

THE CURIOUS VAN DIJK MAP OF THE GULF OF CARPENTARIA

Jan Tent¹

Abstract: In 1859 the Dutch historian, L.C.D. van Dijk published a book on the voyages of discovery made by Jan Carstenszoon in 1623 and Jean Etienne Gonzal in 1756 to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The book contains a commentary of the two voyages as well as a copy of Carstenszoon's journal. It also contains a curious map that not only renames the Gulf of Carpentaria and the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, but also questions the naming of Arnhem Land and some of its named locations. This paper examines some of the possible reasoning behind this unusual map.

INTRODUCTION

The National Library of Australia holds in its map collection a little-known and rather unconventional map, which can be found in a book by Ludovicus Carolus Desiderius van Dijk (1824-1860), a nineteenth century Dutch historian.¹ The book was published in 1859 and bears the title *Mededelingen van het Oost-Indisch Archief N^o.1. Twee togten naar de Golf van Carpentaria, J. Carstensz. 1623, J.E. Gonzal 1756, benevens iets over den togt van G. Pool en Pieter Pietersz.* [‘Information about the East India Archive N^o.1. Two voyages to the Gulf of Carpentaria, J. Carstensz. 1623, J.E. Gonzal 1756, thereunto a little about the voyage of G. Pool and Pieter Pietersz.’].² The map (**Fig. 1.**) is at the end of the book, and depicts the east and west coasts of the Gulf of Carpentaria, the northern end of the present-day Northern Territory, Torres Strait, and part of New Guinea, Seram and surrounding islands. It also shows the locations called at and named (some with dates) by a number Dutch explorers. The map was printed by Carl Wilhelm Mieling, a well-known nineteenth century lithographic printer and publisher in The Hague.

Van Dijk's book is divided into three parts: the first, a nine-page introduction, is followed by a 52-page narrative and commentary on the voyages to the Gulf of Carpentaria by Jan Carstenszoon, Jean Etienne Gonzal, and others. This is followed by the entire text of Carstenszoon's journal, *Journael van Jan Carstensz. of de ghedaene reyse van Nove Guinea [...] A^o. 1623.* [‘Journal of Jan Carstenszoon or the voyage undertaken to New Guinea in the year 1623’].³

At first reckoning, van Dijk's map is rather curious, even for its time. For one, it does not include the southern coastline of the Gulf of Carpentaria even though this had first been charted by Tasman in 1644, the results of which were published by Willem Janszoon Blaeu as early as 1645-46, and Joan Blaeu in 1648 (see Anon. 1644, the so-called ‘Bonaparte Tasman map’). Numerous maps that included the entire coastline of the gulf were published subsequently, to which no doubt van Dijk would have had access. In addition, Matthew Flinders had charted the gulf's entire coastline during his 1802-1803 circumnavigation of the continent, the chart of which was so accurate that it was used for the next 150 years.

The second curious feature of the map is that, with the exception of four names, all the toponyms on Cape York Peninsula and Northern Territory are Dutch. By the time the map was published, numerous British toponyms had been bestowed along the gulf's entire coastline and that of the now Northern Territory. The four non-Dutch names are restricted to the Torres Strait region and are: *Torres Straat*, *Duncans Archipel.*, *Kp. York* [‘Cape York’], and *Cooks Eil.* [‘Cook's Island’].

¹ **Jan Tent** is a retired academic and current Director of the Australian National Placenames Survey. He is also an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the Australian National University, Canberra, and an Honorary Research Fellow at Macquarie University, Sydney. His onomastic research has mainly concentrated on early European place-naming practices in Australasia, as well as the toponymy of Australia in general.

However, the most curious features of the map are:

- its ostensive title: *Golf van Carpentaria of liever Pera's Golf* ['Gulf of Carpentaria or preferably Pera's Gulf'], which appears in the gulf itself;
- the west coast region of Cape York Peninsula which had been known from at least 1644 as *Carpentaria*, is labelled *Carstensz. Land*;
- the question *Waarom?* ['Why?'] after the toponyms: *Arnhem's land* ['Arnhem's Land'], *Wezel of Wesseleiland* ['Wezel or Wessel Island'], *Arhems baai* ['Arnhem's Bay'], and *Kp. Arnhem* ['Cape Arnhem']

Explanations for some of these curiosities are found in van Dijk's introduction, where he provides a *raison d'être* for the book, as well as the stance he assumes. However, before these are considered, by way of background to the book, a brief account of Carstenszoon's voyage of discovery seems in order.

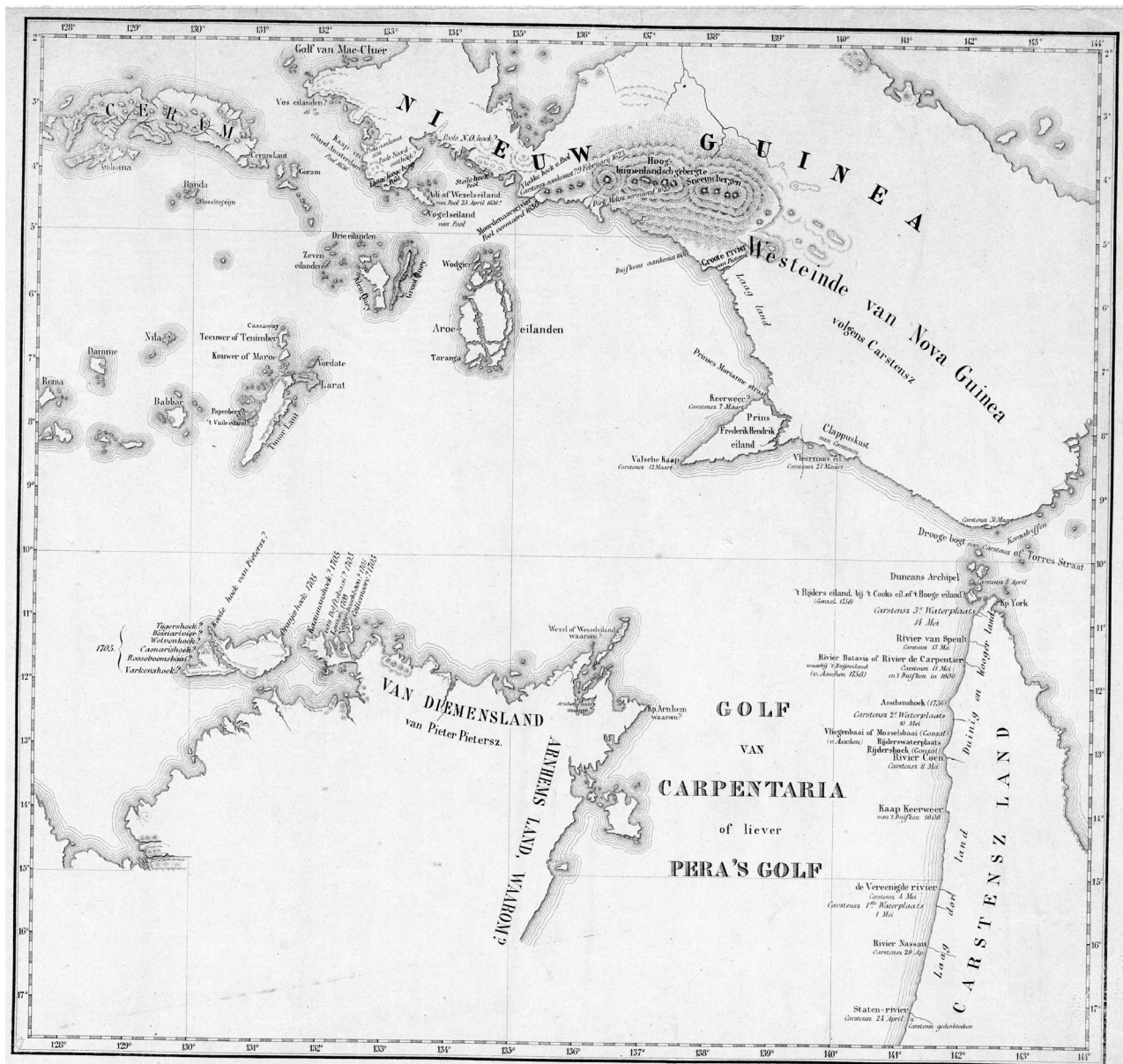


Figure 1. van Dijk (1859) *Golf van Carpentaria of liever Pera's Golf*. Koninkl^e. lith. v. C.W. Mieling te 's-Gravenhage. (Nat. Lib. of Australia, MAP RM 816, online at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231314481>)

EXCURSUS: HISTORICAL BACKDROP

In 1623, the Governor of Ambon, Herman van Speult, dispatched Jan Carstenszoon with the yachts *Arnhem* and *Pera* to the southern coast of New Guinea in order to follow up on the discoveries made by Willem Janszoon in the *Duyfken* [‘Little Dove’] in 1606.⁴ In the previous year, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, had drawn up plans and instructions for Jan Vos to take two ships, the *Haring* [‘Herring’] and *Hazewind* [‘Greyhound’], to carry out this expedition, but it had been cancelled. Subsequently, van Speult sent Carstenszoon on this mission (see Schilder 1976:80-98).

At the time it was thought New Guinea extended across the Torres Strait through to the Cape York Peninsula. Janszoon had charted the region and thought the two were joined even though his chart does not show this. Nevertheless, he labels Cape York Peninsula *Nova Guinea* accordingly. He had only charted about 300 kms of the Cape’s western coast as far as Cape Keerweer when he turned back to Banda.⁵ Coen and van Speult wanted a more accurate cartographic picture of the region, but Carstenszoon was also instructed was to persuade the peoples of the Kai, Aru and Tanimbar Islands to place themselves under the direct obedience and dominion of their “High Mightinesses the States-General of the Netherlands”, and promise to trade exclusively with the Dutch fortresses in Banda and Ambon.⁶

Carstenszoon, on board the *Pera*, was in overall command of the expedition. Dirk Meliszoon was the master of the *Arnhem* until his untimely death during a skirmish with the coastal inhabitants of today’s West Papua Province. As a result, the location of the skirmish was named *Dootslagers Rivier* [‘Manslaughters River’]. The *Arnhem* was then put under the command of Willem Joosten van Coolsteerdt (aka van Colster), the under-steersman (second mate) of the *Pera*. The two ships then sailed along the coastline previously charted by Janszoon. Torres Strait was mistaken for the *Drooge bocht* [‘Shallow/Dry Bight’], thus perpetuating the mistake made by Janszoon 17 years prior in thinking New Guinea and the Cape constituted an unbroken whole. The east coast of the gulf was then followed to the mouth of a river they dubbed *Staaten Rivier* [‘States River’ – still known today as the *Staaten River*].⁷ At this point the expedition turned around for the return-voyage, leaving the entire southern coast of the gulf uncharted for another 21 years until Abel Tasman charted it in 1644.

Between Staaten Rivier and nearby Rivier Nassou [‘Nassau River’] to the north, van Coolsteerdt decided to surreptitiously abandon the expedition and headed westwards back to Ambon via the Aru and Kai islands. Commenting on van Coolsteerdt’s absconsion, Carstenszoon reports on 26 April in a note in his journal:

That the yacht Aernem, owing to bad sailing, and to the small liking and desire which the skipper and the steersman have shown towards the voyage, has on various occasions and at different times been the cause of serious delay, ... (Heeres 1899:38).⁸

Although neither the journal nor the original chart of the *Arnhem*’s voyage has survived, several documents and a copy of a chart made c.1670 (**Fig. 2.**) provide evidence that van Coolsteerdt subsequently came across the east coast of Arnhem Land, and charted part of its coastline. He is also reputed to have named two islands, Arnhem and (Van) Speult. Certainly, Eylandt Speult appears on it, but the label AERNHEM appears on the mainland where the current Arnhem Land is. It is not precisely known to which island Eylandt Speult refers, however, Heeres (1898:101-102) believes that it could have been Groote Eylandt.⁹ In contrast, Robert (1973:26), more reasonably thinks it refers to Marchinbar Island, in the Wessel Islands group.

Neither *Arnhem* nor (*Van*) *Speult* islands seem to appear on any subsequent map, nonetheless, their names were later ostensibly transferred to the mainland, with various VOC documents alluding to *Arnhemland* and *Speultsland*. Perhaps the cape, currently bearing the name *Cape Arnhem*, was mistaken for an island (as was often done at the time) and is van Coolsteerdt’s *Eylandt Arnhem*.¹⁰ Nonetheless, *Arnhem(s) Land* begins to appear on maps from about the mid-seventeenth century (see for example **Fig. 3.**), though no

map has ever shown a (*Van*) *Speults Land*. Both are nonetheless mentioned in the instructions for the 1636 voyage of exploration to the region by the VOC ships *Cleen Amsterdam* [‘Little Amsterdam’] and *Wesel* under the command of Pool and Pieterszoon (see below).¹¹



Figure 2. Anon. (1670). *The discovery of Arnhemland, Australia, by the Yacht Arnhem, 1623* – from the secret atlas of the East India Company, c. 1670. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague [1925-33]. (Nat. Lib. of Australia, MAP Ra 265 Plate 126, online at <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1066940560>)



Figure 3. Thevenot, M. [1663]. *Hollandia Nova detecta 1644; Terre Australe decouverte l'an 1644.* (detail)
[De l'imprimerie de Jaques Langlois, Paris].
(Nat. Lib. of Australia, MAP RM 4667, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-334686747>)

In the meantime, Carstenszoon continued his return journey back up the coast of Cape York Peninsula in order to more accurately chart it, bestowing various names along the way. These were recorded on a chart drawn by Arent Martenszoon de Leeuw, the upper-steersman (first mate) of the *Pera* (Fig. 4). After a five month voyage, they anchored in Ambon on 8 June.

The west coast of Cape York Peninsula obtained the coastal region name *Carpentaria* when it appeared on Thevenot's map of 1663, and was presumably derived from Carstenszoon's naming of the *Rivier Carpentier*, named after the then Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, Pieter de Carpentier.¹² By 1700, the name had migrated to the gulf (Ingleton 1986:209).

VAN DIJK'S RATIOCINATION

In the introduction to his book, van Dijk is very candid in his explanation of why the book was written and the stance he adopts towards the toponymy of the region. He declares that Carstenszoon is a largely forgotten figure in the annals of Dutch exploration of the Great Southland who has been misrepresented. Van Dijk bemoans the fact that many of the toponyms bestowed by Carstenszoon (in addition to those of other Dutch explorers) had arbitrarily and unjustifiably been replaced on maps by the British. Furthermore, he complains that various toponyms bestowed by the Dutch, still surviving on contemporary maps, were inaccurately located.

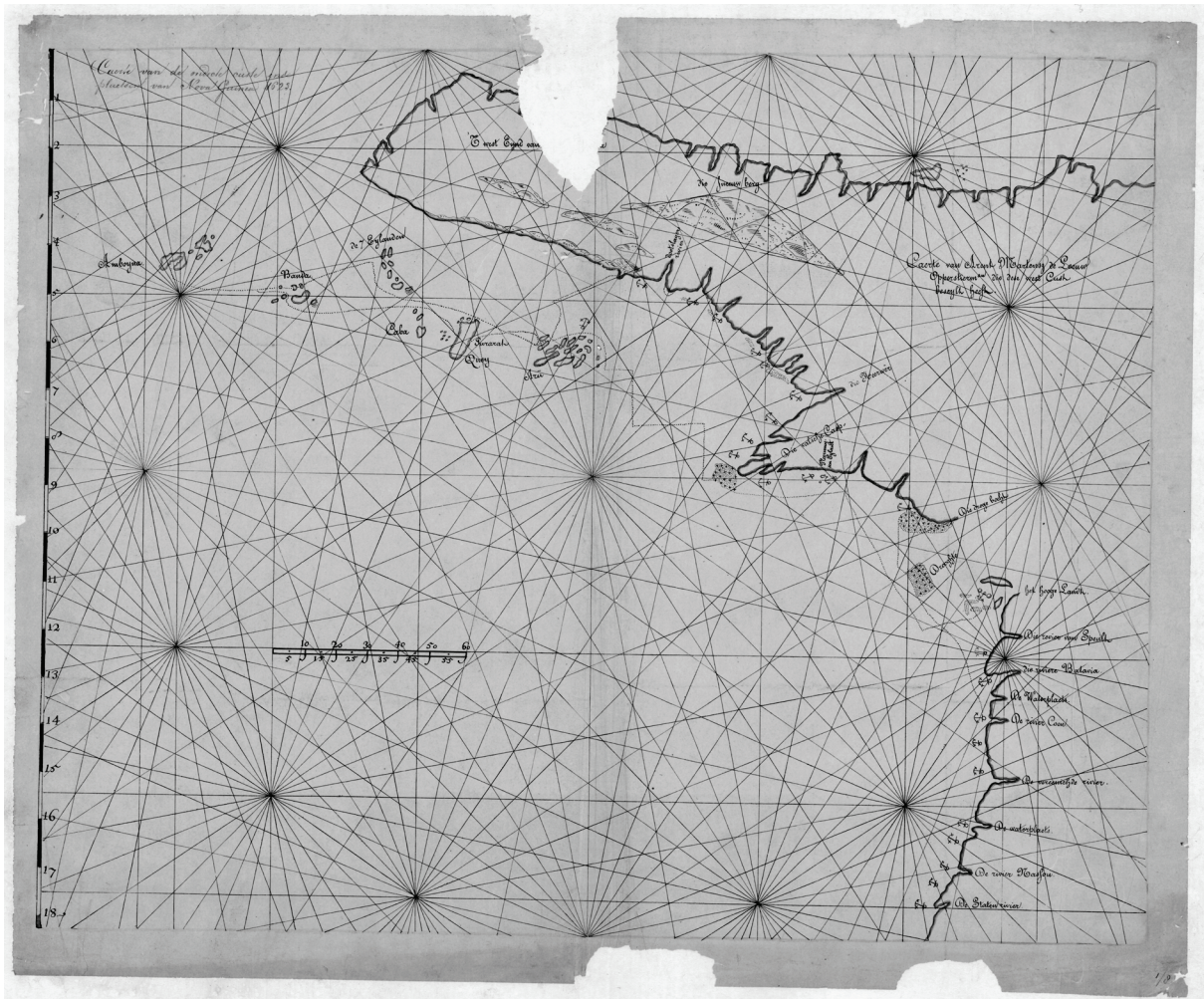


Figure 4. de Leeuw, A.M. [1623?]. *Caerte van Arent Martensz. de Leeuw opperstierman die dese west cust beseijlt heeft.* [s.n., s.l.]. (Nat. Lib. of Australia, MAP RM 392, <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231245000>)

Van Dijk also asserts that various historians had confused Carstenszoon with Dirk Meliszoon, the master of the *Arnhem*, who was killed early on in the expedition, and therefore had never reached the Gulf of Carpentaria. Some historians did not even mention Carstenszoon at all, whilst others, according to van Dijk, claimed that the *Pera* explored the east coast of the gulf, or that the *Arnhem*, under the command of Carstenszoon, discovered the west coast and named it after his ship.

All these injustices and inaccuracies needed to be rectified according to van Dijk; hence his book and the publication of Carstenszoon's journal. However, van Dijk goes further than just wanting to set the historical facts straight by allowing his own prejudices to overshadow the facts as he saw them at the time of compiling his book. Van Dijk is displaying here the wide-spread anti-British sentiment in the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands at the time. It certainly was not unique to van Dijk.¹³

The title of van Dijk's map does not shy away from his belief that the leader of the 1623 expedition should have the honour of having *Carpentaria* named after him, and the gulf after the ship he sailed in, not after de Carpentier. Van Dijk's inclusion of the adverb *liever* ['preferably; rather'] is unusual. If a place has alternative names or was known by a previous name, it is normal practice in Dutch just to use the conjunction *of* ['or']. The job of an historian or cartographer is to be objective and not to express his own predispositions on the merits of the name(s) of a place.

Van Dijk also shows displeasure in the naming of Arnhem Land, even though it was first charted by van Coolsteerdt in the *Arnhem*, and his addition of the question *Waarom?* ['Why?'] after the toponym, like the adverb *liever*, is unconventional. He maintains that the name *Arnhem* does not deserve to be

conferred upon any places on the map, because, he argues, no record of van Coolsteerdt's journal exists, and as a result van Dijk questions the latter's so-called discoveries.

Another small, though tellingly meaningful, oddity is on the lower right-hand corner of the van Dijk's map. There printed is "Staten rivier *Carstensz.* 24 April", and next to a small circle in smaller font, "*Carstensz. gedenkteeken*" ['Carstensz. memorial']. The "memorial" referred to consisted of a wooden board erected there by Carstenszoon, upon which the following was carved:

anno 1623 den 24^{sten} April zijn hier aengecomen twee jachten wegens de Hoog Mog. Heeren Staten-Generaal ['In the year 1623 the 24th April here arrived two yachts on behalf of the High and Mighty Lords of the States-General'].

The significance of the note on the map regarding this memorial is made clear in a footnote on page 18 of van Dijk's narrative and commentary. He explains the motivation for the naming of the river, *Staaten Rivier*, is a direct reference to the occasion of the erecting of the wooden board proclaiming their arrival at the river and stating they were there on behalf of the "High and Mighty Lords of the States-General". Although the wording on the board does not explicitly state that Carstenszoon was taking possession of the region in the name of the States-General, van Dijk's footnote argues he did:

One can regard the placement of this sign as an act of possession-taking, in connection with the charge of Coen to the commander J. Vos, reproduced in the same instruction to Carstensz., to take possession of all lands our folk may encounter, for the High and Mighty Lords of the States-General etc., and, as a sign thereof, erect a stone column in those places. It is true the commander did not, it seems, use the formula prescribed by Coen, but it is very likely that he did not have the chance to talk to the chiefs of the inhabitants, just as on Aru, and to confirm their ownership, and assumed that the above words would suffice. (van Dijk 1859, §2:18).¹⁴

As van Dijk intimates, wooden boards were also erected on Aru and Kai notifying the annexation of these two islands. These were erected on the *Pera*'s home voyage. The board put up on Aru read:

In the year 1623 on the 1st of February, hereunto Aru arrived the yachts *Pera* and *Arnhem* commander Jan Carstensz., merchants Jan Bruwel and Pieter Lingtes, skippers Jan Sluijs, Dirck Melisz., steersmen [mates] Arent Martensz. and Jan Jansz., dispatched under order and command of the Noble Lord General Jan Pietersz. Coen, on behalf of their High Mightinesses the States-General, His Excellency the Prince of Orange and Messrs. the Directors of the United East India Company; and we have also on the 4th day of the same taken possession of the Island for the above-mentioned Highnesses, likewise the chiefs and people have placed themselves under the protection and rule of the aforesaid Lords and adopted the prince's flag. (van Dijk 1859, *Journael van Jan Carstensz.*: 59).¹⁵

The board erected on Kai had very similar wording.

COMMENTARY

Van Dijk's disbelief in van Coolsteerdt's discoveries was unfounded given the documentary evidence available to van Dijk at the time. For instance, there are several letters from the Governor-General, Antonio van Diemen, and the Councillors of the East Indies to the Directors of the *VOG* in Amsterdam, as well as the instructions dated 19 February 1636 to Gerrit Thomaszoon Pool for his expedition to follow the track of Carstenszoon and van Coolsteerdt, all of which mention Arnhem Land (see Heeres 1899: 47-48). The instructions to Tasman for his expedition of 1644 state: "Byaldien naeder geen informatie becomt te verseylen near *Arnhems* en *Speults* landen, gelegen tuschen de hoogten van 9 to 13 graden Z. Br. ondekt in 1623." ['In case no further information is available to sail to *Arnhems* and *Speults* lands discovered in 1623, located between latitudes 9 and 13 degrees S.'] (Leuue 1868: 68).

In addition, van Dijk believes van Coolsteerdt does not deserve recognition because he showed little appetite for the voyage and ultimately absconded. This supposed act of betrayal, in van Dijk's eyes, was enough for him to denounce van Coolsteerdt's discoveries. Van Coolsteerdt's attitude is hardly a valid reason to deny him toponymic and cartographic recognition. His alleged lack of enthusiasm for the expedition is reasonable given the damage and predicaments the *Arnhem* endured during the voyage. The coasts along which the ships sailed are tortuous and extremely difficult to approach due to the extensive mudflats and sandbanks. Frequently both ships, especially the *Arnhem*, ran aground, and it was also badly damaged when it collided with the *Pera*, irreparably damaging her rudder. However, using the main-topmast section from the *Pera* and wood from the shore, the carpenters managed to jury-rig a rudder.

The VOC's purpose in sending out Carstenszoon was to find new markets, precious metals, and to expand its territories. It became clear to Carstenszoon, and obviously van Coolsteerdt, that there was nothing to be gained along the coasts they explored – a view shared by almost all Dutch explorers along the coastlines of the Great Southland. Carstenszoon repeatedly comments on the barrenness and uselessness of the land along the west coast of what would later be known as *Carpentaria*. For instance on 3 May, he comments:

[...] there are no mountains or even hills, so that it may be safely concluded that the land contains no metals, nor yields any precious woods, such as sandal-wood, aloes or columba; in our judgment this is the most arid and barren region that could be found anywhere on the earth; ... (Heeres 1899:39).¹⁶

The expedition, from a commercial point of view, was therefore not a success. Given the tribulations suffered by the *Arnhem* and the lack of any prospect for useful trade and commerce, it is little wonder van Coolsteerdt lost his appetite for the voyage.

Van Dijk's assumption that Carstenszoon took possession of Carpentaria may be seen as a trifle enthusiastic. Nevertheless, given the VOC policy in 1623, he may be excused for drawing this conclusion. The policy had three overriding motives for voyages of exploration to the north-coast of Australia before Tasman's voyage of 1644. They were: (a) commerce, (b) the increase of territory, (c) the establishment of new colonies. According to Heeres (1899: xiv-xv), these principles also partly triggered Carstenszoon's voyage, because he received the same instructions drawn up by Governor-General Coen in the previous year for the abandoned Vos expedition.

A case may be made against van Dijk's possession-taking supposition when the phrasing of the inscription on board at *Staaten Rivier* is considered. The formality and quasi-legal phraseology of the inscription on the boards on Aru and Kai contrast strongly with the simplicity of the one at *Staaten Rivier*. Van Dijk notes the discrepancy between the inscriptions, but his argument that the *Staaten Rivier* inscription did not follow the formula set by Coen because Carstenszoon "did not have the chance to talk to the chiefs of the inhabitants, just like on Aru, and to confirm the ownership by them, and assumed that the above words would suffice" seems to bear little credence. Even if Carstenszoon did have some form of interaction with the inhabitants of the *Staaten Rivier* region, there was no possible way he could have made clear his intention of taking possession of the land. It is well known that Australian Indigenous peoples have a very different *Weltanschauung* regarding the so-called "ownership" of land. And even if in some way the taking possession of the land was communicated, the strange symbols on a wooden board would have been completely unintelligible to the people of the region. It is even questionable that the peoples of the Aru and Kai Islands would have fully understood the meaning or significance of the inscriptions on the boards erected on their lands.

In relation to this, the wording on the pewter plate left by Dirk Hartog in 1616 on the coast of Dirk Hartog Island in Shark Bay declares:

1616 the 25 October is here arrived the ship Eendracht of Amsterdam the uppermerchant Gillis Miebaais of Liege skipper Dirck Hatichs of Amsterdam. The 27 ditto [we] set sail for Bantam the undermerchant Jan Stins, the first mate Pieter Dookes Van Bil. Anno 1616.¹⁷

This can hardly be interpreted as a declaration of possession taking. Nor could the wording on the subsequent pewter plate left at the same spot by Willem de Vlamingh 81 years later:

1697 the 4 February is here arrived the ship Geelvinck of Amsterdam, the commander and skipper Willem de Vlamingh of Vlieland, assistant Joan-nes Bremer of Copenhagen; first mate Michil Bloem of Bishopric Bremen. The hooker Nyptangh skipper Gerrit Colaart of Amsterdam; assistant Theo-doris Heirmans of ditto, first mate Gerrit Geritsen of Bremen. The galiot het Weseltje, master Cornelis de Vlamingh of Vlieland, mate Coert Gerritsen of Bremen and from here sailed with our fleet to further explore the Southland and (are) destined for Batavia – #12 VOC.¹⁸

The Dutch have never claimed to have taken possession of any part of the Great Southland. On the various Dutch maps published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries showing their so-called foreign possessions, none include any part of Australia. Indeed, apart from it being a navigational hazard, they considered it totally unworthy of their commercial interests (see Clark 1979 [1962]:23-26, Gaastra 1979, Sigmond & Zuiderbaan 1979:23) and therefore never took the trouble to take possession of it or any part of it.

Ultimately, Carstenszoon's inscribed board, and the pewter plates of Hartog and de Vlamingh seem to be little more than "I was here" declarations, so often made over the centuries (if not millennia) by visitors, explorers, travellers, and members of the military on campaigns in foreign climes. Australia's inland explorers were also inclined to leave their mark at places they had been, an example being Hume and Hovell carving their names on a tree near the present-day Albury. A plaque bearing the inscription: "HOVELL Nov^r 17/24", can be seen in the so-called 'Hovell Tree Park'.

Apart from questioning various contemporary toponymic labels applied to particular geographic features, van Dijk adds the interrogative *Waarom?* ['Why?'] after *Wezel of Wesseleiland* ['Wezel or Wessel Island?']. He acknowledges that Pieterszoon explored the west and central coast of what is indicated as *VAN DIEMENSLAND* on his map, and correctly points out that Pieterszoon did not venture as far to the east as *Wezel of Wesseleiland*. In addition, on page 28 of his 53-page narrative and commentary, van Dijk refers to the island *Adi of Wezelseiland* ['Adi or Wezels Island?'] off the coast of Bomberai Peninsula (in present-day West Papua), named by Pool and Pieterszoon. In a footnote, he proposes:

On the maps of Bogaerts, Stieler and others there is a Wessel-island (on Bogaerts even two), near the so-called Arnhems Land. Would not this be a mistake? Probably the island discovered by Pool is meant.¹⁹

Van Dijk is incorrect in his assertion that the Bogaerts map (1857) shows two Wessel islands; it actually shows *Wessel Eilanden* ['Wessel Islands?'] (naming a group of islands), a *Kp. Wessel* ['Cape Wessel?'], off the north-eastern coast of Arnhem Land, and labels either current Raragala Island or Elcho Island as *Wessel Eil.* No other *Wessel Eil.* can be discerned on this map, and Pulau Adi is denoted as *Adie*, not as *Wessel Eil.* Stieler's map (1826), on the other hand, inaccurately shows a series of tiny islands approximately at the location of the current Wessel Islands and labels them with an abbreviated plural generic *Wessel I^{en}*.²⁰ The last sentence of van Dijk's footnote refers to the *Adi of Wezelseiland* on his map. In an oblique way, van Dijk is correct to suggest the *Wessel Eilanden* of Arnhem Land were confused with the *Wesel(s) Eiland* of Bomberai Peninsula. Cartographically, over time, there had been some confusion as to where *Wesel(s) Eiland* was actually located, and this ultimately led Flinders to confer the name to the islands off Arnhem Land (see Tent 2019, for a full examination of this confusion). Van Dijk's footnote seems to imply that Bogaerts and Stieler made the mistake and designated the name to the islands, when they were merely adhering to Flinders' naming and charting. From this standpoint, Flinders' journal entries more than adequately answer van Dijk's question, *Waarom?*

[SATURDAY 19 FEBRUARY 1803]

The Dutch chart contains an island of great extent, lying off this part of the North Coast; it has no name in Thevenot, but in some authors bears that of Wessel's or Wezel's Eylandt, probably from the vessel which discovered Arnhem's Land in 1636; and from the south end of Cotton's Island distant land was seen to the N.W., which I judged to be a part of it; but no bearings could be taken at this time, from the heavy clouds and rain by which it was obscured. (Flinders 1814, 2:234)

[SUNDAY 6 MARCH 1803]

A third chain of islands commences here, which, like Bromby's and the English Company's Islands, extend out north-eastward from the coast. I have frequently observed a great similarity both in the ground plans and elevations of hills, and of islands in the vicinity of each other; but do not recollect another instance of such a likeness in the arrangement of clusters of islands. This third chain is doubtless what is marked in the Dutch chart as one long island, and in some charts is called Wessel's Eylandt; which name I retain with a slight modification, calling them WESSEL'S ISLANDS. They had been seen from the north end of Cotton's Island to reach as far as thirty miles out from the main coast; but this is not more than half their extent, if the Dutch chart be at all correct. (Flinders 1814, 2:246)

Perhaps van Dijk did not have access to Flinders' journal, otherwise he would not have questioned the naming of the Wessel Islands in this way. The only mention he makes of Flinders is via a secondary source to the existence of Torres Strait. If van Dijk had read Flinders' journal he would have understood why this island chain bears this name. Besides, by the mid-1800s, all Dutch maps depicting northern Australia recognised the *Wessel Islands* (see Tent 2019).

Van Dijk's questioning of the naming of *Cape Arnhem* and *Arnhem Bay* may also be directly answered by Flinders' words. The two geographic features did not have any names attached to them. Flinders was enlightened enough to allocate names to them related to the Dutch naming of the region. He records in his journal:

We steered on till eight o'clock, and then anchored in 21 fathoms, blue mud. At daylight [FRIDAY 11 FEBRUARY 1803], the shore was found to be distant four or five miles; the furthest part then seen was near the eastern extremity of Arnhem's Land, and this having no name in the Dutch chart, is called CAPE ARNHEM. (Flinders 1814, 2:220)

[SATURDAY 5 MARCH 1803]

On laying down the plan of this extensive bay, I was somewhat surprised to see the great similarity of its form to one marked near the same situation in the Dutch chart. It bears no name; but as not a doubt remains of Tasman, or perhaps some earlier navigator, having explored it, I have given it the appellation of the land in which it is situate, and call it ARNHEM BAY. (Flinders 1814, 2:244)

Three other annotations on van Dijk's map are worthy of comment. The first concerns the cluster of 13 toponyms at the western end of Van Diemensland. All have question marks, and 12 of them are accompanied by the date 1705. The latter refer to names bestowed by Maerten van Delft during his three month voyage of exploration charting the coastlines of Melville Island and the Cobourg Peninsula in 1705 (see Tent *forthcoming b*). The question marks indicate van Dijk is unsure of the toponyms' locations, not that he is questioning the legitimacy of the names. At first reckoning, this seems somewhat strange given there is an anonymous manuscript chart dated 1705 which shows the locations of van Delft's toponyms in reasonable detail (**Fig. 5.**). However, in a book published in 1868 on the voyages of the Dutch to the South Land during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,, Pieter Arend Leupe, historical geographer and functionary at the Dutch National Archives in The Hague, explains:

Up until now it has not been possible to find the journals of this voyage, but the National Archive is in possession of the map of the coast of New-Holland, which was sailed by these ships, with the title: "Hollandia-Nova discovered in 1705, by the little Fluyt *Vossenbosch*, the sloop *Waijer* and the pantchiallang *Nova Hollandia*, which departed from Timor on the 2nd March." Since this most important map – as far as we know – is now being published for the first time, [...]. (Leupe 1868: 198).²¹

Given van Delft's journal is no longer extant, and the publication of the 1705 manuscript chart of his voyage did not occur until nearly a decade after van Dijk's book was published (and a year after van Dijk's own untimely death), it is not surprising van Dijk did not know of van Delft's toponyms' locations. Van Dijk did however have access to the written report by Swaardecroon and Chastelijn (Councillors of the VOC in Batavia) of 6 October 1705, providing a summary of van Delft's voyage and discoveries, and actually cites it (see: van Dijk 1859, §7:47-52; Swaardecroon & Chastelijn 1856 [1705]; Major 1859:165-173; Robert 1973:138-145). This report, compiled from the written journals and verbal narratives of the returned officers, provides the names bestowed upon 17 locations. It is clear van Dijk obtained the 12 names on his map from this report.²²



Figure 5. Section of van Delft's 1705 manuscript chart showing the names he bestowed on the north coasts of Melville Island and Cobourg Peninsula (Anon. 1705. *Kaart van Hollandia - Nova, nader ontdekt, Anno 1705, door het fluitschip Vossenbosch, de chialoup Wajer en de Phantalling Nova-Hollandia, den 2 Maart van Timor vertrocken.* (Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Verzameling Buitenlandse Kaarten Leupe, 4.VEL, inv. nr. 500. Online at www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/4.VEL/inventaris?inventarisnr=500)

The second feature worth commenting upon is van Dijk's use of 'topographic descriptors' on his map.²³ On Cape York Peninsula we see: *Laag dor land* ['Low(-lying) arid country'], *Duinig en hooger land* ['Duny and higher country']; and on New Guinea: *Hoog-binnenlandsch gebergte* ['High interior/inland mountains'], and *Laag land* ['Low(-lying) country']. This is also somewhat unusual given the purpose of his map.

It was common practice for Dutch (and English) mariners during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to annotate their charts with topographic descriptors in order to provide navigational aids for future navigators. This was either to help mariners to safely find their way along treacherous coastlines, or to pinpoint suitable locations for respite and refreshment. Indeed, it was common for sailing instructions to be issued that included specific directives for mariners on exploratory expeditions to accurately chart, draw and describe the appearance and shape of the topography they encountered.²⁴ Unless van Dijk wanted to show the inadequacy (at least in the eyes of the Dutch) of the country surveyed by Carstenszoon, it seems a little odd to include topographic descriptors on his map. Moreover, it cannot be said that his map was intended to be a navigational aid for future mariners. Its small scale and comments on toponyms render it as a political statement, especially when viewed in the context of the book in which it appears.

Thirdly, the exclusion of the southern coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria seems slightly incongruous, whilst the eastern and western coastlines of the gulf, that of northern Arnhem Land, and Torres Strait are all depicted according to the cartographic knowledge of the time. Perhaps the map should be viewed in the light of the book's purpose, that is to document Carstenszoon's and Gonzal's achievements, and, since they did not venture to the southern coast of the gulf, van Dijk may not have felt the need to depict this coastline. If the accurate depiction of the coastlines that are shown was intended to better orient his readers according to contemporary knowledge, then it is curious not to include the southern coast; surely this would have achieved the same purpose. Moreover, it would have shown how close Carstenszoon was to its southern perimeter.

Van Dijk also bemoans, to his mind, the arbitrary and unjustified replacement on official maps of many toponyms bestowed by Carstenszoon (and other Dutch explorers) by the British. Furthermore, he laments that various toponyms bestowed by the Dutch, still surviving on contemporary maps, have been inaccurately placed. Such protests are quite undeserved given the inaccuracy and poor quality of the original Dutch charts in the first place, which were of course due to the limited navigation technology of the time. It is little wonder that even today the exact locations of many of the early recorded Dutch toponyms are in doubt. Many Dutch placenames were replaced by ones conferred by the British as a consequence of this, or as a result of pure ignorance of the existence of any Dutch name on a feature in the first place. The naming of places along the coast explored by van Delft is a prime example of this. The map of this voyage was not published until 1868; in the interim all of his placenames had either been superseded or simply ignored.

The replacing of Dutch names is also a direct corollary of colonisation by the British – to the coloniser goes the privilege of naming places. Flinders' naming of *Cape Arnhem* and *Arnhem Bay* are prime examples of this privilege.

Finally, I am not the first to be critical of van Dijk's ratiocinations. Leupe (1868:71) too, throws doubt on van Dijk's thesis and reasoning. In his introductory remarks on his narrative of van Delft's expedition, Leupe states: "We shall also have the opportunity to give some improvements, which have crept – possibly by error – into the overview by Mr VAN DYK of this voyage."²⁵ On various other occasions Leupe comments upon van Dijk's faulty reasoning and poor scholarship.

If van Dijk was hoping to somehow influence and alter some of the toponymy of Australia's northern coastline, it was in vain. By the time he took it upon himself to "rename" the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, the name of the gulf had become well and truly entrenched. It had been in use for more than 150 years. Moreover, the naming of coastal regions of the Southland had also fallen out of favour by van Dijk's time, especially after the British occupied the continent and started to put their own toponymic mark upon the map, replacing most of the previous Dutch names. Thirdly, van Dijk's book and map were not published in Australia and would not have had any effect. His map does not form part of the canon of early maps appearing in the literature of Australia's exploration, thus eliminating any chance of it effecting a change. His book, as far as I am aware, has never been translated into English, thus severely impeding any chance of having had any consequence in Australia. Even if it had been translated, it is inconceivable that any colonial administration in nineteenth century Australia would have taken the slightest bit of notice of an obscure Dutch historian's point of view. However, it would be unfair to be too harsh in condemning van Dijk's position. Even though he may have been biased and perhaps ill-informed, it should be noted that he was working without the knowledge of various resources available to Leupe and others.

In the end, van Dijk's map should not be viewed as a cartographic representation of Dutch geographic knowledge during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather it is simply a cartographic statement of his main thesis – that Carstenszoon is more deserving of toponymic recognition. In this sense, the

map is an interesting and intriguing aberration in the history of Australian cartography and toponymy. Van Dijk's book and map may also be viewed as eccentric examples of Dutch nationalism and propaganda in the light of the then contemporary Anglo-Dutch rivalry and tensions.

NOTES

- ¹ L.C.D. van Dijk was a lawyer, historian and academic. "He was the first Dutch academic to choose a topic from Dutch colonial history for his thesis [*Specimen Politico-juridicum Inaug. continens Historiam inquisitionis in delicta a praefectis atque officialibus in India cum orientalium occidentali commissa*, Utrecht 1847] and for this he conducted research into original source material. During his research he ran into a lot of resistance on the part of the department [Department of Colonies]. However, Van Dijk was not to be deterred. Absolutely fascinated by the material he discovered in the archives lofts in Amsterdam, he even offered his services to the department free of charge to put the sources in order. In 1852 the Minister of Colonies appointed him scientific archivist, specially [*sic*] concerned with the arrangement and ordering of the archives of the Zeeland Chamber which had been transferred from Middelburg." (Pennings [n.d.]).
- ² Patronyms such as *Carstenszoon* ['Carstenson'] and *Pieterszoon* ['Peterson'] were generally abbreviated in written texts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to *Carstensz.* and *Pietersz.*
- ³ This was the first time Carstenszoon's journal was published (Schilder 1976:85). Later it was republished, with corrections, by Heeres (1899:22-47).
- ⁴ The *Arnhem* was named after the Dutch town of Arnhem, and the *Pera* either after the region known as *Perak* (pronounced [pera?], with a final glottal stop) on the Malay Peninsula, then occupied by the Dutch because of its rich deposits of tin. Alternatively, it could have been named after the Malay word *perak* 'silver'.
- ⁵ Which is why the cape was named *Keerweer* ['Return(-again)' or 'Turn-again'].
- ⁶ "[...] To all the places which you touch at, you will give appropriate names, choosing for the same either the names of the United Provinces or of the towns therein, or any other dignified names. Of all which places, lands and islands, the Commander and Officers of the said yachts will, by order and pursuant to the Commission of The Honourable the Governor-General, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, sent out there [i.e., to the East Indies] by their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Netherlands, together with Messieurs the Directors of the General Chartered United East India Company in these parts, by solemn declaration signed by the Ships' Councils, take formal possession, and in token thereof, besides, erect a stone column in such places as shall be taken possession of, on which should be recorded in bold, legible characters the year, the month, the day of the week and the date, the person by whom, and when such possession has been taken on behalf of the States-General above mentioned. You will likewise endeavour to enter into friendly relations and make covenants with all such kings and nations as you shall happen to fall in with, and prevail upon them to place themselves under the protection of the States of the United Netherlands; of which covenants and treaties you will likewise cause proper documents to be exchanged with the other parties. ..." (Jack 1921:29-30).
- ⁷ It is unlikely the present-day *Staaten River* is Carstenszoon's *Staaten Rivier*. Robert (1973:21) believes, the latter is either the present-day Gilbert River or Smithburne River.
- ⁸ "Dat het jacht Aernem vermits sijne slimme seilage ende weijnige lust ende lieffde, die den schipper ende stuurman tot de vojage behoont hebben, in verscheide reijse ende tijden de reijse vrij wat verlenet heeft, ..."
- ⁹ To be fair to Heeres, according to Schilder (1976:94), the 1670 copy of van Coolsteerdt's manuscript chart was not discovered until the 1920s by F.C. Wieder in the Van der Hem Atlas in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (see Wieder 1925-33).
- ¹⁰ For example: Tasman's *Cabo Maria* ['Cape Maria'] and *Cabo Vandelin* in the Gulf of Carpentaria are actually islands, now known as *Maria Island* and *Vandelin Island* respectively (see Fig. 3).
- ¹¹ Some sources suggest the VOC ship *Wesel* (also spelled *Wezel*) was named after the German town of Wesel, near the Dutch border. During the Eighty Years War (1568–1648) with Spain, Wesel changed hands several times between the Dutch and Spanish. Therefore, the ship may have been named after the town. Although it was common for VOC ships to be named after towns and cities, it was also common for them to bear the names of animals, e.g. *Duyfken* ['Little Dove'], *Aap* ['Monkey'], *Zwarte Beer* ['Black Bear'], *Dolfijn* ['Dolphin'], *Valk* ['Falcon'], *Haas* ['Hare'], *Hazewind* ['Greyhound'], *Haring* ['Herring'], *Os* ['Ox'], *Koe* ['Cow'], *de Creeft* ['the Lobster'] etc. (see De VOCsite 2019). Parthesius (2010) and the VOC website spell the name of Pieterszoon's ship with a z, therefore also suggesting the name denotes a 'weasel' since this is how the name of that animal is spelled. It must also be remembered that one of Willem de Vlamingh's vessels was named '*t Wezeltje* ['The Little Weasel'], the definite article clearly showing the name was not derived from a toponym, but an animal. Accordingly, the ultimate denotation of Pieterszoon's ship's name remains somewhat enigmatic.
- ¹² When Carstenszoon departed on his expedition on Saturday 21 January 1623, the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies was still Jan Pieterszoon Coen. However, on 1 February, Pieter de Carpentier was appointed to the position. Either Carstenszoon knew of this impending appointment, or he was ignorant of it. Nevertheless, de Carpentier was very well-known in the Dutch East Indies and worked in close collaboration with Coen, holding various important positions of authority, including Director-General of Trade, Member to the Council of the Indies, and member of the Council of Defence.

Carstenszoon would therefore have known of him, if not personally, and may have honoured him with the name of the river as a result of these positions.

- ¹³ Anti-British sentiments in the Dutch Republic and later the Kingdom of the Netherlands were endemic throughout the seventeenth through to late-nineteenth centuries. This was due to the rivalry caused by the desires of both nations to secure trade routes to enable colonial expansion. This rivalry culminated in many skirmishes throughout the world, including the four Anglo-Dutch Wars, the battle of Camperdown, and the Boer Wars. The literature on Anglo-Dutch rivalry and the wars they fought is copious (see for example: Edmundson 1911, Tarling 1962, Masselman 1963, Bosscher 1977, Braunius 1977, Gaastra 1977, Gaastra & Emmer 1977, van den Boogaart & Emmer 1979, Israel 1988, Schama 1991, Loth 1995, Milton 1999, Emmer 2000, Rommelse 2001, Janse 2015 and Reynders n.d.).
- ¹⁴ “Men kan het stellen van dit bord als eene feitelijke bezitneming beschouwen, in verband met den last van Coen aan de commandeur J. Vos, overgenomen in de gelijkkluidende instructie van Carstensz., om van alle landen, welke de onzen mogten aandoen, voor de H.M.H.H. Staten-Generaal enz. possessie te nemen, en, in teeken van dien, eene steenen kolom op die plaatsen op te rigten. De commandeur heeft wel is waar, naar ‘t schijnt, niet juist de formule, door Coen voorgeschreven, gebezigd, maar het is zeer wel mogenlijk, dat hij, geen kans ziende om, even als op Aroe, met de hoofden der inboorlingen gesprekken aan te knooopen en de bezitneming door hen te doen bekrachtigen, verneemd heeft met de bovenstaande woorden te kunnen volstaan.”
- ¹⁵ “A^o. 1623 den eersten Februarius sijn hier tot Aru aangecomemen de jachten *Pera* ende *Aernem*, commandeur Jan Carstens, cooplieden Jan Bruwel ende P^r. Lingtes, schippers Jan Sluijs ende Dirck Melisz., stuerluijden Arent Martensz. ende Jan Jansz., door ordre ende commissie van den Ed. Heer Generaal Jan Pietersz. Coen, wegen de Hoog Mog. Heeren Staten Generael, Sijne Exc^{te} Prince van Orangie etc. ende de Heeren Bewinthebberen der Veereenichde Oostindische Comp^{ie} gesonden, en is bij ons voors. op den 4 Febr. passato possessive van ‘t Eijlandt voor de Hoog gemelte Heeren genome, ende de orancais ende volckeren onder de gehoorsaemheijt subjective van voorgemelte Heeren begeben ende de prinsen vlagge ontvangen.”
- ¹⁶ “[het land] heeft gans geen geberchte oft heuvelen, soo dat vastelijck te presumeren staet geenige metalen is hebbende, ja oock veel min eenige costelijcke houten als Sandelum, Aloe ofte Calumba, ende na ons oordeel het dorste en magerste geweste, dat in weerlt soude mogen sijn; [...]” (van Dijk 1856, *Journal van Jan Carstensz.*:41-42).
- ¹⁷ “1616 DEN 25 OCTOBER IS HIER AEN GECOMEN HET SCHIP D’EENDRAGHT VAN AMSTERDAM DE OPPERKOPMAN GILLIS MIBAIS VAN LVICK SCHIPPER DIRCK HATICHS VAN AMSTERDAM DE 27 DITO TE SEIL GEGHM NA BANTVM DE ONDERKOPMAN JAN STINS DE OPPERSTVIERMAN PIETER DOOKES VAN BIL ANNO 1616” (Western Australian Museum 2019).
- ¹⁸ “1697 DEN 4 FEBREVARY IS HIER AEN GEKOMEN HETSCHIP DE GEELVINCK VOOR AMSTERDAM DEN COMANDER ENT SCHIP PER WILLEM DE VLAMINGH VAN VLIELANDT ADSISTENT JOAN NES BREMER VAN COPPENHAGEN OPPERSTVIERMAN MICHIL BLOEM VANT STICHT BREMEN DE HOECKER DE NYPTANGH SCHIPPER GERRIT COLAART VAN AMSTERDAM ADSIST THEO DORIS HEIRMANS VAN DITO OPPERSTIERMAN GER RIT GERITSEN VAN BREMEN TE GALJOOT HET WEESELTIE GESAGH HEBBER CORNELIS DE VLAMINGH VAN VLIELANDT STVIERMAN COERT GERRITSEN VAN BREMEN EN VAN HIER GEZEYLT MET ONSE VLOT DEN VOORTSHET ZVYDLANDT VERDER TE ONDERSOECKEN ENGE DIS TINEERT VOOR BATAVIA #12 VOC.” (Western Australian Museum 2019).
- ¹⁹ “Op de kaarten van Bogaerts, Stieler en anderen komt een Wessel-eiland (op Bogaerts zelfs twee) voor, digt bij het zoogenaamde Arnhemsland. Zou daar geene vergissing plaats hebben? denkelyk wordt toch het door Pool ontdekte eiland bedoeld.” (van Dijk 1859:28). Adrian J. Bogaerts and Adolf Stieler were cartographers of the mid-nineteenth century, and indeed on their maps are depicted all three of the toponyms van Dijk questions: *Cape Arnhem*, *Arnhem Bay*, and *Wessel Islands* (see Stieler 1826, Bogaerts 1857).
- ²⁰ The ⁿ indicates the German plural, *Inseln*, all other singular islands on his map are indicated by *I*.
- ²¹ “Het is tot heden nog niet gelukt de journalen van deze reis terug te vinden, het Rijks-Archief daarentegen is in het bezit van de kaart van de door deze schepen beseilde kust van *Nieuw-Holland*, onder den title: ‘*Hollandia-Nova* nader ontdekt anno 1705, door het Fluytscheepje Vossenbosch, de Chialoup Wayer en de Phantjalang Nova Hollandia, den 2^e Maart van *Timor* vertrokken.’ Daar deze allerbelangrijkste kaart – voor zoo verre ons bekend is – nu voor het eerst wordt uitgegeven, [...]” *A pantchiallang* (*pencalang* in modern Indonesian) is a small traditional trading ship from the west of the Indonesian archipelago. The *VOC* used them and built them for transporting goods in the waters of Dutch East India. A *fluit/fluyt* (or flute) is a specially-designed wide-bodied cargo vessel with a flat bottom, narrow deck and round stern.
- ²² Interestingly, there are quite a few discrepancies between the names appearing in the Swaardecroon and Chastelijn report and those appearing on the 1705 manuscript chart. For a detailed account of the 1705 manuscript chart and van Delft’s expedition see Tent (*forthcoming a*).
- ²³ ‘Topographic descriptor’ is defined here as ‘either a sentential description, or a descriptive phrase not functioning as a toponym’ (See Tent *forthcoming b*).
- ²⁴ Tasman’s sailing instructions for his 1642-43 voyage, for instance, includes the following: “All the lands, islands, points, turnings, inlets, bays, rivers, shoals, banks, sands, cliffs, rocks etc., which you may meet with and pass, you will accurately chart and describe, and also have proper drawings made of their appearance and shape, for which purpose a draughtsman has been provided for you; you will take careful note in what latitude they are situated; what distances the coasts, islands, capes, headlands or points, bays and rivers bear and are separated from one another; what conspicuous mountains as landmarks, hills, trees or buildings (by which they may be recognised) are visible on them; also what depths and shallows, sunken rocks, projecting shoals and reefs are about and near the points. How

and by what marks these may be conveniently avoided; note whether the grounds or bottoms are hard, rugged, soft, level, sloping or steep; whether one should come on sounding, or not; by what land- and seamarks the best anchoring-grounds in road-steads and bays may be known; the bearings of the inlets, creeks and rivers, and how these may best be made and entered; what winds blow in these regions; the direction of the currents; whether the tides are regulated by the moon or by the winds; what changes of monsoons, rains and dry weather you observe; furthermore diligently observing and noting whatever requires the careful attention of experienced steersmen, and may in future be helpful to others who shall navigate to the countries discovered.” (Posthumus Meyjes 1919:147).

²⁵ “We zullen daarbij gelegenheid hebben eenige verbeteringen op te geven, die in het overzigt van dezen togt bij den Heer VAN DYK – mogenlijk abusief – zijn ingesloopen.”

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