncommon in the early modern judicial practices of the Dutch Republic to sentence people to corporal or custodial punishments, like banishment, for crimes that would nowadays seem insignificant. In the early modern judicial practices of the Dutch Republic, honor played an important role, and in the eyes of the authorities in New Amsterdam, Habbesen had been dishonest about his crimes.<sup>4</sup> His dishonesty and the aggravated fact that he had tried to escape might explain the severity of the punishment. Furthermore, he was English and, as a carpenter, he was an indentured servant to the West India Company. All these factors combined could help explain the punishment that Habbesen received.

The potential severity of the punishment, however, was not what caused my initial attention to this case. What I found remarkable about Habbesen's conviction was not the banishment or the birching, but the potential prospect of forced labor with the enslaved Africans, if he was ever to set foot in New Netherland's limits again. It caught my attention, because on the surface it showed a fluidity between two groups – the enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company and the indentured European inhabitants of New Amsterdam – that had not been researched in the context of New Amsterdam before. Even though this form of punishment did not show any potential upward social mobility in status of the enslaved Africans, it did show a potential downward mobility for the Europeans in New Amsterdam's society. In fact, Habbesen's potential punishment of forced labor with the enslaved African owned by the company was not an exception. In 1639, for instance, Gijsbert Cornelissen *van Beyerlandt* was sentenced to forced labor with the enslaved Africans until a longboat would arrive to transport him to the South River, for injuring several soldiers situated in Fort Amsterdam.<sup>5</sup> While for Habbesen, working amongst the slaves was a potential punishment, for Cornelissen it seemed to have actually happened. Between 1638, the year that the court records start, and 1664, the year that the company lost power of New Netherland, a total of nine people received this punishment.

The people that were being punished by working with enslaved African owned by the West India Company, were not the fur merchants, councilors of New Netherland, prominent magistrates or other well-connected inhabitants of New Amsterdam. They were often soldiers,

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<sup>4</sup> Michiel van Groesen & Judith Pollmann, "Inleiding. Het gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw" in: *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw. Recht, onrecht en reputatie in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, eds. Michiel van Groesen, Judith Pollmann & Hans Cools (Hilversum, 2014), 8.

<sup>5</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 32 (3 February 16399, NYSA).

sailors or servants, people that were low in the social hierarchy of New Amsterdam. Because the wages in the Dutch West India Company were standardized, we know that they were paid little, and were often not from the Dutch Republic, but from other parts of Northwestern Europe, like modern day Germany, Scandinavia and the British Isles.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis, however, compares the situation of European soldiers to enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam by analyzing why they were punished a certain way and by analyzing their social mobility in New Amsterdam's society. This essay merely focuses on comparing European soldiers with enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam for several reasons. First, one academic paper has been written about servant migration to New Netherland. Using this study, one could conclude that a large number of the colony's inhabitants were initially servants of the company when arriving in New Amsterdam, because they signed contracts for three or four years and additionally received food and board, which were the requirements for being branded a servant.<sup>7</sup> This inclusive use of the term servant would lead to problems in this thesis, because it meant that, for instance, the director of New Netherland and small artisans, such as carpenters and millers, were also servants. Many of these artisans, however, owned land and used other servants in their households, as well as for their jobs. Because of this inclusive use of the term servant, there were so many different trades and people of different social standing that comparing servants with enslaved Africans would become problematic, and this essay would lose focus. Comparing sailors with enslaved Africans would also be problematic because the nature of their job was not to settle, start a family and a small farm. For this reason, sailors are not the primary focus of the comparison. Sailors, whose ships anchored in New Amsterdam, likely had some social connections in town, but it is hard to find social connections of sailors in New Amsterdam. However, evidence suggests that soldiers and enslaved Africans, "had a certain amount in common. Similarly regimented and punished, they both were employed for heavy manual labor and they lived in proximity. They also had the reputation of stealing [...] and retailing stolen property."<sup>8</sup> Just like enslaved Africans who were forced to live in New

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<sup>6</sup> Herman Ketting, *Leven, werk en rebellie aan boord van Oost-Indiëvaarders (1595-1650)* (Amsterdam, 2002), 41; Jaap Jacobs, "Soldiers of the Company. Military Personnel of the West India Company in Nieuw Netherland", in: *Jacob Leisler's Atlantic World in the Later Seventeenth Century. Essays on Religion, Militia, Trade, and Networks*, ed: Hermann Wellenreuther (Münster, 2009), 22.

<sup>7</sup> Ernst van den Boogaart, "The Servant Migration to New Netherland, 1624-1664", in: *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labour before and after Slavery*, ed: Pieter.C. Emmer (Dordrecht 1986), 59-60.

<sup>8</sup> David Patrick Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815," in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington 1997), 25.

Amsterdam, many soldiers also voluntarily stayed in the colony, creating personal connections within its boundaries, which makes them the perfect subject for the comparison.

A vast amount of academic literature about New Netherland in general and social hierarchy in New Netherland in particular, has been published over the years. Some historians have even argued that the scale of publications focusing on the colony is too large, compared to the role New Netherland played in the colonial empire of the Dutch West India Company, and that therefore the focus should shift to other parts of the empire, such as Dutch Brazil or West African slaving centers, like Elmina.<sup>9</sup> An explanation for the large scale of publications concerning this part of Dutch history could be the interest in the history of New York City and the early beginnings of colonial North America. Early historiography focusing on New Netherland was indeed written through the point of view of historians focusing on the colonial history of what would become the United States. However, several issues arose from this perspective. For example, by comparing seventeenth century Dutch New Netherland's system of slavery with colonial New York's system of slavery, a common, but continuing, misconception arose that in New Netherland slavery was "mild" or non-consistent compared to slavery in the British era.<sup>10</sup> Because of issues that could not be explained through the point of view of North American continental colonial history, the focus of research shifted to the framework of the Dutch empire, which proved to be a more suitable point of view to analyze the history of New Netherland through. This thesis will first elaborate on the historiography about soldiers in New Netherland and the broader Dutch empire, before continuing with the historiography of enslaved Africans in New Netherland.

### *Historiography of European Soldiers in the West India Company*

To get a better understanding about the life and the place of European soldiers in the social hierarchy of New Amsterdam, this thesis will first take a step back and elaborate on the manner in which the West India Company operated. Soldiers were a major contributor to the Dutch West Indian Company's cause. Unlike the Dutch East India Company, which started as a joint enterprise to reduce risks for merchants trading spices in Asia, the goals of the West India Company at its establishment were primarily to trade and colonize the Americas. However, even though trade and colonization of the Americas were the primary reason for its

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<sup>9</sup> Wim Klooster, "The Place of New Netherland in the West India Company's Grand Scheme", ed.: Joyce D. Goodfriend, *Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America* (Leiden 2005) 68-69.

<sup>10</sup> Joyce D. Goodfriend, "Burghers and Blacks: The Evolution of a Slave Society in New Amsterdam." In: *New York History* 59 (1978), 125-144, 125.

establishment, the company was certainly also a tool of war for the State General of the Dutch Republic.<sup>11</sup> Its establishment in 1621, was certainly not coincidental. 1621 was the end of the twelve-year truce between the Republic and the Spanish crown. War could be waged again, and because most Spanish colonies were in South America and the Caribbean, the Atlantic was one of the areas that the Republic could hurt Spain. In the early years after its establishment, the West India Company was very successful. It fought and captured many Spanish ships, including the Spanish treasure fleet in 1628. It also conquered Spanish and Portuguese colonies, the most notorious of which were African slave-trading center Elmina and Brazil. Even so, the Company overspent on war and did not properly invest in its newly conquered colonies and its inhabitants, which eventually led to the demise of the WIC.<sup>12</sup>

At this backdrop, many people enlisted for the company's military in Amsterdam, which was the main recruitment city for the West India Company. It seems unlikely that the reasons for enlisting as a soldier with the West India Company were any different than enlisting as a sailor or soldier for the East India Company.<sup>13</sup> Many soldiers that the West India Company hired were from German-speaking countries, the British Isles and Scandinavia. These soldiers often came to Amsterdam to find employment for several reasons. Some thought they would be able to accumulate money faster than they would where they were from originally. Other fled from war, or were fired soldiers, looking for a new job. There were also people who had lost their property or capital through misfortunes, such as fire, theft or flooding, while others had accumulated debts and tried to pay these off.<sup>14</sup> Even though at its establishment, the West India Company was as popular an employer as the East India Company, attracting suitable employees became increasingly difficult after the 1640s, because the WIC often did not pay off its employees' wages.<sup>15</sup> Regardless, people were still being recruited by the company. Some had little choice. Many visitors, who were looking for jobs in Amsterdam, but had little money, stayed in taverns that were run by crimps. In exchange for the deposit and a *Cedeel* that they received after signing with the company, these visitors received boarding and clothes from the crimps. A *Cedeel* was a letter consisting of the wages that a soldier would collect during his

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<sup>11</sup> Wim Klooster, "Marteling, Mouterij en Beeldenstorm. Militair Geweld in de Nederlandse Atlantische Wereld 1624-1654." In: Victor Enthoven, Henk Heijer & Han R. Jordaan, *Geweld in de West. Een Militaire Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Atlantisch Wereld, 1600-1800* (Leiden 2013), 313.

<sup>12</sup> Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Ithaca 2016), 83-90.

<sup>13</sup> Jacobs, "Soldiers of the Company", 12-14.

<sup>14</sup> Roelof van Gelder, "Pleisterplaats op Weg naar Indië. Logementen voor Oost-Indiëgangers in Amsterdam", In: *Spiegel Historiael* 39-7 (2004), 304-309, 305.

<sup>15</sup> Klooster, *The Dutch Moment*, 86, 119-20 & 142-43.

employment for the West India Company. By giving their *Cedeel* to a crimp, many soldiers would receive little to no money after their employment with the Company had been terminated.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, little academic literature has been written about soldiers employed by the company in New Netherland. Most information we know about soldiers enlisted with the company, we know from sources in Dutch Brazil. One has to keep in mind, however, when reading these sources that some circumstances were different in New Amsterdam from Dutch Brazil. First, the tropical climate of North Brazil was different from the land climate of New Netherland. Second, the West India Company had taken over control of Dutch Brazil from the Portuguese, while New Netherland was an area that had not yet been controlled by a European power. Third, even though the area of New Netherland was contested by the English on certain occasions, Dutch Brazil had to deal with continuous rebellion from within, as well as reconquest by the Portuguese.<sup>17</sup>

Despite these differences, Wim Klooster found that certain aspects of the life of soldiers were the same all over the Dutch Atlantic. Soldiers were mistreated by the company. Life as a soldier employed for the company was tough. Soldiers had to construct forts, were provided with little victuals, were famished and they were also often punished for petty misdeeds.<sup>18</sup> Specifically concerning soldiers in New Netherland, Klooster found several punishments such as sitting on the *houten paerd*. This was a corporal punishment, which consisted of sitting on a wooden horse with a sharp triangular-shaped back for a certain amount of time. A punishment for desertion was human branding of the soldier's ear, so that people would know who the soldier was in case he deserted again.<sup>19</sup>

Jaap Jacobs published the only academic article, concerning the subject of soldiers in New Netherland. This article provided the circumstances that soldiers encountered when arriving in New Amsterdam. The number of soldiers that resided in the town was constantly low, compared to the amount that the council in New Amsterdam thought they needed. In 1643 the military force in New Netherland consisted approximately between fifty and sixty men. In the early 1650s this number had increased to about two-hundred-and-fifty. By the time that the English took over in 1664 less than three-hundred soldiers were enlisted in the whole colony, of which

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<sup>16</sup> Roelof van Gelder, "Pleisterplaats op Weg naar Indië", 307.

<sup>17</sup> Klooster, "Marteling, Mouterij en Beeldenstorm," 319.

<sup>18</sup> Klooster, *The Dutch Moment*, 116 & 143.

<sup>19</sup> Klooster, "Marteling, Mouterij en Beeldenstorm," 332.



approximately 180 were situated in New Amsterdam.<sup>20</sup> These soldiers had several tasks, the most important of which were watch duty and going on expedition, which usually happened in groups of ten. However, soldiers also had other tasks, like cutting firewood and repairing the fort. In the early years, the Company gave out longer contracts for four or five years, while later on the company started giving out contracts for only up to two years. Jacobs suggested that this development was a way of the WIC to turn these soldiers into colonists, similar to what they did with other professions. Soldiers would then have a decent amount of savings and no debts to start a new life in New Netherland.<sup>21</sup>

### *Historiography of enslaved Africans in New Netherland*

The historiography of slavery in New Netherland is in a much more developed stage than that of soldiers. Joyce Goodfriend was one of the first academics who analyzed slavery in New Netherland through the imperial framework. She was the first to argue that slavery was present from the very outset of the colony and that therefore inhabitants of New Netherland were accustomed to slavery. Another argument that Goodfriend made was that after the “fall” of Dutch Brazil, slavery became institutionalized in 1660s New Netherland. The reason for slavery becoming common in New Amsterdam was because owning slaves was not mainly reserved for the wealthy.<sup>22</sup> Goodfriend’s analysis of slavery in New Netherland primarily focused on correspondence between the magistrates of the West India Company in Amsterdam and the directors in the colony. Almost all research on empires before the 1980s tended to focus on analytical binaries, such as the “rise and fall,” or “center versus periphery” points-of-view on empire, with European imperial centers being the driving force for expansion and decline of these empires. According to this theory, the magistrates in Amsterdam were the people that made the important decisions and besides the directors in the colonies, who followed the magistrates’ instructions, the colonial subjects appeared to be unimportant. Although this perspective provided a helpful start to understanding how an empire works, its focus on Europe as the colonizer, left out the colonized as actors in the history of the early modern empire.<sup>23</sup>

Influenced by postcolonial critiques in the 1980s, the focus of academic study therefore shifted towards the colonies themselves, and consequently its subjects, whether colonizers or colonized. Before the 1980s little was known about the lives of the African population of New

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<sup>20</sup> Jacobs, “Soldiers of the Company”, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>22</sup> Goodfriend, “Burghers and Blacks.” In: *New York History* 59 (1978), 125-144, 133 & 142.

<sup>23</sup> Kerry Ward, *Network of Empire. Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge 2008), 6-7.

Netherland, since studies had centered around the institution of slavery instead of on the people who were enslaved. Goodfriend, shifting her focus to how black family lives in New Netherland, showed that marriage and the upbringing of children through family and kinship were important features in the creation of African-American culture in the seventeenth century colony.<sup>24</sup> In a similar manner, Peter Christoph dug into the history of African freedman in New Netherland. Christoph was the first to analyze the cases of half-freedom in the colony. He concluded that the cases mentioned in his article were particular to a black, free and land-holding community and that they were not necessarily relevant to the African community as a whole.<sup>25</sup> The shift in focus from researching the institution of slavery in New Netherland towards researching the average life of its African inhabitants was an important shift. Yet, even though Goodfriend and Christoph provided many glimpses into free and bonded African life in New Netherland, their research was still mostly descriptive.

Whereas Goodfriend and Christoph were one of the first to focus research on the regular African inhabitant of the colony, Ira Berlin uncovered a broader perspective of understanding about the African population of New Netherland. Berlin created the idea of *Atlantic Creoles*, people of mixed African and European descent, who served as intermediaries between African and European traders, while not accepted as culturally belonging to the in-group, whether this in-group was African or European.<sup>26</sup> According to Berlin, the social order in New Amsterdam was very similar to other early modern port cities in the Atlantic region controlled by the West India Company, such as Elmina and Luanda. Therefore, the African community of New Amsterdam must have lived in very similar circumstances as they had been used to in other parts of the Atlantic. Some of these African creoles arrived in New Amsterdam enslaved, while others arrived as freemen. These African and creole freemen could even occasionally own slaves or employ servants. All of these factors suggested “that race – like lineage and religion – was just one of the many markers of social order.”<sup>27</sup> Berlin focused his analysis not only on a wider perspective of the Atlantic, but also on the history of slavery in mainland North America in general. Thus, he raised the suggestion that race was only one of the factors determining someone’s status in the social hierarchy, but he did not develop this concept. However, Berlin

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<sup>24</sup> Joyce D. Goodfriend, “Black families in New Netherland.” In: Nancy A. McLure Zeller, *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place. Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers* (Albany 1991), 147-155, 149-151.

<sup>25</sup> Peter R. Christoph, “The Freedmen of New Amsterdam.” In: Nancy A. McLure Zeller, *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place. Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers* (Albany 1991), 157-170, 165.

<sup>26</sup> Berlin, Ira, *Many Thousands Gone. The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge 1998), 17-20.

<sup>27</sup> Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity. A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge 2003), 32.

showed that conceptualizing a comparative analysis between different areas in the Dutch empire could open up new perspectives about the inhabitants of New Netherland.

In recent years, this comparative analysis has improved the understanding of certain aspects of slavery in New Netherland. For example, Jeroen DeWulf analyzed the “exceptional system of slavery” in the colony, by comparing it to the Portuguese practices on Sao Tomé with the Dutch practices in Brazil and New Netherland. DeWulf argued that the West India Company adopted the Portuguese practices of slavery, and then developed it to surpass it. For the Portuguese in Africa, following laws of Catholicism and speaking Portuguese-Creole language was important if an enslaved African wanted to improve his or her social status, and eventually receive manumission. DeWulf suggested that in Dutch Brazil, the West India Company adopted a Portuguese practice of employing slaves for military and semi-military operations, and that the company later introduced these practices in other colonies and settlements, such as New Netherland.<sup>28</sup> The use of enslaved Africans as soldiers in New Netherland is unfortunately merely a suggestion. DeWulf did not use primary sources relating to New Netherland to back this claim up. Regardless, this suggestion is particularly interesting to test in this thesis as it also suggests a certain fluidity between European soldiers and enslaved Africans. I will therefore elaborate on this subject in the chapter on social mobility of enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam.

Another recent analysis by Susanah Shaw Romney, comparing the fate of orphaned children of slaves and freemen, showed that the color of a child’s skin did not necessarily determine the fate of the orphan. In fact, some black children had much better fates while other white children suffered.<sup>29</sup> Social capital and personal networks shaped how well people could respond to challenges in the early modern colony. Shaw Romney showed that the African population of New Netherland used its European institutions of marriage and baptism to create such personal ties amongst each other and with other groups of society, in order to ensure the safety and future of their group. Furthermore, Shaw Romney also showed that over time, the officials in New Netherland increased the barriers to the Africans’ use of the institutions of marriage and baptism. This meant that it became more difficult for the African inhabitants to ensure the future of their kids, and eventually achieve manumission.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Jeroen Dewulf, “The Slave Policy of the West India Company and the Dutch Reformed Church in Dutch Brazil (1630-1654) and New Netherland (1614-1664)”, In: Comparative Perspective”, In: *Journal of Early American History*, 4 (2014), 3-36, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Susanah Shaw Romney, “Intimate Networks and Children’s Survival in New Netherland in the Seventeenth Century”, *Early American Studies*, VII (2009), 270-308, 275.

<sup>30</sup> Shaw Romney, “Intimate Networks”, 297.

## *Theoretical Framework*

Academic literature about enslaved Africans in New Netherland and academic literature about European soldiers serving the West India Company approach these two subjects in a vastly different manner. Most literature about soldiers working for the company shows their suffering through punishment and hard labor. On the other hand, literature about enslaved Africans in New Netherland explores agency of the enslaved Africans without analyzing their suffering. This shows the difference in focus of the research on slavery and the research about soldiers within the Dutch empire. Whereas the approach of specifically analyzing suffering among soldiers suggests the need of historians to show that enslaved Africans were not the only ones living under deplorable circumstances in the Dutch empire, the approach of specifically analyzing agency of enslaved Africans suggests the need of historians to show that enslaved Africans were not mere puppets who lacked agency. This leads to the question of how to compare the circumstances of European soldiers employed by the West India Company, to the circumstances of enslaved Africans. This thesis will therefore, compare the social status of enslaved Africans and European soldiers in New Amsterdam in two ways. It will do so, firstly, by analyzing and comparing how soldiers and enslaved Africans were prosecuted by the court of the West India Company in New Amsterdam, and secondly, by analyzing and comparing the chances of social mobility of European soldiers and the enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam. This approach therefore, requires, both a framework for analyzing New Amsterdam's legal system and reasons why people were punished a certain way and a framework to analyze personal networks that created means for social mobility.

The early modern empire is best understood as a world of connections. Analysis of this empire should therefore be “interdisciplinary, going beyond traditional economic and political history to include the circulation of people and cultures.”<sup>31</sup> In their theory, Gert Oostindie and Jessica Vance Roitman, therefore emphasize that in analyzing the Dutch empire, scholars should focus on the collections of Dutch actors and colonies and their connections to the wider Atlantic, while “questioning the very concept of “Dutchness” as it was understood in the Atlantic.”<sup>32</sup> As it pertains to actors of a specific group, like European soldiers or enslaved Africans, analysis through networks and connections makes it possible to compare situations

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<sup>31</sup> Gert Oostindie & Jessica Vance Roitman, “Repositioning the Dutch in the Atlantic, 1680-1800”, in: *Intinerario*, Vol. 36-2 (2012), 129-151, 129.

<sup>32</sup> Oostindie & Vance Roitman, “Repositioning”, 146.

and actions in New Amsterdam to the actions of similar actors in other parts of the Dutch empire.

In recent years the academic analysis of networks therefore started to dominate the field of analyzing empire. Merely focusing on the actions of colonial subjects was not enough to sufficiently explain certain dynamics of the early modern empire. Using networks within an empire as an analytical framework, Kenny Ward defined the early modern empire as consisting “of multiple material networks including those of bureaucracy, correspondence, trade, transportation, and migration, as well as discursive networks of law, administration, information, diplomacy, and culture. These independent yet intersecting networks [existed] simultaneously,” but did not necessarily increase in density over time. Conceptualizing an empire through its entirety of networks allowed for a macro-level analysis of “shifting patterns of connection, dissolution, and reconnection” within the empire, as well as a micro-level analysis of people that inhabited the “imperial field of action.”<sup>33</sup> Analyzing the micro-level imperial networks of the inhabitants of New Amsterdam helps us to better understand the dynamics of status within the social hierarchy of early modern New Amsterdam. The potential connections, dissolutions and reconnections made between the European soldiers and the enslaved Africans could help give us a better understanding of the fluidity between these groups. Furthermore, potential connections, dissolutions or reconnections made between one or more soldiers or enslaved Africans with members of other groups, such as artisans, traders, burghers, councilors or magistrates, could improve our interpretation of certain developments in punishment and social mobility of European soldiers and enslaved Africans.

Because this thesis compares punishment for the soldiers and enslaved Africans, the networks of law are particularly of interest. The judicial practices of New Netherland were very similar to those occurring in the Dutch Republic. Almost all directors and councilors in New Netherland had their origin in the Republic, primarily in Holland, Utrecht and Gelderland. Furthermore, in 1629, the States-General of the Republic declared that the West India Company had the right to implement the judicial practices that were customary in Holland and Zeeland on newly concurred land in the Atlantic.<sup>34</sup> For these reasons, it would be safe to argue that New Netherland’s judicial practices were based on the judicial practices in the Dutch Republic, in particular Holland. The early modern judicial practices of the Dutch Republic developed

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<sup>33</sup> Ward, *Networks of Empire*, 10.

<sup>34</sup> Michiel van Groesen, “Recht door zee. Ontvoering, mouterij en slavenhandel in Arguin, 1633-1634”, in: *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw. Recht, onrecht en reputatie in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, eds. Michiel van Groesen, Judith Pollmann & Hans Cools (Hilversum, 2014), 59-60.

locally, and no sentencing standards existed for most crimes. Yet, without sentencing standards, judges still came to very similar convictions in trials remarkably often. Consequently, there were several circumstances that influenced the degree of severity in early modern sentences. The most important mitigating and aggravating circumstances that determined a person's sentence were reputation and social status. The perceived innocence and unspoiled nature of a young person, pregnancy in women, recidivism, efforts to conceal criminal acts, and the defendant's mental state were considered to be mitigating and aggravating circumstances that determined a person's sentence.<sup>35</sup>

Of the mitigating circumstances, public reputation and social status were the most important factors in determining a person's conviction in the early modern Dutch Republic. A good public reputation would often determine whether a person would be prosecuted at all. A person's reputation and social status depended on an individual's social and economic circumstances: an individual's origin, occupation, income, and personal connections.<sup>36</sup> A small minority of inhabitants of a town had burgher status. Burghers were tax-paying citizens of a town and were therefore the most privileged. Established residents had lower status than the Burghers, since they did not pay taxes, but were still privileged compared to the people with the lowest status in a town - the people that lacked permanent residence and moved from place to place.

Even though the West India Company had had only settled in Manhattan and its surroundings for a few decades, these contrasts in social status between groups had also developed in New Amsterdam.<sup>37</sup> There were, however, certain circumstances in New Amsterdam that must have been different from towns in the Low Countries, especially when it came to slavery. In the seventeenth century, owning slaves had been illegal in the Dutch Republic for at least two centuries.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, there were no preexisting judicial practices of punishing enslaved Africans in the Dutch Republic. Even though the existing judicial practices could become the framework for developing new practices to punish enslaved Africans, these practices had not yet been established. This makes the comparison of prosecution between European soldiers and enslaved Africans an interesting approach, as it could lead to new insight

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<sup>35</sup> Manon van der Heijden, *Women and Crime in Early Modern Holland* (Leiden 2016), 38-42.

<sup>36</sup> Heijden, *Women and Crime*, 39;

<sup>37</sup> According to Jacobs, in early modern New Netherland status was mostly based on income, possessions, the holding of public offices and civil rights that depended on the judicial status of a certain person: Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland. A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca 2009), 180.

<sup>38</sup> Susanah Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections. Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, 2014), 193.

onto how slavery developed within the Dutch empire. It also shows what specific factors of reputation such as, origin, occupation, income and personal connections and what type of mitigating or aggravating circumstances led to similar or different reasons to convict soldiers and enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam.

Factors like origin, occupation, income and personal connections of soldiers and enslaved Africans can also help to analyze the social mobility of European soldiers and enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam. Susanah Shaw Romney showed the importance of micro-level networks in creating the society of New Netherland. Shaw Romney analyzed the interpersonal relationships between different cultures of New Netherland's society – native American, African, and European. All of these cultures were based around the idea that family, kin, clan and village offered useful instruments for people to function socially and economically. These personal connections were important in the old order. Yet, Atlantic migration forced settlers, slaves and natives to create new social bonds among cultural boundaries, because they were removed from their original community and culture.<sup>39</sup> These new social bonds, or intimate networks, as Shaw Romney called them, that people entered into, “consisted of a web of ties that developed from people's immediate, affective, and personal associations.”<sup>40</sup> According to Shaw Romney, the old personal connections of family, kin, clan, and village, combined with the new bonds of intimate networks were what constituted the early modern empire. These cross-cultural interactions in New Netherland were not limited to a small group of middlemen or representatives of the WIC or the Dutch Estates General. In fact, according to Shaw Romney, these cross-cultural personal networks were widespread and common.<sup>41</sup>

Social capital and personal relationships shaped how people could respond to difficulties in colonial life. The more higher quality social connections a person had, the more chance of success this person had in this early modern colonial society.<sup>42</sup> Hence, an individual's personal connections positioned this individual in the developing social hierarchies of New Netherland.<sup>43</sup> Whereas cross-cultural intimate networks created new social associations on top of the old social associations, exclusion or dissolution from these intimate networks supported the development of colonial inequalities. By analyzing a person's connections to other members of the community, or the lack thereof, it becomes possible to determine this person's social status

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<sup>39</sup> Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 16.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>42</sup> Shaw Romney, “Intimate Networks”, 274.

<sup>43</sup> Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 20.

within the social hierarchy of New Amsterdam. If multiple European soldiers or enslaved Africans had similar networks and connections, dissolutions or reconnections, we could determine the social status of the group as a whole. Therefore, according to this theory, analyzing intimate networks and personal connections of European soldiers and enslaved Africans within New Amsterdam's society provides a better understanding of the social status of European soldiers and enslaved Africans within the social hierarchy in New Amsterdam.

### *Methodological Framework*

This thesis will use several primary sources to compare the prosecution and social mobility of European soldiers to enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam. These sources are the reason that this thesis focuses primarily on New Amsterdam and the surrounding villages in Manhattan and Long Island, and not New Netherland as a whole. The two sources at the center of this comparison are the council minutes of New Amsterdam between 1638 and 1664 and the baptism records of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, and later the baptism records of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, between 1639 and 1730.

The council minutes of the director and council of New Netherland contain the court sessions, ordinances and other declarations of the director and council of New Netherland. Until Stuyvesant's arrival in the colony, the court of the director and council served both in civil and criminal proceedings. However, when the population of the colony started to expand and the city of New Amsterdam started to attain more rights, the focus of the court minutes shifted away from civil proceedings to merely include criminal prosecutions and appeals. Even though the court minutes do not only pertain to New Amsterdam, this thesis only focuses on crimes that happened in New Amsterdam because this is where the West India Company had most control over its subjects.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, all council minutes before 1638 are lost, just like some of the council minutes in the early 1650s. However, because the council minutes start in 1638 and the company lost control over New Netherland in 1664, the boundaries of this thesis were set between 1638 and 1664.

The second source that will be used in this comparison to analyze personal connections of European soldiers and enslaved Africans is that of the Baptism and Marriage Records of the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam, and later New York. For this essay only the New Amsterdam period will be analyzed. The baptism records contain information about people's

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<sup>44</sup> Henk den Heijer, "Met Bewillinghe van de swarte partij: Nederlands recht op de Goudkust in de zeventiende eeuw", *Pro Memorie. Bijdragen tot de rechtsgeschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 5-2 (2003), 354-55.



personal connections and networks because the Dutch Reformed Church required people to serve as witnesses for baptisms. This was in similar fashion to how the Catholic Church requires people to be godparents of children. These witnesses were people that the family trusted and personally knew, because the witnesses would be left to take care of their children in case of death of the children's parents. Determining the social status of the witnesses would uncover the value in personal connections that European soldiers and enslaved Africans had in New Amsterdam.

All the primary sources used for this thesis have slightly different naming standards, which makes it sometimes hard to determine whether or not people mentioned in one source are the same as in the other source. The Low Countries had patronymic naming standards. For instance, a person with the name Abraham Pietersen was the son of Pieter. In order to not confuse people who had similar first names and father's names, people also often had a nickname that they went by. This nickname could be derived from a trade or profession that they were in, from their origin, or from a personal feature like a big nose or a loud voice. However, people would sometimes have multiple professions, or change professions. For example, the above mentioned Abraham Pietersen was sometimes called *Miller* (Molenaer) and other times *Tavern Keeper* (Harbagier).<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, baptism records would often not mention the Pietersen's profession, while marriage records would mention a person's place of origin.<sup>46</sup>

Women were often called by their patronymics, like for instance Sara Roelofs, who was married to Surgeon Hans *Kierstede*, but kept her father's last name. Other women, once married changed last names to their new husband, like Maria Philips, who was married to Philip Gerard. However, during Stuyvesant's tenure, women would often get their husband's or father's nickname. Sara Pieters, for instance, was sometimes also called Sara *Schepmoes*, after her husband Jan Jansen *Schepmoes*. Generally, during Kieft's administration, people mentioned in the sources were often called by their patronymic name, while during Stuyvesant's administration, people were more often called by their nickname. This had to do with the increasing population of New Amsterdam. Last, if the writer of the original source was less familiar with the subject of the source himself, or with the culture of that person, names in the sources would often be misspelled. Or –worse – the same people would have different names in different sources. This is especially true for the African inhabitants in the primary sources.

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<sup>45</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 413 (23 August 1648), NYSA.

<sup>46</sup> Baptism of Pieter, son of Abraham Pietersz (23 March 1642), in: Thomas Grier Evans (ed.), *Records of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam and New York. Baptisms from 25 December 1639 to 27 December 1730* (New York 1901), 13.

In order to keep this thesis readable, I will mention as little names as necessary. I will use the following naming standard: (First Name) (Patronymic) (*Nickname*). I will spell a person's first name the way I have seen it spelled the most times in all the combined sources, not necessarily the way it is spelled in that particular source. I will spell the patronymic as Father's name plus "sen" for men, or plus "s" for women. The nickname will often be spelled in English. After mentioning the full name, the first time I will continue by calling this person either by his or her first name, or by his or her nickname.

Chapters two and three will analyze and compare the punishment and prosecution of European soldiers and enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam. Chapter two will show that for European soldiers, a strong legal framework existed, consisting on a combination of early modern legal practices from the Dutch Republic and maritime and military law based of the article letters that soldiers had to sign before departure. Chapter three will show that early modern legal practices from the Dutch republic also applied for enslaved Africans, but that these were hardly used because the owners had no interest in the public prosecution of their enslaved Africans. Furthermore, chapter four and five will analyze and compare the social mobility of European soldiers and enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam. Chapter four will show that European soldiers had chances to become prominent inhabitants of New Amsterdam and that their chances were mostly based on conditions determined before departure to New Amsterdam, rank and public reputation. Chapter five will show that enslaved Africans barely had any chance of social mobility. However, it will also show that the chances of social mobility of enslaved Africans were mostly defined through Christianity and creating leverage to negotiate for freedom.

## THE PROSECUTION OF EUROPEAN SOLDIERS

### IN NEW AMSTERDAM

Jan Habbesen was not the only person in New Amsterdam to have been sentenced to forced labor with enslaved Africans who were owned by the West India Company. A total of nine people received this sentence between 1638 and 1664. Forced labor with enslaved Africans owned by the company was a punishment that could only have existed in an early modern empire, like that of the West India Company. The penalty was a combination of discursive traditions of maritime law and judicial practices from the Dutch Republic. The trials of the soldiers who were convicted of this punishment show that a combination of three factors led to the director and council convicting a servant of the company to forced labor with the enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company. The first factor was that the servant of the company had a low status and bad reputation. Furthermore, the sentence was only given to servants who had either concealed their crimes or were recidivists. The third and most important factor, however, was that it was a sentence only given to servants of the company who had broken their oath. It was therefore also meant as a deterrence, to set an example for the other servants of the company not to break their oath.<sup>47</sup>

The punishment of forced labor with enslaved Africans was only given to people who worked for the West India Company and who had low social status and a blemished reputation because all of the convicted people were poor. All of the people convicted to forced labor with the enslaved Africans owned by the company were men who lived in comparable social and economic circumstances. They were all low-income servants working for the West India Company. All of them had European heritage, similar to the the regions that the company recruited their soldiers from. Besides Habbesen who was a carpenter, and another person who was a stonemason, all other convicted people were either soldiers or sailors. Furthermore, none of the men that received this sentence had strong connections to other inhabitants of New Amsterdam at the time that they were prosecuted for their crimes. None of them appeared in the baptism records of the Reformed Church of New Amsterdam. This does not necessarily

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<sup>47</sup> The following other servants to the West India Company who were convicted of forced labor with the enslaved Africans and who are not treated in this thesis are: Gijsbert Cornelissen van Beyerlandt, NYCM, Vol. 4, 31 (3 February 1638), NYSA; Willem Pietersen van Bolsaert, NYCM, Vol. 4, 325-6 (6 July 1647), NYSA; Peter Hendricksen, NYCM, Vol. 8, 922 (12 April 1658), NYSA; Nicolaes Albertsen NYCM, Vol. 8, 831 (15 April 1658), NYSA; & Claes Michielsens, NYCM, Vol. 8, 922 (13 July 1658), NYSA.

signify that they had no personal connections in New Amsterdam. Some of their trial records did mention other people who they were connected to, but it does imply that they might have only recently settled in New Amsterdam.

The most important reason for convicting disreputable and low status European servants of the West India Company was deterrence. All of the convictions explicitly state that they were made “to set an example.” Because all the convicted men were servants of the company in some form or another, they had all sworn an oath to the *article letters* of the West India Company before departure from the Republic. These letters consisted of a collection of articles drawn up by the directors of the company that summed up their rights and duties as servants of the company. Swearing upon these article letters was an early modern maritime tradition that ensured loyalty from sailors to the ship that they were sailing on and its cargo. If the duties that were summed up in the article letters were not honored, the company had jurisdiction to punish its servants accordingly.<sup>48</sup> This tradition explains why the crimes that the convicted servants committed were so vastly different – ranging from property crimes, crimes against the public order and violent crimes. The punishment of forced labor with enslaved Africans was therefore not so much given for committing a specific type of crime, but was a punishment based on breaking early modern Dutch maritime law practices. In sentencing a servant of the company to forced labor with enslaved Africans, the director and council made an example out of the convicted to ensure that other servants of the company would be deterred from committing similar crimes against the article letters that they had sworn an oath on.

Even though this punishment was based on maritime traditions of law and was exclusively given to low ranked and disreputable servants of the company because they had broken an oath, these servants were always also convicted for the actual crime that they had committed. Gerrit Pelser, for example, was sentenced to forced labor with enslaved Africans in 1661. Pelser had showed up drunk to work on several occasions. When he was transferred to inspect ships with the prosecutor, he had showed up drunk to work again. After this, Pelser had gotten in a fight with another soldier whom he had injured with his sword. Taking into account the fact that Pelser had habitually showed up drunk to work and that Stuyvesant and the Council did not want Pelser to influence other soldiers to copy Pelser’s actions, Stuyvesant sentenced Pelser to sit on the *Houten Paerd* for three consecutive days for fighting the other soldier. He was also sentenced to forced labor with enslaved Africans by repairing the fortifications of the city with the enslaved Africans for the duration of two months because he had repetitively broken the

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<sup>48</sup> Ketting, *Leven, werk en Rebelle*, 270-1; Groesen, “Recht door zee”, 58.

oath by showing up drunk to work. In this case, the regular punishment for fighting another soldier was sitting on the *Houten Paerd*, for which Pelsler was still sentenced, but because Pelsler had also broken the oath, he was made an example of in order to ensure that other soldiers were deterred to commit similar crimes.<sup>49</sup>

Merely breaking an oath, however, was not the sole reason for convicting a low status and disreputable servant of the company to forced labor with enslaved Africans. The punishment was only given to servants of the company, based on aggravating circumstances which were common reasons for punishment in early modern judicial practices of the Dutch Republic. The first aggravating circumstance for convicting servants of the company to forced labor with the enslaved Africans was because they had concealed their crimes.<sup>50</sup> Michiel Cristoffelsen from Gothenburg in Sweden, for instance, had stabbed two enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company on Sunday 29 May 1644. The names of the enslaved Africans were not mentioned in the documents, but according to the prosecutor (*Fiscal*), Cristoffelsen intentionally stabbed both of them for no particular reason “in such a way that one of them [was] expected to always be mutilated.”<sup>51</sup> The Africans had been quietly sitting down, and did not seem to notice that they were about to be attacked. The attack was relentless, because while one enslaved African was severely mutilated and possibly crippled for life, the other enslaved African was in danger of dying as a result of the attack. As if these acts were not horrible enough, during his trial before the Court Martial of the West India Company in Fort Amsterdam on the sixth of June, it became clear that Cristoffelsen had previously left on a furlough for one month without telling his senior ranked officer in the military that he had done so. He also admitted that he had stabbed a goat of a prominent inhabitant of New Amsterdam. His efforts to conceal the criminal act of leaving on a furlough without informing anybody and stabbing a goat were aggravating circumstances in his already deplorable situation that Cristoffelsen was in. For these reasons, Willem Kieft and the Council sentenced Cristoffelsen to “work together with enslaved Africans, owned by the company, for twelve consecutive months”, and just in case, Cristoffelsen was also sentenced “to be chained, in case he will be executed contingent upon if the enslaved African will die.”<sup>52</sup>

Recidivism was another aggravating circumstance that led the Director and Council to convict disreputable and low status European servants of the company to forced labor with the

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<sup>49</sup> Charges and sentence against Gerrit Pelsler, NYCM, Vol. 9, 779-80, NYSA.

<sup>50</sup> Heijden, *Women and Crime*, 40.

<sup>51</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 189 (6 June 1644), NYSA.

<sup>52</sup> For Cristoffelsen’s sentence: NYCM, Vol. 4, 190 (6 June 1644), NYSA.

enslaved Africans.<sup>53</sup> Recidivism presented itself in two forms in the sources. First, as was illustrated with Cristoffelsen, recidivism came forward in cases where people admitted to having committed several distinctive crimes. The other form in which recidivism was displayed in the sources was through people who had already previously been sentenced for committing the same crime that they were being prosecuted for. Elias Emmens, for instance, was a European soldier who had served the company for years at Fort Casimir on the South River and had recently been transferred to Fort Amsterdam. At Fort Amsterdam, he was fired from the military, deemed unfit to serve because he showed terrifying and insolent behavior. He had also been inciting discord among the soldiers, and had dissuaded them from their duties.<sup>54</sup> Approximately a month later, on 19 September 1654, Emmens had again shown “terrifying and insolent behavior.” In front of Peter Stuyvesant’s house, situated southeast of Fort Amsterdam. Emmens had accused the Director-General of being abusive and unjust towards Emmens, for which he was punished to forced labor with enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company. The fact that both court cases explicitly mention Emmens’ terrifying and insolent behavior show that the recidivist nature of the crime was taken into account when sentencing Emmens.<sup>55</sup>

The punishments of forced labor with the enslaved Africans show that a combination of maritime law and legal practices from the Dutch Republic was used to prosecute servants of the company. Specifically focusing on European soldiers employed by the company shows that a third network of law applied to them: that of military law. During the Dutch revolt military law practices developed among the the rebels. These military legal practices originated from the article letters similar to those that the servants of the company had to sign.<sup>56</sup> The distinction between maritime and military legal practices, however, was not so much the reasons for punishing soldiers, but the way they were punished. The most customary punishment for soldiers was sitting on the *houten paerd*, which was used specifically to discipline soldiers who were disobeying orders. For this punishment a convicted soldier had to sit on a wooden copy of a horse as if he was a cavalier. The back of this wooden horse was triangularly shaped and sharply edged on the top. Soldiers were convicted to sit on the *houten paerd* for a certain amount of hours, often several days in a row and sometimes with weights attached to their legs. Soldiers

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<sup>53</sup> Heijden, *Women and Crime*, 41.

<sup>54</sup> NYCM, Vol. 5, 358-9. NYSA.

<sup>55</sup> NYCM, Vol. 5, 375 (9 October 1654), NYSA.

<sup>56</sup> Eric Swart, *Krijgsvolk: militaire professionalisering en het ontstaan van het Staatse Leger, 1568-1590* (Amsterdam 2006), 78-9.

often received this form of punishment when disobeying orders. In Dutch Brazil and Elmina, soldiers were punished to sit on the *houten paerd* for not returning to the encampment or fort before a certain hour. Moreover, in Dutch Brazil, soldiers were also punished for leaving on a furlough without telling their corporal or for not saluting when senior officers were walking by.<sup>57</sup>

In New Amsterdam, the punishment of sitting on the *houten paerd* was exclusively used on soldiers and served, just as the forced labor punishment, as a deterrent for both the punished soldier and other soldiers. For example, barely two months after Cristoffelsen was convicted to forced labor with enslaved Africans, owned by the company, he was accused of another crime. In front of Willem Kieft and the council, Pieter Wolphersen *van Couwenhoven* accused him and two other soldiers, Paulus Heymans *van Leiden* and Huybert Jansen *van Sprang* of having smashed his carpentry to pieces. Van Couwenhoven was a member of a prominent family in New Amsterdam. He lived on the south west side of *'t Marcktveld*, right next to Fort Amsterdam where Cristoffelsen, Heymans and Jansen were stationed. In his lifetime van Couwenhoven served as magistrate of New Amsterdam, land surveyor of the West India Company in New Netherland and overseer of the Company's efforts to build embankments with palisades on the north end of the city in 1654.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, the social status of the accused soldiers in New Amsterdam was low. Cristoffelsen had just recently been punished to forced labor with enslaved Africans and neither Heymans nor Jansen had any personal connections through the Dutch Reformed Church at the time of the crime. As low ranked soldiers in the company's military, their pleas would not have matched up with Van Couwenhoven's accusations. The soldiers thus pled guilty of smashing Van Couwenhoven's carpentry to pieces. For breaking Van Couwenhoven's carpentry, Heymans and Jansen, being first time offenders, were sentenced to sit on the *houten paerd* for three hours. Cristoffelsen received a similar but different corporal punishment as Heymans and Jansen. He had to stand underneath the gallows while holding a pickaxe for three consecutive hours.<sup>59</sup> Before this could happen, Cristoffelsen and Jansen fled New Amsterdam. Cristoffelsen was never to be heard from again, but Jansen returned and ended up witnessing several baptisms of Heymans children.<sup>60</sup> Going through the same punishment together might have bonded them for life.

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<sup>57</sup> Klooster, "Marteling, Muijerij en Beeldenstorm," 332.

<sup>58</sup> Meeting of council New Netherland: NYCM, Vol. 5, 102-10 (14 March 1653), NYSA; hired as overseer of building fortification: NYCM, Vol. 5, 285 (15 Juli 1654), NYSA; hired as Landsurveyor: NYCM, Vol. 6, 20 (6 February 1655), NYSA.

<sup>59</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 199 (8 August 1644), NYSA.

<sup>60</sup> Paulus, Son of Paulus Heymans (30 June 1647), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 22.

Purely focusing on types of punishments for soldiers, however, does not answer why soldiers were punished the way they were. It also does not answer why soldiers were prosecuted a disproportionate amount compared to other groups living in New Amsterdam. The number of soldiers in New Amsterdam was consistently low. During Kieft's war only sixty soldiers served in New Amsterdam. In January 1664, approximately 180 soldiers served the company in New Amsterdam.<sup>61</sup> However, soldiers were continuously prosecuted with peaks during wars. The reason for this was that the West India Company had clear jurisdiction over them. They served the company and had pledged an oath to the article letters of the company and its military. Therefore, clear laws existed for soldiers. It is also likely to assume that the prosecutor used sergeants and cadets as informants. Using informants to report crimes to the prosecutor was a common phenomenon in early modern Holland. There, vigilance in reporting crime was considered a civic duty.<sup>62</sup>

Honor and public reputation played a vital role in prosecution in early modern Dutch law practices. Especially the perception of honesty could mean an immense difference between conviction or acquittal. However, when was a testimony recognized as honest? The director and council from the West India Company in Elmina considered testimony honest as long as it was not contradicted by someone else. Moreover, in Elmina, the defendant first had to testify in front of an interrogator and then in front of the director and council. When the defendant attested the same story on both occasions, it was considered honest.<sup>63</sup> The director and council in New Amsterdam dealt with testimonies in a very similar fashion. For example, on 14 May 1655 *cadet* Hans *Breyer* stood trial for robbery, damaging property and enticing soldiers to commit larceny. Breyer had damaged the reed roof of Jan Vinge's brew house so that his accomplice, soldier Pieter Woutersen, could enter and steal malt. He had also enticed Woutersen, to steal a gun and to blame it on the Native Americans. Likewise, he had stolen gunpowder of a ship that he was supposed to guard and had illegally taken wine off the ship, without paying the appropriate taxes. He had also left New Amsterdam one night to steal chickens from former sergeant, Daniel Lisco, who lived in the *Smith's Valley*, situated between the northern edge of town and the ferry to Long Island. In his testimony, Breyer denied to have ever damaged the reed on Jan Vigne's brewery's roof. Instead he had patrolled the street in case

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<sup>61</sup> Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 38.

<sup>62</sup> Martijn van den Burg, "Law Enforcement in Amsterdam. Between tradition and modernization", in: Manon van der Heijden, *Serving the Urban Community: The Rise of Public Facilities in the Low Counties* (Amsterdam 2009), 221.

<sup>63</sup> Heijer, "Met Bewillinghe van de swarte partij", 359.



someone would notice that there was a robbery taking place, while his associate was robbing Vigne's brewery. He also pleaded not guilty to stealing gunpowder.<sup>64</sup>

The prosecutor probably lacked testimonies about the crimes, because after Breyer had denied to have committed several crimes that he was accused of, the Stuyvesant and the council started to interrogate him. This interrogation, however, was not focused on him being accused of stealing a gun, smuggling wine or stealing Lisco's chickens. Instead, it was focused on an event that had happened earlier between Breyer and Stuyvesant. According to the prosecutor and a councilor, Breyer had walked up to Stuyvesant before the trial, and had begged for mercy. Breyer, however, denied this event ever occurred. Unfortunately for Breyer, another soldier testified to have seen begging Stuyvesant for mercy. This third party testimony was essential for Stuyvesant and the council in justifying a punishment for Breyer. Even though the council did not necessarily have proof that Breyer had committed the crimes that he was accused of, they did have prove that Breyer had not been honest in front of the director and council. This also meant that he must have also lied about the other situations. The council in discussing how to sentence Breyer, had no doubt that Breyer had committed the crimes that he was accused of. According to Johannes *la Montagne* who was the longest serving councilor, serving both Kieft and Stuyvesant, Breyer "deserved the gallows for his various crimes." Hence, Breyer was convicted to be hanged at the gallows in Fort Amsterdam.<sup>65</sup>

In early modern Dutch society, with social status came privilege, and this privilege also influenced an individual's prosecution.<sup>66</sup> For the military of the West India Company, social status was derived through rank, and consequently, the higher the rank, the more privileged a soldier was. To a certain extent, this privilege can be explained through the social and economic background of the soldier. Origin played a significant role in what rank a person could be hired into. The company consistently hired only Dutch people for the ranks of sergeant or higher, unless the person had exceptional experience and skill. Furthermore, a sergeant was hired because he could show to have certain skills like being able to use a weapon. For instance, Nicolas Coorn was specifically hired as a sergeant to teach soldiers how to properly use their weapons.<sup>67</sup> Origin and skill therefore gave these individuals an advantage in the hiring process of the company over people who were not from the Dutch Republic or did not have a usable skill. This subsequently gave the people that were hired as sergeants an advantage when

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<sup>64</sup> NYCM, Vol. 6, 40-6 (14 May 1655), NYSA.

<sup>65</sup> NYCM, Vol. 6, 40-6 (14 May 1655), NYSA. "Deserved the gallows" from: *ibid*, 43.

<sup>66</sup> Groesen & Pollmann, "Inleiding", 9.

<sup>67</sup> Jacobs, "Soldiers of the Company", 19; NYCM, Vol. 4, 11 (24 June 1638), NYSA.

standing trial because now they were in a more privileged situation than other soldiers because they had a higher esteemed occupation and received more money than regular soldiers.

That difference in punishment based on social status between different ranks can clearly be identified when comparing cases of theft committed by soldiers with different ranks. In December 1638, for instance, sergeant Nicolas Coorn was accused by Jacob *van Corlaer* of selling axes to native Americans, bringing over native American and African women to the barracks overnight and stealing turnips, chickens and tobacco pipes together with other soldiers. Since several soldiers corroborated the accusations against Coorn, the allegations were found to be true by Kieft and the council. Coorn had an advantage over the regular soldiers who corroborated the accusations made against the sergeant, because of his rank. In his testimony in front of Kieft and the council, he attested to the accusations and mentioned the names of the three other soldiers that had committed the crimes - Hans *Schipper*, Jochem *Beeckman* and Jacob *Swart*. Coorn did not have any interest in protecting the soldiers that he had stolen with. The soldiers that Coorn had mentioned in his own testimony were corporally punished to sit on the *houten paerd* for two hours. Coorn did not have to go through corporal punishment because he had a higher rank than the soldiers, but he was stripped of his rank and had to serve in the company's military just as a soldier.<sup>68</sup>

Consequently, soldiers who were just hired as soldier were less privileged than soldiers who had a rank. Therefore, when no war was being waged, a regular soldier who was caught stealing from a prominent inhabitant of New Amsterdam was prosecuted through the full extent. One such example of a soldier prosecuted to the fullest extent was Jonas Jonassen *van Utrecht*. Besides, having lived in New Amsterdam for at least three years by the time of his prosecution, Jonas Jonassen *van Utrecht* lacked a personal network outside the company's military. He also lacked rank and income to be considered a witness in somebody's baptism, despite being born in the Dutch Republic. Most soldiers were either single or had left their wives and children home when enrolling the company's military. Almost no soldiers who were prosecuted in New Amsterdam for any type of crime had any personal connections in the city through baptisms. Until 1644, Jonassen had served for the West India Company in Brazil, but probably as a result of Kieft's War he ended up in New Netherland.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 28 (2 December 1638), NYSA.

<sup>69</sup> Quite a lot of soldiers who served in Kieft's War were originally situated in Brazil. Jonassen probably came along with Captain Johan *the Frisian* and Ensign Gijsbert *the Lion*, who also served in Brazil before arriving in New Netherland: *Will of Jonas Jonassen, formerly in the service of the West India Company in Brazil*, Register of the Provincial Secretary, 1642-1660 (Hereafter RPS), Vol. 2, 131 (22 October 1644), NYSA.

On a November night in 1647, Jonassen and fellow soldier, Gerrit Segersen, were on patrol somewhere on Long Island. When passing Cornelis Volckertsen's inn, Segersen and Jonassen went into Volckertsen's yard and stole several chickens from his hen house. One of them also stabbed a hog owned by Volckertsen in such a bad way that it died from the inflicted wounds. Living on Long Island, Volckertsen was not a prominent inhabitant of New Amsterdam, but he did have personal connections in the city. He was married to Marie du Trieux, who was daughter of New Amsterdam's court usher. Several very influential inhabitants of New Amsterdam witnessed his children's baptisms, such as the prosecutor of Vlissingen, and Anneken Bogardus, the wife of *reverend* Bogardus. Furthermore, his wife Marie served witness to at least six baptisms in the 1640s, which implies that the Volckertsen family was important enough to serve as guardians of several children.<sup>70</sup> Segersen had fled New Amsterdam after the act, which meant that Jonassen was the only one that could be held accountable for the theft. Jonassen confessed to the crime after the dead chickens had been found behind a chest, when looking through his possessions in Fort Amsterdam. For these offenses Jonassen was sentenced to sit two hours daily on the Houten Paerd with two weights of fifteen Amsterdam pounds each attached to each leg for three days in a row.<sup>71</sup>

Still, being a soldier without rank, did not always have negative connotations in court. When the company needed soldiers, they were often pardoned for their crimes. Jan *Haes* came to New Netherland serving the company as the English-speaking carpenter.<sup>72</sup> In February 1643, Willem Kieft declared war on the Native Americans, which came to be known as Kieft's War. In 1643 and 1644, however, the company's military in New Netherland only had between fifty and sixty enlisted soldiers.<sup>73</sup> Obviously, there were not enough soldiers to fight a war, and it was also probably the reason that Haes enrolled for the company's military. A year into the war, the prosecutor accused Haes of several crimes. Firstly, Jan Haes had stolen a rifle of a prominent inhabitant of Staten Island, probably so he could use it against the Native Americans. Secondly, after Laurens *the Norman* had been killed by a Native American, Haes had stolen the shoes of *the Norman*'s dead body and had sold them for three guilders. The prosecutor's last accusation was that Haes had killed a hog. Haes admitted to committing all these crimes in front

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<sup>70</sup> Marie du Trieux was also nicknamed "the Unicorn", because in 1654, when Volckertsen had passed and she had married another innkeeper, Jan Peeck, she was prosecuted for prostitution: NYCM, Vol. 5, 253 (23 May 1654), NYSA; Cornelis, son of Cornelis Volckertzen (5 February 1643) and Pieter, son of Cornelis Volckertzen (9 February 1648), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 14 & 25.

<sup>71</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 351 (15 November 1647), NYSA. An Amsterdam Pound was approximately 492 grams; see Appendix B in: Gehring, *Volume V Council Minutes 1652-1654*, 237.

<sup>72</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 110 (5 December 1641), NYSA.

<sup>73</sup> Jacobs, "Soldiers of the Company", 16.

of Kieft and the Council. Usually admitting to having committed several crimes would mean a severe punishment for a soldier, but this time Haes was pardoned for his crimes, because “he had served the country as a soldier.”<sup>74</sup> Clearly, the company needed him as the war was still continuing.

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<sup>74</sup> *Dutch colonial council minutes, 1 February - 3 March 1644*, NYCM, Vol. 4, 183 (1 February 1644), NYSA.

# THE PROSECUTION OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS

## IN NEW AMSTERDAM

The idea that slavery in New Netherland was mild, does not appear to be the case when analyzing prosecution of enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam. However, between 1638 and 1664, only five criminal prosecutions were brought against members of the enslaved African community of New Amsterdam. The lack of prosecution could explain why scholars developed theories about the benign nature of slavery in New Netherland. If we compare it to the amount of prosecutions against soldiers, and take into consideration that approximately ten to seventeen percent of the population of New Amsterdam were enslaved Africans, the number of prosecutions against enslaved Africans was low.<sup>75</sup> Yet, the lack of prosecution in the sources, does not necessarily indicate a lack of punishment. Instead it shows that the judicial practices of the Dutch Republic did not carry over well to colonial New Amsterdam when it came to enslaved Africans. Neither enslaved Africans, nor their masters had much incentive to petition for prosecution. Furthermore, when prosecuted, the fate of enslaved Africans was in the hands of their masters. When their masters had their backs, the enslaved Africans could be acquitted, but when their masters turned to the side of the prosecutor, the enslaved Africans were in trouble. This thesis will first analyze the social status of enslaved Africans because social status was so important for the severity of the conviction. Then this thesis will go more into depth about the lack of prosecutions and analyze two different trials involving enslaved Africans.

The penalty of forced labor with enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company also exposes how the inhabitants of New Amsterdam perceived the social status of the enslaved Africans. These forced labor convictions demonstrate that European inhabitants of New Amsterdam were heavily influenced by the Portuguese - using Portuguese discursive networks of information and culture - in their every day contact with African inhabitants of New Amsterdam. These convictions also show that European inhabitants of New Amsterdam identified skin color with slavery and that the enslaved Africans were considered of even lower status than the people who were convicted to do forced labor with them.

First, these punishments demonstrate that the European inhabitants of New Amsterdam identified black people of full African descent with slavery. The original trial documents were written in Dutch and with no exception, all convictions, when translated literally, did not mention terms like “slavery” or “slaves”, but instead used the following phrase, convicting the

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<sup>75</sup> Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 55.

servants “to work with the honorable company’s *negros*.” In the cultural framework that the Portuguese had created for two centuries since they had started their empire, *negro* was the word for black person of full African descent.<sup>76</sup> Since northwestern Europe had no tradition of slavery since the end of the middle ages, most European inhabitants of New Amsterdam had only come in contact with slavery after departing Europe. Many people that worked for the West India Company had previously worked in the spheres of the Portuguese or Spanish empires, where slavery persisted throughout the early modern era. Due to this, employees of the company were used to the culture created by the Portuguese and the information given by the Portuguese surrounding slavery.<sup>77</sup> It was therefore not uncommon, to refer to African inhabitants of New Amsterdam as *negros*, since many enslaved Africans that lived in New Amsterdam in the first few decades that the colony existed came also from captured Portuguese and Spanish ships. However, in this particular case the term *negro* did not stand for black person of full African descent, as it had done in the Portuguese meaning of the word. In the context of the Dutch empire, the Portuguese word *negro* had emulated its meaning to become *enslaved African*.

In the imperial context of the West India Company, the dissolution of the Portuguese meaning of the word *negro* and emulation of its meaning in Dutch, created new colonial inequalities. This can also be shown in connection with the forced labor sentence. Convicting disreputable and low status servants of the company to forced labor with enslaved Africans implied that the European population of New Amsterdam considered enslaved Africans of even lower social status than the convicted servants.<sup>78</sup> The European inhabitants clearly viewed the work that they were forcing the enslaved Africans to do as degrading. These type of convictions debunk clearly the idea that slavery in New Netherland was mild.<sup>79</sup>

The primary reason that there were so little prosecutions of enslaved Africans was because early modern judicial practices relied on the public reputation and honor of close personal connections like family, kin, members of the same household or direct neighbors to petition for prosecution of a person who had committed a crime. Under West India Company’s jurisdiction, severe crimes were always prosecuted by a local director and council.<sup>80</sup> In all other cases,

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<sup>76</sup> Jonathan Schorsch, “Mossey Pereyra de Paiva: an Amsterdam Portuguese Jewish Mercant Abroad in the Seventeenth Century”, in: Yosef Kaplan, ed., *The Dutch Intersection: The Dutch and the Jews in Modern History* (Leiden 2008), 72.

<sup>77</sup> Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment*, 15-7; Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 193.

<sup>78</sup> Jeroen DeWulf, *The Pinkster King and the King of Kongo. The Forgotten History of America’s Dutch-Owned Slaves* (Jackson, 2017), 24.

<sup>79</sup> Dewulf, *Emulating*, 2.

<sup>80</sup> van Groesen, “Recht door zee”, 67.

however, the company relied on fellow inhabitants to report less severe crimes. In early modern cities of the Dutch Republic, the public prosecutor depended not so much on his assistants or hired neighborhood overseers to complain about offensive behavior, but mostly on family members or direct neighbors of the offender. In these situations, family members or direct neighbors of the offender primarily complained, not only because criminal behavior was considered morally abominable, but because the offender's behavior could also damage the reputation and public honor of his family member or direct neighbor.<sup>81</sup>

These legal practices from the Dutch Republic, however, clearly did not properly work in the cross-cultural situation of New Amsterdam. The lack of jurisdiction of the company outside New Amsterdam signified that the enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company might have dealt with criminal behavior by themselves. In 1639, the enslaved Africans who were owned by the company, for example, did not live in New Amsterdam, but further north on Manhattan, east of Hog Island.<sup>82</sup> Since the overseers of the enslaved Africans lived in New Amsterdam, and the closest farms were far away, the West India Company had little jurisdiction over the enslaved Africans outside of work hours. The prosecutor of the company in New Amsterdam could therefore only rely on fellow enslaved Africans owned by the company to inform on criminal behavior of other enslaved Africans. The African inhabitants of Manhattan came from a vastly different cultural background than the European inhabitants who were more used to this system. The enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company simply did not report criminal behavior to the authorities the way European inhabitants did. The records show agency amongst enslaved Africans when it came to protecting their children, so it is likely that this agency was also shown by not informing criminal behavior of fellow enslaved Africans to the prosecutor.<sup>83</sup> Instead, when they needed to, the enslaved Africans community of Manhattan might have dealt with criminal behavior in their own way. One of the five criminal trials in New Amsterdam, involved seven enslaved Africans who had killed another enslaved African, named Jan *Primero*. Remarkable about this group was that all of them testified to committing this crime together, and that most of them received partial manumission three years after this criminal trial. This particular group of enslaved Africans developed into the leaders of the African community in the 1640s.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Heijden, *Women and Crime*, 33-4.

<sup>82</sup> Joan Vinckeboons, *Manatvs gelegen op de Noot Rivier*, Map, 1639, From Library of Congress, *Map Collections*, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3804n.ct000050/?r=-0.456,-0.002,1.676,0.798,0> (accessed 30 June 2018).

<sup>83</sup> Goodfriend, "Black families in New Netherland," 152; Shaw Romney, "Intimate Networks", 294.

<sup>84</sup> Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 215-6.

Furthermore, there is also evidence that enslaved Africans were privately disciplined without interference of the judicial framework that had developed for European inhabitants of New Amsterdam. This was particularly true for enslaved Africans who were owned by individual inhabitants of New Amsterdam. As these enslaved Africans lived in with their masters, their honor and public reputation of the masters were connected to that of the enslaved Africans they owned. Because of this connection, their masters could not publicly inform the prosecutor on criminal behavior of the enslaved Africans that they owned, without hurting their personal honor and reputation. For this reason, the Dutch East India Company in Batavia allowed masters to discipline their enslaved subjects privately, and only got involved if the enslaved person had committed a serious crime specifically. There are several indications that private disciplining of enslaved Africans also occurred in New Amsterdam. For instance, there is one known document in which the council commands the prosecutor to sell two enslaved Africans, because they were “lazy and thieves.” Since there is no evidence that these two enslaved Africans were ever prosecuted for stealing, it could mean that they were punished by being sold without the company using the judicial framework that existed for European inhabitants of New Amsterdam. Further, evidence comes from a criminal prosecution of a girl named Lysbeth Antony, in which she explicitly states that she had received a beating from her mistress after the mistress had accused her of stealing Wampum, the local colonial currency of New Netherland.<sup>85</sup>

Masters also had economic motives to privately discipline the enslaved Africans that they owned, instead of petitioning for a trial at the prosecutor. After all, one has to remember that these enslaved Africans were the property of their European masters and enslaved Africans were expensive to buy. In the 1650s the price of an enslaved African varied between 140 and 375 guilders, while reaching a peak in the 1660s, when people paid up to six hundred guilders per slave. The master carpenter of New Amsterdam, for instance made 36 guilders per month in wages. A captain of a ship was hired to work for fifty guilders, whereas a newly hired reverend was hired for one hundred guilders per month. These were the wealthier servants of the company residing in New Amsterdam, and if they wished to own an enslaved African they certainly had to save up. This indicates that only the wealthiest inhabitants of New Amsterdam could own enslaved Africans, but it also implies that slave owners had no reason to appeal for

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<sup>85</sup> Boudewijn Sirks, “Het recht om huysselyk te castyden. Slavernij in Oost-Indië, 1602-1860”, in: *Slaven en Schepen. Enkele reis, bestemming onbekend*, Remmelt Daalder, Andrea Kieskamp & Dirk J. Tang (eds.) (Leiden, 2001) 86; “Lazy and thieves”: NYCM, Vol. 6, 327 (14 March 1656), NYSA; *Examination. Lysbet Antonissen*, NYCM, Vol 10, Pt 3, 31, NYSA.



the prosecution of their property for things like theft or adultery. If their enslaved Africans were publicly punished through the criminal court, they would be mutilated or worse, which meant both economic devaluation and loss of usefulness. This knowledge must have caused masters of enslaved Africans to privately punish their slaves instead.<sup>86</sup>

Between 1638 and 1657 only two criminal prosecutions involving enslaved Africans occurred in the court of the director and council. One of these was the trial about the murder of Jan *Primero* and the other was a trial about sodomy committed by Jan *Creole* on Manuel *Congo*. Both convictions were based on biblical laws, which make them less interesting for analysis, as sentences for these type of crimes were always the same. The first ordinary trial was in April 1657, petitioned by the widow of the former prosecutor of Gravesend on Long Island, against an enslaved African, whose name we unfortunately do not know. The widow did not mention that the porter was an African inhabitant of New Amsterdam, however, the prosecutor did.<sup>87</sup> It is unknown whether this African was enslaved or a servant because Van Borsum both hired servants from the African community and owned enslaved Africans.<sup>88</sup> Yet, keeping in mind the conclusion of the previous chapter that the meaning of the word *negro* had become synonymous with enslaved Africans, it is likely that he was Van Borsum's enslaved African and not his servant.

The trial of the widow versus the enslaved African particularly shows the importance for the enslaved African community to have strong cross-cultural connections with influential European inhabitants of the colony. On the thirteenth of April 1657, the widow went up to Egbert *van Borsum*'s house on Manhattan to request the ferry to take her back to Long Island. Van Borsum had the monopoly on operating the ferry between Manhattan and Long Island. According to the widow, she went up to Egbert's porter to ask if he could hold on to some of her goods, because she had to do one more small task on Manhattan before departure. When she returned and demanded her goods back from the porter, he denied to ever receiving them. According to the widow, when she complained about this to Van Borsum, the porter threatened to kill her.

This trial also signified the reliance of early modern courts on testimonies to ascertain who was telling the truth and who was not. As many trials lacked physical evidence, finding a

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<sup>86</sup> P.C., Emmer, "de Slavenhandel van en naar Nieuw-Nederland." In: *Economisch-Historisch Jaarboek 35* (1972), 117-8; NYCM, Vol. 4, 222 (11 May 1645), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 4, 418 (5 October 1648), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 4, 317 (22 July 1647), NYSA.

<sup>87</sup> NYCM, Vol. 8, 522-3 (17 April 1657), NYSA.

<sup>88</sup> Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 149 & 236.

reliable witness could make the difference between conviction and acquittal. In the judicial practices of the Dutch Republic, male witnesses who took an oath were considered significantly more reliable witnesses than women.<sup>89</sup> Fortunately for the accused enslaved African, Van Borsum defended him in front of Stuyvesant and the council on the next court day. Van Borsum called in two witnesses under oath, who testified that the widow had been drunk on the thirteenth of April, the day of the alleged theft.<sup>90</sup> These testimonies must have caused the prosecutor not to continue the prosecution. It meant that the widow's testimony from the previous week was untrustworthy. The tide had turned for the widow and now Van Borsum appeared before the court again, this time petitioning for the prosecution of the widow, because her items had been found in a local tavern in New Amsterdam.<sup>91</sup> Van Borsum's enslaved African went free.

Egbert van Borsum had very good personal connections in New Amsterdam. Due to this, his social status in New Amsterdam was high. Although he never served as a witness to anybody's baptisms, he did baptize his six children in the Reformed Church in town. The height of his social status is evident through the type of witnesses that were present at his children's baptisms. The witnesses to his children's baptisms were amongst the most influential inhabitants of New Amsterdam. Willem Kieft, members of the council, wealthy merchants, and their wives all witnessed baptisms of Van Borsum's children.<sup>92</sup> Even though he did not appear to be a burgher of New Amsterdam - probably because he lived outside the embankments of the city - he could pull some strings if he wanted to. On the other hand, the widow came from a small English settlement on Long Island, called Gravesend. She was the widow of Jan Maurits, who served as prosecutor in the village in 1655.<sup>93</sup> Both the widow and her husband had no track record in the Reformed Church in New Amsterdam. This was not abnormal, as Gravesend was almost fifteen kilometers away from Breukelen, the closest town on Long Island to New Amsterdam. Even though her husband used to be prosecutor of Gravesend, it is unlikely that the widow had many connections in New Amsterdam.

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<sup>89</sup> Ariadne Schmidt, "Gelijk hebben, gelijk krijgen? Vrouwen en vertrouwen in het recht in Holland in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw", in: *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw. Recht, onrecht en reputatie in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, edited by Michiel van Groesen, Judith Pollmann & Hans Cools (Hilversum, 2014), 115.

<sup>90</sup> NYCM Vol. 8, 539 (24 April 1657), NYSA.

<sup>91</sup> NYCM, Vol. 8, 547 (1 May 1657), NYSA.

<sup>92</sup> Hermannus (2 September 1640); Cornelis (5 October 1642), Hendrick (26 April 1648), Tymon (17 September 1651), Janneken (23 November 1653) & Annetje (30 May 1656), all found in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 10, 14, 24, 30, 36 & 42.

<sup>93</sup> NYCM, Vol. 6, 63, NYSA.

Egbert van Borsum had both personal and financial reasons to defend the enslaved African during the prosecution. First, Van Borsum's personal honor and public reputation were at stake just as much as those of his enslaved African. Even though Van Borsum was granted the monopoly on the ferry service between Manhattan and Long Island by Stuyvesant and the Council, this did not mean that he could not lose the monopoly. Thievery by his enslaved African porter, could damage his reputation, and could potentially lose him his monopoly. Furthermore, as mentioned above, enslaved Africans cost quite a lot of money in New Amsterdam. For example, in 1655, someone purchased an enslaved mother and boy for 525 guilders. And since these prices were not far off from what an adult male would cost, Van Borsum would have had to do an extensive amount of ferry runs in order to have been able to pay for his own enslaved African. Prices for ferry runs varied between six stivers and two guilders depending on the cargo. Therefore, he had no reason to give up an enslaved African to be mutilated or worse, for a petty theft that had not even occurred. Just as someone would not inform on an enslaved African committing a crime out of self interest, a master also had to protect its enslaved African to protect his property.<sup>94</sup>

When the masters took the prosecutor's side, however, the personal connections of the master led to very disadvantageous situations for the enslaved Africans that were being prosecuted. In the case of Lysbeth Anthony, who was being prosecuted for arson of her master's house in January 1664, her master's personal connections in New Amsterdam's community led to a dire situation that nobody could help her with. Lysbeth's master, Marten Cregier was a prominent inhabitant of New Amsterdam. Besides owning a tavern, he was captain-lieutenant of the city's burgher militia from 1649 until the English took control of the colony, and moreover he served several terms as burgomaster of New Amsterdam. Ironically, Cregier had also served as the first head of New Amsterdam's burgher fire department in the late 1640s, but had not done a very good job at it. Also, he and his wife witnessed numerous baptisms in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam.<sup>95</sup>

The potential personal connections of Lysbeth Anthony did not affect the outcome of her trial, because even though they might have been prominent in the African community of New

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<sup>94</sup> Bond of Richard Wraith to skipper Meyndert Swart, RPS, Vol. 3, 1 (8 September 1655), NYSA; Ordinance regulating the ferry, NYCM, Vol. 5, 289-93 (1 July 1654), NYSA.

<sup>95</sup> List of tavern keepers, NYCM, Vol. 4, 372 (16 March 1648), NYSA; for being Captain-Lieutenant of the Burgher Militia: NYCM, Vol. 4, 427 (4 March 1649), NYSA; for being named Burgomaster: NYCM, Vol. 5, 106 (13 March 1653); for leading the burgher fire department, NYCM, Vol. 4, 357 (23 January 1648); & NYCM, Vol. 4, 416 (28 September 1648). Both Marten Cregier and Lysbeth Martens or Lysbeth Cregier witnessed many baptisms all the way until 1663: in: Evans, 15-75.

Amsterdam, they lacked cross-cultural connections with other groups in New Amsterdam. It was hard to find personal connections for Lysbeth, who according to the court documents was born in New Amsterdam. One of the court documents mentions her mother's name, Maria. Her last name indicates that her father's name was Anthony, a common Christian name amongst the earlier generation of enslaved Africans in New Netherland, as Anthony was the patron saint of the Kingdom of Kongo. In total, two Elisabeths of African descent were baptized in the 1640s in New Amsterdam, but none of their father's names were Anthony. It is possible, however, that she was adopted by another African family. There are several examples of African families adopting children in New Amsterdam, and there were at least two African couples, called Maria and Anthony, living in New Amsterdam. One of these couples gained half-freedom and the other couple were some of the last African inhabitants of New Amsterdam that had access to baptisms in the Dutch Reformed Church. Both families seemed to have been prominent in the African community, but lacked connections with European inhabitants of New Amsterdam. However, nobody from the African community stepped in to help Lysbeth Anthony during her arson trial of February 1664.<sup>96</sup>

Futhermore, because her master had such strong personal connections to his community, the authorities of New Amsterdam immediately believed his accusations. As an enslaved African female in New Amsterdam, regardless of any personal connections that might have been able to help, her position in court was very weak. In his petition to the court, Cregier immediately pointed his finger to Lysbeth Anthony who had also run away. According to Cregier, the fire had started in the stable right next to his house, and could not have been started by accident. The fire was so powerful that it could be seen throughout the whole city of New Amsterdam. Cregier's house, which also served as a tavern, was situated on the west side of *The Square*, right in between Fort Amsterdam and the Reformed Church at the beginning of the *Heereweg*. The fire was so intensely violent that "if it had not been attenuated with the help of fellow burghers [...], it would have certainly damaged the properties surrounding it." When she was caught, and brought back to Fort Amsterdam for questioning, her interrogators did not even question *if* she had set fire to the house, but *why* she had done so. In fact, they had to ask her twice why she had set fire to Cregier's house. The first time she answered *how* she had done so

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<sup>96</sup> See note 15: Shaw Romney, "Intimate Networks", 276; Elisabeth, daughter of Pieter Portugies (1 March 1643) & Elisabeth, Daughter of Emanuel Swarger van Angola (28 August 1644), in: Evans., *Baptisms*, 15; Goodfriend, "Black families in New Netherland.", 152; Antony Ferdinando from Cascais in Portugal and Maria van Angola married on 30 November 1643 and Anthony Mattheuszen and Maria Anthony married on 1 February 1654. Both can be found in: Samuel J. Purple (ed.), *Marriages from 1639-1801 in the Reformed Dutch Church, New York* (New York City, 1890), 12 & 18.

(by dropping a piece of coal in a bale of hay). When asked a second time *why* she had lit the fire, Lysbeth answered that she had done so out of revenge, since Cregier's wife had unjustly hit her, after falsely accusing her of stealing Wampum. Lysbeth then continued by confessing about several other crimes that she had committed, including stealing five guilders from her former owner, reverend Drisius, and stealing a hatband from Cregier on request of another enslaved African in return for sexual intercourse.<sup>97</sup>

Recidivist behavior also played a role in Lysbeth Anthony's conviction - condemned to be strangled to death, while tied to a pole, after which her dead body would be burned. In early modern society, recidivism was an important reason for receiving a harsher punishment. A few years earlier, in June 1661, Lysbeth had been prosecuted for stealing black Wampum from the wife of her former owner, reverend Samuel *Drisius*. On that occasion, Lysbeth had confessed that Barbar, another enslaved African, who lived in the chest maker's house where she worked as a cooper, had enticed her to steal the wampum. On a side note, Barbar could have been Lysbeth's older sister, because Barbar was also the daughter of Emanuel *Swager van Angola* who baptized one of the earlier mentioned Elisabeths. This would explain why Barbar could have encouraged Lysbeth to steal the wampum. As a punishment for this theft, Lysbeth's mother Maria was forced to publicly flog her in front of the magistrates of New Amsterdam.<sup>98</sup>

Furthermore, the change in description of Lysbeth Anthony's skin color and age in the sources, indicates that her public reputation and honor had deteriorated because of her previous conviction in 1661 and her confessions in 1664. When she was merely prosecuted for theft in 1661, she was described as a ten-year-old servant girl. The description of her skin color was not mentioned and this was probably the reason why the court forced Maria to punish Lysbeth. This shows that skin color was not necessarily a marker for receiving a stronger punishment.<sup>99</sup> In less than three years, however, her image had changed dramatically. Now she was eighteen years old and the sources described her skin color as black. This could be explained because her body had matured as a teenager and is also the reason why certain scholars did not connect these two cases.<sup>100</sup> We will never know if her body might have matured in the three years

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<sup>97</sup> Order to a search for a slave belonging to Martin Cregier, NYCM, Vol 10, pt. 3, 1, NYSA; Examination of Lysbet Antonissen, NYCM, Vol 10, Pt 3, 31, NYSA; Sentence of Lysbeth Antbonissen, NYCM, Vol. 10, Pt. 3, 43-46, NYSA.

<sup>98</sup> Court Minutes of New Amsterdam (hereafter CMNA), Vol. 3, 212 (10 June 1661); Barbar, daughter of Emanuel Swager van Angola (28 September 1642), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 14.

<sup>99</sup> Ernst van den Boogaart, "Colour Prejudice and the Yardstick of Civility: The Initial Dutch Confrontation with Black Africans, 1590-1635", in *Racism and Colonialism*, R. Ross (ed.), (The Hague 1982), 53.

<sup>100</sup> Shaw Romney, "Intimate Networks", 277; Jaap Jacobs, *Een zegenrijk gewest: Nieuw Nederland in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 1999), 324.

between the two trials. Yet, the change in perception of her age was not the only difference in her perception because in 1664 she was all of a sudden described as “Cregier’s servant *negerin*”, the Dutch female version of the Portuguese word *negro*. The description of her skin color had changed not because she had matured, but because her public reputation and honor had deteriorated.

The economic motives that masters of privately owned enslaved Africans had to not petition for their slave’s prosecution can also be identified in the public punishment of enslaved Africans. In three out of the five criminal prosecutions of enslaved Africans in New Netherland, four defendants were convicted to the death penalty. However, in three instances, the death penalty was later commuted. Lysbeth Anthony was convicted for arson and to be strangled to death while attached to a pole, after which her body was to be set on fire. In 1646 Jan *Creole* was convicted of sodomy with ten-year-old Manuel *Congo*. Both were enslaved Africans owned by the West India Company. Creole and Manuel received the same sentence as Lysbeth, but both Manuel and Lysbeth’s convictions were commuted. They were still to go through the process of being attached to a pole, while wood surrounding them was to be set on fire. Even though they were to think that they were going to be set on fire themselves, they never actually were.<sup>101</sup> Their age might have played a role in commuting these sentences, but the director and council commuted several more public death penalties. These commutations were always done without letting the convicted or the spectators know that the sentence was going to be commuted.<sup>102</sup> The lack of residents to do proper labor in the colony certainly played a role in the retraction of these death sentences, just as it did in Hans Breyer’s case. However, the fact that enslaved Africans cost quite a lot of money and were hard to be bought in a society that often paid in beaver skins or wampum instead of guilders, must have also been an important reason for the directors and council to commute their sentences.

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### THE SOCIAL MOBILITY OF EUROPEAN SOLDIERS

#### IN NEW AMSTERDAM

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<sup>101</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 262, NYSA.

<sup>102</sup> Scott Christianson, “Criminal Punishment in New netherland”, In: *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place. Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*, Nancy A. McLure Zeller (ed.) (Albany 1991), 87.

The social mobility of European soldiers in New Amsterdam was vastly different than the social mobility of enslaved Africans. An obvious distinction, although it has to be made, was the difference in nature of both groups' servitude. As a rule, slaves were bonded for life, unless their master granted them freedom. Most soldiers, however, only served the company for a few years. In the 1630s and 1640s, after arriving at Fort Amsterdam, a soldier usually served between three and five years. In the 1650s and 1660s, the duration of their contracts had been reduced to two years.<sup>103</sup> The sources definitely show that as former soldiers of the West India Company in New Amsterdam, it was possible to improve one's social status. This advancement was mostly reserved for sergeants and cadets who had often moved to New Amsterdam with their wives. The indicators for social advancement of soldiers were similar to the indicators for punishment. Public reputation, income and good personal networks were pivotal in improving a former soldier's social status. Therefore, regular soldiers only had a chance of upward mobility when they had the leverage to negotiate.

An important factor in the chances of upward social mobility for former soldiers was the way in which wages were paid out by the West India Company. These practices could lead to several different outcomes depending on the personal situation that the soldier was in prior to departure for Fort Amsterdam. The wages for soldiers stationed in New Amsterdam were similar to the wages that were given out to soldiers serving the Dutch East India Company. In 1650, a soldier in New Amsterdam received between seven and nine guilders wage per month depending on experience. A cadet in New Amsterdam received ten guilders, while a sergeant received eighteen guilders per month. Besides monthly wages, soldiers serving the West India Company, also received yearly boarding money. This money for food and board was pretty equally distributed. Soldiers received seventy-five guilders per year, whereas cadets and up received one hundred guilders per year.<sup>104</sup> While in service, the soldiers lived off their yearly boarding money. After the first year of service, their first monthly wages could be claimed by a proxy, such as spouse, kin or other personal connections in the city of departure. However, the largest amount of money could only be collected at the end of the service in the city of departure, usually Amsterdam.<sup>105</sup> Yet, plenty of soldiers stayed in New Netherland after their tenure was finished. This indicates that wages could also be claimed in New Amsterdam.

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<sup>103</sup> Jacobs, "Soldier of the Company", 23.

<sup>104</sup> Jacobs, "Soldier of the Company", 22.

<sup>105</sup> Danielle van den Heuvel, "Getrouwd met Jan Compagnie: Oost-Indiëvaarders en hun echtgenotes in Enkhuizen en omgeving", in: *Leidschrift: tijdschrift voor zeegechiedenis*, 23-1 (2004), 35-6.

Soldiers who had proxies picking up their wages in the port of departure had a clear disadvantage over other soldiers who had not done so. Moreover, they would have an ever larger disadvantage compared to sergeants or other servants of the company. If a soldier had left the Republic without having any other personal connections pick up their monthly wages as a proxy, this person could potentially have a great start of a new life. For instance, a soldier who signed a three-year contract with the company could potentially be paid out between 252 and 360 guilders at the end of his contract. A sergeant serving the same amount of years could potentially even be paid out 648 guilders. However, compared to other professions, wages of regular soldiers and cadets were low. Only sergeants were paid out similarly compared to wages paid out to other servants of the company, such as carpenters or coopers.<sup>106</sup>

Regular soldiers and cadets who had “sold their souls” to crimps before departure to Fort Amsterdam, had an even clearer disadvantage compared to regular soldiers who had not done so. These soldiers who had become victims of crimps were often not able to receive any of their wages at the end of their service because they were heavily indebted to their crimps.<sup>107</sup> There were two types of victims of crimps. The first group consisted of people who had already signed up for the company, and had often received an advance in wages of 18 guilders. As long as a crimp could keep a soldier of the first category in his lodgings, which served both as a brothel and an illegal tavern, the crimp could pinch the whole advance that the soldier had received. If the crimp managed to keep the soldiers in his lodgings after he had spent his advance, the soldier would move over to the second group. This group consisted of the poorest men, often homeless and immigrants. Just as with the first group, the crimp would offer them drinks and prostitutes, but because they would not have been able to afford these, the crimps forced them to enroll in the company. Through this, the crimps were able to collect both their advance and serve as a future proxy to collect wages.<sup>108</sup>

Sergeants had higher chances of upward social mobility in New Netherland compared to lower soldiers because they already had a higher social status before signing up with the company, and they also received higher wages than cadets and regular soldiers during their service. Furthermore, the baptism records indicate that most sergeants came to New Amsterdam with their wives and created a great deal of personal connections while serving. Almost all

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<sup>106</sup> Ketting, *Leven, Werk en Rebellie*, 59-61.

<sup>107</sup> Marc A. van Alphen, “The female side of Dutch shipping: financial bonds of seamen ashore in the 17th and 18th century” In: *Anglo-Dutch mercantile marine relations 1700-1850*, J.R. Bruijn & W.F.J. Mörzer Bruyns (eds.) (Leiden 1991), 125-7.

<sup>108</sup> Roelof van Gelder, “Pleisterplaats op Weg naar Indië”, 307.



sergeants who were mentioned in the records of the director and council, also made an appearance in the baptism records on multiple occasions. Sergeant Juriaen Roelofsen witnessed nine baptisms between May 1640 and April 1643. In 1643, he was killed in Kieft's war.<sup>109</sup> Sergeant Gerrit Doumans, witnessed two baptisms and his wife conceived three children between 1645 and 1647 when they lived in New Amsterdam.<sup>110</sup> Sergeant Caspar *Steynsmits* had three children and witnessed the baptisms of three more children between 1648 and 1659.<sup>111</sup> Sergeant Daniel *Lisco* also had one child and witnessed a total of eight baptisms in the ten years that he appeared in the baptism records.<sup>112</sup> These sergeants clearly intended to stay in New Amsterdam. All of these four sergeants who served in Fort Amsterdam in the 1640s, except for Roelofsen who died, appeared to have been successful after they were released from their contract. Daniel Lisco had an intriguing climb on the social ladder of New Amsterdam. In 1648, both he and Gerrit Doumans owned a tavern. By November 1653, Lisco was mentioned as one of the "most influential burghers" of New Amsterdam. A year later, he was voted into the burgher militia as an ensign. Most remarkably, he kept using *sergeant* as his nickname even after he was released of the service.<sup>113</sup>

However, as mentioned above, these sergeants had clear advantages over other lower ranked soldiers. By comparing the social mobility of two married cadets who had both served in Kieft's war, it becomes clear that not only money or rank played a role in advancing social mobility but that public reputation was also very important. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February in 1642, Kieft ordered sergeant Roelofsen, to attack the Native American tribe who had an encampment behind the colony of Pavonia, based on the intel gathered by "all the cadets".<sup>114</sup> In this assault, which came to be known as the *Pavonia massacre*, approximately eighty unexpected Native Americans were killed.<sup>115</sup> Yet, for cadet Jan *Snedicker*, the Pavonia massacre played a pivotal role in improving his public reputation and advancing his social status in New Amsterdam. The baptism records show this increase of status. Even though he was married and had lived in New Amsterdam almost two years before the massacre, he had little personal connections in town.

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<sup>109</sup> In the council minutes he appeared as Jeuriaen Rodolff, while in the baptism records he appeared as Jorgien, Jorgen, Jeurgie or Jeurie Roelofszen: Evans, *baptisms*, 10-15.

<sup>110</sup> In the council minutes he appeared as Gerrit Doumans, while in the baptism records he appeared as Gerrit Doymans: Evans, *baptisms*, 18-22.

<sup>111</sup> Evans, *baptisms*, 24-51.

<sup>112</sup> Evans, *baptisms*, 22-49.

<sup>113</sup> List of tavernkeepers: NYCM, Vol. 4, 370-1 (16 March 1648), NYSA; "most influential burghers": NYCM, Vol. 5, 145 (11 November 1653), NYSA; Ensign: NYCM, Vol. 5, 456 (17 December 1654), NYSA.

<sup>114</sup> NYCM, 25 February 1642, Vol. 4, 161, NYSA.

<sup>115</sup> Evan Haefeli, "Kieft's War and the Cultures of Violence in Colonial America", in: *Lethal Imagination. Violence and Brutality in American History*, Michael A. Bellesiles (ed.) (New York 1999), 27.

Prior to the massacre he had witnessed only one baptism: that of his sergeant Roelofsen's daughter. One month after the massacre, however, he quickly witnessed two baptisms of very prominent and influential inhabitants in New Amsterdam. In the years that followed, he became a prominent inhabitant himself, witnessing baptisms together with the reverend's wife, a prominent tobacco planter, and Jochem Pietersen *Kuyter*, who had written a quite damaging pamphlet against Kieft's war.<sup>116</sup>

Just as sergeant Doumans and sergeant Lisco, by 1648 former cadet Snedicker, owned a tavern in New Amsterdam.<sup>117</sup> Owning a tavern was a way to advance one's social status in New Amsterdam. Inns and taverns were important public and private social spaces in early modern times and did not just serve the purpose of eating, drinking and lodging. They functioned as centers for gathering news and other information, served as meeting grounds for merchants and were used to proclaim ordinances and new laws. The early modern tavern was a place where personal networks came together. It was a hotspot for social, commercial and political activities.<sup>118</sup> As a tavern keeper, Snedicker therefore served an important social service in New Amsterdam. It gave him a lot of high quality personal connections in New Amsterdam. By 1652, Snedicker moved to Long Island and was one of the establishers of the town Midwood, located in the current Brooklyn neighborhood Flatbush. In Midwood, he also opened a tavern, petitioned for building a church, joined the local burgher militia and even became a magistrate in 1655.<sup>119</sup> Snedicker's career from cadet to magistrate showed that if soldiers survived their service in the military of the company, they could move up in social status relatively quickly. Snedicker's social mobility was commonplace for a soldier post military service in the company.

Another cadet, Paulus Heymans, who was one of the soldiers who had broken Jacob van Couwenhoven's carpentry with Michiel Cristoffelsen, arrived in New Amsterdam with the auxiliary troops from Brazil during Kieft's war in 1644. This can be assumed because besides baptizing his own children, he also witnessed the baptism of a child of Anthony *Portuguese*, one of the half-free Africans living in New Amsterdam. His knowledge of the Portuguese language must have been the major reason why he was hired as *overseer of the enslaved*

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<sup>116</sup> Evans, *baptisms*, 11-24; Haefeli, "Kieft's War", 27-29.

<sup>117</sup> The other former soldiers mentioned on this list were Philip Geraerdy, Daniel Lisco and Gerrit Douman: NYCM, Vol. 4, 370-1 (16 March 1648), NYSA.

<sup>118</sup> B. Ann Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville 2001), 158-61; Maarten Hell, *De Amsterdamse Herberg 1450-1800. Geestrijk Centrum van het Openbaar Leven* (Nijmegen 2017), 10.

<sup>119</sup> NYCM, Vol. 5, 43 (17 June 1652), NYSA; Joining the burgher militia of Midwood, NYCM, Vol. 5, 240 (7 April 1654); appointed as magistrate of Midwood, NYCM, Vol. 6, 29 (13 April 1655).

*Africans* owned by the West India Company on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1647. He stayed a servant of the company, receiving twenty-five guilders per month and one-hundred guilders per year for food and board. This was quite a significant raise of fifteen guilders per month.<sup>120</sup> Besides his connections with the enslaved African community, he also had personal connections to a old councilor, a wealthy merchant, as well as several ties to other former soldiers, like an ensign and sergeant Gerrit Doumans.<sup>121</sup> Heymans' connection to a wealthy merchant and his knowledge of Portuguese make it likely that overseer of the enslaved Africans was not his only occupation. However, Heymans' public reputation in New Amsterdam was quickly deteriorating. His civil court proceedings in front of three magistrates of New Amsterdam in 1654 show that Heymans owed several hundreds of guilders to various people.<sup>122</sup> He got into fights after drinking too much in a tavern and he committed adultery, for which he was convicted to be deported back to the Dutch Republic. Through his personal connections and his knowledge of Portuguese, however, it is likely that Heymans was allowed to stay in New Amsterdam. In April 1656, Heymans was forced to resign as overseer of the enslaved Africans, because "his situation urgently [demanded] it."<sup>123</sup> Heymans continued to live in New Amsterdam and even remarried. However, his reputation would never recover.

Heymans' forced resignation as overseer of the enslaved Africans came at a time of influx of soldiers from Dutch Brazil in New Amsterdam and Long Island. According to Jacobs, starting in the 1650s, the West India Company intended soldiers to be able to perform a second profession, while giving them short contracts of two years, so they would stay in New Netherland after their tenure had finished.<sup>124</sup> Even though it is true that New Netherland became more important to the company after control over Dutch Brazil had returned to the Portuguese, the above-mentioned examples clearly show that the company had already been sending soldiers with their wives to expand the population of New Netherland as early as the mid-1630s. The pattern of soldier migration shows comparisons to the migration of other indentured servants to the company.<sup>125</sup> The nicknames of soldiers serving in New Amsterdam also indicate that soldiers also served the company in other roles. Sergeant Caspar Steynsmits' nickname, for instance, suggests that he also served the company as a stonemason, since "Steynsmits" was

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<sup>120</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 434 (10 January 1647), NYSA.

<sup>121</sup> Evans, *baptisms*, 20-26.

<sup>122</sup> RNA, Vol. 1, 159 (1 June 1654); RNA, Vol. 1, 177 (10 August 1654).

<sup>123</sup> for the lawsuit against Heymans for fighting in a tavern: NYCM, Vol. 5, 229 (3 March 1654), NYSA; for the lawsuit against Heymans for committing adultery: NYCM, Vol. 6, 69 (9 July 1655), NYSA; For handing in his resignation as overseer of the enslaved Africans: NYCM, Vol. 6, 366 (8 April 1656), NYSA.

<sup>124</sup> Jacobs, "Soldier of the Company", 29.

<sup>125</sup> Ernst van den Boogaart, "The Servant Migration to New Netherland" 59-65.

a bastardized version of “Steenmetselaer”. According to the baptism records, cadet Jan *Snedicker* also served as a cobbler.<sup>126</sup> Some soldiers worked as blacksmiths, like Barent Enessen, or as a cooper, like Jan Jansen.<sup>127</sup> Since there was a shortage in skilled labor, soldiers could serve as the perfect colonists.

The significance of the loss of Dutch Brazil for the social mobility of soldiers in New Amsterdam should not be underestimated. After the company had lost control over Dutch Brazil, many former inhabitants of Dutch Brazil moved to New Amsterdam. At least two hundred former inhabitants of Dutch Brazil were soldiers. Furthermore, servants of the company who had lost land in Brazil, were granted land on Long Island and north of Manhattan.<sup>128</sup> The increase of soldiers can also be explained by the paranoia of the West India Company of losing New Netherland so closely after losing its prized possession, Brazil. New Netherland’s borders had also recently been threatened by both Swedish troops in the south, who had taken control of Fort Casimir in 1654, and English troops in the north. During the first Anglo-Dutch War, rumors had been circulating in Long Island and Manhattan that an English fleet had landed in Boston to prepare for an attack on New Amsterdam. These rumors were so persistent that Stuyvesant and the council started to prepare New Amsterdam for a possible siege.<sup>129</sup>

The years 1655 and 1656 therefore served as the perfect moment for many regular soldiers to improve their social status. In the early modern empire, the balance of power could sometimes easily shift. At those moments, whoever had the momentum and leverage could renegotiate their social relationships.<sup>130</sup> In 1655, the soldiers clearly had the leverage to renegotiate their social relationships in New Amsterdam and Long Island. In these two years at least fourteen soldiers were released from their contract, even though they had not finished their tenure yet.<sup>131</sup> Because the West India Company was unable to pay out their wages and some had lost possessions in Brazil, the company granted them land on Long Island. These negotiations can clearly be seen in the court records. Sergeant Jacob Luby, for instance, was

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<sup>126</sup> his name appears in several forms: Jan Snedicker, Jan Snyderken, Jan Snuker Schoenm, Jan Snydercken Schoenm, Jan Snydercken Schoenmaecker: Evans, *baptisms*, 11-24.

<sup>127</sup> For Barent Enessen see: NYCM, Vol. 4, 387-8 (28 May 1648); for Jan Jansen, see: Evans, *Baptisms*, 16 & 19 (3 January 1644 & 17 April 1645).

<sup>128</sup> Jeroen DeWulf, *The Pinkster King*, 23.

<sup>129</sup> NYCM, Vol. 5, 106 (13 March 1653), NYSA.

<sup>130</sup> Victor Enthoven, “Onder de wapenen: burgersoldaten in de atlantische wereld”, *Leidschrift*, 22-2 (September 2007), 16.

<sup>131</sup> For all the discharges: NYCM, Vol. 6, 204 (16 November 1655), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 6, 281-2 (2 February 1656), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 6, 298 & 303 (25 February 1656), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 6, 312 (25 February 1656), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 6, 320 (14 March 1656), NYSA; NYCM, Vol. 6, 367 (11 April 1656), NYSA.

one of the fourteen men negotiating to be released from service. He had already been granted land in Midwood, but still had to serve in Fort Amsterdam. He argued that traveling back and forth was becoming too demanding. In return for his release, Luby offered to help out the other settlers defending Midwood against the “impertinence of the natives.”<sup>132</sup>

## **5**

### **THE SOCIAL MOBILITY OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS**

#### **IN NEW AMSTERDAM**

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<sup>132</sup> NYCM, Vol. 6, 282 (2 February 1656), NYSA.

Social mobility for enslaved Africans started with receiving manumission. In New Amsterdam, barely any enslaved Africans were granted full manumission between 1638 and 1664. The chances for upward social mobility for enslaved Africans, were therefore extremely limited. Of the free African population of New Amsterdam, nobody was ever granted burgher status. Yet, many enslaved Africans still tried to emancipate. Some of them received full or partial manumission from their bondage. The rare amount of manumissions make it hard to analyze specific routes towards freedom for the enslaved African inhabitants of New Netherland. Some enslaved Africans, who were privately owned, were at times granted manumission by their owners. In 1649, Jan Jansen *Damen*, for instance, recorded in his will that his enslaved African, Cecilia, should be manumitted after his death. Another example comes from Philip Jansen *Ringo* who granted his enslaved African, Manuel *the Spaniard*, manumission on the condition that he would pay Ringo one-hundred guilders once a year for three years. If Manuel would not pay, Ringo had the right to restore Manuel's bondage.<sup>133</sup> Due to the rare amount of manumissions, this chapter will mostly analyze a group of eleven enslaved Africans and their wives who received partial manumission in 1644. By tracing their efforts to emancipate, this chapter analyzes the particular approaches that could lead to manumission. Additionally, it analyzes the obstacles that the West India Company created to stop more enslaved Africans in their efforts to emancipate. Economic and religious motives, combined with social and legal developments were the preeminent reasons for the little amount of manumissions of enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam.

The most famous manumission in the history of New Netherland was granted to a group of eleven male enslaved Africans and their wives, all owned by the West India Company.<sup>134</sup> One of the reasons that this manumission grant is famous, is because the freedom that was granted to the enslaved Africans was not absolute, but conditional. These Africans were therefore granted what came to be called half freedom. In return for this partial freedom the Africans had to pay the company a certain amount of corn, peas, beans or a hog, valued at twenty guilders on a yearly basis until their death. Moreover, the children of these men and

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<sup>133</sup> For Cecilia's case: RPS, Vol. 3, 72 (12 December 1649), NYSA; for Manuel's manumission: RPS, Vol. 3, 30 (17 February 1649), NYSA.

<sup>134</sup> Using the marriage records of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, at least two enslaved African women were certainly granted half freedom. There were more marriages among the African population of New Amsterdam before February 1644, but the names can not be attributed to any other half free Africans with hundred percent certainty: Jan *de Fort Orange* and Maria *Grande* married on 24 November 1641 & Antony Ferdinando *from Cascais in Portugal* and Maria *van Angola* married on 30 November 1643, in: Purple, *Marriages*, 11 & 12.

women who were granted half freedom by the company remained enslaved for the rest of their lives. On 25 February 1644, they were granted half freedom by director Willem Kieft:

“Having seen the petition of the enslaved Africans that have been of service to the company for eighteen to nineteen years - named Paulus *van Angola*, *Big Emanuel*, *Little Emanuel*, *Emanuel de Gerrit de Reus*, *Simon Congo*, *Anthony Portuguese*, *Gracia*, *Pieter Sao Tomé*, *Jan Fransisco*, *Little Anthony*, [and] *Jan de Fort Orange* - to be fired from their servitude, and to be liberated. [...] As they have been promised for a long time now, so be it that we, director and council, fire these *enslaved Africans*, standing before us, and their wives for the rest of their lives from their servitude, while also setting them free and *liber*, similar to all other *common people* here in New Netherland.”<sup>135</sup>

There is much debate on the reasons why this group was granted half freedom. Some scholars have argued that half freedom proves the mild and less rigid nature of slavery in New Netherland. According to this movement, the company were thankful for their servitude and allowed these Africans to emancipate after having served length of their bondage.<sup>136</sup> Other scholars have analyzed the motives of the company to retain the children while partially freeing the parents as a way for the company to not have the burden of supporting aging slaves while ensuring the continuing bondage of their children.<sup>137</sup> There is something to say for the age argument. Some of the half free Africans married after they partially emancipated. Three future wives received manumission in 1662 on the condition that they would clean Stuyvesant’s house once per week.<sup>138</sup> Yet, according to Shaw Romney the timing of the partial manumissions remains unclear because at the same time that the Africans became half free, certain legal and

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<sup>135</sup> The proclamation specifically uses the term *negros* instead of *enslaved Africans*, which I changed into enslaved Africans. The term *dienstbaarheid* could have several meanings, like *service*, *serfdom*, *servitude* or *slavery*. *ny*. The term *liber* is Latin for freedom, which shows that the Kieft and/ or other members of the council had knowledge of the law. *Luyden* is an early modern Dutch term referring to the common people, not belonging to the aristocracy, regents, burghers, craftsmen, merchants, farmers, and laborers with a contract. They were therefore seen the lowest class of free people, in: NYCM, Vol. 4, 183-4 (25 February 1644), NYSA

<sup>136</sup> Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 203; Christoph, “The Freedmen of New Amsterdam”, 158-9; Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1625-1863* (Chicago 2003), 12.

<sup>137</sup> Joyce D. Goodfriend, “The Souls of African American Children: New Amsterdam”, *Common Place*, III, no. 4 (July 2003), 3.

<sup>138</sup> NYCM, Vol. 10-1, 296 (28 December 1662), NYSA; Jaap Jacobs, “Van Angola naar Manhattan. Slavernij in Nieuw-Nederland in de zeventiende eeuw”, in: *Slaven en Schepen. Enkele reis, bestemming onbekend*, Rammelt Daalder, Andrea Kieskamp & Dirk J. Tang (eds.) (Leiden, 2001), 70.

economic developments in the Dutch empire led to decreasing chances of the emancipation for enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam.<sup>139</sup> My analysis of the group that received half free status shows that these Africans were granted half freedom out of a compromise between the company and the Africans. The company was in a position of power because they owned the enslaved Africans, but the Africans had the leverage to negotiate for their freedom. Half freedom should therefore be seen as a “negotiated social relationship.”<sup>140</sup> Analyzing the agency of these Africans in their goal of receiving freedom might help us get a better understanding as to why they did not receive partial manumission.

These half free African inhabitants of New Amsterdam had their roots both in Africa and in the Portuguese empire, but had adapted to Dutch customs in the eighteen to nineteen years that they had lived in New Netherland. Their names suggest this diverse heritage. Their first names indicate their Portuguese Christian heritage. Anthony, Emanuel, Gracia and Simon were common names on the Iberian Peninsula. Even names like Jan, Paulus and Pieter were clearly Christian names that could have easily been assimilated to Dutch from Juan, Paulo and Pietro. Most of their nicknames, imply their African and Portuguese heritage. *Angola*, *Congo* and *Sao Tomé* were all areas on the African west coast, in which the Portuguese were the dominant European slave traders in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>141</sup> Emanuel *de Gerrit de Reus* and Jan *de Fort Orange* clearly acquired their nicknames after arrival in New Netherland. The fact that they had adapted in some form to Dutch culture can be seen in the baptism records of the Dutch reformed church in New Amsterdam. All of the half free Africans in New Amsterdam were mentioned in the baptism records of the Dutch Reformed Church as either fathers or witnesses of children who were baptized. These half free Africans were not the only African inhabitants of New Amsterdam who converted to Dutch Reformed Christianity. Between September 1639, when the baptism records start, and 1655, approximately forty-one African men and twenty-four African women appeared in the baptism records of the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam. It is impossible to confirm an exact number because some of these Africans might have been counted twice when a different nickname was used to describe them. There are indications that several baptisms of African children were not included

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<sup>139</sup> Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 192-4.

<sup>140</sup> Victor Enthoven, “Onder de wapenen”, 16.

<sup>141</sup> Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, “Trans-Imperial and Cross-Cultural Networks for the Slave Trade, 1580s-1800s” In: Catia Antunes & Amélia Polónia (eds.), *Beyond Empires: Global, Self-Organizing, Cross-Imperial Networks, 1500-1800* (Leiden 2016), 41-68, 45.



in this list.<sup>142</sup> This group of forty-one men and twenty-four women baptized a total of fifty-five children.

The presence of the eleven Africans who were granted half freedom in the baptism records potentially support DeWulf's theory that the West India Company adopted and emulated slavery among the lines of Portuguese practices in Sao Tomé. On this island off the coast of Africa, enslaved Africans had to adapt to Portuguese customs and convert to Christianity to improve social status and eventually receive manumission. The final step to receiving manumission for enslaved Africans in Sao Tomé was through becoming middlemen or joining Portuguese military.<sup>143</sup> There are several indications to support the claim that this also happened in New Amsterdam. First, these enslaved Africans who were mentioned in the baptism records had a shared Portuguese heritage, they probably knew that under Portuguese practices serving as soldiers, middleman or agents in trade, was the final step towards negotiating freedom for enslaved Africans. Furthermore, the West India Company had used enslaved Africans in their war efforts in Dutch Brazil and sent military commanders from Dutch Brazil to New Amsterdam during Kieft's war. The following paragraphs will show that indeed some of the Africans who were granted half freedom served in the military during Kieft's war. These enslaved Africans knew about methods to receive manumission in other parts of the Dutch empire and used this knowledge to their advantage when they had leverage to negotiate for freedom.

The baptism records contain names of four men who almost certainly joined the West India Company's military around the time of Kieft's War. The first example of an enslaved African who used their military past to obtain manumission is Sebastian *Captain of the negros*. Sebastian's nickname has been interpreted by scholars in several ways. Some scholars saw in him the overseer of the enslaved Africans.<sup>144</sup> This interpretation, however, is incorrect, because the Dutch sources use other terms for overseer. Shaw Romney saw in him the leader of the African community with connections to the wider Atlantic world.<sup>145</sup> This could certainly be a possibility and does not exclude the theory of him serving as captain in the military of the West India Company. Although it is impossible to identify Sebastian's origin with hundred percent certainty, it is likely that he came Paraiba in Brazil. In 1638 he had been captured as a prize on

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<sup>142</sup> Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: a Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (Leiden 2006), 314-8.

<sup>143</sup> Dewulf, "The Slave Policy", 6.

<sup>144</sup> Willem Frijhoff, *Fulfilling God's mission the two worlds of Dominie Everardus Bogardus, 1607-1647* (Leiden 2007), 538; Peter R. Christoph, "The Freedmen of New Amsterdam", 159.

<sup>145</sup> Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 215.

the Atlantic by a ship owned by the West India Company called The Neptune. The ship's council had granted Sebastian freedom and a salary for eight guilders per month.<sup>146</sup> Sebastian witnessed five baptisms of enslaved African's children in the Dutch Reformed Church. These baptisms serve as proof in confirming that Sebastian was indeed employed in the military during Kieft's war. He witnessed three baptisms, was nicknamed captain of the negros and all of these baptisms occurred during Kieft's war. The other two baptisms that he witnessed took place before and after the war, and at these two baptisms his rank was not mentioned.<sup>147</sup>

The second reason to believe Sebastian was enlisted as the captain of the negros in the company's military during Kieft's war was his personal connections with captain Jan de Vries. These personal connections indicate that Sebastian had access to networks of the soldier community in New Amsterdam. Captain De Vries had arrived in New Amsterdam from Dutch Brazil with auxiliary troops during the war.<sup>148</sup> In this period, De Vries was an important councilor for Willem Kieft and served as one of the highest commanders of the West India Company's military in New Netherland. But after the war had finished, Captain De Vries' social status in New Amsterdam quickly dwindled. An enslaved African woman, named Elary, had given birth to De Vries' illegitimate child. Because of this De Vries was fired from the West India Company and sent to the Republic facing trial.<sup>149</sup> There seemed to have been some hesitation from the reverend of the Dutch Reformed Church to baptize the illegitimate creole child of De Vries because his child was finally baptized more than a year after he was shipped off to the Republic. Sebastian served as a witness to the baptism of Jan, the son of Captain de Vries and Elary, along with one of Captain de Vries' formerly owned enslaved Africans. A few years earlier, during the war, Captain Sebastian had also witnessed the baptism of another son of Elary.<sup>150</sup>

There were more Africans who joined the company's military during Kieft's war. Anthony and Emanuel both served as trumpeter, while Pieter van Camp served as a drummer. In Europe, every cavalry unit of the Dutch military contained two Trumpeters., while every infantry unit

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<sup>146</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 81 (15 November 1640), NYSA. The theory that Sebastian van Paraiba was also captain Sebastian is supported by: Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections*, 214-7.

<sup>147</sup> As Captain of the negros, Sebastian was a witness to three baptisms: Jochem, Son of Larie Swartinne (24 August 1643); Christina, Daughter of Emanuel Trompetter (18 February 1544); & Philip, Son of Groot Emanuel Neger (26 May 1645). in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 17-9; Sebastian also witnessed two baptisms for which he was not called captain of the enslaved Africans: Elisabeth, Daughter of Pieter Portugies (1 March 1643); and Jan, Son of Captain Jan de Vries and Swartinne (25 August 1647), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 15 & 23.

<sup>148</sup> *Dutch colonial court minutes, 23 February–9 March 1645*, NYCM, Vol. 4, 216 (9 March 1645), NYSA.

<sup>149</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 265 (26 July 1646), NYSA.

<sup>150</sup> Jan, Son of Captain Jan de Vries and Swartinne (25 August 1647) & Son of Larie Swartinne (24 August 1643), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 17 & 23; RPS, Vol. 2, 162 (3 August 1647), NYSA.

had one drummer.<sup>151</sup> The drummer was also expected to speak several foreign languages, so he could negotiate with the enemy to liberate soldiers who were taken hostage.<sup>152</sup> We do not know much about Pieter, but he was granted land next to the other half free Africans, together with Sebastian, which indicates that he was a free African before joining the military, or that he was Pieter Sao Tomé.<sup>153</sup>

It is, however, certain that both Emanuel and Anthony were granted half freedom on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1644 by Willem Kieft. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1644, only seven days before that partial manumission was granted, Captain Sebastian witnessed the baptism of Christina, the daughter of Emanuel *Trumpeter*.<sup>154</sup> Emanuel *Trumpeter* was also known as *Little Emanuel*. We know this because *Big Emanuel* and Emanuel *de Gerrit de Reus* requested manumission for Christina in December 1663. They stated that her father had been granted half freedom by Kieft and had also been promised by Kieft that all young children as well as future-born children would have the same status as their father.<sup>155</sup> Since Christina was an orphan, *Big Emanuel* and Emanuel *de Gerrit de Reus* were still alive, and the only other Emanuel, who received partial manumission in February 1644 was *Little Emanuel*, Emanuel *Trumpeter* had to have been the same person as *Little Emanuel*. Similarly, Anthony *Trumpeter* was the same person as Anthony *Portuguese*, who was also granted half freedom by Kieft in February 1644. Anthony's wife witnessed two baptisms, one as the wife of *Anthony Trumpeter* and one as *Maria Trumpeter*. Comparing both the marriage and baptism records of the Dutch Reformed church leads to the conclusion that both *Anthony Trumpeter* and *Anthony Portuguese* were in fact the same person.<sup>156</sup>

This evidence clearly shows that both free and enslaved Africans served in the West India Company's military during Kieft's war.<sup>157</sup> However, DeWulf's suggestion that the company initiated the granting of half freedom seems unsubstantiated. It is more likely that the agency in petitioning for manumission came from the enslaved Africans, as they were in the perfect position to negotiate for their freedom. Around the time that they were granted freedom, the

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<sup>151</sup> Marjolein 't Hart, *The Dutch Wars of Independence: Warfare and Commerce in the Netherlands 1570-1680* (London 2014), 41.

<sup>152</sup> Hart, *The Dutch Wars*, 41.

<sup>153</sup> Dutch Colonial Patents and Deeds, 44-209 (8 April 1647), NYSA.

<sup>154</sup> Christina, Daughter of Emanuel Trompetter (18 February 1544), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 18.

<sup>155</sup> NYCM, Vol. 10, Pt. 2, 416 (6 December 1663), NYSA.

<sup>156</sup> Anna, Daughter of Phillippe Swartinne (8 May 1644) & Jan, son of Charles Morgeres (23 Juli 1655), in: Evans, *Baptisms*, 17 & 37; Antony Ferdinando from Cascais in Portugal and Maria van Angola married on 30 November 1643, in: Purple, *Marriages*, 12.

<sup>157</sup> Leslie M Harris also makes the suggestion that Africans fought alongside the militias: Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 36.

company was in desperate need of men to protect the colony and its inhabitants. By October 1643, in the midst of the war, many inhabitants of Manhattan and Long Island had fled back to the Dutch Republic and most villages on Long Island had burned to the ground. At the same time, only fifty to sixty soldiers were enlisted in the company's military. These soldiers, alongside an English troop led by Captain John Underhill and a group of militiamen had to take on an alliance of several native tribes consisting of approximately fifteen-hundred men. When the harvest season ended, these forces were sent out to plunder food supplies from the native villages.<sup>158</sup> In 1630, the West India Company had used similar tactics in the military operations against the Portuguese in Pernambuco. There the company enlisted both free and enslaved Africans in militias, armed with bows and swords to support the European soldiers, and to additionally search for potential food supplies. In return for their enlistment the enslaved Africans were able to negotiate manumission.<sup>159</sup> It was to this backdrop, that the eleven enslaved Africans were able to negotiate for their manumission.

Serving in the company in times of war, probably in a similar type of militia as the company had used in Pernambuco, gave the enslaved Africans the leverage to negotiate for the freedom that they had "been promised for a long time."<sup>160</sup> The reason that they not received full freedom might have something to do with the fact that the colonial world could be characterized as a "negotiated social relationship."<sup>161</sup> Even though the Africans had the leverage to negotiate, the company still had the most decision power because they owned these enslaved Africans. Half freedom could therefore simply have been a compromise from both sides. The fact that after 1645, Africans were gradually excluded from networks that could lead to manumission show that the company did not want to be put in a compromised position again.

After 1645, it became increasingly more difficult for enslaved Africans to baptize their children. Part of this can be explained by reverend Megapolensis' policy to not actively convert heathens.<sup>162</sup> However, that would not take into account that the already Christianized African population of New Amsterdam was also gradually excluded from performing baptisms on their

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<sup>158</sup> Evan Haefeli, "Kieft's War", 31; for the approximation of the amount of soldiers in this period: Jacobs, "Soldiers of the Company", 16.

<sup>159</sup> Mark Meeuwse, "The Opportunities and Limits of Ethnic Soldiering. The Tupis and the Dutch-Portuguese Struggle for the Southern Atlantic, 1630–1657", In In: *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, Wayne E. Lee (ed.) (New York 2011), 140.

<sup>160</sup> NYCM, Vol. 4, 183-4 (25 February 1644), NYSA.

<sup>161</sup> Victor Enthoven, "Onder de wapenen", 16.

<sup>162</sup> Leendert Jan Joosse, *Geloof in de Nieuwe Wereld. Ontmoetingen met Afrikanen en Indianen (1600-1700)* (Kampen 2008), 258.

children.<sup>163</sup> Between 1639 and 1645, the percentage of baptisms involving African inhabitants compared to the total amount of baptisms performed in the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam was around fifteen percent. After 1646, this percentage steadily decreased until it had reached zero by 1656. Between 1656 and 1664 no other baptisms involving the African population of New Amsterdam took place in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam. In 1665, however, after the company had lost control over the colony, African inhabitants of New Amsterdam almost immediately reconnected with the network of the Church through baptisms.<sup>164</sup> Between 1639 and 1645, the percentage of baptisms involving children of the African inhabitants of New Amsterdam was consistent with the ten to seventeen percent of the population of New Amsterdam who was African in 1664.<sup>165</sup> This indicates that the number of Africans in New Amsterdam had stayed consistent but that they had lost access to the church and that specifically, the West India Company made an effort to stop these baptisms from taking place.

At the same time, economic and social developments also led to the Dutch increasingly becoming involved in the Atlantic slave trade and developing a legal framework for slavery. The only actors with the power to grant manumissions were the owners of the enslaved Africans. As mentioned in the chapter about prosecution of enslaved Africans, buying slaves was expensive, and therefore only the West India Company and wealthy inhabitants of New Amsterdam could afford to own enslaved Africans. The West India Company had the monopoly on slave trade after 1621 but the military character of the company had caused disruptions in the slave trade between the 1630s and 1650s. By 1647, the company started allowing shareholders access to the slave trade including trade with New Netherland.<sup>166</sup> Because of a clear demand for enslaved Africans in the colony, Stuyvesant and the council even tried to discourage the export of slaves from New Netherland.<sup>167</sup> The increase in commercialization of the slave trade also allowed the company to create their own legal framework for slavery. By 1655, the Portuguese term *negro* was slowly disappearing from the sources. Instead the Dutch had changed *negro* into *neger*. The year that baptisms of Africans in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam stopped coincided with the influx of soldiers and inhabitants from Brazil. As the scale and nature of slavery in Brazil was very different than it had been in New

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<sup>163</sup> Shaw Romney, "Intimate Networks and Children's Survival", 297.

<sup>164</sup> For the baptisms between 1638-1664: Evans, *Baptisms*, 10-77. For the African population reconnecting with the network of the Reformed church: Evans, *Baptisms*, 78.

<sup>165</sup> Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 55.

<sup>166</sup> Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Trans-Imperial", 48.

<sup>167</sup> P.C. Emmer, *De Nederlandse Slavenhandel, 1500-1850* (Amsterdam 2000), 57.

Amsterdam, it is likely that these soldiers brought their own legal framework for slavery from Brazil.

By 1664, the population of New Amsterdam had increased to approximately 2,500 inhabitants.<sup>168</sup> This meant that the number of African inhabitants of New Amsterdam was between 250 and 425. Only a few of these African inhabitants had received full or partial manumission. Some of the free and half free African inhabitants had been granted land on Manhattan, close to Stuyvesant's farm. The rest, however, between 200 and 375 African inhabitants remained enslaved.

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<sup>168</sup> Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 32.

## CONCLUSION

I started researching this thesis after noticing social fluidity between European soldiers and enslaved Africans. This social fluidity did not only come forward in the punishment of servants of the company to forced labor with the enslaved Africans. During Kieft's war enslaved Africans fought side by side of European soldiers. Through this, some enslaved Africans were able to negotiate half freedom. Furthermore, former cadet Paulus Heymans van Leiden served the West India Company for years as an overseer of the enslaved Africans. Even though he was in a position of power, he also maintained personal relationships with the members of the half free African population of New Amsterdam. His knowledge of Portuguese might have played a crucial factor in the reason why he was hired as an overseer. Yet, the influx of more soldiers from Dutch Brazil around 1655 and 1656 also came around a time when the enslaved Africans started to get excluded from cultural practices such as baptisms, which were vital in creating a community and receiving manumission.

When comparing prosecution of European soldiers and enslaved Africans it therefore becomes clear that both groups were treated very differently by the West India Company in New Amsterdam. This was mostly due to the legal framework that existed in New Amsterdam. For soldiers, the company had an explicit set of rules that were upheld through legal practices from the Dutch Republic in combination with maritime and military laws. Because this set of rules was so clear, soldiers were more often publicly prosecuted than other inhabitants of New Netherland. For enslaved Africans, however, legal practices from the Dutch Republic clearly did not properly work. Private masters did not have the incentives to petition with the company for public prosecution of their enslaved Africans because of economic motives and because owning a criminal enslaved African could potentially damage their own honor and public reputation. Furthermore, the West India Company had similar economic motives not to publicly prosecute enslaved Africans. This is why only in very severe cases, like that of Lysbeth Anthony, enslaved Africans were prosecuted. The exclusion from the criminal legal process also suggests that enslaved Africans were therefore privately punished.

The differences in social mobility of European soldiers and enslaved Africans were also sizeable. Enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam had very little chances of upward social mobility. Some of them were granted full manumission and some received half freedom. Yet, the vast majority remained bonded for life. Only under a specific set of circumstances were some enslaved Africans able to receive manumission. Christianity played a critical role in this. Leverage to negotiate for freedom was another vital element in receiving manumission. When

the population of New Amsterdam was scarce and barely any soldiers serving the company were there to fight Kieft's war, some enslaved Africans took their chance and negotiated half freedom. However, a similar situation never reoccurred. In fact, after the war was over cultural, economical and legal developments made it increasingly more difficult for enslaved Africans to receive manumission. Enslaved Africans were not allowed to baptize their children anymore which incredibly diminished their chances of social mobility.

For soldiers, factors determined before crossing the Atlantic played a vital role in potential upward social mobility. Crimps or personal connections in the city of departure serving as a proxy for the soldiers, played an important role in the amount of money a soldier could receive after his employment with the West India Company finished. The amount of wages received after ending their service in return played a critical role in the soldier's chances of upward mobility. Rank also played a crucial role in the chances of positive social mobility for soldiers. Regular soldiers showed no signs of social mobility. Former sergeants and cadets, however, were more successful in creating personal connections with prominent inhabitants of New Amsterdam. Many sergeants, in fact, became prominent inhabitants of New Amsterdam, such as the case of Daniel Lisco showed. Cadets also showed promise of social mobility, as was shown with Jan Snedicker. European soldiers were therefore way better off in New Netherland than enslaved Africans.

Even though there was some social fluidity between European soldiers and enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam, this should not be confused with equal chances in this early modern colonial society. The West India Company intended for both European soldiers and enslaved Africans to stay in New Netherland. For European soldiers this can be seen through the fact that sergeants and cadets brought their wives, while for enslaved Africans it can be seen in the fact that barely any enslaved Africans were manumitted. Both groups, however, had different purposes in the early modern colony of New Netherland. European soldiers were used to defend the colony, but when their tenure was over, they could potentially start a new life in New Amsterdam. However, the company had little reason to manumit enslaved Africans, because they were used to do every day tasks that no other colonists wanted to do. Therefore, European soldiers and enslaved Africans had very unequal chances of positive social mobility in New Amsterdam.

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