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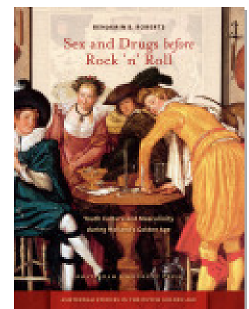
Roberts, Benjamin B.



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EPILOGUE

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In the 30 years that passed between 1620 and 1650, the world changed drastically. The Dutch Republic gained its independence from Spain with the treaty signed at Westphalia in 1648. The prosperity and economic growth of the early part of the century began to wane. Peace throughout Europe also brought economic hard times to the Republic, as the trade in armaments, weapons, and supplies had proved to be lucrative for Dutch merchants. The economic conjuncture went into decline, social mobility became more rigid, and the Dutch Reformed Church began to recognize its failure at not becoming a state church as the Roman Catholic Church was before the Revolt. During the 1650s and 1660s the Republic experienced a series of setbacks: in 1651 a devastating tide flooded parts of Amsterdam, the first Anglo Dutch War (1652-1654), the Republic's economy went into further decline, the loss of Brazil to the Portuguese, the burning of the village of De Rijp in 1654 and 1658, the loss of the Nieuw Nederland colony in North America to the British in 1664, and the outbreak of plague in Amsterdam in 1665. Moral crusaders attested these misfortunes to be the sign of God's wrath on the Republic for its licentiousness, and at the forefront of the country's wayward lifestyle were the country's young people. However, this time it was a new generation of young men, those born in the 1630s and 1640s. This time moralists accused them of lewd behavior because they had succumbed to excessive drinking, engaging in premarital sex, and squandering their leisure time with randy books.[1]

For the generation of young men from the 1620s and 1630s, their lives changed drastically as well. By 1650 Otto Copes, the drunken young man arrested in 1629 for firing weapons at Groningen's municipal guard, was married and the father of five children. After his ruckus with the municipal guard in December 1629, he left that city and enrolled four months later as a law student at the University of Leiden. By the mid-seventeenth century he had become a successful municipal administrator, regent of the city of 's-Hertogenbosch, and representative of the generality region of North Brabant for the States-General in The Hague, where he developed strategic relations with the House of Orange. Copes was an elder in the Walloon Church and, ironically

enough, had become an officer of the local municipal guard in 's-Hertogenbosch, and perhaps even dealt with rowdy drunken students.[2]

According to early modern standards, Copes had passed through all the rites of passage, biological and cultural, and had become a fully fledged adult and reached middle age. He commissioned Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669) to paint an allegorical family portrait of his wife, Josina Copes-Schade van Westrum, and their children. In the painting his wife is shown pointing towards heaven, symbolizing her choice for good over evil in the upbringing of her children. In the lower left-hand corner of the painting, vice is represented with images of Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid – the Roman gods of wine and love, which symbolized excessive drinking and promiscuous sexual behavior, vices that Otto was well acquainted with.[3]

His behavior as a young man was not out of the ordinary for his cohort of young university students in the 1620s and 1630s, the generation that grew up during the Republic's economic and cultural golden years. During his formative years, the province of Holland had the largest population of young people, many of whom were immigrants seeking employment, adventure, religious freedom, and the prospect of a prosperous future. These economic and demographic factors along with social and culture elements had a profound impact on young men from the 1620s and 1630s and allowed them to create an idiosyncratic youth culture. Young men expressed themselves differently from previous generations through hairstyle and clothing, drinking rituals, were more apt to refrain from using lethal violence, became sexually mature at a much later age than teenagers do today and learned to channel their sexuality and carnal urges. Also, smoking was a new leisure activity that had not been done in Europe before. They participated in other leisure activities such as singing from songbooks, rides in recreational vehicles through the countryside and taking boat trips.

While sex, drugs, and recreation might have been important *pull* or luring factors for the generation of young men of the 1620s and 1630s, the Republic's new institutions, including universities and municipal councils, were filled with humanist-educated members who focused more on the union of *mercantile and state* instead of *church and state.* These institutions served as key *push* factors in molding a new mentality among young men in the Republic during the 1620s and 1630s. Contrary to contemporary notions that youths are more likely to be more progressive, young men from the lower echelons of society tended to uphold traditional stances such as Catholic holidays and feasts and were more apt to conform with conservative religious ideologies like those backed by Counter-Remonstrant supporters. The new institutions of the state established during the Revolt in 1575, including its universities, had a great impact on civilizing young Dutch men, as well as numerous foreign students from the German states and northern European countries. By prohibiting the use of lethal violence, including dueling, and banning medieval brotherhoods such as the nations, university officials were instrumental in restraining the use of violence among students. After students graduated, they returned to their homes throughout Europe and brought with them a new norm of non-violent mediation. The banishment of regional brotherhoods such as the nations had a similar effect. Within the short span of a couple of decades, using violence for the sake of defending one's honor and reputation – also those of friends and students

from the same region or country – was considered barbaric and uncivilized behavior for the new elites of Europe. For young men from the upper and middle classes, non-lethal violence and negotiation became an ideal trait of manhood. A man who resorted to violence lost his masculinity and social status because he no longer had control over his emotions.

In this respect, ordinances passed by Dutch municipal councils and the regulations imposed by the States-General were responsible for changing and 'molding' young men in Dutch cities, in essence creating a 'modern', non-violent form of masculinity. On the one hand, Holland's cities witnessed a traditional collective socialization of young men from the lower echelons of society, who often came from rural backgrounds. Their behavior became more regulated when tough municipal authorities implemented civil order through force and the use of civil guards. On the other hand, the impact of stable diets, of a growing consumer-oriented economy based on mercantile trade with luxuries such as silks and tobacco, of humanism through state-backed educational institutions, of travel, and of literary societies helped churn out a unique youth culture and form of masculinity.

Young men of this generation looked up to role models, both in the secular and non-secular domain, to mirror and guide them through the transition to adulthood. The typical masculine traits included excessive drinking, womanizing, and smoking. In the Dutch Republic, the men who represented these traits more than any other were usually military men, soldiers, and sailors. According to Willem Frijhoff, role models and examples were key pedagogical mediums in Western culture, and their subliminal function as educators should not be underestimated. Throughout Judeo-Christian history, icons, saints, and the stories of Biblical figures served as important examples in educating young people. In the Northern Netherlands, the Reformation and Iconoclastic Fury of the sixteenth century had removed the Roman Catholic Church and its iconic traditions from public life. The pedestals were empty where martyrs and saints had once stood as examples of spiritual and secular lives. For church congregations and youngsters in particular, this caused a large pedagogical vacuum. In the post-Reformation era, Dutch youths – regardless of their religious denomination – were apt to search for new edifying heroes and idols. Frijhoff argues that Protestant ministers were quick to fill the void. 'Their portraits resembled the icons, radiating spirituality and modest piety, precisely complying with the church codes of clothing, pose, gesture, and hairstyle.'[4] The increasing level of literacy and cheaper production of printed matter in the Republic enabled the writings of the clergy to fill the spiritual void once occupied by the saints of the Catholic Church. There was a continuous demand for exemplary lifestyles throughout the century. Deathbed stories of pious children were published, for example, and used as an illustration for children and adults to live a virtuous Christian life. Publications about pious children who died during the plague outbreak in 1664 were role models for other children.[5]

Moralists fulfilled an essential role when it came to spiritual matters in the secular domain of daily life, but adolescents and young men were likely to seek role models in men from another caliber for matters such as eating, drinking, attending school, working, and recreation. Especially gender role models that projected contemporary notions of manliness and embodied masculine character traits.

Masculine role models and a national identity?

Role models played a significant part in helping young men establish identities for themselves. In that regard, the newly unified country and its young people had psychologically much in common in the early seventeenth century. They were in search of a common and cohesive identity.[6] Current research headed by Lotte Jensen addresses the shaping of a national identity affected by war and martial propaganda in the period 1648-1815, but leaves the 1620s and 1630s period open.[7] However, for the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Dutch historian Judith Pollmann argues that the country was in the throes of reinventing identities through the production of pamphlets giving a national identity of what the Northern Netherlander was portrayed to be, or at least what the Southern Netherlander was not.[8] Early-seventeenth-century contemporaries including Johan van Beverwijck emphasized the need for the young republic to have a common identity, in which a cohesive education of the country's young people was key. A common identity for its young people was a necessity for the young republic to survive: 'Republics that set more store by their good citizens give more attention to the upbringing of their children', and 'the depravity of republics proceeds from the inattention and oversight of their good upbringing'.[9] In other words, Van Beverwijck pleaded not only for a moral and civic education in the home but also one that exceeded beyond into the realm of Dutch society where good citizenship and ideal burghers stood on pedestals.

According to research conducted to discover what makes individuals successful in society today, the psychologist Stephan R. Covey interviewed numerous people who have prospered financially, socially, and emotionally. The model deduced from his research has been published in the popular self-help book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), which has sold more than 15 million copies worldwide. Unfortunately for the seventeenth century, we cannot implement such a study. There are clues that point in the direction of men who embodied masculine habits and were 'role-model material' for young men in the 1620s and 1630s. During the war against Spain, the men who fit the bill of being role models were those who fought for the country's independence. According to the research of D.F. Scheurleer, contemporaries in the early seventeenth century idolized their naval and military men with numerous verses, poems, songs, and satires. Every naval hero and battle became the talk of the nation and was expressed by writing poetry, which was a common pastime.[10] One of the most heralded was Admiral Jacob van Heemskerk. He was killed by a cannon while trying to approach the Spanish mainland during the Battle of Gibraltar (1607) and was given a state funeral upon the navy's return home. It was the first state funeral since the death of William the Silent in 1584. The Republic honored Van Heemskerk by burying him in the Oude Kerk (Old Church) in Amsterdam and commemorating him with a mausoleum designed by one of the country's most acclaimed architects, Hendrick de Keyser. The inscriptions on Van Heemskerk's shrine, which can still be seen today, emphasize his courage, skill, and leadership. Shrines like these had a didactic purpose and were intended to encourage Dutch youths. According to the art historian Cynthia Lawrence, 'the unprecedented intensity of the country's response to Heemskerk's victory and death was also a consequence of the lack of contemporary flesh-and-blood idols with which the Dutch could identity'. Heemskerk

as a role model was a contemporary who was neither remote in history, like the Batavians were, nor socially removed, like the stadtholders Maurits, Frederik Hendrik, and the other members of the House of Orange were. He was a commoner just like the rest, and his popularity extended through all classes of Dutch society.[11]

Dutch naval officer Piet Hein was an even greater example of a national naval hero for the country's young people. In 1628 Hein (1577-1629) managed to capture the Spanish fleet carrying a booty of eleven and half million guilders worth of gold and silver off the coast of Cuba. The treasure turned Hein into an instant hero, and upon the fleet's return to the Republic, Hein was heralded as a national hero in Amsterdam, Leiden, and Haarlem with parades and fireworks. The news of Hein's capture of the Spanish fleet even brought the population of Madrid, who strongly opposed their leaders, out into the streets to honor him. Little did they know how great a blow had been struck to the Spanish economy and what the long-term consequences would be. With a profit of 50% dividend, the booty from the silver fleet was quite lucrative for the shareholders of the West India Company and the Dutch stadtholder, Frederik Hendrik, who received 10% of the treasure. After Hein died, a national monument in the Old Church of Delft was erected in 1637 to honor him. Although richly decorated tombs in Protestant churches were frowned upon in the seventeenth century, they were tolerated because of their didactic purpose.[12] Youths looked up to commemorated war heroes. Frijhoff argues that the power of the traditional role models of saints and icons lies not only in their divine powers but also in their human traits, which 'mortals' can easily associate themselves with.[13] For the early seventeenth century, young men also sought role models in real men who were alive and closer to the experience of daily life. If a youth lived in a Dutch city, he was likely to have been confronted by many civil guards and soldiers, especially in the cities along the eastern borders that were continuously under attack and where soldiers were regularly quartered. Youths had already imitated the conspicuous and colorful clothing of soldiers, and envied them their right to bear arms. In addition, their reputation for great courage in fighting against the Spanish tyrant did not go unnoticed. Some residents were required to house Spanish soldiers, but the general public noticed their presence in the streets, markets, shops, at the city gates and guardhouse, and in taverns and smoke houses.[14]

During the first decades of the seventeenth century, the positive image of civil guards and military men in the Dutch Republic was a relatively new phenomenon. The public's perception of the armed military men at the beginning of the Revolt in 1568 was quite different from that held at the end of the Twelve-Year Truce in 1621. In the early years of the revolt, soldiers were renowned for pillaging and plundering the peasant populations, and their moral fabric was anything than holy. The womanizing, excessive drinking, and playing frivolous games such as backgammon and cards had earned them a licentious reputation. However, in the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Dutch army underwent a positive transformation. Olaf van Nimwegen, scholar of Dutch military history, argues that especially during the last decades of the sixteenth century and early ones of the seventeenth century, the Dutch army transformed from an 'unreliable band of mercenaries into a disciplined force that could hold its own against the might of Spain'. Under the helm of Stadtholder Maurits, the Dutch armed

forces – and military men in general – became more disciplined and professional and had earned more respect from the civilian public.[15]

The restored, positive representation of the militia went hand in hand with the increase in war propaganda, which was needed to support the war. During the war the population was eager to know about its progress. In the pre-newspaper era, updates on war developments and war propaganda in general were distributed by prints. Art historian of the early modern period Christi Klinkert points out that the military triumphs of Maurits, especially those in the period 1590-1600, were recorded in elaborate prints that were published and distributed to the civilian population by well-established publishing houses such as Hogenberg in Cologne. Hogenberg fulfilled an important role in providing news similar to the news agency Associated Press today. The States-General as well as other foreign heads of states were dependent on accurate news reports of the war. In the late sixteenth century the publishing houses Hogenberg and others made pictorial reports of the capture of Breda (1590), the sieges of Zutphen and Deventer (1591), the campaign of Groningerland (1591), the sieges of Nijmegen (1590-1591), Steenwijk (1592), Coevorden (1592), Groningen (1594), and Hulst (1596), as well as the Battle of Turnhout (1597), the defense of the Bommelerwaard (1599), and the most important one that is etched in Dutch minds, the Battle of Nieuwpoort (1600). These prints were based on chronicles, journals, pamphlets, political songs, maps, and illustrations from books and gave an accurate overview of the military engagements. Pictorial reports played a key role in highlighting Maurits's military accomplishments as well as re-enforcing his position and that of his successors such as Frederik Hendrik in maintaining the office of stadtholder.[16] This was not an exaggeration. Due to the dynamics of the Revolt against Spain and the numerous men born in the family who chose a career in the army, the military became a family business for the Nassaus.[17]

Another means of keeping the general populace informed about the war was through songs. The events of a battle or the progress of the war were often turned into the lyrics of a familiar tune, so that it could easily be remembered and relayed to others. These *geuzenliederen* (rebel songs) were informative, but also served as propaganda in keeping the war effort alive and the population in a state of fear.

After the Twelve-Year Truce ended in 1621, the oral transmission continued but was also turned into imagery on political prints, broadsheets, and paintings that depicted a national mythology. Town councils and government buildings commissioned paintings illustrating military battles to commemorate the Revolt and the war for independence.[18] By the end of the Eighty Years' War in 1648, the image of the soldier in Dutch art had undergone a major change. From their criminal-like status in the mid-sixteenth century, they became transformed into heroes and courtiers.[19]

In the cities of the Republic, youths were likely to be aware of the prominent presence of the civic guards responsible for maintaining law and order. During peacetime the urban militia walked a tightrope between protecting citizens on the one hand and enforcing laws on the other. The latter became difficult when the guard had to enforce unpopular laws such as tax increases, which had been dictated by the town regents. During the Twelve-Year Truce, tensions erupted

between Remonstrant and Counter-Remonstrant supporters. The frictions in church and politics quickly spilled over and extended to the civic militias, consistories, schools, and universities. Hormone-crazed youths tended to preserve conservative rural norms and values through the sanctioned violence of the charivari. City-dwelling youngsters, thrill-seeking and out for adventure, were often instrumental in implementing violence towards minority groups such as Remonstrant supporters in Amsterdam.

In the absence of a common foreign enemy, the young republic was almost in a state of civil war. The stadtholder's purpose and role in the political domain was weakened considerably. When the war resumed in 1621, social unrest in the cities subsided as the different factions and general populace once again had to focus their attention on Spain, the common enemy.[20] Consequently, the law-enforcing status of the civic guard changed, as they also were required to defend the city until the army arrived.

Under the new circumstances, urban populations respected civic guards because they were seen as their immediate defenders. Civic guards also cultivated their heroic image by parading in processions and commissioning large portraits of themselves. Especially in the 1620s and 1630s, life-size depictions of civic guards decorated the various halls of the guards' buildings. In these portraits, the civic guardsmen were portrayed dressed in military costume, sometimes wearing helmets and carrying muskets and flags, and of course having a heroic allure. The most famous example of this genre is Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* (1642), where the guards are shown arranged around their captain, armed, decorated with banners, and looking very brave.[21]

In the period 1621 until the end of the war in 1648, military men started to represent good patriotic – and masculine – virtues such as courage and perseverance. At the crown of this heroic imagery stood the republic's stadtholder, Prince Maurits, who turned the Dutch army into the most modern of the early modern period.[22] Counter-Remonstrant-backed town councils honored the stadtholder by having large portraits of him painted. Haarlem's town council, for example, commissioned Hendrick Pot in 1620 to honor the House of Orange with an allegorical painting that displayed leading members of the Orange dynasty and glorified their Christian and political virtues and military skills.[23] Maurits, a bachelor who never married and fathered eight children with six different mistresses, was by no means a saint in real life, but a moral image of him – even if it was fabricated – served for the sake of national unity. During the 1620s and 1630s, paintings, prints, and pamphlets depicting military men as being virtuous were used to create a unified war effort and cohesive feeling of Dutch identity and played a potential exemplary role for the Republic's adolescent boys and young men.[24] Undoubtedly, Maurits and his cousins Willem Lodewijk van Nassau, the stadtholder of Friesland, and Count Johan VII of Nassau-Siegen (1561-1623) were instrumental in modernizing the Dutch army and bringing allure to the military profession. Maurits was inspired by Leiden's professor, Justus Lipsius, who in 1596 published a commentary on the work of the Roman Polybius (second century BC) on the *De Militia Romana*. The work described the lessons of the legionaries of the Ancient Romans which were relevant for the Republic at that time. Maurits learned how important it was to re-organize and re-build his army. It needed to be well disciplined, drilled and trained daily, and the soldiers

needed to know skills to build redoubts and field fortifications. In theory, Lipsius's philosophy called for well-trained officers who could lead, educate, and be a good example for their men. He also believed that the infantrymen should receive daily training and recognized the need for a better schooling of the officers. In the same period, Johan VII of Nassau-Siegen founded a *Schola Militaris*, a military academy, in Siegen in 1616 where he used his own manual, *Kriegsbuch* [War Book], to teach young princes, counts and sons from the noble and patrician families the art of logistics, arming, tactics, field operations, and military strategy. The young men who attended were usually between 17 and 25 years old and primarily from the Netherlands, the German states, and Bohemia. The cadets learned how to build forts and encampments, as well as the fine art of fencing, horseriding, good manners, and French. The school's advertisement brochure boasted that young men would have a unique chance to learn the 'art of war as it is best practiced and implemented in the Netherlands'. A year's tuition cost a hundred Thaler.[25]Aspiring young noblemen who later sought a commission in the army of the States-General like Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen (1604-1679) (the son of Johan VII) probably underwent an officer's education at the *Schola Militaris*.[26] In the period between taking on the stadtholdership after his father's murder in 1584 and his own death in 1625, Prince Maurits managed to lay the foundation for extensive military reforms in the army of the States-General. His reforms were backed by the financing of the States-General to expand and maintain the army as well as laying the groundwork for proper housing, clothing, supplies, and providing medical treatment for soldiers. In addition, soldiers were paid on a regular basis. All in all, the reforms were instrumental in modernizing the Dutch military, and they were copied by many of Maurits's adversaries in Europe during the early seventeenth century.

In addition, modern media such as songbooks and pamphlets became propaganda tools for the stadtholder and the States-General, and helped keep the war effort alive. Each time Maurits conquered or re-conquered a city, a new song was added to the rebel songbook glorifying his military victory. Even military mishaps such as a failed expedition at Duinkerken and an invasion in Brabant were still portrayed in pamphlets as military triumphs. Visitors to The Hague's hall of knights, the Ridderzaal, still viewed the military banners as if they were military victories. Maurits's war machine was intricately aided by influential members of society like Minister Johannes Uytenbogaert and Haarlem's writing master, D. van Horenbeek, who were commissioned by the stadtholder to compose poems honoring his military achievements – whether true or not.[27] After Maurits's death in 1625, Frederik Hendrik continued the same practices to ensure a positive image of the military endeavors and war in general. When Frederik Hendrik conquered towns, he founded homes for poor children who could be identified with an orange-colored 'N' for Nassau embroidered on their sleeves. War propaganda tactics like these managed to elevate the public's image of the soldier in general, and particular for young men who sought masculine role models.[28]

The dark passenger of male role models

After recognizing the positive masculine impression that soldiers and military men in general must have made on adolescents and young men in the 1620s and 1630s, we must also be aware of their dark passenger or negative side. Paintings showed a darker or immoral facet to the life of a soldier and the municipal guard. In the painting genre known as *kortegaard* or *corps de garde*, military men were portrayed during their hours of leisure in guardrooms, passing time with idle vanities such as loose women, consuming alcohol, gambling, and smoking. According to the art historian Jochai Rosen, the *kortegard* or guardroom scene type of paintings by Pieter Codde and his followers became popular in the 1620s in Amsterdam, and did not portray the reality. They were an elaboration of the Prodigal Son and merry company genre that was popular among elites and the middle class.[29] Contrary to the life-size heroic military men portrayed in town halls and other official buildings, the immoral activities of the militia depicted in this genre were not intended for public viewing. Paintings of the guardhouse genre are small, and their details are minute, such as in Antonie Palamedesz's. *Two soldiers and an officer playing dice* (21.8 x 19 cm in size).[30] During the 1620s other Dutch painters influenced by Codde developed the genre even further, including Willem Duyster and Jacob Duck. Many of these painters were already known for their portraits of merry companies.[31] In Jacob Duck's *Soldiers in Guardhouse*, the soldiers are womanizing, drinking, playing cards and backgammon, and smoking. Pipes are laid out on the foreground. Just as in the merry companies, the activities of these soldiers were intended as comic relief instead of moral caution. In the early seventeenth century, there was still a relaxed attitude towards sensual matters in telling jokes, books, and paintings. Long before the Freudian cigar, the projectile shape of the tobacco pipe was an added attribute for painters, and a woman holding a pipe was a common innuendo for sexual intercourse.[32]

The prominent youth culture of the 1620s and 1630s had a strong affinity with military role models in dress, hairstyle, weapons, drinking, womanizing, and smoking habits, and became a precedent for a new urban 'republican' youth culture which lasted until the end of the Republic itself. One characteristic factor remained constant until the end of the eighteenth century. Young men, as well as older men, continued to let their hair grow or wear wigs with long hair from the 1620s until the 1790s. In all likelihood, the generation of young men from the 1620s and 1630s had cast a new mold for educating young men in a republican state, which continued until its end. In hindsight, after having been a republic in Europe for more than two hundred years, the regression of the country in 1814 to an absolute monarchy with the Orange-Nassau dynasty as its hereditary sovereigns must have seemed like turning back the clock, especially while the rest of Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century basted in the sun of Enlightenment thought and the advent of the new American republic in North America. For Dutch citizens in the early nineteenth century, it must have entailed a profound cultural shift and change in *mentalité*. Besides the new style of short hair on men, the generation of young people of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands in the early nineteenth century must have been educated differently and manifested a new youth culture with their own clothing, games, rites of passage, tomfoolery, recreational activities, and music. They were quite different from their forefathers who grew up

in a Republic without a nobility and monarchy. However, that is a presumption which requires in-depth inquiry, just as all generations deserve – and are worthy of – historical investigation as unique actors in time.