

# APPENDIX I: NOTES ON EVIDENCE FROM FREIGHT RECORDS AND PROTOCOLS AT THE AMSTERDAM CITY ARCHIVES<sup>1</sup>

## SOURCE MATERIALS

The Notarial Archives of the Amsterdam Municipal Archives contain various contracts and protocols relevant to commerce conducted by Amsterdam merchants in the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Since the sugar trade was conducted by private merchants either under the auspices of the West India Company (WIC) as was the case in the Brazil colonial trade (1630–1654) or in trade with Barbados and other islands in the West Indies under British or French colonial rule, freight contracts were drawn up with a Notary Public in Amsterdam. Merchants and ships master usually drew up a contract in which they described freight cargo and further instructions and agreements on the terms. The parties mostly acted outside the WIC monopoly except when slave cargo was involved. Only rarely was the WIC referred to.

<sup>1</sup> Officially the collection is called: Archives of Notary Publics of Amsterdam. Access number of the archives is 5075. Period covered, 1578–1915. For the Inventory of the Notarial Archives see S. Hart: (partial) access to the Notarial Archives. (30452: Archief van S. Hart: (gedeeltelijke) toegang op de notariële archieven).

<sup>2</sup> S. Hart, “De zeventiende eeuw van 1585 tot ca. 1680,” in L. M. Akveld, S. Hart and W. J. Hoboken, *Martitieme geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, Vol. 2 (Bussum 1977), pp. 121–123.

From the freight contracts in the Notarial Archive, we derive the date of the contract, the inventory number, and the name of the Notary Public along with the names of merchants, the names of the ship masters, the name of the vessel, and usually where the vessel originated and was to sail to. The cargo carried from Amsterdam to overseas destinations is usually listed in more or less detail. Sometimes, the destination may be several locations with instructions to exchange in return cargo of a specific kind or in terms of various staple products that may be included in the return cargo. Sometimes prices are referred to which reflects the desirability of return cargo of one kind or another. In a few instances, in particular when specific cargo is referred to, merchants or factors at destination are named and left with instructions to deliver within a specified period of time. Besides freight contracts, Notarial Archives might also contain other records including reports about debts or estate matters. Disputes sometimes occurred and were recorded upon return in Amsterdam by means of "Attestations" or "Insinuations" which might include lost cargo, shipwreck, or delays in delivery. Through "Procurations" somebody might be entrusted to collect goods or money from a third party. This might include an inheritance or a debt. Other contracts or protocols might include a "Bodemery," or "Bottomery" (English translation), which was a kind of insurance and concerned a credit to the merchant or shipmaster on the security of the ship's bottom and sometimes the cargo. The loan was often used by merchants or shipmaster to purchase goods that were to be shipped. After a successful voyage the loan was paid back with a share of the profit. The Notarial Archives are transcribed on index cards and filed under several different categories including product-specific and regional-specific categories. For the purpose of this study I accessed two sugar files, and the files listed as West Indies, Barbados, and Jamaica contained in index card boxes.

Analysis of freight records indexed in the Notarial Archives under "sugar" covers the period from 1645 until 1699. The sugar file contains approximately 150 records and includes not only records on freight contracts but also attestations of trade disputes, lost cargo reports, and reports on shipwrecked and seized vessels. Several of the records appear in both the Barbados and sugar index card file and suggest that duplicate records existed across inventories. There appear to have been two index card collections on sugar in existence, and one of the record files contains five entries from the last decade of the sixteenth century. For the most part the records in the two card collections overlap. It is not clear why there are no

index cards in the sugar files for the period 1600–1645 but it is possible that they were filed with other inventories (including the inventory on Portuguese Jews). The records appear most extensive (or complete?) for the period 1645–1659 when 95 freight records are found in the sugar trade index file. From 1660 to 1699, the record trails off and only 31 freight records are filed. About half of the records of the later decades are entries including attestations and insinuations in disputes about insurance and loss of cargo.

For the analysis of the Barbados index card file, I included all the freight records and protocols, referred to earlier, for the period 1634–1699. The file contains 280 records. In a research paper completed by N.C. Kieft, “Windmills in the West Indies: Dutch Entrepreneurs and the Development of Barbados, 1621–1655” (unpublished paper, no year, deposited with the Barbados Museum and Historical society), only the freight contracts are included in the analysis (See Fig. 4.1 in Chap. 4). Kieft does not list the merchants involved in trade and does not extend his analysis beyond 1669. Because no merchants’ names are included and the time period is limited, Kieft misses the transition in trade from the carrying and supply type trade conducted by Dutch merchants to the sugar trade conducted by Amsterdam’s Sephardic merchants. From other protocols in the Barbados index card file it is clear that disputes, debt issues, and complaints of lost cargo increased during times of uncertainty and maritime conflicts. There is a small index card file on West India with 28 records for which duplicates were found in the Barbados file if Barbados was mentioned in the entry. The West India file also contains a few entries referring to French colonies. A small file on Jamaica has about 20 index cards from 1613 to 1751 and contains a few sugar index cards.

## APPENDIX 2: NOTES ON SUGAR IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE

From 1630 to 1654, marking Dutch colonial rule of Northeast Brazil under the West India Company (WIC), the import trade of sugar to the Dutch Republic reached its peak during the period 1637–1644 when an average annual import of sugar from Brazil was a little more than 8,000,000 pounds. In addition, the average annual import of sugar from Asia under the auspices of the East India Company (VOC) accounted for approximate 1,200,000 pounds per year during the period 1640–1660.<sup>1</sup> As an oversupply occurred and a price decline set in, the VOC reduced its orders in Asia which resulted in a substantial decline of supply from Asia during the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Sugar exports from Dutch Brazil reached its peak in 1641 when almost 15,000 crates of sugar were shipped for a total amount of 447,560 *arroba* of which 353,300 *arroba* were shipped by private merchants (one *arroba* is approximately 14.75 kilograms). WIC's imports of slaves to Northeast

<sup>1</sup> Niels Steensgaard, "The Growth and Composition of the Long-distance trade of England and the Dutch Republic before 1750," in James D. Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-distance trade in the early modern world, 1350–1750* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), pp. 102–152; pp. 132–135. The data was obtained from J. J. Reesse, *De Suikerhandel van Amsterdam van het begin der 17de Eeuw tot 1813* (Haarlem, 1908), CXX, CXIII–CXV. Data on variation in the price for sugar is derived from N. W. Posthumus, *Nederlandse Prijsgeschiedenis*, Vol. 1 (Leiden, 1943).

<sup>2</sup> Steensgaard, Table 3.14, p. 134.

Brazil peaked in 1644, more than doubling the number of arrivals of 1642 from 2500 arrivals per year to over 5000 per year. In 1646, only a few hundred slaves arrived.<sup>3</sup> By 1646, export of sugar from Northeast Brazil had almost completely ceased due to planter's revolts and crop failure. In the same year, prices for sugar on the Amsterdam market rose substantially from previous years (rising from 30 to 40 guilder cents per pound to 57 guilder cents per pound) followed by a rapid increase in sugar as commodity used in transactions in Barbados from 1646 to 1649.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas import of sugar from Dutch Brazil declined, the decade of the 1650s was the most productive and promising time for the sugar market of Amsterdam as records show that 20 refineries were in production in 1620, 40 refineries were in production in 1650, and 66 refineries operated in the Dutch Republic of which 50 were operating in Amsterdam in 1660. In terms of production, the industry seems to have peaked by the mid-1660s.<sup>5</sup> Each refinery could process about 1500 chests of sugar per year and the city's 50 refineries in 1660 supplied more than half the refined sugar consumed in all of Europe at the time.<sup>6</sup>

The sugar industry was Amsterdam's leading industry in the mid-seventeenth century and is referred to as a commercial industry (i.e. *trafiek* or "*verkeers industrie*") in which much of the capital was supplied by merchants and often required a formidable outlay in plants and equipment, and imported raw sugar. In addition, competent knowledge of foreign markets and competition was important. Among the refiners in the

<sup>3</sup> Stuart B. Schwartz, "A Commonwealth within Itself: The Early Brazilian Sugar Industry, 1550–1670," in Stuart B. Schwartz (ed.), *Tropical Babylons* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, London, 2004), Figure 6.1, p. 169, and Henk den Heijer, "The Dutch West India Company, 1621–1791," in Postma and Enthoven (eds.), *Riches from Atlantic Commerce* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2003), Table 4.2, p. 88, derived from Watjen, *Das Hollandische Kolonialreich in Brasilien* (Nijhoff, The Hague, 1921).

<sup>4</sup> Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: sugar, slavery, and plantation agriculture in early Barbados* (University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, London, 2006), Table 3, p. 22, and Table 1, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> J. J. Reesse, *De Suikerhandel van Amsterdam van het Begin van de 17de Eeuw tot 1813* (Kleynenberg, Haarlem, 1908), pp. 30–32, and pp. 107–110. By 1680, only 20 refineries remain in production, although not knowing much about the size or production capacity of individual refineries, it is difficult to assess to what extent changes in technology and scale of production explain the number of refinery operations or if indeed supply and distribution had declined.

<sup>6</sup> Gyorgy Novaky, "On trade, production and relations of production: The sugar refineries of seventeenth-century Amsterdam," in *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, volume 23, no. 4, 1997, pp. 459–489. Novaky collected data from the Hart's Register on Occupations, derived from "Poorterboeken" which list gainfully employed residents of Amsterdam.

mid-seventeenth century were several *Converso* and Sephardic merchants who had migrated to Amsterdam in the 1640s and 1650s and had traded sugar with Lisbon and Oporto prior to transferring their business to Amsterdam.<sup>7</sup>

The time of prosperity of the sugar trade and refining came to an end in the late 1660s. The following decades show a steep decline in supply of sugar from Asia which continues through the rest of the seventeenth century. The earliest known customs register from Amsterdam dating from 1667 to 1668 records imports of just over 7,000,000 pounds of sugar, most of which can be attributed to reexport of sugar from England and supplies from Curacao and St. Eustatius. At around 1700, Suriname supplies approximately 10,000,000 pounds per year.<sup>8</sup>

After the implementation of the British Trade and Navigation Acts of the 1650s and 1660s an increasing amount of muscovado or raw sugar ended up in London and Bristol, where it was stored in warehouses waiting to be processed. Dutch statistics on import and exports show that between October 1667 and September 1668, almost all the sugar imported was raw sugar (in total 7,242,130 pounds vs. 1700 pounds refined sugar) and that almost all the export of sugar from the Dutch Republic was refined sugar (1,727,729 pounds vs. 633,275 pounds raw sugar). Of all the Atlantic commodities listed, sugar was by far the largest in amount and value.<sup>9</sup> In addition to raw sugar reexported from England, Amsterdam merchants obtained a substantial but unverifiable amount of muscovado sugar smuggled out of the English and French colonies to Curacao and St. Eustatius and from there transported to the Dutch Republic and the Amsterdam market.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Eddy Stols, "The Expansion of the Sugar Market in Western Europe," in Schwartz (ed.), *Tropical Babylons* (2004), pp. 237–288.

<sup>8</sup>Steensgaard, Table 3.15, p. 136 with reference to J. P. van de Voort, "De Westindische plantages van 1720 to 1795," (Dissertation University of Nijmegen, 1973).

<sup>9</sup>H. Brugmans, "Statistiek van den in- en uitvoer van Amsterdam, 1 oktober 1667–30 september 1668," *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 19, 1898: 125–183; Victor Enthoven, "An Assessment of Dutch Transatlantic Commerce," in Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven (eds.), *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping 1585–1817* (Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2003), pp. 385–445; Table 14.14, p. 438. See also Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century* (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1949), p. 63.

<sup>10</sup>Victor Enthoven, "'That Abominable Nest of Pirates,' St. Eustatius and the North Americans, 1680–1780," *Early American Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, Special Issue: Anglo-Dutch Revolutions (Spring 2012), pp. 239–301; 251–252.

It has been suggested that a very large share of British imports was for domestic consumption, yet customs records show that at least 40 percent of the sugar import was still being reexported at the end of the seventeenth century. English customs records for 1698–1699 show that London exported only about 13,657 cwt. of all the sugar refined in England (cwt. is a unit of measurement for weight used in commodities trading contracts. In the United Kingdom, a cwt. or hundredweight is 112 pounds). During the same year, London exported about 125,211 cwt. of raw sugar or muscovado and 14,294 cwt. of the same was exported from other English port cities, for instance Bristol, which became a major sugar import-export center in the eighteenth century. In total, the Dutch Republic processed about half of the 139,505 cwt. of raw or partly refined sugar reexported from England into fully refined sugar for distribution in the European market at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Public Record office, Customs 2/6, 1698–1699. See also Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the 17th Century* (1950), pp. 92–93.

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<sup>1</sup>Note: Included are only English-language sources, no journal articles, and reference is made to edited volumes only when specifically addressing the relevant topic.



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